

# MARCH

## PRAYER GUIDE

### **DISCOVER** RICHLAND CREEK

DAYS 1-17: DISCOVER CHURCH

DAYS 18-23: PRAYING FOR DISCIPLE NOW

DAYS 24-30: ENGAGE AT THE CREEK

### 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.

**DEFINED BY THE WORD**  
**DEVOTED TO PRAYER**  
**DEPENDENT ON THE SPIRIT**

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## WHAT IS A HEALTHY CHURCH?

*Ephesians 1:19-22 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*

For the next few days of this month's prayer guide, we are going to focus on the local church. Specifically, what are the marks of a healthy church? What is church membership? Why join a church? What is our church membership class about? What does it mean to be a member of a church? These are profoundly important questions.

First, we must start with a definition of church. In the language of the Westminster Confession of Faith, the church comprises the "whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be, gathered into one, under Christ the Head thereof." Simply stated, a church is a community gathered around Jesus by His Word. It is the body of Christ of whom He is the head (Ephesians 1:22-23). This body claims Christ as its Lord and Savior.

A healthy church will encompass numerous marks or characteristics, ensuring the body is protected, grows, thrives, reflects, and reaches outward to the lost. Author and pastor Mark Dever identifies these marks as: expositional preaching, biblical theology, the Gospel, a biblical understanding of conversion, evangelism, church membership, church discipline, church leadership, and a concern for discipleship and growth. (*Nine Marks of a Healthy Church by Mark Dever*)

To be sure, the church stands as a monument to God and His character. Clearly, the health of God's church is of the utmost importance because it consists of "those whom the Lord has called out of the world into union and fellowship with Christ and into communion with each other" (Derek Thomas).

### **Questions to Consider:**

What would you say are marks of a healthy church? Have you considered what role you have in the church?

### **Prayer Prompt:**

Father, we pray for Richland Creek Community Church. We pray for health and unity as we seek to glorify you, God.

### WHAT IS CHURCH MEMBERSHIP?

*Romans 12:4-5 For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.*

As we think about what it means to belong to a local church body in covenant membership, we must rightly orient the focus of membership. Membership is not like being a member of your local gym, a member of the big box warehouse store, or a member of a sports team. No, covenant church membership is being a part of a family within a local church body with people who have professed faith in Christ. The gospel alone is what unites us. As Paul wrote in Romans 12, the local church is a family made up of multiple individuals with different functions; yet, they are one in Christ.

Local church membership has been a part of Christian history dating back to the early churches formed after the ascension of Christ. In many examples we see in the New Testament, a church is a local gathering of specific people. In his book *The Church*, Mark Dever reminds us that "God has chosen to maintain a distinct and separate people for the purpose of displaying his character."

**When we reflect on how God has created us for community with one another, we remember that being a part of a church family helps move us from isolation into fellowship with other believers for accountability and growth.**

When you think about your family and how it functions, does the importance of serving one another come to your mind? It should. In many families, we selflessly serve one another as we contribute to the health and prosperity of the family unit. Within the local church, every member has a unique opportunity to contribute to the overall health of the body by using their spiritual gift for the common good of others. Are you actively using the gifts God has given you? As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace (1 Peter 4:10).

**Questions to Consider:** Have you chosen to join the family of believers at Richland Creek? If not, what is keeping you from doing so? Are you displaying God's character through the local church?

**Prayer Prompts:** Read Hebrews 10:24-25

God, help me to see my purpose in the body of believers. Show me ways that I can contribute to the unity of the church family.

God, give me opportunities to serve the brothers and sisters of Richland Creek with the spiritual gifts uniquely given to me.

### WHY BECOME A MEMBER OF A CHURCH?

*1 Peter 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you.*

When we consider the membership of the church, we remember that it is a group of people gathered in agreement upon the gospel of Jesus Christ, having personally given testimony of salvation by grace through faith. The membership represents Christ through their living and partakes in the grace of Christ through the ordinances uniquely given to the local gathered body of believers. Therefore, the organized structure or polity by which the church is guided means that the pastors or elders of a specific congregation are entrusted by God for the care and protection of the flock as the spiritual shepherds. Church membership then is the ability for the shepherds/pastors of the local congregation to know for whom they are responsible and for whom they will give an account before God.

On those special occasions when the church gathers in remembrance of what Christ has done through the observation of the Lord's Supper, we remember that it was Jesus who established the church (Matthew 16); it is Jesus who is the head of the church (Colossians 1); it is the bride of Christ for whom He died (Revelation 19); and it is the church who unites as the physical representation of Christ to the world (Matthew 5).

Joining the family of believers at Richland Creek is quite simple. Being a member at the Creek signifies the following:

- Faith in Jesus alone for the forgiveness of sin
- Baptism by immersion as a public testimony of salvation
- Completion of the membership class and interview with a pastor
- Commitment to a membership covenant

#### **Questions to Consider:**

How can you help the pastors at Richland Creek shepherd the flock? Are you willing to commit to the group of believers at Richland Creek? What are you waiting for?

#### **Prayer Prompts: Read John 13:34-35**

God, thank you for the pastors who desire to shepherd and care for me. Help me make their task a joy for them and not a difficulty.

God, allow me to see my purpose within the body of Christ at Richland Creek. And if you're leading me to commit to this family, help me to be obedient to complete the membership process.

### DISCOVER RICHLAND CREEK: MEMBERSHIP CLASS

*Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

This month we are excited to bring back our in-person (since the pandemic began) church membership class, which we call Discover Richland Creek. Local church membership has been a part of Christian history dating back to the early churches formed after the ascension of Christ, as seen in the book of Acts. In the New Testament, a church is a local gathering of specific people in many examples.

