



CHURCH WITHOUT WALLS

CONNECTION

In this series of 'Church Without Walls' we're suggesting to you that church looks like connecting with others to help with your spiritual growth. Sometimes we preach God's message of love with words and other times our actions of love speak loudest.

GATHER WITH OTHERS AND CENTRE YOUR ATTENTION ON GOD IN YOUR MIDST.

Connection Activity 1:

Meet a friend for coffee and chat about your spiritual growth.

Our spiritual growth often comes from a challenge of faith. This challenge is your issue of this moment that god is using to help you grow and mature spiritually. These challenges come as part of life and we all experience them. When we reflect on what is happening we can learn and grow, and often sharing with a friend helps us to gain perspective.

There are several in our church family who enjoy going for walks and using this time to speak of their personal faith journey. Others prefer a coffee date or an ice cream. The key thing is to connect with someone else and centre your attention on god in your midst.

Our goal as a church family is to be well-connected with each other and our community. To achieve this goal we are encouraging you to step into an intentional conversation about your spiritual growth.

Being open like this does require you to be vulnerable, but as Brene Brown says, "vulnerability builds connection." She goes on to say, "one of the reasons there is such an intimacy deficit today is because we don't know how to be vulnerable. Vulnerability is glue that holds intimate relationships together."

Inviting others in allows us to experience true connection.

Connection Activity 2: Visit your neighbour.

Too often we live in an insular, introverted way and don't even reach out to those people who live closest to us - our neighbours! In this Connect challenge we're encouraging you to make a bold move and deliver some kind of treat to your neighbour. It could be baking, a surprise gift or an offer to help them with a job around the house.

Do you have others in your house? If so, invite them to be part of this challenge. Maybe you have young children, if so, include them in preparing the treat you're planning to deliver. If you have older children, ask them to think about ways they could serve your neighbours by doing chores or running errands.

Do you know others in your neighbourhood? Perhaps you could extend this challenge to include more than one neighbour. Have a street party! Book in a BBQ night, host a games night or plan a working bee.

Don't limit your imagination as you find ways to love your neighbours .

Connection Activity 3: Gather with other families and complete a family bible study.

Do you have a crazy image in your head when you think about getting your kids together with other kids to have a calm and sensible time of Bible devotions? It may end up looking a bit chaotic, but surely the effort is going to be worth it, right?! Whatever the outcome, we encourage you to give this a go and help your kids to have a natural relationship with the Word of God. Have faith - the seeds you plant in your children at an early age will bear good fruit in the years to come.

The goal here is connection. Invite one or two other families to join you and make a plan with the parents as to how you're going to manage the chaos. Who is going to lead and who is going to organise the snacks - all of these things need to be planned.

Find a devotion that will suit your family. There are so many great family devotions available in Christian bookstores and on the internet.

This is a great opportunity to invite other children in your neighbourhood to be a part of your family bible study.

Pray with your children and ask God to show them who they would like to invite over to join you. Be very careful to fully inform the parents what you are doing so they don't accuse you of wrong motives. Trust God that He will open the door for a significant connection.

God's Good News is for everyone!

Connection Activity 4: Gather together to remember Jesus in your midst.

Sharing communion together and remembering the sacrifice of Jesus is a special way to form a strong connection and help with your spiritual growth.

JESUS INSTRUCTED US TO SHARE COMMUNION

When the time came, Jesus and the apostles sat down together at the table. Jesus said, "I have been very eager to eat this Passover meal with you before my suffering begins. For I tell you now that I won't eat this meal again until its meaning is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God." Then he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. Then he said, "Take this and share it among yourselves. For I will not drink wine again until the Kingdom of God has come." He took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." After supper he took another cup of wine and said, "This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.

(Luke 22: 14-20)

Communion is a special time when we choose to remember the sacrifice Jesus made for us all. Sharing communion with someone is a special way to form a strong connection and help with your spiritual growth.

All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.

(Acts 2: 42)

Scripture to focus on.

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

(2 Peter 1: 3-4)

Connection Activity 5: Bless others in prayer.

Pray for one another.

Therefore, 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.

(James 5:16)

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

(Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

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Find someone you've never prayed with before and ask how you could bless them in prayer.

This may take you outside of your comfort zone, but it will grow you in spirit and in faith. God will use you and bless someone as you step out in obedience. And, as you do, you will be blessed in ways you did not imagine!

Let's leave the final words to the Apostle Paul:

Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important.

(Galatians 6: 2-3)



CHURCH WITHOUT WALLS

DEVOTIONS

In this series of 'Church Without Walls' we're suggesting to you that church looks like spending time with God. Spending time with God makes room for the Holy Spirit to meet your deepest needs. We encourage personal devotions using scripture to guide us as a helpful tool in allowing God to work in our hearts.

