

OCTOBER

30 Days of Prayer

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HOW TO USE THIS PRAYER GUIDE

These devotions with prayer prompts are intended to assist our church family as we seek Christ personally in our daily time with Him and corporately during our monthly family prayer service.

It is vital that we pursue the Lord in prayer with a humble heart and depend on His guidance and leadership. Our previous prayer guides were designed to build on one another, to prepare our hearts and minds to deliberately and continuously follow the will of God for our church.

ALL PREVIOUS **PRAYER GUIDES**
ARE LOCATED ON OUR WEBSITE AT

WWW.RICHLANDCREEK.COM

Day 1 - What is the Great Commission?

Key Scripture: *Matthew 28:18-20* “And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

The “Great Commission” title is man’s way of summarizing Jesus’ final charge (also recorded in Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:46-49; John 20:21-23; and Acts 1:8). Three years of teaching and modeling is encapsulated as Jesus sends out His disciples as ambassadors under His unrivaled authority. Following Christ’s victorious life, death, burial, and resurrection, He has complete reign as King, here commanding others to continue His mission.

Calling the disciples to be obedient as He’s been obedient to the Father, Jesus unites His followers around a single work. The “make disciples” command is central. Surrounding words – go, baptizing, and teaching – inform how we are to continually make disciples. From hearing the gospel until mature in Christ-likeness, the totality of a Christian’s life is in view as we obey and teach others what it means to follow Christ – individually and corporately, locally and globally.

A beautiful echo is heard throughout Scripture as the Triune God calls people to be authentic worshipers who know Him, obey Him, and multiply throughout the world (Genesis 1:28; Isaiah 42:6; Revelation 5:9-10). Though being His representative is weighty, we’re reminded God’s faithful sustaining presence is always with us (Joshua 1:9; Matthew 1:23; John 14:16-17) as He leads us in carrying out the Great Commission.

Questions to Consider:

Do I view myself as an ambassador charged with Christ’s mission to reach the world through developing disciples? Is my vision of discipleship too small and my obedience selective?

Prayer Prompts:

- Grow me into Christ-likeness as I tell the good news of Jesus and teach others how to obey.
- Mold me as a vessel for Your glory and other’s good.
- May our church be intentional to share the gospel and develop mature replicating disciples of Christ.

Day 2 - To Whom Was the Great Commission Given?

Key Scripture: *Matthew 28:18-20 “And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

Jesus spoke the Great Commission. In it He gave the command to reach all peoples of the earth with the gospel. But to whom was Jesus speaking? Was He speaking only to the apostles? Or perhaps was it to everyone in the Church as a whole? Or to every Christian individually?

To be sure, Jesus was definitely speaking to the apostles. However, the fact that Jesus says, “I am with you always, to the end of the age” suggests that the Great Commission extends beyond the apostles and to believers in every age and culture. And then there is the fact that not every believer in Jesus is going to be a missionary in another culture across country boundaries. Some may support those who “Go” to all the nations through financial giving; some may support through prayers of protection and spiritual growth. Ultimately, the nations will be reached with the gospel by believers opening their mouths and telling the gospel to those who are in their circle of influence. In other words, everyone can be involved in the Great Commission.

We can be confident that Jesus intends all Christians to be involved because 1 Peter 2:9 declares, *“You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”* This verse clearly teaches we can all declare Christ to those who are around us.

Therefore, the Great Commission is to be loved, supported, and encouraged by all who love what Jesus loves—that is, to make His name known to the nations until He returns.

Questions to Consider:

How can we share the Great Commission with those in our community? In our town? How can we live our lives surrendered in such a way as to be available to the call of God to go to the nations to share the Great Commission? How can we support those who go when we cannot?

Prayer Prompts:

- Lord, prepare individual believers to boldly proclaim your good news to the lost.
- Lord, may we take the Great Commission seriously at RCCC.

Day 3 - The Great Commission and the Great Commandment

Scripture Reading: *Matthew 22:34-40*

In Matthew 22:34-40 the Pharisees ask Jesus a question: which is the greatest commandment in the law? Jesus answers, *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”* Simply stated, Jesus is teaching us to love God and love others. This passage is referred to as the Great Commandment. A few chapters later (Matthew 28:18-20) we read the well-known passage known as the Great Commission. What is the relationship between Jesus’ two teachings?

Let’s clarify the words **“commandment”** and **“commission.”** A commandment is an authoritative order. With a commission, one is sent to fulfill a task or mission. God has given orders for us to love Him and love others. One way we demonstrate love for God and others is by participating in God’s mandate of discipling others.

The mission of God is that all people would glorify and enjoy Him forever. One way we participate in this is by making disciples. Making disciples is an act of love towards others. The great news of our faith is that God moved heaven and earth to save people from sin and death; to re-establish lost humanity back into right relationship with Himself. A natural outpouring of our love to God, in response to His love for us, should be directed at others made in the image of God. The apostle John writes, *“Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another”* (1 John 4:11). Indeed, the Great Commandment drives the Great Commission.

Dr. Danny Akin writes, *“The Great Commission is the natural outgrowth of the Great Commandment. Participating in the Great Commission is an upward expression of the believer’s love for God.”*

Questions to Consider:

Does your love for God overflow into loving others by proclaiming the Gospel and discipling them? Who do you know that needs discipling?

Prayer Prompt:

- Father, grant me a heart that desires to love and obey You. Instill in me a zeal to reach the neighbors and the nations for Your glory.

Day 4 - What is the Church's Role in the Great Commission?

Key Scripture: *Acts 1:8 "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

The church is God's. He died for it. He founded it. He is the head of it (Ephesians 5:22-27). When we consider the church's purpose and vision, we must be careful to ground our thoughts in God's Word, not man's visions or inclinations.

The Great Commission's immediate audience was the twelve apostles. This command was such that the first disciples would go and make more disciples—until the end of the age. By the end of Acts we see these twelve apostles, along with Paul and many others, take the Great Commission to the known world. Simply stated, the Great Commission was not limited to the twelve apostles. Every believer is called to be a disciple maker. And the natural environment where that happens is the local church.