God has uniquely given those who gather at Richland Creek the opportunity to commit to one another through covenant church membership. Jonathan Leeman helps us define the importance of church membership when he says, "Church membership is a formal relationship between a church and a Christian characterized by the church's affirmation and oversight of a Christian's discipleship and the Christian's submission to living out his/her discipleship in the care of the local church."

In the 4-week long Discover Richland Creek class, we will discuss four key categories that explain covenant membership at Richland Creek.

- WHO WE ARE AND WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?
- WHY DOES THE CHURCH EXIST?
- WHAT DOES THE CHURCH DO?
- WHAT IS MY NEXT STEP?

After completing the class, for those who desire to continue with church membership, we schedule a membership interview with one of our pastors where a pastor will hear a member candidate's salvation and baptism testimony, will discuss their walk with the Lord, and will explain opportunities to connect to godly relationships and areas of serving within the church. We desire to come alongside new members and help them pursue obedience to God's commands in the context of biblical community within the body of Richland Creek.

**Questions to Consider:** Are you obeying God's Word and faithfully gathering with His people? If you're not doing that as a covenant member but just a regular attendee, why?

#### **Prayer Prompts:**

God, help me to see my purpose in the body of believers at Richland Creek.

God, help me to understand that being a Christian is to belong to a local church, where I can grow in Christlikeness as a member.

### WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MEMBER OF A CHURCH

*John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another ...*

As we examine what makes a healthy church, it may seem as if the health of a church rests on the leadership. But the congregation plays a big role, too! So, what are our responsibilities within the local church? One pastor writes, "The health of the local church depends on the willingness of its members to inspect their hearts, correct their thinking, and apply their hands to the work of the ministry."

Everyone has a part to play. We all bear the responsibility to jointly build, maintain, and protect the body of Richland Creek Community Church.

Read through the following scripture references to gain a better understanding of your role as a member to the local church:

- Matthew 18:15
- Matthew 28:19-20
- Romans 12:10-13
- 1 Corinthians 12:7
- Ephesians 4:15
- Hebrews 10:24
- 1 Peter 4:10
- Jude 20-21,

Clearly, we have many responsibilities and much work to do—eternal work that God has prepared for us (2 Timothy 3:17).

#### **Question to Consider:**

How are you contributing to the health of Richland Creek Community Church?

#### **Prayer Prompts:**

Father, thank you for the gift of the church. Pray that our members would participate in and contribute to the building up of the body through serving, equipping, discipling, and prayer.

### UNITY IN CHRIST

*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 person's salvation is not more miraculous than another. 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, I challenge you to think about the way you treat people. What if every person you encounter today is another believer? Would you hesitate 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 will 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.

## WORSHIP

*John 4:23-24 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*

As stated above in John 4:23-24, we should seek to be true worshipers. We can worship God as His children saved by the work of Jesus and filled with the Holy Spirit. We can worship God as His followers in the truth He reveals through His Word. Worship is our response to a holy, loving, just, merciful, and faithful Father. It is the overflow of a grateful heart, forever thankful for the grace given through Christ.

It can be hard to define worship since everything we do as Christians should be done to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31). It is our hearts and minds that determine and define our worship. An inward-focused heart and mind can lead to idol worship or misguided worship. We also must resist the cultural norm of measuring ourselves and each other based on works.

Remember, a disciple of Christ is who we are and not what we do. Our works are the result, not the cause, of lives transformed by Christ. When we are right with God through faith in Christ, we are able to glorify Him with our lives. We can glorify Him at home, work, school, church, the athletic field, or wherever else we are. God has created us to worship Him, and our mission is to bring Him glory. As a church, we can enthusiastically embrace this mission together.

### **Questions to Consider:**

Is God the highest priority in my life? How can I glorify God with my life? How does worship affect my discipleship?

### **Prayer Prompts:**

Father, help me identify that You are the highest priority of my life.

Father, lead me to understand that everything I do should be an act of worship in response to Your love for us and an expression of our love for You.

Father, help me develop a regular habit of worship through private devotion and church gatherings.



### BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH LIFE GROUPS

*1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep, we might live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.*

Our Creek Life Groups provide a place for us to grow as disciples together, where everyone is accepted for who they are in Christ, empowered to take the next step toward Him, and encouraged to love God and one another above all.

God designed His people to be relational - a body of believers who bear one another's burdens and encourage one another in their spiritual journey. God's desire is for His people, at all ages and stages of spiritual maturity, to join together, grow in faith, and glorify Him. Life Groups are one of the primary places where this life-on-life connection, discipleship, and study of the Word takes place.

Our Creek Life Groups provide a place for you to love and be loved – a place to know others and be known by them. They allow for vulnerability between believers and encourage authentic relationships that point one another towards Christ and His Word resulting in spiritual growth.

Whether you are a beginner in your faith or are a mature believer, these relationships are a command and blessing from a loving God who desires to know you more. Pray that you will find these relationships within your own Life Group so that you can grow closer to one another and in spiritual maturity. If you aren't currently part of a Life Group, prayerfully consider joining a group and taking part in the close relationships found there.

#### **Questions to Consider:**

Are you actively participating in close relationships with fellow believers?  
Are you intentional to encourage and build one another up?

How can you be more intentional in developing relationships with those in your life group that reflect God's command to love God and love one another?

#### **Prayer Prompts:**

Lord, give me eyes to see and a heart to understand that my growth as a disciple will never happen apart from meaningful relationships with other believers.

Pray for love to pervade all of our relationships, as Paul commands in Eph. 4:15.

### HOW CAN I PRAY FOR CREEK LIFE GROUPS?

*Colossians 3:16-17 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. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*

Our Creek Life Groups will not thrive without each member intentionally investing in their growth and development. Today we will spend a few minutes thinking about how we can all be purposefully and regularly praying for our groups.

