

CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY CHURCH Journal Guide for Personal Reflection and Branch Group Discussion

Welcome to the Journey of Faith for the next 31 days.

We are taking the month of May 2022 to spend time pausing, listening and reflecting on God's Voice. We are seeking to hear from Him through His Word (Scripture), through worship of His name, and through Prayer. The focus is listening for God's direction for our church and for yourself in this next season God would have for us.

We will be using a variation of the P.R.A.Y. acrostic to guide this time... please set aside about 15-20 minimum each day for this prayer reflection experience.

P is for Pause – take a few moments to quiet your heart and your mind from all distractions. You may have to go to another room or find another time to have this time of reflection. Pause regularly throughout your prayer time.

R is for Read on God's Word and Reflect all that He reveals about Himself through His holy Scriptures. Each day we will start with a passage of Scripture to reflect on – guided by a brief question to prepare our hearts to hear God's voice. You may want to read the whole chapter.

A is for Ask God for guidance, for insight, for any pressing need you are experiencing because He desires to provide for His children. Take time to listen for God to speak.

Y is for Yield to God's Voice... this may be a new practice for you to spend to sit in silence, seeking the Holy Spirit's promptings. As you hear His voice, confirm the thought with Scripture and that it does not go against what the Bible already has revealed from God; then write down what you sense God saying to you in the journal space provided each day. Finish with Closing Prayer at end of booklet.

A Special Word for Branch Groups...

Please set aside extra time each week at Branch Group to spend time praying that God would reveal His will for our church. There will be questions at the end of this booklet to guide the conversation and prepare your group to pray. Leaders, please look over these questions to determine which questions may be right for your group to discuss in preparation for prayer.

Please join us on Wednesday nights at our midweek worship service.

Each Wednesday night in the month of May will be a special worship and guided prayer time to extend what we are doing to be done corporately. The first Wednesday of June, June 1st, will be a special celebration that brings to conclusion our 31 days of Prayer faith journey... please make a special effort to join us that night as we want to hear what God has been speaking to you.

Prayer Themes for our journey – we will pray for:

- Week 1 ... Our Posture and Approach in Prayer
- Week 2 ... Personal Protection and Provision
- Week 3 ... Church Leadership and Guidance
- Week 4 ... Spiritual Warfare and Prayer

Free Suggested Resource:

"Lectio 365" app available in your phone's app store

Day 1... (Week 1 ... Our Posture and Approach in Prayer)

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read Psalm 5:1-3 (ESV)...

Give ear to my words, O Lord; consider my groaning.
² Give attention to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for to you do I pray.
³ O Lord, in the morning You hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for You and watch.

And **R**eflect on:

- 1) Why do we pray to God?
- 2) What is the posture we are to take in prayer?

Ask God for guidance on what to "groan" and "pray" for...

Day 2...

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read 1 John 5:13-15 (NIV)...

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. 14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us—whatever we ask we know that we have what we asked of Him.

And **R**eflect on:

- 1) Why do we have confidence to approach God?
- 2) What is the condition by which we are to pray?

Ask God for guidance on what God's will is for our church and your life...

Day 3...

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read Psalm 4:1-3 (NIV)...

Answer me when I call to you, my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; have mercy on me and hear my prayer. ² How long will you people turn My glory into shame? How long will you love delusions and seek false gods? ³ Know that the Lord has set apart His faithful servant for Himself; the Lord hears when I call to Him.

And **R**eflect on:

- 1) Why do we seek relief from God in our distress?
- 2) What is the difference between the people described in verse 2 and verse 3?

Ask God for His protection and provision for aspects of our church and your life that need God's intervention...

Day 4...

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read Psalm 85:8-10 (NLT)...

 I listen carefully to what God the Lord is saying, for He speaks peace to His faithful people. But let them not return to their foolish ways.
 ⁹ Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, so our land will be filled with His glory.
 ¹⁰ Unfailing love and truth have met together. Righteousness and peace have kissed!

And Reflect on:

- 1) What are the elements God has spoken to us?
- 2) What is the relationship between listening carefully to God and "fearing" Him?

Ask God for to show you how to hear His voice more clearly and to reject any foolish distractions...

Day 5...

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read Psalm 17:1-3 (NLT)...

O Lord, hear my plea for justice. Listen to my cry for help. Pay attention to my prayer, for it comes from honest lips.
² Declare me innocent, for You see those who do right.
³ You have tested my thoughts and examined my heart in the night. You have scrutinized me and found nothing wrong. I am determined not to sin in what I say.

