

# WORD *and* *prayer*

Our purpose is to *glorify God by being and making disciples of Jesus Christ who are a community of worshippers on mission*—and we can't fulfill this without engaging with God through scripture and prayer. This is foundational to our relationship with him—he speaks to us in scripture, we speak to him in prayer. This guide includes suggestions for reading God's word and daily topics for us to pray together as a church family.

## Reading God's Word

Below are three options for engaging God's word through the year. Before your daily reading, briefly pray that God would make you open, give you understanding, and transform you through his word (Psalm 119:18; Isaiah 66:2).

### 1. Bible Read-Through

You can read the entire Bible in one year with about 10-15 minutes each day. Consider inviting a friend or group to do this with you, and then share insights and questions. The *ZF Bible Reading Plan*, available at our Resource Center, includes five readings per week to allow flexibility. Rather than including Psalms in the schedule, this plan encourages you to integrate Psalms into your everyday life by reading one each day. Find other plans at [esv.org/resources/reading-plans/](http://esv.org/resources/reading-plans/).

### 2. Bible Immersion

Immerse yourself in a book of the Bible by re-reading and studying it for a period of time. For example, re-read Ephesians every day for a month, then choose a different book for the next month. Or read through 2-4 chapters of John each day until you get to the end, then re-read it again and again for the month. Consider memorizing parts of the book or scheduling a weekly block of 2 hours to study a book of the Bible more in-depth.

### 3. Bible Rhythm

Simply establish a rhythm of reading 20 minutes each day, picking up where you left off from the previous day. As you finish a book of the Bible, move to the next one or move to one that is of particular interest to you.

## Meditation and Prayer in Response to God's Word

After reading scripture, meditate on it and turn your reflections into prayers. Here are four questions Tim Keller provides to lead us to respond in prayer:

- *Praise*: What does this text show me about God for which I should praise or thank him?
- *Repentance*: What does this text show me about my sin that I should confess and repent of?
- *Request*: What does this text show me about a need and how shall I petition God for it?
- *Transformation*: How would this change my life if I took it seriously—if this truth were fully alive and effective in my inward being?

## Praying for the Church and World

In addition to your other various personal prayers of praise, thanksgiving, and requests, join together in praying each day for a particular church-wide or global focus.

### Sunday: Church Gatherings and Revival

- Pray for the gathering of our church—that God would show us Christ and renew, encourage, and transform us through his presence, people, and word.
- Pray for other local churches, and that God would send a wave of gospel-renewal and revival.

### Monday: Vocation and Leaders

- Pray for our church members as we engage in our vocations of school, work, and parenting—that we would bless, love, and serve others in God's strength and for his glory.
- Pray for local, national, and global leaders—that they would lead with wisdom and righteousness.

### Tuesday: Evangelism and Social Concerns

- Pray for two or three people who don't yet know Jesus, and pray for the Lord to use the evangelistic efforts of Christians to bring people to himself.
- Pray for the Lord to spread truth, goodness, and wisdom with regard to current social concerns of sanctity of life, ethnic disunity, political strife, poverty, and confusion regarding gender and sexuality.

### Wednesday: Spiritual Growth and Discipleship

- Pray for a few members of our church—that God would give them joy in knowing him.
- Pray that God would produce the fruit of the Spirit and transform members into the image of Christ.

### Thursday: Global Missions and the Persecuted

- Pray for a mission partner—that God would encourage and use them to spread the gospel.
- Pray for our persecuted brothers and sisters—that they would be faithful witnesses to Christ and be protected and comforted by the Spirit.

### Friday: Relationships and Gospel Culture

- Pray for our church family to cultivate a gospel culture of love, humility, and gentleness.
- Pray for our friendships, marriages, and families to embody this same ethos of love.

### Saturday: Thanksgiving

- Thank God for various evidences of his grace that you've seen or become aware of
- Thank God for any ways you've seen him answer prayers from the week.