First, pray for our Creek Life Group leaders. These men and women carry a significant shepherding and teaching responsibility in our church. They must be strengthened by a vibrant personal walk with Jesus: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me" (John 15:4).

Second, pray that new leaders will be raised up and new groups started. Multiplication of new Creek Life Groups brings vibrancy and freshness to our ongoing ministries. We cannot have new groups without new leaders and people willing to move out of their current group to start a new one.

Third, pray for flexibility and patience among all those who are plugged into groups. If you are reading this as an active member of a group, then pray for yourself! When we live in honest relationship with one another, we're going to mess up, hurt one another's feelings, and so forth. The lifeblood of a positive Life Group culture is forgiveness, patience, and love.

#### **Questions to Consider:**

Letting the Word of Christ dwell in us is a command, which, when obeyed, leads to us encouraging and blessing others. Is your time in the Word resulting in you blessing others? Will you commit to praying for your Creek Life Group leader and the group itself regularly for at least the next month?

#### **Prayer Prompts:**

Lord, please give my Life Group leader joy in their walk with You and their service to our group. Protect them from discouragement and fear.

Lord, please multiply new Life Groups and, if it is Your will, use me to help start or encourage a new group.

Lord, give me patience with my fellow believers as in Philippians 2:3-4.

### SERVING

*1 Peter 4:10-11 As each has received a gift; use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies - in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

Here at Richland Creek, God has uniquely, by His grace, brought people together under the banner of the shed blood of His Son, Jesus Christ, so that we might worship Him and grow as His children. One of the ways we grow to look more like Jesus is in our love and care for those around us. When the church gathers throughout the week, we can use our unique gifts to serve one another through our different ministries, glorifying God.

Within the church, there are opportunities to use your unique spiritual gifts given to you by the Holy Spirit. Our ministry areas need you and your gifting. The best way to find out how the Lord has gifted you is by serving where there is a need. To discover where you can take part in serving the Lord, visit [richlandcreek.com/serve](http://richlandcreek.com/serve) or stop by the **Next Steps** area in the lobby on Sunday morning to talk with someone about serving.

In his book *Servanthood as Worship*, Nate Palmer provides two critical thoughts for the believer when it comes to serving:

“Serving in the church is not the privilege of the few. It is the call of every Christian’s life” and secondly referring to the book of Acts, “The church (collectively) provided the platform for people (individually) to worship God by serving others, thus sustaining and building the church while drawing attention to the glory and grace of God.”

#### Questions to Consider:

Am I a good steward with using my spiritual gifts for the common good of the body of believers at Richland Creek? Do I serve with the strength that God supplies, or am I doing it in my own power?

#### Prayer Prompt:

Father help me to serve others like Jesus did, for your glory and for their good.

## GROWING IN OUR OWN DISCIPLESHIP

*Colossians 1:27-28 To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.*

False assumptions tell us that spiritual maturity equals church attendance, how long we have been a Christian, or how much Bible knowledge we have. Maturity comes as the Spirit uses biblical knowledge applied in obedient action to transform believers. As infants progress from milk to solid food, plants are cultivated into bearing fruit, and athletes are trained over time; so too Christians are meant to grow in Christ-likeness (Heb 5:12-6:1; Col 2:6-7; 1 Tim 4:7-8; 2 Pet 3:18).

To facilitate growth, a biblical church develops an intentional pathway for its people – a continual process for Jesus' parting words. The church fosters cycles of sharing the gospel as God calls non-Christians out of darkness into His marvelous light, baptizing disciples and continuing their growth by teaching them to obey all of Scripture's commands (1 Pet 2:9; Matt 28:18-20; Luke 6:40). In other words, we teach and model Christ-likeness for God's glory until presenting others mature in Christ.

Jesus is our example. He poured into His disciples for three years, shaping them toward His mission. He, the Good Shepherd, commissioned them to feed His sheep, His beloved people (John 21:15). Today, the church continues the feeding process and prepares a discipleship pathway to develop the youngest, most immature believers into seasoned disciples, sent to develop more disciples. Though imperfect this side of heaven, the church is purposeful, obedient to the Word for God's glory, aiming its members ever deeper in our knowledge and love of God, impacting our love for others. The growth pathway continues until we see Jesus face to face.

### **Questions to Consider:**

How do I see God's faithfulness in deepening my relationship with Him? Where do I need to submit in obedience to the Spirit's transforming work?

### **Prayer Prompts:**

- Father, may our church train disciples unto maturity in Christlikeness.
- Give wisdom to our pastors as they plan and shepherd us toward growth.

## PRAYER (PART ONE)

*1 Thessalonians 5:17 Pray without ceasing.*

How far could you run if you held your breath? Without a sufficient supply of air, even an elite athlete would lack the strength to go far—much less finish a race. As air is to our lungs, prayer is to the Christian. Neither we nor the church will thrive without it. Prayerlessness weakens us. It leaves us vulnerable to sin and the schemes of the Enemy. "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities ... against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12). Yet, instead of praying at all times in the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18), we often neglect our relationship with God—setting aside the power and grace He intended to strengthen us with. Imagine the implications for the church, and the effectiveness of its ministries, if God's people fail to pray.

The Bible tells us that our loving, wise, holy Heavenly Father commands His people to devote themselves to prayer—both individually and corporately. Why? Prayer is an act of worship in response to what we know about who God is, what He has already done for us in Christ, and what He will accomplish when Christ returns. He calls believers to spend time in prayer to grow in our knowledge of Him. As we enjoy the blessing of fellowship with God, our love for Him (and others) will grow. Prayer positions us to recognize our dependence upon God—for He alone is the source of everything we need for life and godliness. As sinners saved by grace, we must seek the Lord with an attitude of humble reverence. Apart from Him, we can do nothing! Prayer even aligns our thoughts and desires with God's. Scripture tells us that His ways are not our ways. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are [His] ways higher than [our] ways..." (Isaiah 55:9). Imagine the implications for the church, and the effectiveness of its ministries, if God's people faithfully pray.

