

January 2022

Month of Prayer

Welcome

to our Grace Connection Month of Prayer

At the start of this new year we're making a choice together, to put God first and to seek Him so that everything else flows from Him. Over the next few weeks, we're going to be praying for a variety of topics and areas of church life. Each week the scope and reach of our prayers will grow: first we'll pray for ourselves and our own hearts. Second, we'll be praying for our churches. In week three we'll pray for our cities and neighbourhoods, and we'll finish the month by praying for our nation and beyond. We hope there's something in here for everyone, including some things that you might not normally pray for.

There are three things we're believing for as we pray together through these topics: perspective, power, and family. Looking to God first changes the way we see things, we get a Kingdom *perspective*. We believe in the *power* of prayer so if we're going to see anything happen in our churches it has to start here. We also know that while we might be separated by distance, praying together will join us together as a family at a deeper heart level and in unity.

We all have different experiences of prayer. Some of you might be right at the beginning of that journey. Others of you will have stories of answered prayer from over many years. No matter where you're at, we're all in this together. This is about taking the next step, whatever that might be, so that we can learn from one another, form new rhythms of prayer across our churches, and all grow in our prayer lives. Ultimately our prayer is that "out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith..." Ephesians 3:16-17.

Happy praying,
Love Steve, Julia, Ben & Emily



Fasting

We'd love you to consider fasting at some point during the month if you are able to. To explain a bit more of why, here's Julia:

"I get excited about fasting. It has been a place of encounter, encouragement and breakthrough in my life.

Steady discipline and perseverance don't come naturally to my personality - the very fact I can do it (and get excited about it) tells me God is right there with me and the Holy Spirit is at work in me.

Fasting helps me focus and declutter my busy world. I don't need any encouragement to make myself busy - I do need something radical to make myself rest in God. Fasting forces me to slow down my body. It brings me face to face with my limits and wide open to the reality of God. As a 'spiritual reset' it can't be beaten!

Fasting is countercultural and counter intuitive. I find the first few hours hardest, my body really likes food! When I started, I needed the encouragement of other people just like me. Could I fast as a mum with two toddlers? I needed the real-time encouragement of church friends who weren't only surviving their time of fasting... but were thriving.

I am hungry to know God. In His wisdom, He has given me a pathway to find Him in a fuller, deeper and unique way. It involves saying no to some good things in order to say a big yes to God. What would I forgo to maximise my enjoyment of God? What would I sacrifice for more of Him?

Fasting is a beautiful invitation - I find my 'yes please' easier to say each time. I'm looking forward to saying yes together in January."

Julia Morrison - King's Church Birmingham

*For more information and good principles on fasting, you can visit:
graceconnection.co.uk/fasting*

Using this Booklet

To help us pray together, we've prepared a plan for how we can pray during each day of this month, with a rest day each week. Each individual week will work in concentric circles, starting with praying for ourselves, then our church, then our city and finally our nation & world.

So on any given day, if you would like to join with others in praying through the topics, there are 3 things to help you:

1) A Topic - Pray whatever comes to mind from this topic, whatever the words mean to you or what they speak to you about. If you're not sure, you could do a Bible search for where they appear, look at some of the other themes in the week to get a better idea of what's being prayed for or ask a friend how they are praying. But best of all, see #2 and #3 below!

2) A Bible Passage - The topics will link in some way to the Scriptures listed. Read the verses, check out what's immediately before and after them if you like, but see what God is saying through the passage and use it as fuel to pray.

It's important to remember the power of praying the promises of God contained in Scripture back to Him. So when we take the truths of the passage and use them to fuel our prayers, we know we are praying in line with the will of God, we know that He wants to accomplish what is written and we know that within His sovereignty, He has decided that things change when we pray those truths back to Him!

3) A Video - Each day on the Grace Connection YouTube channel, there will be a short video from someone in a Grace Connection church, who will talk about how you can pray for this topic from the passage and pray for us all as we petition God together. Need a bit of help? Feeling a bit stuck or uninspired? Or simply want to see a range of faces from across our churches? These videos will really help.



graceconnection.co.uk/youtube

KIDS & FAMILIES

0-5s

"My number one tip for praying with 0-5s is to keep it fun! There can be a tendency to just have prayer as a bedtime or mealtime activity and whilst this is great at providing rhythm and routine, we want to teach our kids that they can pray about anything, at anytime, anywhere. For younger kids, songs and rhymes work really well, as do prayers with actions. Using prayers that encourage participation or filling in the gaps can be fun too, for example, 'Thank you Jesus that you are...!'