The local church exists to glorify God, to build and strengthen His people and then to send them out near, far, and in between. Mark Dever writes, "So think once more of the four commands of the Great Commission: go, make disciples, baptize and teach. Who does all this? Who sends out the going Christians to make disciples? The local church. And who names them as disciples by baptizing them, and then helps them grow by teaching them? The local church does. The local church is the normal means God has given us to fulfill the Great Commission."

Our church, Richland Creek, is a command post for missionary work—from neighborhoods to nations—evangelizing the lost, equipping the saved, and deploying the disciplined.

Questions to Consider:

Are you a disciple who makes more disciples? What are some ways you can partner with our church to fulfill the Great Commission?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray over Matthew 9:37b and ask God to instill in you a burden for the lost.
- Ask for the Holy Spirit to convict the hearts of all believers to obey the Great Commission.
- Pray for the next generation to respond to Jesus' call to go and make disciples in their cities, their states, and around the world.

Day 5 - Does the Great Commission Involve Social Justice/Action?

Key Scripture: *Luke 4:18 “He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.”*

The verse above has Jesus reading from a scroll the words of Isaiah (Isa 61:1). Jesus sees His audience as the poor, the captives, the blind, the oppressed. Therefore, Jesus is truly concerned with social injustice. Danny Akin, in *40 Questions about the Great Commission*, writes, “Note, however, [Jesus’] ministry with each of those has proclamation as its foundation. He’s proclaiming good news to the poor ... liberty to the captives ... recovery of sight to the blind.... He speaks and then He acts.”

There has been a growing interest among modern Christians in the establishment of justice in society, which is a good thing—as long as justice is defined biblically. Indeed, justice is a fundamental aspect of God’s character (see Deut 10:17–18; Jer. 9:24) and the Lord requires justice of His followers (see Micah 6:8). Moreover, in the Bible, believers are specifically instructed to apply justice in legal matters (see Deut. 16:18; Jer. 21:12) and in economic matters (see Lev 19:36; 25:15). Scripture describes those who ignore justice as being wicked (see Prov 19:28; Luke 11:42), and teaches that social injustice is the result of sin.

History teaches us that in the fallen world, these goals will be difficult to consistently achieve. However, we can meet social needs in our community and still make disciples. One does not have to negate the other. The Great Commission to go, to share the gospel, and to make disciples will help us in the present and promises a time in the future when “justice will flow like a river” (Amos 5:24).

Questions to Consider:

How can I be involved in the Great Commission with my words and my actions? When I do assist others, am I speaking the good news and then acting?

Prayer Prompts:

- Lord, help your Church to be aware of social injustice and to meet needs while sharing the good news of the gospel.

Day 6 - What is a Disciple?

Key Scripture: *Luke 6:40 “A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.”*

“Disciple” isn’t exactly a word we often use when talking with our friends. Yet, we see its concepts woven throughout Scripture. From Genesis 1-3 onward we see that God wants to be known and obeyed. Though the portrayal of a continual learner of God and His Word is all over the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Jeremiah 9:23-24), the New Testament fleshes out in detail what a disciple of Jesus is.

Culturally, in New Testament times, a student apprentice—a disciple—would apply everything the master teacher said and did along every step of the learning process. Biblically, if saved by grace through faith in Christ, we are His disciples, gifted a relationship with our Teacher (Matthew 11:29). Additionally, “**disciple**” is described as a follower (Mark 8:34), an imitator of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1), and a fully trained one (Luke 6:40). There is an intentional focus on and joyous delight in God and obeying Him (Psalm 119:10-16).

The heart posture of a follower of Christ is counter-cultural. A true disciple desires to be transformed into the image of Jesus (Romans 12:1-2), chooses to do the Father’s will (Matthew 6:10), and purposes to fully obey (Luke 6:46-49; John 14:15).

If we are truly saved, we show our love for God by living how Jesus lived. Disciples don’t wear an identifying name-tag or uniform; yet, we are known as Christ followers by our love and faithful obedience (1 John 2:3-6). As the Holy Spirit works in us, our wants change, and we desire to grow in Christ-likeness as a disciple who makes disciples for God’s glory and His kingdom’s advancement.

Questions to Consider:

Does my life exhibit a pattern of humble discipline, of saying Jesus is worthy of my obedience? What does this reveal? Am I really a disciple of Christ? How would others know?

Prayer Prompts:

- Confess areas I am not walking in submission as Jesus walked. By my obedience, may I be a worshiper of God until I see Him and proclaim, “*Holy, holy, holy ... Lord God Almighty ... to receive glory...*” (Revelation 4:8b & 11a)

Day 7 - Who is a Disciple?

Key Scripture: *John 15:16 “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.”*

Historically, in first century Jewish culture, teaching and training began at a very young age and consisted of several stages. Before entering the “masters” level of training, the potential disciples sought permission to study under a rabbi and were then given tests by the head rabbi. Those who excelled were extended the invitation to be discipled by the rabbi until the age of 30, when the disciple would begin their own ministry. Those who were not chosen, which was the vast majority, returned back to their family business.

This system was a works based choosing. We see, however, that this is not the way Jesus trained His disciples. They didn’t choose Him, but rather Jesus chose them; and His choosing was by grace, not works. No test to be taken, no criteria to be met, but simply for them to trust and obey.

Sometimes we tend to separate the words “**Christian**” and “**disciple**.” However, God’s Word tells us in Acts 11:25-26 that the disciples were called Christians: “*So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.*”

These two words should not be separate, but rather we should think of them as the same. Everything that it means to be a disciple, is also what it means to be a Christian. So when we ask the question who is a disciple, the answer is ALL believers are disciples--not just the pastors, not just someone who has been a believer for 20+ years, but all.

Questions to Consider:

Do you have a biblical understanding that you are called to be a disciple? Let us not forget Jesus chose us.

Prayer Prompts:

- Father, help me to understand that as a Christian, I am also a disciple who has been chosen by You.
- May I trust and obey as you have asked of me Father.