As we seek to trust and obey, may the fervency and frequency of our prayers increase—that we might glorify God and run with perseverance the race marked out for us!

### **Questions to Consider:**

How can you increase the frequency and fervency of your prayers?

### **Prayer Prompts:**

Read Matthew 6:5-15. Following the pattern of Jesus, pray verses 9-13 in your own words.

### PRAYER (PART TWO)

*Acts 2:42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

*James 5:13-14, 16 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray.... Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him ... confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.*

One of our goals at Richland Creek is to love God in prayer by devoting ourselves, corporately and individually, to daily communicating with Him in light of who He is and what He has done according to His Word. In a healthy church, members pray for one another and with one another—passionately pursuing God and participating in His kingdom work.

Individually, we follow the example Jesus set for us—praying frequently and alone (Luke 5:16, 9:18; Mark 1:35). Corporately, we follow the example of the early church—frequently praying together (Acts 1:13-14, 2:42, 12:5). It means searching our own hearts, lamenting, confessing, and repenting of sin—praying honest, transparent prayers that magnify God and reflect the magnitude of His mercy and grace toward us in Christ.

For biblical examples of prayer, read the psalms penned by King David, Ezra's lament (Ezra 9), Israel's confession (Nehemiah 9), or the profound prayers of the Apostle Paul. Our words need not be as eloquent, but we must approach God with the same humble and contrite heart. Be encouraged by the faith of those who came before you and those whom God chose to walk alongside you. Pray with your brothers and sisters in Christ at the monthly prayer meeting, in your Life Group, Discipleship Group, etc. A healthy church prays—that it, and its people, may serve and be sanctified, strengthened, and sustained by the power of God—for the glory of God!

#### **Questions to Consider:**

Is prayer a priority in your life? How frequently do you pray privately/corporately? How will participating in corporate prayer impact your walk with the Lord?

#### **Prayer Prompts:**

Thank you, Father, that we can approach Your throne of grace with confidence because of Christ. Help us to be people (individually and corporately) devoted to prayer.

### INVESTING IN OTHERS

*Ephesians 4:11-13 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*

The discipleship pathway involves participation by God's people in the maturing process – pastors, leaders and church members alike cultivating growth churchwide. Hebrews 10:24-25 frames our gathering together around the Word toward active involvement in other's lives as we spur each other on to love and good works. Our pastors lead by investing in the church family through biblical teaching and by being examples of Christlikeness. This leads our church to then invest in each other – from the oldest to the youngest, the most seasoned to the newest believer. In like-mindedness, each joyously leans into the work of the ministry (Acts 20:27-28; Heb 13:7; 2 Tim 2:2; Phil 2:1-5).

The discipleship process is church members investing in their personal relationships with Christ and then each other by loving and being committed family members. Spiritual parents with spiritual children, along with big brothers and sisters in the faith, living out God's Word in the power of the Spirit for the younger ones. Unity is strengthened around our love for God and others for His glory. Biblical community is developed as we study the Bible, pray, worship, witness, give, serve, and live on mission together (John 14:15; Matt 22:37-39; 1 Cor. 11:1; Romans 12).

This is God's work among His people (Phil. 2:13). Yet, He asks Christians to put in the effort to grow (2 Pet. 1:5-8). Reflecting His grace, may we persevere to present one another mature in Christ. May we live as praise unto God until we are in His presence.

#### **Questions to Consider:**

Where is my pride inhibiting someone else from biblically shaping my life? How will I learn from and invest in someone else's discipleship growth?

#### **Prayer Prompts:**

Father, thank you for our pastors and leaders. I pray You will continually develop them so they may encourage and equip one another and the church family.

Father, grow us for the work of Your kingdom ministry. Use me to train up others so they may impact families, churches, workplaces, schools, and mission fields for Your glory.

### GOING NEAR AND FAR

*Matthew 4:19 And He said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.*

*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 all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*

Our God does not work through random coincidences or accidental instances. The Lord is sovereign, purposefully working throughout all of history to redeem His people and receive His own glory. To that end, it is surely no coincidence that the FIRST words Jesus spoke to His followers align with His LAST words to His followers: To follow Jesus is to participate in His mission. Do you see the striking similarities? One well-known pastor said it right when he said, "When you accepted Jesus, you accepted the call to missions; the gospel was never meant to stop with you, but to spread through you."

We tend to think of missions as a special call for a select few. In truth, the call to serve on Christ's mission applies to everyone who is a follower of Jesus. Location, giftedness, and age may vary; however, the call is gloriously inescapable. Jesus uses us, the church, to go as living testimonies of the mission of God to every corner of the earth so that people from every tribe, tongue, and nation will gather and adore the Lamb who was slain on their behalf (Revelation 5).

#### **Questions to Consider:**

Who is called to engage in the mission of God? What is involved in the mission of God? How might God be calling YOU to utilize the time, talents, and treasures that He has given you to serve His mission?

#### **Prayer Prompts:**

Upward: Thank you Jesus for saving me from my sins.

Inward: Lord, I confess to my anxieties regarding the mission of God and I ask You to give me boldness to live out your mission to others.

Onward: Lord, I pray for our mission partners to remain courageous, devoted, and faithful to the mission that God has called them.



### WHAT DOES BAPTISM MEAN?

*Acts 8:36-38 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, 'See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?' Then Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.*

The Greek word *baptizo* in the New Testament means to submerge or immerse, and in this context, to do so in water. This is not describing a sprinkling or pouring of water, but a complete covering. Acts 8 not only tells us about the practical meaning and method of baptism, but also who is qualified.