You can also use your environment to help your kids pray. When out on a walk with your kids why not seek to connect with God in nature, picking up things you find and asking questions like, 'Why did God make this?'. Including God in all aspects of our day and modelling prayer to our kids goes a long way in helping them to engage.

Often, especially with small children, our temptation can be to try and get prayer out of the way, thinking that God won't speak to us. Instead, I try to have an intentional approach when it comes to expectation - God wants to meet and speak to all of us! So I find getting kids to ask questions such as, 'What are you like God?' and then listen to Him for the answer can really help develop this.

So, any time, any place, any prayer... and above all keep it fun!"

Claudia Little - Grace Church Nottingham

5-10s

"Kids at this age are transitioning from young children to being slightly more independent, becoming more aware of the 'why' and 'how' we do things as well as the 'what' to do and this can be reflected in their prayer life. When our kids were younger, we set the tone and direction in prayer but now our emphasis is more about helping them to develop their relationship with God, rather than prayer just being a thing you do. We would encourage our kids that God is the best person to ask for help and that just as we love to hear how their day was, God loves it too!"

God loves to speak to all of us, so we talk of prayer as a conversation with God where we get to learn how He speaks to us. We might talk about what the Bible says prayer is or give them practical tools to help. We've used questions like, 'What might God say to you when you are worried?' and prayers they can repeat; we've got them to imagine walking up to God to give Him their concerns then bringing back His peace; we try to model it ourselves by talking about answered prayer and by allowing them to see us pray. We've also found liturgy helpful using the *Every Moment Holy* book.

Prayer is a gift, not a duty - something to be talked about & enjoyed. It's a privilege and if we delight in doing it, we know something will be passed on to our kids."

Jennifer Key - King's Church Birmingham

11-18s

"In such a foundational and habit-forming time of life, praying with teenagers needs to be approached with a great sense of care, empowerment and encouragement.

We found listening well to our daughters as they talk about their lives and learn to pray to be really important. We gave a great deal of affirmation to them and recommended praying out loud themselves, but very much tried to avoid applying too much pressure, which would cause them to clam up and be self-conscious. Actually, we found that quiet, behind-the-scenes encouragement played a huge role.

The best approach is to treat them like adults. Model it by praying yourself, talk about the benefits of prayer, including stories of answered prayer and openness of where you are needing to rely on God in prayer and don't be afraid to get creative or mix things up; we all need a bit of direction in how to pray sometimes. Be that constant source of affirmation that points them to how God sees them. Be cool about it when they do pray out, but don't say, 'I'm cool' - that's just embarrassing...!"

Martin Cheesman - Grace Church Nottingham



There are also some great kids' videos that re-tell biblical stories on the [Saddleback Kids YouTube channel](#)

Week One

Week One is all about praying for ourselves, asking for God's blessing on our life and character right from the start of 2022. We'll be using Paul's letters as fuel and each day will feature an online video devotional from a leader within our churches, accessible on the Grace Connection YouTube Channel.

Sunday 2nd

Growth in our Godliness
Titus 2:11-14

Monday 3rd

Growth in our Character
Colossians 3:12-17

Tuesday 4th

Growth in our Gifting
Romans 12:3-8

Wednesday 5th

Growth in our Calling
Ephesians 1:15-23

Thursday 6th

Growth in our Mission
Romans 10:14-17

Friday 7th

Growth in our Compassion
Romans 12:9-13

Saturday 8th

A Day of Rest

"The first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day is to have my soul happy in the Lord."

- George Müller



[graceconnection.co.uk/youtube](https://www.graceconnection.co.uk/youtube)

Why not use these pages to write out your prayers & prophecies?

"Don't focus on the words and form of your prayers, trying to get it right, just pray from the heart. Prayer is just like talking to a close friend; it flows from your relationship with them."

Quotes from within our Grace Connection Churches

Week Two

Week Two brings our church before God, asking that we would go deeper in Him. Using passages from John's Gospel, others in your church will also be praying these things and likewise across our family of churches, we'll be asking God's blessing together on the church families to which we belong.