Day 8 - The Cost of Being a Disciple

Key Scripture: *Luke 14:33 “So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.”*

Jesus certainly does not pull a “bait and switch” when He calls us to follow Him. On the contrary, Jesus’ terms are explicitly clear—“all that he has.” Why does Jesus set the expectations so high? David Mathis explains, He (Jesus) not only counted the cost of discipleship (His own sinless life of obedience to the Father), He embraced the cost of disciple making.” Simply stated, those are the expectations that Jesus Himself satisfied. It seems only natural that He would require all those who follow Him to do the same. Beloved, we are following a person (God incarnate) with an agenda, a goal, a mission. God’s plan of redemption has directed us outward to others—people. Jesus’ life was “otherly” focused, generous, and completely sacrificial. It makes sense that when we follow Jesus, we are also called to be what Jesus is—“otherly” oriented, generous, sacrificial, and entirely obedient to the Father. That will cost us control over our hopes, agendas, and future for our life.

Friends, we are not Jesus’ “co-pilot.” We are Jesus’ tailgaters—closely following behind in the path, direction, and purposes of Christ. This call of discipleship requires all that we have and all that we are. Oh, how difficult we find this calling to be at times. We would do well to admit, “Our natural bent is to follow our visions, dreams, and heart—and then check behind to make sure Jesus is blessing what we have chosen” (Bill Hull).

For some of us, the cost of discipleship may be startling, or even new. But for others, we already know all about the mandate of discipleship and disciple making. We just simply refuse to do so because we have not embraced the cost.

Questions to Consider:

Are you willing to pay the cost of following Christ? What are your biggest obstacles to following Jesus?

Prayer Prompt:

- Father, I confess I am often motivated to live my life in pursuit of my own desires for life. Lead me in the way I should go that I might renounce all that I have for the One who laid down His life for me.

DAY 9 - The Goal of Discipleship

Key Scripture: *John 17:3-4 “And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.”*

Motivated by love and in submission to the Father, Jesus finished the work the Father sent Him to do. He made God known, demonstrated what it looks like to faithfully walk in His ways, and secured forgiveness, redemption, and eternal life for all who believe in Him. In accomplishing all of this and more, what was the goal of Christ? According to John 17, His ultimate purpose in all that He did was to glorify God.

As we consider the goal of discipleship, should we not obediently follow the example Jesus set for us and make disciples for the very same purpose?

We glorify God when, motivated by our love for Him, we obediently follow His command to “make disciples” (Matthew 28:19). As Mark Dever put it, “God’s love for us starts a chain reaction. He loves us, then we love Him, then we love others.”

We glorify God when we acknowledge that it is His Spirit working in and through us for our good and for the good of others. Any fruit that results from discipling is a product of His power and grace. Romans 11:36 states, “*For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen*”

Growing in Christ-likeness as we learn to follow Jesus is how we become mature disciples, but we must not lose sight of the ultimate goal as we accomplish the work He sends us to do—to know Christ and glorify Him.

Questions to Consider:

Am I growing in Christ-likeness and helping others to do the same?
Do I seek God’s glory or my own? How might Christ’s example be an encouragement?

Prayer Prompts:

- Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name! Praise Him for all that Jesus accomplished on our behalf, and for the way He is working in and through you for His glory.
- Pray that your love for Christ will abound more and more. Pray that your love for Christ will motivate you to honor Him with obedience to His command to “make disciples.”

Day 10 - Religion or Relationship?

Key Scripture: James 1:22-24 *“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.”*

I was a great church member for many, many years. I was on every committee, sang in the choir, gave announcements during Sunday School, sat through every sermon, and once in a while I even prayed. I thought this was what it meant to be a disciple—a follower of Christ. I never realized there was so much more to being a follower of Christ until I came to Richland Creek. Some wonderful **women** leading a class called Women Equipping Women (WEW) began to disciple me and take me through God's Word, showing me what it means to be a disciple. This same class is offered to men in our church called Men Equipping Men (MEM).

MEM and WEW are introductory class that teach believers who a disciple is, what obedience to God looks like, and how to practice that obedience. It was at this point I realized I had been spiritually asleep for many years. What I came to learn was that I was viewing attendance and busyness as the means to cultivating a growing relationship with God. Truth be told, I had no relationship; I only had religious practices. I am so grateful that I was shown how important discipleship is and I can now take what I have learned and share it with others.

Questions to Consider:

Is your walk with Christ based on your religion or your relationship? Are you a disciple—one who is a Christ-follower, a learner, one who is growing in your relationship and your walk with God? Are you a hearer of the Word only or are you willing to be a do-er by discipling others?

Prayer Prompts:

- Lord, thank You for Your Word, for in it we find all we need for living a godly life.
- Impress upon us the need for being a disciple who makes disciples.
- Lead us to those who we can disciple according to what Your Word tells us in Matt 28:18-20.

DAY 11 - Disciple or Christian?

Key Scripture: *Acts 11:26 “And when [Barnabas] had found [Saul], he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.”*

Beginning in the 1st century AD, the term “Christian” described this distinct people group, comprising both Jews and Gentiles, who believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ—the promised Messiah. The moment they put their trust in Jesus, they fully committed their lives to following Him. The word “Christian” literally means follower of Christ.

Though “Christian” is only used 3 times in the New Testament, the Bible does not differentiate between a “Christian” and a disciple of Christ. Christians are disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mark Dever writes, “Following Jesus first means that you have entered into a personal, saving relationship with him. You have been, ‘united with Christ’ (Philippians 2:1)... To be a Christian means to be a disciple. There are no Christians who are not disciples. And to be a disciple of Jesus means to follow Jesus. There are no disciples of Jesus who are not following Jesus... Christians are people who have real faith in Christ and show it by resting their hopes, fears, and lives entirely upon him.”

This biblical definition is helpful because this is not the way most people generally understand and use these terms today. There is a tendency to apply “Christian” in a very broad sense and “disciple” in a very narrow sense. Yet, everyone who claims to believe in God (or just claims not to be an Atheist) is not a “Christian.” Likewise, a “disciple” is not a type of Christian—one that is a step ahead, a level above, or just one who follows harder after Jesus. Christians don’t become disciples by following Jesus. Christians are disciples who obediently follow Jesus.