When the eunuch asks, "What hinders me from being baptized?" Philip answers with the biblical qualification for baptism: "If you believe with all your heart, you may." Baptism is not a part of our salvation; it is a part of our obedience. Baptism follows true conversion to faith in Jesus. This is why we do not believe that infant baptism is biblical. This is why we also encourage those who are unsure if they were saved before a previous baptism to be baptized again with the assurance of their faith.

The same Greek word for baptism can also refer to the process of dying fabric. Think of a dull, bland fabric being immersed in a rich and colorful dye. When the fabric is brought back up, it has been transformed. This is a good and memorable illustration of how we are transformed the moment we place our faith in Christ, and how baptism is a picture of that moment.

#### **Questions to Consider:**

Have you been baptized after placing your faith and trust in Jesus? If not, what is holding you back? Do you have a biblical understanding of baptism? Please speak with a pastor if you have questions.

#### **Prayer Prompts:**

Father, I am grateful for the symbol of baptism as a picture of Your death, burial, and resurrection.

Pray for the lost people in your life to come to faith in Jesus as their Savior and Lord, and for God to prepare you to share the Gospel with them.

*Ephesians 4:4-6 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

### THE LORD'S SUPPER

*Luke 22:14-16 When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."*

Our practice of communion has similar elements as the Last Supper. Jesus broke the bread and poured the cup with the apostles the night before His death, instructing them to remember His sacrifice. We observe communion in much the same way, remembering the broken body and shed blood of our Savior. It is also very significant that the Last Supper was an observance of the Passover.

This took place on the night the Passover lamb would be slaughtered. Christ was signifying His role as the once and for all Passover lamb. His sacrifice would pay for the sins of humanity for all times. Even though many still observe the Passover to this day, there is no need for further sacrifice to pay the debt of sin in our lives. Some missed that truth then, and many still miss it now, waiting for a Messiah who has already come.

Communion reminds us of the Last Supper and the Passover. In the above verses, Jesus also promises us that He will partake of the Passover supper again in heaven. He also promises us a place at that table through faith in Him. As we partake of communion, we remember all that Jesus has done for us and look forward with great anticipation to our future with Him.

#### **Questions to Consider:**

As a believer, are you actively participating in the Lord's supper? Do you recognize and meditate on the significance of this symbolic ordinance the church participates in?

#### **Prayer Prompts:**

Give thanks to God for sending Jesus as our sacrificial Passover lamb.

Pray for clear understanding of the connections between the Last Supper, Passover, and communion.

Pray for those who are still waiting for a Messiah to accept Jesus as the Christ.

*1 Peter 1:18-19 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*

## PRAYING FOR DISCIPLE NOW (DNOW)

Knowing God and Being Known by Him

*Galatians 4:8-9 Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?*

The theme for our 2022 Student Ministry Disciple Now (DNOW) is "Known", based on our theme verse quoted above. For the next five days, this prayer guide will walk you through key passages that our students will be learning during DNOW weekend.

A personal relationship with the Creator of the universe is a concept unique to the Christian faith. Through the blood-bought sacrifice of Christ, we have gained direct access to God and are now his children. God knows the born again as a father knows his own child. It should never cease to amaze us that the eternal and holy God desires to know us wretched sinners. During DNOW weekend, we will explore the implications for knowing God and being known by him. Paul tells the Galatian church that they were formerly slaves to idols of this world, but now they are free because God knows them. Pray that many hearts will be freed from idols through the grace of God, who desires a relationship with his people.

### **Questions to Consider:**

What is the difference between knowing God and being known by God? How were you formerly enslaved to idols? How are you now free in knowing God?

### **Prayer Prompts:**

Pray for our students: that many will come to know God during DNOW weekend.

Pray for our staff and volunteers: ask that God will encourage all those who serve.

Pray for our speaker: Dr. Scott Pace is a seminary professor and a member of our church; he will be the main speaker for the weekend.

Pray for our band: Jimmy Cooper is the worship minister at Open Door Church; he will be leading our students in worship during the weekend.

Pray for our students and their first small group session as they will be working through passages like Psalm 19, Hebrews 1, and John 10 and asking questions like "Do I know God and am I known by Him?"

### DNOW: TRUSTING GOD AND TRUSTING OTHERS

*Please read Psalm 34:4-8, 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, Ephesians 4:1-6.*

*Psalm 34:4-8 I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!*

As we continue to pray for our students who are attending our DNOW event, focus on their second small group discipleship time. The topic of this first session is "Trusting God and Trusting Others." Knowing God and being known by Him should shape the way in which we view God and others. Scripture teaches us that God is trustworthy and that He desires to know us and speak to us. The psalmist says that God is good, and He answers. We can trust God because He has answered our cry for salvation. For our students who know God, this is a truth they can rest in. For our students that do not know God, we desire for them to trust in God for salvation and to taste and see that He is good.

The second part of this session will be spent looking at why we should trust other believers. 1 Corinthians tells us what loving one another within the church should look like. If you are trying to love me in this way and I am trying to love you in this way, then we should both be able to trust one another and be unified in our efforts to follow Jesus. Ephesians 4:1-6 teaches us to walk in a manner worthy of our calling and to be unified in our faith in Christ. It is our faith that bonds us together, and we should be able to trust one another. We should not live in fear of whether our fellow believers have our best interests in mind. We should not have to ask if they are trustworthy. We should trust that they are, and we should walk worthy of our calling and therefore be trustworthy ourselves.

#### **Questions to Consider:**

Are you actively pursuing unity? Are you a trustworthy church member?

#### **Prayer Prompts:**

Pray that our students would grow in their trust in God and His word.

Pray that our students would trust those in the church.

### DNOW: KNOWING GOD IN TRIALS

*1 Peter 1:6-7 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

How does knowing God help someone deal with trials? When everything in your life is falling apart, what are you supposed to do? As believers, we have an eternal perspective. Knowing God changes how we endure trials. Our hope is not just that one day every problem will go away. It is the hope that we are known by a God who loves us. We serve such a gracious God that even in the midst of heartache, confusion, and worry, He turns our sorrows into joys. He redeems our brokenness!

