TAMPA LIFE CHURCH

WHY WE PRAY

Understanding prayer, healing, peace, and intercession



INTRODUCTION

Understanding our Sunday service

James 5:16 | KJV

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

On Sunday, our gathering at Tampa Life Church centered on prayer. We prayed for the sick, for people facing trouble, and for those who needed peace. We brought one another's burdens before God and asked Him to work in situations beyond our ability to change. For those familiar with this kind of service, the purpose may have seemed clear. For others, it may have raised honest questions. Why do we pray together? Why do we ask for healing? What gives us confidence that God hears us?

Those questions deserve a biblical answer. Our confidence must rest on the Word of God. A moving atmosphere can touch our emotions, but Scripture explains why we approach God and what He calls us to do for one another. The same Bible that teaches the church to preach also teaches the church to pray. Acts 2:42 describes the first believers continuing in the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers. Prayer belonged to the shared life of the church from its beginning.

Intercession means praying to God on behalf of someone else. We ask Him to meet a need that another person carries. When we pray for a family under pressure, a person in pain, or someone who feels overwhelmed, we practice this ministry. We do not need to understand every detail of the situation. We bring the person to the Lord with love, trusting that He knows what we cannot see and can do what we cannot do.

This study explains why we pray and how we can participate with understanding. We will look at God's invitation to approach Him, His command to pray for one another, and the biblical foundation for asking for healing, peace, and miracles. We will also consider how to remain faithful when an answer takes time. Our purpose is to grow into a church family that brings real needs to Jesus and continues to care for people after the service ends.

CONSIDER TOGETHER

Which part of a service centered on prayer would we like to understand more clearly?

01 GOD HEARS US

We pray because God invites us

1 John 5:14 | KJV

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

Prayer begins with God's invitation. We are able to approach Him because He has made a way for us through Jesus Christ. Hebrews 4:14-16 describes Jesus as our great High Priest, who understands our weaknesses, and invites us to come boldly to the throne of grace. That boldness is confidence in His mercy. We do not have to impress God with a long speech or reach a certain level of emotion before we can ask for help. We come because He welcomes us.

Jesus teaches in Matthew 6:8 that our Father knows what we need before we ask Him. This may lead us to wonder why we should pray at all. Yet immediately afterward, Jesus teaches His disciples how to pray. God's knowledge does not remove our need for relationship with Him. As we pray, we acknowledge our dependence, ask for His provision, confess our sins, and yield our desires to His will. He knows our needs and still invites us to bring them before Him.

First John places our confidence in God Himself and connects our asking to His will. We can ask boldly because He is powerful and good, while recognizing that we do not know everything He knows. Jesus modeled this surrender in Gethsemane when He prayed, 'nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done' (Luke 22:42). Submission to God's will is an expression of faith. We entrust our requests to the One whose wisdom reaches beyond our understanding.

We also pray in Jesus' name, as He teaches in John 14:13-14. His name is not a formula that gives us control over an outcome. We approach God through Jesus and seek what honors Him. Our confidence does not come from how eloquently we speak, how many people hear us, or how strongly we feel. It comes from the Lord to whom we are praying. A simple, sincere prayer can express deep trust: Lord Jesus, we need Your help, and we place this situation in Your hands.

CONSIDER TOGETHER

How does God's invitation change the way we approach Him when we feel weak or unworthy?

02 WE CARRY ONE ANOTHER

God calls us to pray for others

1 Timothy 2:1 | KJV

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

Praying for others is a direct biblical responsibility. Paul urges the church to offer prayers and intercessions for all people. Our prayer life therefore reaches beyond our own needs and the people closest to us. We can pray for our children, neighbors, coworkers, church leaders, and those in authority. Jesus even teaches us to pray for those who mistreat us in Matthew 5:44. Prayer gives love a way to respond when a situation is painful, complicated, or beyond our reach.

First Corinthians 12:26 explains that when one member of the body suffers, the other members suffer with it. This helps us understand why a congregation gathers around someone who is hurting. Their struggle matters to the whole church. Galatians 6:2 also calls us to bear one another's burdens. We cannot always remove another person's burden, but we can refuse to leave that person alone with it. We listen, pray, encourage, and offer the practical help we are able to give.