Remember, Christian = disciple.

Questions to Consider:

In what sense do I think of and use the terms “Christian” and “disciple”?
Am I a Christian, according to the biblical definition?

Prayer Prompts:

- Praise God, for there is, “neither Jew nor Gentile ... for [we] are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).
- Pray that the Lord will help you rightly understand what it means to be a Christian and that you would be eager to follow Jesus.

Day 12 - Spiritual Disciplines

Key Scripture: *1 Timothy 4:7b “discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness;”*

Don Whitney writes, “We aren’t merely to wait for holiness; we’re to pursue it.”

A good place to start with a discussion of spiritual disciplines is a definition. We need to know exactly what we mean when we say “spiritual disciplines.” Spiritual disciplines are those practices found in Scripture that promote spiritual growth. These are habits of devotion that when practiced foster intimacy with God. These disciplines are not a means to themselves. They are a means or a tool by which we look more like Jesus everyday as we engage in these habits. We don’t drift towards holiness; so if we want to be like Jesus we have to be intentional about doing certain things and developing certain habits that will help us be more like Christ.

At the Creek we have identified certain core competencies (spiritual disciplines) that define who we are as a church body and set the agenda for our ministry focus. These competencies are under two headings: love God and love others. We will love God in His Word, in prayer, in our witness, and in our worship. We will love others through church community, through our ministry, through our generosity, and while on mission. We believe every member is equipped by the Holy Spirit to grow in these core competencies.

Bill Hull wisely states, “Spiritual disciplines develop habits of the heart.” They are tools—tools that foster intimacy with our God. If you’re new to spiritual disciplines and don’t know where to start, we suggest starting with two disciplines crucial for your development as a child of God—Bible study and prayer. For in these two disciplines we hear from God in the Word and then respond back to God in prayer.

If you would like to learn more about spiritual disciplines go to
richlandcreek.com/connect/discipleship

Questions to Consider:

Are you spending time in God’s Word regularly? How is your prayer life? What steps are you taking to participate in your spiritual growth?

Prayer Prompt:

- Father, incline my heart towards obedience to Your commands. Make me walk in the path of Your commandments and turn my eyes from looking at worthless things.

Day 13 - How Can I Be Discipled?

Key Scripture: *Philippians 3:17* “Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.”

Paul urges fellow Christians to imitate, or follow, his example. Paul didn't mean he was perfect, but rather that his life was an example of one who obeyed the commands of Christ. Paul lived in such a way that his life was a pattern of obedience, for other Christians to emulate. Paul declared, “*Imitate me just as I also imitate Christ*” (1 Cor 11:1). Christ is the one to be followed and to be obeyed (John 14:15, 21). What did Christ do? He obeyed the will of the Father (John 5:19; 6:38; 8:28). A newly saved person is only as obedient or mature as what they know at the time, but they are obedient. The more they learn, the more they desire to obey. They are faithful with what they know.

A disciple is an obedient follower of Christ; he is a learner and imitator. To be discipled is to learn what Jesus desires of us and then to obey what He wants us to do. Obedience is vital to following Jesus.

Teaching is necessary in discipleship but doesn't stop there. The disciple must put into practice the teaching. “*What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things,*” (Phil 4:9). To practice is to undertake, to do, to accomplish or perform. To learn without actual doing is like sitting in a classroom your entire life without ever going into the world to apply what you have learned. To learn and not obey is to sin (James 1:22).

In order to be discipled, you must follow, or imitate, the example of another, who is following/obeying Christ. Discipleship is not a class, a degree, a 12-week Bible study, a home group or a quick fix. While teaching is involved in discipleship, it is not the sum of discipleship. At some point the disciplee (the one who is being discipled) must put into practice what is learned.

For Discipleship at Richland Creek, go online and complete the Richland Creek Community Church Discipleship Form at:

richlandcreek.com/connect/discipleship

Questions to Consider:

Am I an example of someone who follows/obeys/imitates Christ? Do I lead others to do the same?

Prayer Prompt:

- Father God, please give me the desire and willingness to be obedient to be a disciple who makes disciples.

Day 14 - Who to Choose to Disciple?

Key Scripture: *Proverbs 3:3 “Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart.” Jeremiah 29:13 “You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.”*

Just as a beautiful necklace adorns the neck of the one who wears it, in this Proverbs verse, Solomon counsels on steadfast love and faithfulness adorning one's heart. Notice the words bind and write—strong language used to emphasize that these things should become part of a believer's nature. As disciples who make disciples, we want to be steadfast in God's commands to us.

As we are faithful and obedient to look for someone to disciple, the first thing we must do is pray. Pray for God to place someone in your life for you to disciple and that they will desire to be obedient to the Word. Then we must think as we seek. Is there a new believer in your life? Do you already have an established relationship with someone in your life that can move into a discipleship relationship?

As we seek to find someone to disciple, we want to consider some very important things. First, the person has to desire to be disciplined. It does not work if the one doing the discipling is the only one committed. Pray for and seek a believer who is eager to listen and learn and desires to be obedient in what God has commanded. This is who you are looking for. We want to look for someone who is Faithful (dedicated, steadfast), Available (committed, dependable) and Teachable (willing and seeking to learn)—a silly but helpful acrostic of “FAT”—but please don't call them fat!

At Richland Creek, there are many people desiring to be disciplined. We must be faithful in praying and seeking to be a church full of disciple makers who glorify God.

Questions to Consider:

Have you committed to praying for someone you can disciple? Are you intentionally seeking out someone who is faithful, available, and teachable to disciple?

Prayer Prompts:

- Lord, help me to be intentional and faithful in praying for and seeking someone to disciple as you have commanded.
- I pray that the body of Richland Creek will seek to glorify you by being disciples who make disciples.

Day 15 How to Disciple?

Key Scripture: *Colossians 1:28-29* “Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all the energy (of Christ) that powerfully works within me.”

The process of discipleship is like the physical growth of a person. In the toddler years, there is much teaching, modeling, and hand holding. As proficiency develops, more responsibility and expectations come with less hand holding. We expect a child would mature and no longer need hand holding and would grow to lead another.