Many of our students are dealing with tough things all the time. They are bombarded with so many hurtful words, bad situations, and broken relationships. Some of our students have faced unimaginable pain. The Lord allows us to face trials for His glory and our good. It may not seem that way, and yet 1 Peter is clear. Believers have a faith that is more precious than gold.

When facing trials, our faith is strengthened, deepened, and refined. In the middle of a trial, we cling more to the Lord. Not only can we hear about the Lord's faithfulness, we can experience it firsthand! It becomes an internal, personal experience of God's good grace in our lives. This does not excuse the evils within the world. But we serve a great God, and He can work in the brokenness to bring about beautiful, life-giving testimonies of His grace. Our story testifies and brings glory to His name. We pour out praise unto the Lord, who is faithful and present in our trials.

#### **Questions to Consider:**

How do you deal with trials? In what ways has the Lord been present in your times of need? In what ways has the Lord redeemed brokenness in your life?

#### **Prayer Prompts:**

Pray that our students will know the Lord more deeply through the trials they may be facing.

Pray that our students will not lose heart in the Lord during difficulty.

Pray that our students will have an eternal perspective amidst hardship.

## DNOW: IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU

*Please read James 4:1-10, Mark 10:35-45, Colossians 3:1-4*

Today we will be praying for our students attending DNOW and their time in their small group session 4. They will be working through the idea that our lives are to be lived for God's glory, not our own. When we are known by God, and we know Him, then our lives are no longer about us. In Jesus' life on earth, He displays that even for Him it was not all about Himself; He submitted Himself to the Father's plans and desires. In Mark, the disciples want a place of honor in the kingdom, and Jesus tells them that it is better to serve than to be served. Jesus Himself came to serve. He placed the Father's desires above His own, and He gave Himself as a ransom for many. James teaches us to humble ourselves and not be in pursuit of our own selfish gain. We experience conflicts and disagreements within the church when things get out of perspective or when pride creeps in. Colossians 3 says to place our minds on things above, for we have died to ourselves—meaning we should be about what God wants, not what we want. Life is not about us, and therefore the world does not revolve around us. It is all about knowing Him and being known by Him for His glory.

Our students will be challenged to humble themselves before the Lord and to evaluate their lives to see whether it is all about them or the Lord. If we are all honest with ourselves, we probably struggle with being more focused on our own agendas than the Lord's agenda. We want to model Jesus' example and be all about God's plan and not our own.

### **Questions to Consider:**

Are you working toward your own glory or the Lord's? Are you known for being a servant or being served? Are you currently in any quarrel with someone in our church?

Are you humbling yourself before the Lord?

### **Prayer Prompts:**

Pray that our students would submit to the Lord's plan for their lives.

Pray that our students will always be humble servants.

Pray for unity in our student ministry.

### DNOW: OUR NEW IDENTITY

*Ephesians 2:8-10 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

Throughout DNOW, we have explored what it means to truly know God (not just know about Him!) and how beautiful it is to realize we are fully known and loved by the Creator of the universe. When we are born again, we are given a new identity as a believer in the saving work of Jesus Christ. We put off the worldly desires and actions of our old selves and put on the righteousness of Christ. We are not who we once were, and praise the Lord for that! But, while these are lovely thoughts to ponder, they beg the question: Now what? How do we live as known and loved disciples of Christ?

These verses from Ephesians remind us that living out our identity as believers spur us to action and good works. These works are not done to save us but rather done because we are saved. Our obedience to the Lord and His commands is to come from the overflow of our gratitude for His grace and mercy toward us and our desire to glorify Him. We “get to” serve the God who saved us rather than “have to,” and this attitude shift makes all the difference.

#### **Questions to Consider:**

Are you still trying to earn your salvation through good works? What is standing in the way of you accepting the gift of grace God is offering?

If you are a believer, are you living out your identity in Christ by obeying God’s commands from an attitude of joy and thankfulness, or are you working yourself to exhaustion and bitterness trying to earn His favor?

#### **Prayer Prompts:**

Lord, please forgive us when we forget who and whose we are. Help us to remember, your commands are for our good and your glory.

Other verses to meditate on: Colossians 3:12-17

### PRAYING FOR DNOW-FOLLOW UP

*Galatians 4:8-9 Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?*

Today we will be praying that the Lord will use all that our students learned this past weekend at DNOW to strengthen their faith. We desire for our students to know God and to be known by Him. Our students will be tempted to take what they have learned and attribute it to a fun weekend and forget the value of knowing God. We simply desire for our students to never forget what it means to know God. To know God absolutely changes every aspect of our lives. The very fact that we know Him means that we have a personal relationship with Him. We do not just know about Him, but we know Him as He desires us to know Him.

Another thing we desire our students to remember long after this weekend is that they are known by God. To be known by God changes everything about our lives as well. God does not just know about us, but He knows us in a personal and relational way. He knows believers as His own and not as enemies. Matthew 7 indicates that there will be many who come to the Lord who have known all about Him and even done great things in His name, but then God says, "Depart from Me, for I never knew you." To be known by God means that we are in His family—we are forgiven and saved from His wrath. We desire for our students to walk away from this weekend with a solid understanding of what it means to know God as well as what it means to be known by Him. We will have students who attended this weekend who are lost and they do not know God. Let us pray for them, that they will repent and believe and know God personally, and that they might be saved by His grace and be known by Him.

#### **Questions to Consider:**

How has knowing God changed how you live? How has being known by God changed your view of yourself?

#### **Prayer Prompts:**

Pray for our lost students that they might be saved.

Pray for our saved students that they might be strengthened in their faith.