The friends in Mark 2:1-12 provide a vivid picture of bringing someone to Jesus. They carried a paralyzed man to the house where Jesus was teaching and, when the crowd blocked the way, lowered him through the roof. The account describes a physical act of faith, rather than a formal prayer meeting, but it helps us understand the loving concern behind intercession. Their friend's need became something they were willing to carry. Jesus saw their faith and ministered to the man.

Intercession can begin with an ordinary question: How can we pray with you? We do not need private details to pray sincerely. Sometimes another person is too exhausted or distressed to find many words, and our prayer becomes a way of standing beside them. Afterward, love continues through a message, a meal, a visit, or another appropriate act of care. James 2:15-16 challenges us to respond to practical needs with more than kind words. Prayer and active compassion belong together in the life of the church.

CONSIDER TOGETHER

Whose burden can we carry in prayer this week, and what practical care could accompany that prayer?

03 PRAYER FOR THE SICK

We believe God can heal

James 5:14-15 | KJV

Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

We pray for healing because Scripture reveals God's compassion for the sick and instructs the church to pray for them. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus responds to people suffering from disease and physical weakness. Matthew 14:14 says that He was moved with compassion toward the multitude and healed their sick. These accounts reveal both His authority and His care. The people who came to Him were more than examples of a spiritual lesson; their pain mattered to Him.

James brings prayer for the sick into the life of the church. The sick person may call for the elders, who pray and anoint with oil in the name of the Lord. The oil accompanies obedient prayer; the passage identifies the Lord as the One who raises the sick. Power does not belong to the oil or to a particular minister. Our trust rests in Jesus. When we pray this way, we are responding to a biblical instruction with dependence on Him.

We believe God can still heal today. Hebrews 13:8 affirms that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and 1 Corinthians 12 includes gifts of healing among the Spirit's gifts. Our Apostolic conviction is that we may continue to seek His healing work. We ask specifically and expectantly, while entrusting the result to Him. We cannot promise the timing or manner of every answer, and someone who remains sick still needs our prayers, companionship, and care.

Illness does not establish that someone has committed a particular sin or failed to believe strongly enough. In John 9:1-3, Jesus rejects His disciples' proposed explanation that a man's blindness resulted from his own sin or his parents' sin. James' words about forgiveness also do not make every illness evidence of personal wrongdoing. We must minister with compassion. Prayer can accompany appropriate medical care, and receiving treatment does not mean we have abandoned faith. We continue to ask for healing and to support the person who is suffering.

CONSIDER TOGETHER

How can we pray confidently for healing while showing patient compassion to someone who is still sick?

04 EXPECTING GOD TO WORK

Why we pray for miracles

Acts 4:29-30 | KJV

And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

A miracle is an extraordinary work of God that displays His power beyond ordinary human ability. Scripture records Jesus opening blind eyes, cleansing lepers, and raising the dead. These works direct our attention to who He is. John 20:30-31 explains that the signs recorded in that Gospel were written so that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and have life through His name. A biblical understanding of miracles keeps Jesus at the center.

In Acts 4, believers facing threats gather to pray. They ask God for boldness to speak His Word and for healing, signs, and wonders through Jesus' name. Their request joins the proclamation of the gospel with dependence on God's power. This gives us a clear example of a church asking God to do what its members could not accomplish themselves. The believers did not treat their difficult circumstances as a reason to stop expecting Him to work.

First Corinthians 12:10 also names the working of miracles among the manifestations of the Spirit. Verse 11 explains that the Spirit distributes His gifts according to His will. From these passages, we believe the church should remain open to God's miraculous work today. We cannot produce a miracle through pressure, technique, or excitement. We can pray in faith, obey Scripture, and remain available to the Lord. The power belongs to Him, and any testimony should bring Him honor.

Our expectation must remain truthful. We should not exaggerate a story or announce an outcome we do not know has happened. We can give thanks for improvement, acknowledge what is still uncertain, and keep praying. Honest testimony honors God and respects the people involved. We also recognize His goodness in ordinary provision, wise counsel, and faithful care without needing to label every helpful event a miracle. Whether He works through an extraordinary intervention or sustains us through daily grace, our trust remains in Jesus Himself. We ask for miracles because He is able, and we follow Him because He is Lord.

CONSIDER TOGETHER

What need can we bring to God with fresh expectation, while leaving the outcome in His hands?