And **R**eflect on:

- 1) What are the motivations for the psalmist to pray?
- 2) Why is a pure heart a requirement for God to answer our prayer requests?

Ask God for to search you and see if there is any offensive way within you (Ps. 139:23,24) ...

Day 6...

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read Hebrews 4:15-16 (NIV)...

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have One who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet He did not sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

And Reflect on:

- 1) Why can we approach God with confidence?
- 2) What do you picture when you think of God's "throne of grace"?

Ask God to increase your confidence in God's grace and mercy that may you seek His will...

Day 7...

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read Ps. 46:10-11 (NIV)...

He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." ¹¹ The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

And **R**eflect on:

- 1) Why is it hard to be still and just listen for God's voice?
- 2) What is God declaring about Himself and how should that focus our attitude and actions?

Ask God to help you be still in your rushing thoughts and the day's activities...

Day 8... (Week 2 ... Personal Protection and Provision)

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read Col. 1:9-12 (NIV)...

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, ¹⁰ so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹ being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, ¹² and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of His holy people in the kingdom of light.

And Reflect on:

- 1) What is the focus of the knowledge that God gives us?
- 2) Why does God provide this knowledge?

Ask God to help you live worthy of Him and all He has given you, bearing spiritual fruit in all your efforts ...

Day 9...

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read Zephaniah 3:17 (NIV)...

The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in His love He will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.

And Reflect on:

- 1) What are the actions that God takes with us?
- 2) What is the significance that God delights in you?

Ask God to help you experience His delight in you, to hear Him rejoicing of you...

Day 10...

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read Numbers 6:24-26 (NIV)...

 ""The Lord bless you and keep you;
 ²⁵ the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you;
 ²⁶ the Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace.""

And Reflect on:

- 1) What do you think it means for God to "keep you"?
- 2) Why is God's blessing seen as His face turning toward you and shining on you?

Ask God to show you what hinders your experience of His grace and peace; ask for His help to remove these barriers.

Day 11...

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read Genesis 17:7 (NIV)...

I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.

And **R**eflect on:

- 1) What was this covenant based upon? (Remember this was long before the Law was given)
- 2) What is the significance that God is building this covenant with Abraham's descendants too?

Ask God to protect and provide for those who will come after you (both in your family and in your church)...

Day 12...

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

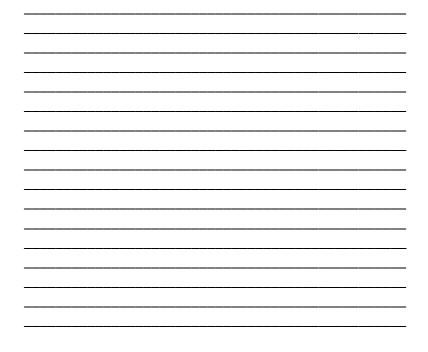
Read Psalm 73:26 (NKJV)...

My flesh and my heart fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

And Reflect on:

- 1) Why do your "flesh" and "heart" fail?
- 2) What is expected of you because God is the strength by which we live?

Ask God to sustain your actions towards others with His strength and for a larger portion of His power in your life.



Day 13...

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read Psalms 42:1-2 (NLT)...

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for You, my God. ² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

And **R**eflect on:

- 1) When was the last time you truly desired God's presence as "thirsting"?
- 2) When and where can you meet with God?

Ask God to increase your desire for His power and presence in your life...

Day 14...

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read Romans 15:13 (NLT)...

I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in Him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

And Reflect on:

- 1) What is the impact of God's hope in us?
- 2) What is the result of this hope supposed to be in you?

Ask God to for overflowing joy, peace and power in the lives of those you know who are Christians...



Day 15... (Week 3 ... Church Leadership and Guidance)

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

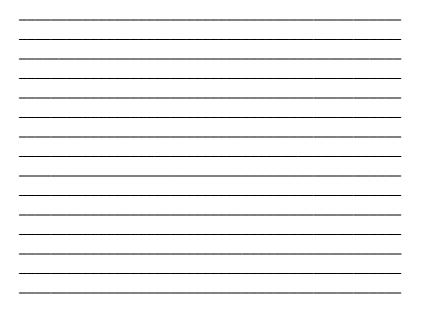
Read John 17:20-21 (NIV)...