MAKE ROOM FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT TO MEET YOUR DEEPEST NEEDS.

Devotions Activity 1: (Acts 2: 38-47)

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

DISCUSS:

What you think "holy fellowship" looks like?

How we choose to fellowship with others affects our walk with God. Consider these questions and write out your answers or discuss them with a friend.

- What was the "fruit" of the way the Acts 2 church lived out their faith together?
- Identify the key to the outbreak of the Holy spirit in this church group?
- Are there disciplines you need to implement in your life to become devoted to fellowship?

Devotions Activity 2: (Genesis 16: 1-16)

The angel of the Lord found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. 8 And he said, "Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?" (verse 7)

Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, "You are God Who Sees"; for she said, "Have I not even here [in the wilderness] remained alive after seeing Him [who sees me with understanding and compassion]?" Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi (Well of the Living One Who Sees Me); it is between Kadesh and Bered. (verses 13-14)

As we do "church" a little differently in this summer series, take some time to reflect on the fact that God is "El Roi". Contemplate what this means for you and discuss it with someone else.

How can you be the hands and feet of Jesus and show someone love this week?

How we choose to see God in our circumstances affects our walk with God and others. Consider these questions as you ponder this story:

- Have you been in a season where you have felt hidden from God? How did God bring you hope and comfort in this season?
- When is it you feel most "seen" by God?
- What other names of God bring you comfort?

Abram and Sarai were desperate for a child, in fact, so desperate they took matters into their own hands. Sarai gave her maidservant to her Abram and she conceived a child. At this news Sarai mistreated Hagar, and Hagar fled.

She ran from all she knew, feeling hopeless and dejected hiding by a spring in the desert. Yet even when she fled, the Angel of the Lord found her and brought her hope and comfort, reminding her that The Lord sees her and knows her. He reminded her that God is "El Roi" - the God who sees us.

Devotions Activity 3: (Acts 20: 7-12)

Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together. And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing him said, "Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him." Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed. And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted.

As we actively live being the Church Without Walls let us not neglect meeting together. This doesn't need to be formal or planned, and you don't need to speak until midnight, and there is nothing greater than a spontaneous picnic or fish and chips by the lake with others!

How could you be the Church Without Walls this week?

Here are a few ideas:

- Invite another family to join you for donuts at the park.
- Invite someone for dinner.
- Do a shout out on social media saying you'll be somewhere at a certain time and invite anyone to join you.
- Drop round some muffins to a single person you know.
- Invite people to join you for pizza by the lake and take turns sharing how you are being the Church Without Walls.

From the beginning of time, it has always been God's plan that we would meet together; to gather and share a meal, share communion, and share our lives with one another.

Paul made a point in Acts 20 to share for as long as he could as he didn't know when he would see them again, he couldn't keep the good news to himself.

In our busy world it is easy to neglect getting together. Sometimes it is easier to "connect" online or not at all, but Paul shows us how we are called to gather.

Acts 20:12 tells us all the people were "greatly comforted" when they left. We never fully know the impact we can have on people with a small gesture of kindness, an invitation, or a kind word, so let's meet together, share our lives and all walk away greatly comforted.

Devotions Activity 4: (2 Chronicles 34: 1-2)

Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

Some people avoid the relationship of spiritual mothers and fathers because of fear of control or manipulation. But when it functions healthily, this relationship is truly a gift from God for our growth and health as believers.

So, how can you develop positive, Godly relationships with the spiritual parents or spiritual children in your life?

- Start with your own sonship journey
- Let people lead you
- Live life together
- Become a disciple
- Avoid the pitfall of control
- Mature People: ask God who to pour into
- Daughters and Sons: be present
- Allow God to father you

Josiah was still a child when he became King of Jerusalem, yet he ruled with integrity and a steadfast resolve to walk in the ways of God, just as his father David had done. This story reminds us that we always have people watching and learning from us, just as we are learning from those around us. Not all of us have our own children, but God has called each one of us to be Spiritual Mothers and Fathers to those in our community.

God puts people in our lives to bless us, lead us, and spiritually parent us. But we have to let them in.

In reflecting on who influences you and who you have influence over, here are some questions to think about:

- How are your actions positively affecting those around you?
- Do people who know you, know what you stand for?
- Are you living in a way which points people to their Heavenly Father?
- How could you take a bold step of faith this week?



CHURCH WITHOUT WALLS

WORSHIP

In this series of 'Church Without Walls' we invite you to express praise and adoration to God through different styles of worship. Worship music is the common way for us to worship God, but we can also worship through other creative forms such as art, writing, crafts, and dance.