Paul leveraged his life to make Christ known **AND** to present other followers as spiritually mature. Paul wasn't satisfied that they knew Christ. He “toiled, struggling with all the energy” of Christ, in order that they stand mature. Paul persevered in the process of discipleship until they matured as full followers of Christ. This is our calling as well.

Evangelizing is part of discipleship, as is teaching, modeling, correcting, encouraging, and accountability. The discipleship process takes time and effort.

Accountable relationships with others who are growing in Christ-likeness is a necessary piece of discipleship. People are the object of God's redemptive work, and God uses His people as the means of training others to mature in Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1; Colossians 4:12-13). These relationships may be one-to-one, a small group, or a group of 20. Christian maturity is about Christ and helping others to grow in Christ-likeness.

In order to teach another to follow Christ, you must know and obey Christ. To know what Christ wants His followers to be, know, and do, you must be in the Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3-4). The eight discipleship goals are train tracks, helping us to be, know and do all Christ commanded. The “eight things” aren't the goal, but are a means to help us obey Christ by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Discipleship is work. Pastor Jim Gillespie has stated, “Followers of Christ will imitate Him, learn of Him, talk to Him, listen to Him, obey Him, glorify Him.”

Questions to Consider:

Do I obey everything Christ commanded? Do I toil that others may stand mature in Christ?

Prayer Prompts:

- Father, help me to be an obedient follower of Christ.
- Help me to toil that others may also obey Christ.

Day 16 What's Wrong with Discipleship Today?

Key Scripture: *Genesis 3:1* “Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?”

It started in the garden as the serpent questioned the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?” It continues today as Satan attacks the church through the Word. The devil tries to deceive us with a change, a distortion of a definition or meaning. An attack on the Word of God was the beginning of the fall of mankind.

We see this distortion of terms and expectations in the spiritual disciplines.

- **Bible study** has been changed to Bible reading. Psalm 119 declares the following concerning the Word of God: Having my eyes fixed (v. 6); with whole heart I seek you (v. 10); stored up your word in my heart (v. 11); meditate on your precepts (v. 15); not forget (v. 16); consumed with longing for your rules (v. 20); and more! This represents intentional, focused study of the Word—not a cursory reading.
- **Prayer** has been described as talking to your best friend. Real prayer is talking to God, remembering He is Sovereign. God knows your inner thoughts. Your best friend cannot know this. God sent His Son Jesus to die for you (John 15:13). The love of your best friend is nothing compared to the love of God for you.
- **Evangelism** has been distorted from a witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to living a good life or helping others in need. “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature’” (Mark 16:15). Paying rent for a neighbor in need is not evangelism.

If we aren’t careful, we will fall into this same trap of distortion. We, too, will be deceived.

As a disciple, we must be careful that our expectations and terms of discipleship are biblical. We look to Jesus as our model. Jesus obeyed the will of the Father, even unto death on a cross (Philippians 2:8).

Questions to Consider:

Is my definition of discipleship biblical?

Prayer Prompt:

- Father, help me be a disciple who makes disciples of Christ.

Day 17 - Where Do I Begin Discipling?

Key Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:2 *“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”*

Where do I begin? That is a question many people ask. For starters, before you disciple someone, you must first be a disciple of Jesus. Next, begin to look at your **circle of influence**. This is a phrase that simply means to consider people who are closest to you (i.e., your children), people with whom you spend the most time, people who even live next door, people in your church. Galatians 6:10 says, *“So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”* While you may not be able to disciple everyone, you can start with your circle of influence. By remembering this group of people in your life, you are hopefully starting a cycle of discipling someone who will disciple another, who will disciple another.

There are some matters in discipling someone that you must consider. It is important to disciple someone of the same gender. Also consider someone who has a schedule similar as yours, someone who lives near you or works near you. Of course, there is also Zoom and other such apps that will help you connect with people far away for the same purpose. And, then, think about the possibility that God also has people He places in your path that you might not have considered.

Finally, remember, making disciples is about following Jesus and taking others with you.

Questions to Consider:

Who is in my circle of influence? Am I prepared to disciple others by following closely after Jesus myself?

Prayer Prompts:

- Lord, make me aware of those who are all around me who are ready to learn more about You.
- Lord, make me willing to be bold in beginning a discipling relationship with someone.

Day 18 - Is Accountability Necessary?

Key Scripture: *Colossians 3:16 “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”*

Most of us do not like to be admonished or held accountable. We like to live in a state of anonymity where we can go home and watch or read what we want without others seeing. We go around with ear buds in our ears so we do not have to talk to the person standing in line with us. We go to church and listen to a message; we leave and don't open our Bible until the next Sunday morning. And no one knows because we do not have someone in our lives to hold us accountable in our walk with Jesus.

The God of the Bible is a God who desires a relationship with us. He never intended for us to “do” life alone. We need brothers and sisters in Christ to hold us accountable because, left on our own, we are vulnerable to falling into sin. Galatians 6:1-2 says, “*Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.... Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*”

What is accountability? It is the practice whereby redeemed people desire and agree to a relationship with one another whereby both participants are growing and strengthening their relationship with Christ. Accountability partners desire Christ, prioritize Christ, and pursue Christ. Consequently, they genuinely submit, honestly and transparently, to discussion and confession about their struggles with sin, purity, and fidelity to the Lord.

Proverbs 27:17 tells us that “*iron sharpens iron.*” Hebrews 10:24-25 says to “*stir up one another to love and good works ... encouraging one another.*”

Questions to Consider:

Do you want someone in your life to hold you accountable to your walk with Jesus? If not, why?

Prayer Prompt:

- Thank you, Lord, for wanting a relationship with me in that You have provided us with Your Word for instruction and encouragement and with brothers and sisters in Christ who can hold me accountable to my walk with You.