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

And **R**eflect on:

- 1) Who is the focus on in Jesus' prayer according to v. 20?
- 2) What is Jesus specifically praying for in these verses?

Ask God to increase our church's unity and to give you insight to anything that may be hindering this...



Day 16...

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read Eph 3:14-21 (NIV)...

For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶ I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. ²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, ²¹ to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

And Reflect on:

- 1) How would you summarize what Paul is praying to happen in the Ephesian church?
- 2) Who is the one to accomplish this work and how?

Ask God to deepen our church's foundation of love so that God is glorified in our church

Day 17...

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read Eph 4:11-13 (NIV)...

"So Christ Himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip His people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ 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.

And **R**eflect on:

- 1) Why did God give a variety of spiritual gifts of leadership for the church?
- 2) What is the ultimate result of everyone using their spiritual gifts in works of service according to v. 13?

Ask God to reveal where you can serve God's purpose with your spiritual gifts in our church and our community...

Day 18...

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read 1 Cor. 12:4-6 (NIV)...

"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

And Reflect on:

- 1) What could be sources of division in the church according to these verses?
- 2) Why is it important to remember "...in everyone it is the same God at work"?

Ask God to bring to mind any barriers to unity that exist in our church and for insight to what you can do about it...

Day 19...

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read 1 Cor. 12:12-14 (NIV)...

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

And **R**eflect on:

- 1) Why is the human body a great analogy for God's church?
- 2) What would be lacking in our church if a particular group was missing?

Ask God to help us create an inclusive spirit at our church.

Day 20...

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read Phil. 2:1-4 (NIV) ...

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being likeminded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

And **R**eflect on:

- 1) Why is our personal experience with Jesus the motivating factor in how we are to treat others?
- 2) How do we overcome "selfish ambition"?

Ask God to deepen the common sharing of God's comfort and love at our church; ask for insight of who's interests need to be considered more...

Day 21...

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read Acts 1:8 (NIV)...

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

And **R**eflect on:

- 1) When did you receive God's Spirit? (See Rom. 8 if needed)
- 2) Why is it necessary to receive God's power before we seek to be His witness in the world?

Ask God to lead to those to whom you can be a witness to of God's love and power



Day 22... (Week 4 ... Spiritual Warfare and Prayer)

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

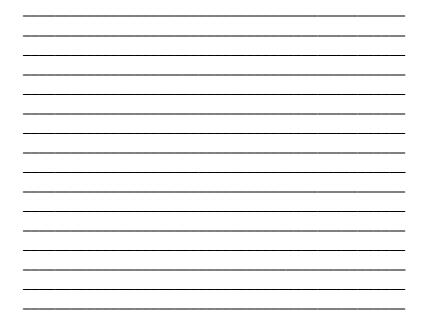
Read Eph. 6:18 (NLT) ...

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people."

And **R**eflect on:

- 1) What occasions may we not think to pray for? Why should we pray even in those circumstances?
- 2) What is the relationship to being alert and praying for other Christians?

Ask God to give you insight into how to pray for other people in our church...



Day 23...

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read Ps. 34:17-19 (NLT)...

The Lord hears His people when they call to Him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles.
¹⁸ The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; He rescues those whose spirits are crushed.
¹⁹ The righteous person faces many troubles, but the Lord comes to the rescue each time.

And **R**eflect on:

- 1) When have you felt "crushed"?
- 2) How do you know God has been "close" to those when troubled or brokenhearted?

Ask God to come to aid of those who may be feeling overwhelmed, troubled or "crushed" in this season...

Day 24...

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read Eph. 6:10-12 (NIV)...

A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. ¹¹ Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. ¹² For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

And Reflect on:

- 1) When do you feel most like you are in a "battle"?
- 2) How are we to approach this spiritual battle?

Ask God to prepare you daily to face the spiritual challenges that are present?

Day 25...

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

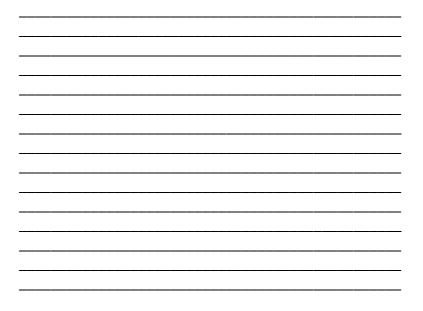
Read Isa. 37:20 (NIV)... Context: This is the conclusion to King Hezekiah's prayer when Assyrian king Sennacherib attacked Jerusalem and mocked God and God's people.