OUR GOAL IN WORSHIP SHOULD BE TO LIFT GOD UP IN OUR LIFE AS LORD OF ALL.

Worship Activity 1:

Play your favourite worship music and keep it going until you feel connected with God.

WORSHIP MUSIC IS GOOD FOR YOU.

Isn't that is what worship is all about? We must persist until we feel connected with God. That is God's desire and it should be ours.

Music has a powerful way to connect us to God.

Psalm 145 has to be one of David's best Psalms for praising God - the depth of his adoration from God can be seen in these first seven verses.

I will exalt you, my God and King, and praise your name forever and ever.

I will praise you every day; yes, I will praise you forever.

Great is the Lord! He is most worthy of praise! No one can measure his greatness.

Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts; let them proclaim your power.

I will meditate on your majestic, glorious splendour and your wonderful miracles.

Your awe-inspiring deeds will be on every tongue; I will proclaim your greatness.

Everyone will share the story of your wonderful goodness; they will sing with joy about your righteousness.

Look it up, it's a great Psalm with 21 verses that will inspire your worship!

This idea of church without walls is all about encouraging us to think wider than church being a building or a meeting we attend. In the same way, praise and worship must not be a "show we watch", instead it should be something we experience - and it should definitely be something we participate in.

As you introduce praise and worship music into your regular routine our prayer is that you will experienced a heightened awareness of God in many different ways.

Worship Activity 2:

Learn more about the different spiritual pathways and discover yours. .

You have a unique pathway to God.

When you understand your personal pathway you will be able to more easily find ways to connect with God and worship Him the way He designed you.

Do you know which pathways helps you connect to God?

As you spend time contemplating this list, you will discover new and unique ways to connect with God. Our prayer is that you will experienced a heightened awareness of God in many different ways.

1. **Naturalists** - love God best outdoors. These people worship in the midst of God's creation. They celebrate His majesty and discover spiritual truths through nature
2. **Sensates** - love God through their senses. These people worship through sensual experiences - sights (like art), sounds (music), smells, and more
3. **Traditionalists** - love God through religious ritual and symbols. These people worship through traditions and sacraments of the Church. They believe structure, repetition, and rigidity, like weekly liturgy, leads to deeper understanding of God and faith
4. **Ascetics** - love God in solitude and simplicity. These people worship through prayer and quiet time, and the absence of all outside noise and distraction
5. **Activists** - love God through confrontation, fighting for godly principles and values. They worship through their dedication to and participation in God's truth about social and evangelistic causes
6. **Caregivers** - love God by serving others, and worship by giving of themselves. They may nurse the sick and disabled, "adopt" a prisoner, donate time at a shelter, etc.
7. **Enthusiasts** - love God through mystery and celebration. These people worship with outward displays of passion and enthusiasm. They love God with gusto!
8. **Contemplatives** - love God through adoration. These people worship by their attentiveness, deep love, and intimacy. They have an active prayer life
9. **Intellectuals** - love God with their mind and their hearts are opened up to a new attentiveness when they understand something new about God. These people worship through intense study, apologetics, and intellectual pursuits of their faith.

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Activity 3:

Write out a personal psalm or prayer in your journal.

Writing out our prayers forces us to slow down and “live” in the moment of the prayer. You will find as you write prayers you may also write out a song, which is of course a psalm!

Writing out a psalm or prayer is a great form of worship.

Take inspiration from the Psalms of David

Psalm 86 is a prayer of David.

Hear me, Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.

Guard my life, for I am faithful to you; save your servant who trusts in you.

You are my God. Have mercy on me, Lord, for I call to you all day long.

Bring joy to your servant, Lord, for I put my trust in you.

Therefore, do your best to be honest in writing your personal psalm. Here are some simple pointers we found that may help you:

- *write from the standpoint of faith; trusting God no matter what.*
- *try to write in poetic form.*
- *write with candour and honesty. (The psalmists have taught us that pain and struggle can be freely expressed to God.)*
- *allow your feelings and emotions to show through, because faith is more than knowledge and facts.*
- *try to use figurative speech, including metaphors and similes like the psalmists used.*
- *write reflectively.*
- *write as New Testament Christians, for we know the Messiah has come.*

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CHURCH WITHOUT WALLS

FAMILY

In this series of Church Without Walls we're suggesting to you that church looks like investing in your family. A playdate is a great way to invest into your family.

INVEST IN YOUR FAMILY AND INVITE OTHERS INTO YOUR FAMILY SPACE.

Family Activity 1:
Take your family (or someone else's family) on a playdate..