Day 19 - Jesus' Example of Making Disciples

Key Scripture: *Mark 3:13-14 "And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those whom He desired, and they came to Him. And He appointed twelve (whom He also named apostles) so that they might be with Him and He might send them out to preach."*

Notice Jesus calls **TO** Himself with the intent of "sending out." The word commission actually means *the act of committing or entrusting a person, group, etc., with supervisory power or authority*. That's what Jesus is doing—giving the disciples authority to carry on the mission of God. What is the mission of God? That all people worship and glorify God forever. The MEANS TO THAT mission is to make disciples.

My friends, if you have truly accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, Jesus has called you to Himself. He has chosen you to learn and to grow to look more like him, in order that you can go and make disciples who then go make disciples to glorify the Father. Jesus chose ordinary men, not seminary professors or preachers, men who would be obedient to His calling and willing to learn from Jesus. Jesus taught them how to pray, how to understand the Scriptures, and then He sent them out to teach others.

One great example of this is Peter. Jesus chose Peter as one of the twelve disciples, knowing that Peter would deny Him three times the night before He was crucified. Yet, Jesus chose Peter anyway knowing that he would remember all that he was taught and would continue Jesus' ministry and teaching to the ends of the earth. How about you? Will you obey Jesus by following the commands of Scripture? To love Him is to obey Him. Luke 6:46, *If you love me, you will obey my commandments.*

Questions to Consider:

What is stopping you from becoming a disciple who makes disciples? (John 14:15-17).

Prayer Prompts:

- Father, thank You for choosing me as a disciple. Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths.
- Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation.

Day 20 - Why I am Choosing to Make Disciples

Key Scripture: 2 Timothy 2:2 *“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.”*

I spent many years of my life not knowing how to be a faithful, obedient follower of Christ—in other words, a disciple. Before coming to Richland Creek, I had never really heard the word disciple, unless it was in the context of the disciples in the Bible. Nor had I realized I was called to be just like them—a learner, an imitator of Jesus. My life was devoted to a church, not to the Lord. It was very clear to me how different my life would have been had I been discipled early in my spiritual walk. Everything from my marriage, to finances, to how I raised my children would have been different if I had been a faithful imitator of Christ.

By God's grace, a group of leaders in the Women Equipping Women Discipleship group began discipling me, and I began to grow in my relationship with God. For the first time, I was getting to know God personally. Over time, I had a desire to imitate Christ, to follow Him, to glorify Him, and to grow in Christ-likeness.

Once I began growing in my relationship with Christ, I realized I wanted to share what I was learning with others. I wanted to be a disciple who makes disciples. My heart's desire is to see others discipled so they too can *“taste and see that the Lord is good”* (Psalm 34:8), and then share what they have learned with others. I still love being discipled. My time of learning is such a sweet time with the Lord and with those He has placed in my life to teach and guide me in my walk with Him. Have you ever considered being taught the fundamental disciplines of spiritual growth and disciple-making? We would love to show you how. Simply call the church office or request to connect with a discipleship leader at

richlandcreek.com/connect/discipleship

Questions to Consider:

Are you a faithful imitator of the Master Teacher? If not, why? Are you fulfilling Christ's command in Matthew 28:18-20 to make disciples?

Prayer Prompt:

- Pray using Psalm 119:26-40 as your guide.

Day 21 - Family Discipleship

Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 6:1-9

Key Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:6-7 “*And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.*”

Life can be overwhelming at times, and then add in these unusual days of COVID-19. So how can we as parents and grandparents, aunts and uncles, begin to show and tell the next generation about a perfect Savior, Jesus Christ? We already have to compete with cell phones, social media, time constraints, youth sports, etc. So how do we begin to disciple our own children? Deuteronomy 6:7 gives us the answer—All the time! In other words, talk to your children about God as you go through life together.

So, where do I start? **START SIMPLE.**

- Begin by reading the Bible together. Depending on their ages, even small children will listen to a few verses at a time.
- Sing a hymn of the faith together. Sing the same song for a whole month. Talk about the lyrics. Good hymns are full of good doctrine.
- Teach your children to pray for the lost, to pray for their needs, and even to pray Scripture.

They are never too young for small doses of knowledge about the God who created them and loves them. Middle school and high school age children, of course, can and should participate more in a family worship time. Perhaps your family might study through a single book of the Bible. Children can take turns reading passages and then allow Mom and Dad to explain verses, make application and model praying to God.

Questions to Consider:

What are some things I can do to begin family discipleship in my home with my children? With my grandchildren?

Prayer Prompts:

- Lord, teach me to rely on You to help me begin discipling my family.
- Remind me that “*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*” (Phil 3:14).

Day 22 - Men's and Women's Discipleship

Key Scripture: *Matthew 28:18-20 "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'"*

How did you learn to tie your shoes? I bet you learned to tie your shoes by having someone teach you. They did this with both instruction and demonstration. It went something like this: First, watch me tie your shoes. Second, let's tie your shoes together. Third, I'll watch you tie your shoes. Don't worry if you make a mistake, I'm here to help. Eventually, you could tie your own shoes. Think of it this way: a "shoe-tying disciple" made you a "shoe-tying disciple."

Likewise, Jesus commanded all Christians to fulfill His Great Commission (verse 18). And not only through evangelism (verse 19), but also through disciple-making (verse 20.) The tools needed for all Christians to learn to observe all that He has commanded are found through Bible-centered instruction and demonstration. Disciples of Jesus teach and demonstrate to other disciples until one day, they too are disciples who make disciples of their own. Jesus has commanded all Christians to do this until His return. It is the purpose of the church.

Here at Richland Creek we have two ministries, Men Equipping Men (MEM) and Women Equipping Women (WEW), that function to carry out His Great Commission. Through instruction and personal demonstration, these disciples walk with someone, no matter where they are in their spiritual maturity to become a more mature Christian. They know and obey the Word, pray without ceasing, worship in spirit and in truth, walk in the fullness of their gifting as they serve the church, cheerfully give, witness to a lost and dying world, have biblical community and accountability with others and are on mission for the kingdom of God.

Questions to Consider:

Have you ever been discipled? Have you ever made a disciple? How are you personally fulfilling the Great Commission of Jesus Christ?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that Richland Creek Community Church will be a Matthew 28:18-20 church.
- Pray for the MEM and WEW Ministries.