Pray for the ongoing discipleship of our students.



### FOUR WAYS TO BE ENGAGED IN DISCIPLESHIP

*Hebrews 10:24-25, And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

Our church desires for us to gather together in corporate worship, unified as the body of Christ worshipping King Jesus. We worship because He is altogether worthy. Moreover, corporate worship provides us opportunities to encourage one another in the Gospel. We remind ourselves of the truth. We fortify our resolve to be light in a dark and sinful world.

Likewise, we also have the privilege and responsibility to build relationships with each other in Life Groups. Life Groups seek to foster the development of true, loving relationships that allow us to confess sin, edify each other, spur one another on, bear one another's burdens, serve one another, and so much more (1 Cor. 1:10; Phil 4:2; Gal 5:13; Ephesians 4:2).

Moreover, because each of us has been given a spiritual gift for the "common good" (1 Cor. 12:7), we are called to serve. Simply stated, we use our gifts to serve and minister to others for the edification of the church. Week after week, we must look for ways to minister to others and build them up in the faith, and we do all this together.

Finally, the equipping ministry supports all three of these areas—worship, life groups, and service. The equipping ministry prepares and enables us to be more involved, more engaged, and grow deeper in our worship, life groups, and service. All these pieces (worship, life groups, service, and equipping) fit together so that "the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12-13).

#### **Questions to Consider:**

Are you attending corporate worship? Have you joined a life group? Do you serve the body? If any of these pieces are missing, why? Are you a fully committed member of Richland Creek?

#### **Prayer Prompts:**

Father, thank you for my church. Thank you that our pastors and leaders are diligently and faithfully working to guard and guide this church towards Christlikeness.

## EQUIPPING AT THE CREEK

*Read Ephesians 4:1-16*

*Ephesians 4:11-13 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ...*

As mentioned in yesterday's prayer guide entry, the equipping ministry supports three areas of church engagement: worship, life groups, and service. The equipping ministry equips people to grow deeper in their worship, life group relationships, and service by continually offering 'next steps' that direct and guide the congregation towards greater maturity and development in our relationship with each other and our walk with Christ. As Richland Creek continually "equips the saints for the work of ministry," a mature church emerges, glorifying God and reaching all manner of people for Christ. To accomplish this, God has gifted His church with a diverse group of people identified in the Ephesians 4 verses today.

Paul begins Ephesians 4 by describing God's plan for growing His church. Essential to this growth is humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another, and unity (verses 2-6). In verses 7-10, Paul goes on to say each one of us has been given spiritual gifts (v. 7) that enable us to participate in the building up of our church. Specifically, God has provided shepherds, teachers, and leaders of all kinds to serve in their diverse giftings. "The gifts were given so that we would equip and strengthen other believers, and thus the gifts are others-centered, not self-centered" (Thomas Schreiner). Indeed, the equipping ministry at Richland Creek is "others-centered."

Tomorrow we will look at specific equipping opportunities on Wednesday nights that will develop and strengthen you for the work of ministry and the building up the body of Christ (v. 12). This "building up of the body leads to its unity and its stability and maturity such that the church becomes more like Jesus Christ" (Schreiner).

**Questions to Consider:** Are you taking hold of the equipping opportunities at the Creek? Are you growing deeper in Christ in your worship, relationships, and service?

**Prayer Prompts:** Father, thank you for all the pastors, leaders, and servants you provide to equip and strengthen the body of Christ. Thank you for Richland Creek's faithfulness in making and maturing disciples.

### EQUIPPING OPPORTUNITIES AT THE CREEK

*2 Peter 3:18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*

As Peter writes this verse, he is more than likely in jail at the end of his life. Throughout this final letter, “he reminds us about the importance of accurate knowledge of the truth (2 Peter 1:2, 3, 5–6, 8, 12; 2:2, 20; 3:18).” Clearly, believers are to continually grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ, by God’s grace. Thankfully, God has provided the means by which we do this—the local church.

Yesterday we looked at what equipping was and why it is so important in the building up of God’s people. The equipping ministry equips people to grow deeper in their worship, life group relationships, and service by continually offering ‘next steps’ that direct and guide the congregation toward greater maturity and development in our relationships with each other and our walk with Christ.

The Creek provides a variety of diverse opportunities to be edified, equipped, and developed in faith. To be sure, our pastoral staff earnestly desires that we walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God (Col. 1:10). To this end, the equipping ministry puts forth classes, workshops, Bible studies, conferences, events, and training sessions—all so that we may grow in Christ.

Specifically, on Wednesday nights, the Creek has equipping opportunities for Creek kids, students, and adults. Adult equipping offers discipleship classes for men and women as well as those in our Hispanic community, men’s and women’s Bible studies, Financial Peace University, classes taught by pastors, and topical classes. Each of these equipping opportunities is open to all.

#### **Questions to Consider:**

Are you participating in the equipping opportunities here at the Creek? What classes or events can you plug into and be strengthened for kingdom work?

#### **Prayer Prompts:**

Pray for our pastors, teachers, lay leaders, and servants who faithfully serve in the equipping ministry to build up the body of Christ.

Pray that our brothers and sisters in Christ, by God’s grace, would be equipped and engaged with our church body, for our church body.

## MORNING BIBLE STUDY

*Colossians 2:6-7 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught abounding in thanksgiving.*

Morning Bible Study (MBS) exists to glorify God. In the fall of 2019, we began helping women grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ by teaching them to love God in His Word (individually and corporately) and to love others through biblical fellowship.

We designed MBS to walk women through a 3-step inductive Bible study method. Step 1 is observation. The study guide we produce helps them ask good questions and determine what the text says. Step 2 is interpretation. Our teachers help participants understand what the text means. Before applying the timeless message to their lives, they must know what the biblical author intended to communicate to the original audience. Step 3 is application. All Scripture is useful and beneficial for daily life (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Group discussion provides an opportunity to understand how the message to the original audience is relevant today. Then, they get to put what they learn into practice!