Sunday 9th

Hearing His Voice
John 10:7-16

Monday 10th

Demonstrating His Love
John 13:12-15

Tuesday 11th

Displaying His Reconciliation
John 13:31-35

Wednesday 12th

Walking by His Spirit
John 14:15-18 & 25-26

Thursday 13th

Feeding off His Word
John 15:1-11

Friday 14th

Speaking His Gospel
John 20:19-23

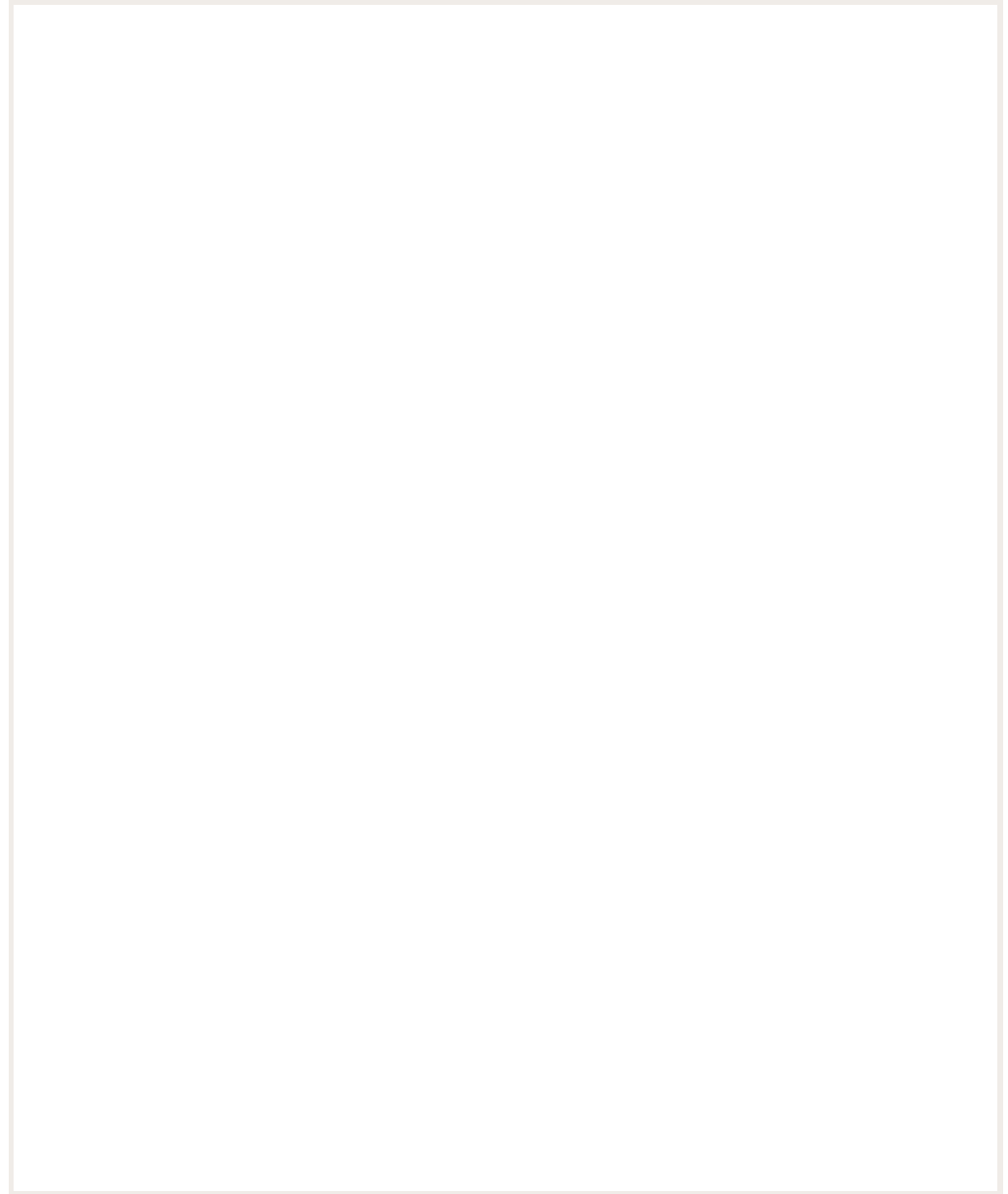
Saturday 15th

A Day of Rest

"I am convinced that prayer is not only our greatest privilege, but also our greatest source of power... Keep it simple, keep it real, keep it up."

- Pete Greig

"I pray because I'm helpless. I pray because the need flows out of me all the time, waking and sleeping. It doesn't change God. It changes me." - C.S. Lewis



"Never ignore the faint tugging on your heart, whenever it occurs. Get alone and pray."

Quotes from within our Grace Connection Churches

Week Three

Week Three brings the cities God has placed us in before Him: their people, neighbourhoods and structures. It may be that praying for 'the welfare of the city' (Jeremiah 29:7) is a new thing for you; if so, why not let the prayers of the Psalms guide you, or pray along with the daily video devotionals on the Grace Connection YouTube channel.