Day 23 - Small Group Discipleship

Key Scripture: *1 Corinthians 11:1 “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”*

Before the foundations of the world, the Trinity exemplified perfect community. And, throughout Scripture, including the creation of man and woman, the giving of spiritual gifts in the church, and partnership in gospel ministry (Genesis 2:18-22; 1 Corinthians 12; Philippians 1:5), the necessity of community is seen.

Jesus lived out His ministry with people. From His first interactions, He was preparing His disciples through every circumstance to be sent out, to replicate all He taught. Crowds followed Jesus, but notice He chose twelve disciples and further focused on developing a small group of three—Peter, James, and John.

Of course, we can make disciples one-on-one, yet research is confirming fruitfulness from teaching and modeling within small groups of 3-6 members. When meeting one-on-one, the disciplee’s tendency is to be a self-focused consumer of the discipler. In contrast, intentional small groups are others-focused, becoming a training ground to develop more learners to be sent out as group leaders. When purposeful, groups also model community, demonstrate humility and the necessity of one another, encourage active participation, appreciate diversity of gifting, display unity, and invite mutual sharpening (Proverbs 27:17).

As we aim to bring God glory while growing in Christ-likeness, we do what Jesus did—make disciples who replicate (Matthew 28:19), have a multi-generational, kingdom vision (the more mature teaching and modeling for the less mature, Titus 2:1-8) until the followers become the examples to be followed (1 Thessalonians 1:6-7; 2 Timothy 2:2). We cannot separate our identity as Jesus’ disciples from growing in Christ-likeness as we make disciples.

Questions to Consider:

Am I part of a small group of disciples who intentionally cultivate obedience to all of Scripture (Hebrews 10:24)? If not, what’s stopping me from contacting the church office about joining small group discipleship? Am I afraid to let others deeply know me and correct me (Proverbs 27:6, Luke 17:3-4)?

Prayer Prompts:

- Grow my desire to be continually shaped by the Word and more mature Christians.
- Help me be humble and others-focused. Exponentially spread small groups of disciples making disciples throughout this church and community for Your glory.

Day 24 - Unity in Christ

Key Scripture: *Ephesians 4:4-6 “There is one body and one spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.”*

As you reflect on this passage, it is important to recognize that all born again believers are unified in their salvation. One individual's salvation is not more miraculous than another's. The circumstances surrounding their salvation can certainly be different, but the actual salvation is through the work of Jesus Christ. Each person must place their faith and trust in Jesus Christ for salvation, and this unites all believers from old to young, from boy to girl, from poor to rich.

There is only one salvation, and there is only one Savior. It is important that we remember this when we think about unity and the fact that we are all not yet perfected. The reality is that Jesus unites us with believers all around the world as being one family in Christ. It is a wonderful thing to pause for a moment and reflect on the fact that there are believers all around the world who know Jesus just like you. There is a unified purpose and love for the Lord that exists around the world and millions of believers are united in their pursuit of Jesus. Oh, what a glorious day it will be when we are together in the presence of the Lord for eternity.

As you go throughout your day today, consciously think about the way you treat people. What if every person you encounter today is another believer? Would you be slow to be negative? Would you be so eager to speak harshly about them in traffic? Would you serve them differently or tip them differently?

Questions to Consider:

Do you view all believers as God's children? Do you attempt to treat all believers well? Are you determined to help others become unified with the Lord?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that the Lord would give you a heart of joy for all believers.
- Pray that the Lord would help you be unified with all believers.
- Pray and thank the Lord for your salvation and the fact that He allowed you to be unified with Himself.

Day 25 - Unity Among Brothers and Sisters

Key Scripture: *Ephesians 4:2-3 “With all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”*

As you consider the scripture above, honestly examine yourself to see if you are humble, patient, tolerant in love, and being diligent to preserve unity in peace. Many days we forget to diligently preserve unity. Our church must be concerned with unity among one another. We must be proactive to preserve unity with each and every believer, which means that if we are not unified, we need to fix it. Unity is more than just avoiding conflict; it is actively pursuing a common bond with one another. It is hard to be unified and develop a common bond with people you don't know. Psalm 133:1 says, *“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!”*

Unity is not optional among believers. It will not be achieved if we treat each other like we're not equally valuable in God's church. We should see believers as equal to us in their salvation and recognize that we will both be perfected in eternity. Remember, it is with humility and gentleness that Paul instructs the church to act.

At Richland Creek, we simply cannot treat each other with contempt and hatred. We cannot slander and talk about each other negatively and expect to achieve unity. We cannot allow division to creep into our midst. We must fight for unity, and it starts with us as individuals. It starts with examining how we interact with one another and the way in which we think about each other.

Questions to Consider:

Have you contributed to unity or disunity with your words and actions? Do you view others and yourself at Richland Creek as equally important? Do you have disunity with anyone at Richland Creek? If so, we encourage you to be diligent in prayer for forgiveness and to seek counsel from a pastor if needed.

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that the Lord would help you function in unity with others at Richland Creek.
- Pray that the Lord would help you look for ways to be unified with others at Richland Creek.

Day 26 - Unity in Ministry and Pastors

Key Scripture: *Ephesians 4:11-13 “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors, and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.”*

Christ gifts and equips people differently for the purpose of building the church up to become mature believers. In this passage, one position is not distinguished as being better than another; rather, each position is listed as an aid to a believer's spiritual development. An evangelist may not be able to help everyone the same way the pastor might, and the teacher may not be able to help everyone the same way that an evangelist might.

Christ has gifted men differently so they might work together to meet the different needs of God's children. Their goal should be to work together to help each believer become a mature and faithful follower of Jesus. They teach, preach, apostle, evangelize, and pastor in order to equip the saints for the work of service to build up the body until they all attain the unity of the faith and become the mature believers that Christ desires them to be. One minister ought not to see his own role as more important than another's role. They must recognize that God desires for them to work together to build up the church. Ministers should never see themselves as the only voice necessary for the maturity of the believer.