Our goal is sanctification and spiritual maturity. By daily increasing in obedience and submission to the authority of God's inspired, inerrant, infallible written Word, we pray that the women who attend will be conformed to the image of Christ and reflect His character.

For the first time, we are excited to offer a sister class that mirrors MBS on Wednesday nights called Evening Bible Study (EBS). This semester, we are studying Jonah and Nahum. We will discover the depths of God's mercy as we observe the relationship between mercy and judgment and reconcile the tension between these two aspects of God's character.

*Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. (John 17:17)*

### **Questions to Consider:**

Have you developed a regular habit of Bible intake? Are you studying the Scriptures individually and corporately?

### **Prayer Prompts:**

Pray Isaiah 55:10-11.

Pray that every teacher, leader, and participant will seek God with all of her heart. May they treasure the Christ of the Word and look more like Jesus at the end of the semester than when we began.

## COLLEGE MINISTRY HIGHLIGHT

*Read 1 Timothy 4:6-10*

*1 Timothy 4:10 For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.*

The college ministry here at Richland Creek exists to call 18 to 24 year-olds to be disciples of Jesus who love God with everything they have and love others as themselves. We do this through authentic relationships and compassionate ministry. It is our goal to see students' lives transformed as they transition from lost to laborer and through all of this for the Lord to spark a movement of young people at the Creek who desire to honor Him with their whole lives. We deeply appreciate your prayers as we minister to those the Lord places in our paths.

Here are two specific ways you can pray for us. First, pray that the Lord would move us outside our comfort zones as we strive to be an outward-focused ministry seeking to take the gospel to college campuses, workplaces, and anywhere else our students engage others. Second, pray that we continue in the unity of the Spirit, exhibiting true sacrificial love for one another.

In our efforts to make this a reality, you can pray specifically for two upcoming events in the college ministry:

First, pray for our outreach opportunities on the campus of North Wake Tech and for our follow up and the Spirit's work with those to whom we speak.

Second, pray for follow up from our mission trip to Provo, UT. As we shared the gospel among this predominantly Mormon population, may the seeds we planted grow.

### **Questions to Consider:**

Why does Paul connect our ongoing ministry with hope in God? How does this affect the way we do ministry?

### **Prayer Prompts:**

Pray for the prayer requests mentioned above plus whatever the Spirit leads you to pray for our students. Try to put yourself in their shoes. What was it like for you at that age?

Spend time thanking God that he is continuing to raise up the next generation of church leaders and disciples for His glory.

## LEGACY BUILDERS MINISTRY HIGHLIGHT

### *The Righteous Shall Bear Fruit in Old Age*

*Psalm 92:12-15 The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish like a palm tree. They will still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green, to declare that the LORD is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.*

Psalm 92 is a wonderful psalm of encouragement for the Christian. Here God tells us that we shall flourish like a palm tree; we will grow like a cedar in Lebanon; we will flourish in the courts of our God, and we will still bear fruit in old age. The palm tree and the cedar were highly valued by the people of the Near East, the palm for its fruit and the cedar for its wood. The word "flourish" in verses 12-13 means "to develop in a healthy or vigorous way." What a wonderful picture the psalmist paints here of a saint growing older in service to the Lord Jesus Christ!

It is God's will for our lives to stay "fresh and green," to "bear fruit" even in our old age. We change as we grow older, but the Lord never changes. He is our Rock, and His will for our lives is perfect, so we will not complain.

We believe our senior saints are a vital part of the body of Christ here at the Creek. The Richland Creek Legacy Builders exist to reach senior adults and the community with the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to assist them as they grow into the man or woman God created them to be. Our mission is to build up the body of Christ and glorify His name. Our goal is to make disciples that make disciples. We seek to accomplish our mission through Bible study, prayer, worship, service, and fellowship.

### **Questions to Consider:**

Why do you think God wants us to stay fresh and green and to bear fruit in our old age (v. 15)? What has God promised to help us enjoy a lifetime of productivity and faithfulness (see Isaiah 46:4)?

### **Prayer Prompts:**

Dear Father in heaven, help us to stay fresh and green, and to bear fruit in our old age so that we might declare Your goodness and righteousness all the days of our lives. In Jesus name!

## HISPANIC MINISTRY HIGHLIGHT

*Ephesians 4:11-15 ... to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*

Paul explains one foundational teaching—us being the church. We are the church as we come together, shoulder to shoulder, and equip ourselves and others to be disciples who effectively live out and engage the culture with Gospel boldness. This effort includes peoples from all nations, as stated in 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.” If you are born again, you have received this power!

The Creek’s Hispanic initiative seeks to provide Spanish speakers with a vibrant and theologically sound family in order to build up their faith on the Rock of our salvation by reaching and equipping disciples to love God and love others. These are disciples who make disciples in Wake Forest, the Triangle, through social media outlets, and to the ends of the earth!

### **Questions to Consider:**

The average turnover for Hispanics in our area is about 18 months. Have you considered the urgency of the Gospel and discipleship efforts to serve these brothers and sisters?

How can you partner up with the church in praying, going, and giving for this in-house mission endeavor?

### **Prayer Prompts:**

Lord, thank you for saving us. We beg you to give us boldness as we attempt to reach our brethren in other languages and welcome them into our family.

# Thank You

We praise the Lord for all those who contributed to make this prayer guide possible. We are so grateful for the faithful servants who have dedicated their time and talents to writing this prayer guide.

To God be the Glory!

## *1 Thessalonians 5:12-13*

*But we ask you, brothers and sisters, to recognize those who diligently labor among you and are in leadership over you in the Lord, and give you instruction, and that you regard them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.*