Sunday 16th

My Household
Psalm 118:1-7 & 14-16

Monday 17th

My Neighbourhood
Psalm 145:1-9

Tuesday 18th

My Day-to-Day Interactions
Psalm 23

Wednesday 19th

My City I: Other Churches
Psalm 133

Thursday 20th

My City II: Business Leaders &
Political Leaders
Psalm 72:1-7

Friday 21st

My City III: Those in Need
Psalm 41:1-3

Saturday 22nd

A Day of Rest

"Men may spurn our appeals, reject our message, oppose our arguments, despise our persons, but they are helpless against our prayers."

- J. Sidlow Baxter

"If you're stuck, start by declaring who the Lord is.
Even if you're not in a very thankful or prayerful place,
your heart will soon be encouraged and focused by the
power of His truth."

Quotes from within our Grace Connection Churches

"Like eggs, prayers often don't hatch immediately but
rather incubate in God's overarching purposes."
- Elisa Morgan

Week Four

In the final week, we bring the UK, Malawi & the Persecuted Church before God, asking for a move of the Holy Spirit, just as the Early Church saw in the book of Acts, from where we'll take our readings. Again, there'll be a video devotional available each day on the Grace Connection YouTube Channel.

Sunday 23rd

A Move of God in our Nation
Acts 2:14-21

Monday 24th

Future Grace Connection Church Plants
Acts 13:1-3

Tuesday 25th

Grace Connection Churches in the UK
Acts 4:23-31

Wednesday 26th

Grace Connection Churches in Malawi
Acts 2:42-47

Thursday 27th

The Persecuted Church around
the World
Acts 20:17-24

Friday 28th

The UK Government
Romans 13:1-7

Saturday 29th

A Day of Rest

"To get nations back on their feet, we must first get down on our knees."

- Billy Graham

"I find existing written prayers from Christians of old really helpful. Prayers from history have given me words when I have struggled to find them myself."

Quotes from within our Grace Connection Churches

"Prayer is the expression of a relation to God, a yearning for divine communion. It is the outward and upward flow of the inward life toward its original fountain. It is an assertion of the soul's paternity, a claiming of the sonship which links man to the eternal." - E.M. Bounds

What's On

Sunday 2nd: Month of Prayer begins

Each week will have a prayer focus from the Sunday to the Friday inclusive (see Daily Devotionals section), with a built-in rest day each Saturday. The Grace Connection-specific events will all happen in the last week, so please check your church's social media for details of local prayer events across the month.

Wednesday 26th: Grace Connection Online Prayer Meeting, 8pm

Join us as we gather our 4 UK churches online to worship, pray and prophesy together on Zoom.

Thursday 27th: Prayer for the Nations Online, 8pm

This event will feature specific prayer for our churches in Malawi and for the Persecuted Church.

Sunday 30th: 24 Hours of Prayer (12am Sunday through to 12am Monday)

To finish the month, we'll join together in 24 hours of prayer for all we've been looking at across January. Feel free to pray alone, with others in person, or join in the Zoom call which will be running constantly through the 24 hours.

Why not gather some friends or your Home Group/Life Group and sign up together? You can sign up for a slot at graceconnection.co.uk/24hours

All online Grace Connection events will use the following Zoom details:

Meeting ID: 879 4829 8273

Password: 011863

You can find a series of prayer articles written during the 2020 Lockdown at: gracechurchnottingham.org/docs/Prayer-Resource.pdf

Together Weekend

In June of this year we will finally be hosting Together Weekend, a gathering of all the Grace Connection churches based in the UK.

The weekend is running from Friday 10th to Sunday 12th June 2022. Details are yet to be confirmed, but we do know that it'll include extended times to worship and enjoy Jesus as well as loads of opportunity to enjoy being family together.

If you already booked tickets for the weekend, your ticket still stands and will be carried over to this year. If you haven't already purchased a ticket you can do so through our website graceconnection.co.uk

We'll be sharing more information about Together Weekend in the coming months, for now we'd love you to save the date and get booked in. After everything we've all been through we can't wait to get away and lift our eyes to Jesus and everything He's called us to.

For more information on each of the Grace Connection UK churches, please visit:

gracechurchnottingham.org

kingschurchbirmingham.org

revelationchurchmanchester.co.uk

theriverchurch.co.uk

graceconnection.co.uk

"The potency of prayer hath subdued the strength of fire;
it hath bridled the rage of lions,
hushed anarchy to rest,
extinguished wars,
appeased the elements,
expelled demons,
burst the chains of death,
expanded the gates of heaven,
assuaged diseases,
repelled frauds,
rescued cities from destruction,
stayed the sun in its course, and
arrested the progress of the thunderbolt."

- John Chrysostom





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