05 PEACE IN OUR TROUBLE

We bring our burdens to God

Philippians 4:6-7 | KJV

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

We pray for peace because our needs include the burdens within us. A person may appear well and still carry grief, fear, family tension, or uncertainty about the future. Philippians 4 invites us to bring those concerns before God. In this passage, 'be careful for nothing' addresses anxious care. Paul directs us toward prayer, specific requests, and thanksgiving. We are invited to bring the very things that trouble us into our relationship with the Lord.

The passage promises that God's peace will keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. It does not say that every difficult circumstance will disappear before we can experience His care. The word 'keep' communicates the idea of guarding. We can ask God to steady us while we wait for a decision, strengthen us while we grieve, and help us respond wisely in a tense situation. His presence gives us someone to turn toward when our own thoughts feel unsettled.

Jesus spoke about peace while preparing His disciples for trouble. In John 16:33, He told them they would have tribulation in the world and encouraged them because He had overcome the world. Christian peace is rooted in the Lord who remains faithful through suffering. We can acknowledge pain honestly while trusting Him. Tears do not make prayer a failure, and a person who still feels distressed after prayer has not become less worthy of God's love or the church's support.

Praying for peace also opens our hearts to obedience. Philippians 4:8-9 continues with instructions about our thoughts and the things we practice. We may need to apologize, seek wise counsel, address a conflict, or take the next responsible step in a difficult situation. Prayer helps us place those actions before God. As a church family, we can become part of His care by listening patiently and staying close to those who struggle. We ask Him to give peace, and we offer companionship as people learn to carry their burdens with Him.

CONSIDER TOGETHER

What concern do we need to name honestly before God, and what faithful next step is available to us?

06 PRAYING AS A CHURCH

Why we gather and pray together

Acts 4:24 | KJV

And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:

The New Testament shows believers praying both privately and together. Jesus teaches private prayer in Matthew 6:6, and Acts describes the congregation gathering to seek God. These practices strengthen one another. Personal prayer develops our daily dependence on the Lord, while shared prayer allows us to carry common needs and encourage one another's faith. In Acts 12:5, the church prayed earnestly for Peter while he was in prison. His need became a concern the believers brought to God together.

Someone new to a Pentecostal service may wonder why several people pray aloud at the same time. Acts 4 describes believers lifting their voice to God with one accord. Our shared spoken prayer expresses that same desire to seek Him together, though the passage does not prescribe the precise sound or volume of every gathering. We may agree with a person leading prayer, pray aloud near others, or participate quietly. God hears us in each of these settings.

Physical expressions can also have a biblical foundation. First Timothy 2:8 speaks of lifting holy hands in prayer, and Acts 20:36 describes Paul kneeling to pray with believers. James 5 describes anointing the sick with oil. These actions can express surrender, reverence, and obedience. They do not create God's power, and no single posture proves the depth of someone's faith. Those who cannot kneel or lift their hands can still pray with a sincere heart. We also ask before touching someone when offering personal prayer.

First Corinthians 14:26 directs attention to building up the church, and verse 40 calls for things to be done decently and in order. These principles help us welcome the Spirit's work with care for everyone present. Leaders can explain what is happening, invite participation, and give clear direction. No one needs to imitate an emotional response to belong. A person may weep, another may pray with a steady voice, and another may quietly begin to trust God. Our shared purpose is to approach Jesus in faith and love, allowing His Word to guide the way we minister to one another.

CONSIDER TOGETHER

How can our shared prayer help a first-time guest understand what we are doing and feel welcome to participate?

07 FAITH WHILE WE WAIT

When the answer has not come

Luke 18:1 | KJV

And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

Some prayer requests are answered quickly, while others remain before God for a long time. This can be one of the hardest parts of faith. We may have prayed sincerely, received prayer from others, and still face the same pain or uncertainty. Scripture gives us room to speak honestly about that experience. The Psalms contain questions and lament as well as praise. Bringing our grief to God is itself an act of relationship; we are still turning toward Him with what we carry.

Jesus introduces the parable in Luke 18 by teaching that we ought always to pray and not lose heart. Its point is not that God shares the unjust judge's reluctance to care. Jesus draws a contrast that encourages confidence in God's justice. We continue praying because the Lord is worthy of our trust. Repeated prayer is not necessarily empty repetition. Returning with a real need can express ongoing dependence, even when our words are simple and familiar.