"Now, Lord our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You, Lord, are the only God."

And **R**eflect on:

- How do you think Hezekiah is feeling to be in the "hand" of another king/power?
- 2) What is the reason Hezekiah seeks God's help?

Ask God to make known His power and presence in the cultural battles taking place in our society...



Day 26...

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read 2 Cor. 10:4-5 (NIV)...

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ

And Reflect on:

- 1) What are the "weapons" you normally respond with to the challenges that you face?
- 2) What are the "weapons" God has given us according to verse 5?

Ask God to help you take captive all the distracting and defeating thoughts and instead fill your mind with His thoughts so that overcome the battles in your life...

Day 27...

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read Matt. 18:18-20 (NIV)...

"Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ "Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three gather in My name, there am I with them."

And **R**eflect on:

- 1) While God is always with you, what happens when two or more Christians gather together that is unique to the individual presence you have with God?
- 2) What is Jesus giving us authority to do regarding the church?

Ask God to give guidance to our church leaders to know how to operate in His authority...

Day 28...

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read Romans 8:31-37 (NIV)...

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

And **R**eflect on:

- 1) Why do I need not feel defeated?
- 2) What should be my mindset instead be based upon?

Ask God to intervention in any situation in which you feel defeated, condemned or separated from Him...

Day 29... (Finishing Strong by Listening)

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read Romans 8:26-27 (NIV)...

"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. ²⁷ And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

And **R**eflect on:

- 1) When are you most likely at a loss of how to pray?
- 2) What is the Spirit doing at these times? Why is it comforting to know this is in "accordance to the will of God"?

Ask God to fill your mind with His thoughts and your voice with His groans for God's people...

Day 30... (Finishing Strong by Listening)

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read Ps. 37:3-7 (NIV) ...

"Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.
⁴ Take delight in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.
⁵ Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him and He will do this:
⁶ He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun.
⁷ Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him; do not fret when people succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.

And **R**eflect on:

- What is the connection between "trusting", "taking delight in the Lord" and being still "before the Lord"?
- 2) Considering the situation in v. 7, why is this hard to do?

Ask God to quiet your mind and open your eyes to see the alive and present powerful Savior, pray for people of faith to rise up with gentle but bold voices of truth...

Day 31... (Finishing Strong by Listening)

Pause for a few moments to quiet your heart and mind

Read Pr. 3:5-6 (NIV) ...

 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;
 ⁶ in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.

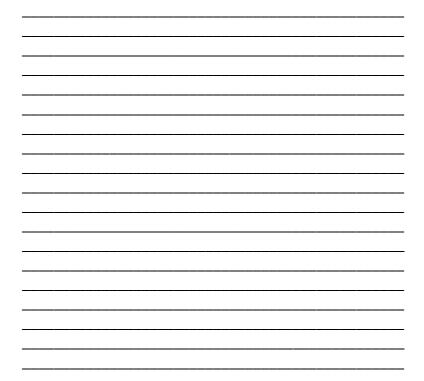
And **R**eflect on:

- 1) How does "our" understanding cause us to stumble in Life?
- 2) What do "straight" paths look like in our lives?

Ask God to help you be fully aware of the struggles and questions you have and to show you how to turn your heart to worship of Him in all aspects of your life...

Final Summary Thoughts

Write below a summary of what you believe God has spoken to you over the past 31 days...



Closing Prayer (from Lectio 365):

Father, help me to live this day to the full, being true to You, in every way.

Jesus, help me to give myself away to others, being kind to everyone I meet.

Spirit, help me to love the lost, proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen

Branch Group Questions

Here are a few questions to "prime the pump" for your Branch Group to spend more time praying and listening for God's voice during your weekly gathering

Week 1 (Our Posture and Approach in Prayer)

- How do you normally approach your prayer time?
- What are you expecting to hear/feel during prayer?

Week 2 (Personal Protection and Provision)

- What is your favorite Bible verse that speaks about the way God cares for you?
- Why is prayer a primary way we experience God's peace?

Week 3 (Church Leadership and Guidance)

- What do you see God doing in our church?
- What is something you would want God to do in the lives and families of our church's leaders?

Week 4 (Spiritual Warfare and Prayer)

- What are the greatest threats to God's people that you see?
- What do you think God is saying for us as a church?