Questions to Consider:

Have you ever known a pastor or minister to act as if they are the only one equipped to help you grow? Have you realized that God has given you Pastors and Ministers to help you grow? Are you listening to your Pastors and Ministers as they try and help you grow?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that God would help you listen well to those whom He has placed in your life to help you become a mature follower of Jesus.
- Pray for unity among your pastors and ministers as they try to help the church mature in their faith.

Day 27 - New Pastor: For the Pastor Search Committee to be Unified in their Identification of Him

Key Scripture: 1 Samuel 16:7 “But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’”

The anointing of David in 1 Samuel 16 is an incredible passage. God told Samuel that He provided Himself a king for Israel among Jesse’s sons. Samuel was to anoint the one God named to Him. Eliab was first, and Samuel was certain that he was God’s choice. God’s response is recorded in verse 7 above, and seven sons of Jesse passed before Samuel without being chosen. David, the youngest son, was tending sheep when Samuel told Jesse to send for him. Samuel then anointed David as God’s chosen future king. This would have a resounding impact on the rest of Scripture and history, helping prepare the way for Christ.

As our Pastor Search Committee serves diligently to identify our Vision and Preaching Pastor, they must look beyond the tangible and temporal to discern the heart for the eternal. Certainly things like ministry experience, education, and communication skills are important, but his heart for the Lord and people is of utmost importance.

The choice of our new Pastor will have profound impact on our church for many years to come. Just as God saw David’s heart, He sees the heart of our next Pastor. He has already identified and chosen him. We are very grateful for the Pastor Search Committee as they strive to see as God sees, joining together in unity to identify who God has chosen.

Questions to Consider:

Why is it important to see people the way God does? How can you grow in wisdom and discernment?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray for our Pastor Search Committee to have wisdom, discernment, and patience as they strive to see as God sees.
- Pray for the Pastor Search Committee to identify in unity the man God has chosen. Pray for our church family to be unified through this process.
- Pray 1 Corinthians 2:12 *“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.”*

Day 28 - New Pastor: For His Vision for Our Church

Key Scripture: *Matthew 16:15-18 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”*

In the above passage, Jesus asks what is likely the most crucial question in all of Scripture: “Who do you say that I am?” This question cuts through experience, education, and opinion to get at the heart of what we believe about Jesus. Peter’s honest answer that Jesus is the Christ and God’s Son was revealed by God through faith. It is this confession of Jesus that provides the vision and mission for the church.

Peter’s proclamation is the rock, or foundation, that the church is built upon. This foundation is the sinless life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God’s Son and our Savior. It shapes and focuses the vision and mission of the church with laser-like precision to preach the Gospel and make disciples across the globe. We glorify Him as a church through obedience to His commands, by loving Him, and by loving others.

The new title of Vision and Preaching Pastor emphasizes the importance placed on vision for our church moving forward. God’s unchangeable mission for our church is to bring glory to Him by proclaiming and teaching Christ. Our new Pastor will have a clear vision of the why, who, what, and how, helping to lead us as we fulfill God’s mission.

Questions to Consider:

How would you answer Jesus’ question: “But who do you say that I am?” Why is vision important for us as a church? Do you understand God’s vision and mission?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray for our church to continue to follow God’s vision and mission.
- Pray for our new Pastor to have a clear vision for the why, who, what, and how of following God’s vision and mission.
- Pray for our church family to be of one heart, mind, and accord in glorifying God.

Day 29 - New Pastor: For He and His Family to Have Certainty About His Calling

Key Scripture: 2 Timothy 4:2 “Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.”

We want our next Pastor to be a “man of the Word.” This phrase means that he is Bible-centered. That everything he does and says is from the Word and no other place. When Paul was instructing Timothy on the attributes of a Pastor, he spoke of the characteristics of Christ. When Paul instructed Timothy on what a Pastor does, he said that he was to “preach the Word.”

It is the Word that the church needs -- the inerrant, infallible, all sufficient Word of God that the church of Jesus Christ desires above all else -- our only source of ultimate truth, that teaches us everything we need to know for salvation and living a life that is pleasing to God.

Our next Pastor must be prepared to preach the Word “in season and out of season,” when it is convenient and when it is not, when he will be loved for it and when he will be persecuted for it. For the Christian, this commitment to the Word by our Pastor will allow the Word to “correct” us when our thinking is wrong; the Word will “rebuke” us when we are walking in disobedience and the Word will encourage us as we prepare for the return of our Lord.

Pray our new Pastor will do this in a Christlike way with great patience and careful instruction.

Questions to Consider:

Is your life centered in the Word of God? Are you open for the Word to correct, rebuke and encourage you?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that the Pastor Search Committee is Holy Spirit led to a man who will preach the Word in season and out of season.
- Pray that Richland Creek Community Church will be a church that desires to be corrected, rebuked and encouraged by the preaching of the Word.

Day 30 - New Pastor: His Transition from His Current Role to Our Church

Key Scripture: *Acts 13:1-3 “Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.”*

Ministry transition can be the very definition of bittersweet. It is hard to leave what you’ve known and those you love, but there is great excitement for what God has in store and the new relationships that will be formed. This transition can be handled graciously and go quite smoothly, or can be done carelessly and cause unnecessary damage.

In the above passage from Acts 13, we see a healthy and glorifying ministry transition. God called Barnabas and Saul out of the church at Antioch for a new and specific purpose. The church responded by praying and fasting, followed by an anointing and acknowledgment of God’s call. They sent them away gladly, and ministry at the church continued while Barnabas and Saul followed their calling. There was no contention, even though some may have preferred that they stay. We hope and pray for this type of transition for our Vision and Preaching Pastor.

Questions to Consider:

Why is this transition so important? How can you help prepare for our new Vision and Preaching Pastor?

Prayer Prompts:

- Pray for our new Pastor to handle this transition in a godly manner. Pray for his current congregation to send him out well.
- Pray for comfort and understanding among his current congregation, that they see God’s mission for him, and for their church.
- Pray for his family to handle this season well, that their hearts would be comforted and strengthened.
- Meditate on Isaiah 43:18-19 *“Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”*

Thank You

We praise the Lord for all those who contributed to make this prayer guide possible. To God be the glory!

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

“But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.”

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