Second Corinthians 12:7-10 also shows us a prayer answered in a way Paul had not requested. He asked three times for his thorn in the flesh to depart. Scripture does not identify that thorn precisely, so we should avoid claiming certainty about its nature. The Lord answered by assuring Paul of sufficient grace and strength made perfect in weakness. This passage does not tell every sick person to stop seeking healing. It shows that God can sustain His servant even when the requested removal has not occurred.

We do not always know why a particular answer is delayed or why suffering continues. We should resist giving explanations God has not given us, especially when speaking to someone in pain. We can keep asking for healing, wisdom, provision, and peace without making promises on God's behalf. As a congregation, we remain present after the moment of prayer. We remember the person, follow up with care, and make room for both hopeful testimony and honest tears. Faithfulness includes continuing to love people whose stories do not yet have the ending they hoped for.

CONSIDER TOGETHER

What would it look like to keep praying for someone while making room for their grief and unanswered questions?

08 PUTTING PRAYER INTO PRACTICE

A praying church begins with us

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 | KJV

Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

A Sunday devoted to prayer can become the beginning of a deeper daily practice. Paul's instruction to pray without ceasing describes a life that keeps turning toward God. We still attend to work, family, rest, and other responsibilities, but we learn to bring those parts of life into His presence. A regular time of focused prayer can help us develop this habit, and brief prayers during the day can keep our hearts attentive to Him.

We can begin simply by reading a short passage of Scripture and responding to what it teaches. We thank God for His goodness, confess what needs to change, and ask for help to obey. Then we bring specific needs before Him. We may name a sick friend, a family under pressure, or someone who needs to know Jesus. Using Scripture helps our prayer grow in understanding. We are learning to ask in ways shaped by God's character and purposes.

When praying with another person, we can listen first and ask what they would like prayer for. Then we speak honestly to Jesus about that need. We do not need to give a speech or explain the cause of their suffering. A short prayer offered with faith and love is a meaningful beginning. We can ask for healing, peace, strength, and guidance, then thank God for hearing us. Afterward, a practical act of kindness may help the person experience the care of the church.

In our homes, we can teach our children that prayer belongs to ordinary life. We can thank God around the table, pray before difficult decisions, and remember people who are hurting. Children learn something about the Lord when they see us depend on Him and respond with compassion. They also need truthful language: we can tell them that God hears us, that He is able to work, and that we trust Him even when we do not understand the answer.

This is why we prayed together on Sunday. We believe God invites us to approach Him, calls us to care for one another, and has power to heal and work miracles. We seek His peace in trouble and His grace while we wait. As we return to our daily responsibilities, we carry that same invitation with us. We can become people who bring burdens to Jesus and remain available to serve those for whom we pray.

CONSIDER TOGETHER

What specific time and place will help us begin a steady practice of prayer this week?

REVIEW AND RESPONSE

Making the lesson our own

Complete each thought using the Scripture references.

1. If we ask anything according to His _____, He hears us. (1 John 5:14)

2. Paul urges that prayers and intercessions be made for _____ men. (1 Timothy 2:1)

3. The sick may call for the _____ of the church to pray. (James 5:14)

4. The early church asked God for _____ to speak His Word. (Acts 4:29)

5. God's peace will keep our hearts and _____ through Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7)

6. Jesus taught that we ought always to pray and not to _____. (Luke 18:1)

A prayer to make our own

Lord Jesus, thank You for inviting us to come before You. Teach us to pray with faith, understanding, and compassion. We ask You to touch the sick, give peace to troubled hearts, and work in situations beyond our strength. Help us carry one another's burdens and remain faithful while we wait. Let Your Spirit guide our prayers and shape our daily lives. Make us a church family that trusts Your Word and expresses Your love through practical care. We place our needs in Your hands and ask that Your will be done. In Jesus' name, amen.

OUR NEXT STEP

This week we will pray for _____

and offer this practical care _____

Answer key 1 will 2 all 3 elders 4 boldness 5 minds 6 faint

REFLECT AND RESPOND

From understanding to practice

Read, discuss, or write a personal response to each question.

1. How does the invitation in Hebrews 4:14-16 help us pray when we feel weak, ashamed, or uncertain?

2. What is the difference between knowing about someone's burden and helping carry it? What could prayer and practical care look like together?

3. How can we hold a strong belief in divine healing while continuing to care for someone whose healing has not yet come?

4. What would help someone unfamiliar with Pentecostal worship understand and participate in a service centered on prayer?

5. Which request will we continue bringing to God this week, and what act of obedience or compassion should accompany it?