The good news about a playdate is that you get to decide what that looks like. You may like to brainstorm this with the people who live in your house, or you may choose to surprise them.

The great thing about the playdate challenge is that you get to make it up as you go along. Every family is different and you know your family best. What do you like to do that puts "juice" in your tank?

For some families it's outdoor activities, for others it's movie nights on the floor with popcorn and ice cream. The term playdate implies that play is a central theme, so don't plan a 'Day of Family Chores' and expect your family to get all excited!

Here's a brief list of ideas:

- outdoor adventure
- shopping trip
- cooking or baking challenge
- trip to the movies
- visiting relatives
- games night
- craft activities
- You get the idea... the sky is the limit.

When we talk about being the church without walls we are encouraging you to connect with others so that your relationship can be made stronger. After all, the church is a group of people who keep Jesus in the centre of their world. So, inviting others to be a part of

your playdate can include those who may not normally choose to attend church in a building, but may be open to hang out at the park or play games.

The point of inviting others to participate is the building of relationships that allow you to “be the church” without feeling like you have to “do church” (in the traditional sense.)

Go on, give it a go!

Family Activity 2: Do things that make you laugh.

Laughter is good medicine for the soul, and as you will see below, it forges bonds within your family. Strong families stay together through thick and thin, so to laugh with your family is good for your future.

Here’s your challenge:

Go to the beach / lake / park / mall / visit relatives and do things that make you all laugh.

What makes you laugh? Stories about the days of old? What about the times you totally goofed up? Your children will no doubt laugh at you doing a crazy dance! There are many ways to make your family laugh more. You may prefer People-Watching or you may prefer to Sing Silly Songs. Can you do Impersonations? Find ways to laugh with your family.

When we talk about being the church without walls we are encouraging you to connect with others so that your relationship can be made stronger. After all, the church is a group of people who keep Jesus in the centre of their world. So, inviting others to be a part of your laughter can include those who may not normally choose to attend church in a building, but may be open to hang out at the park or play games.

The point of inviting others to participate is the building of relationships that allow you to “be the church” without feeling like you have to “do church” (in the traditional sense.)

Go on, give it a go!

Researchers have proven that laughter is good for you. Research says, “laughter not only plays an important role in social and non-verbal communication, but it also provides evolutionary qualities that encourage group bonding and protect us from physical and psychological pain.” Okay, so you may not be so interested in the “reducing pain” part! Surely you want to increase the bonding in your family? To laugh with your family is good medicine for the soul.

Make this scripture part of your prayer this week.

When the Lord brought back his exiles to Jerusalem, it was like a dream!

We were filled with laughter, and we sang for joy.

And the other nations said, "What amazing things the Lord has done for them."

Yes, the Lord has done amazing things for us! What joy!

Restore our fortunes, Lord, as streams renew the desert.

Those who plant in tears will harvest with shouts of joy.

They weep as they go to plant their seed, but they sing as they return with the harvest.

(Psalm 126)

Family Activity 3: Set your Family Goals for 2021.

CONNECTION BREEDS COOPERATION!

If you think your kids are not interested in a conversation about goals then you would be wrong. When we come together with someone else we love and talk about the future, it builds expectation and hope. How many of us need more hope in our lives? Kids, especially!

Author Kelly Holmes says on her website, *Happy You Happy Family*, "connection breeds cooperation." She writes a fantastic post for you on goals and gives so much good information it may take you days to digest it. What is especially good is the the example of how to start conversations and the acronym "WOOP" for your goals. (search her website).

Keeping it real while keeping it simple, Kelly shares these examples of family goals:

- Save up for a special family vacation
- Eat more veggies
- Volunteer together
- Spend more time together as a family, like a family date night out, game night, movie night, and so on
- Divvy up household chores to share the workload
- Be more physically active together
- Commit to having a device-free dinner every night
- Start a family book club
- Go somewhere new once a month
- Start a garden

Our goal in stepping into Church Without Walls is to invite others into our family space. Who could you invite to be part of this process? Is it other family members who you want to connect with more? Is it an elderly neighbour you feel you may like to “adopt”?

You may like to set a goal with someone around accountability. Meet with them and make a commitment to one another. This may look like taking a walk once a fortnight or meeting for prayer. It could be a goal to have a neighbourhood dinner each quarter. . .

Family Activity 4: Sow Positive Family Affirmations.

AFFIRMATIONS ARE LIKE ACORN SEEDS... THEY GROW INTO FUTURE OAK TREES.

Write a card to each of your children / your spouse / parents / grandchildren.

(You choose any that apply to you!)

As you share positive family affirmations you will see “new life” birth in each person you share with. Be diligent to pray before you begin and ask God to speak His love through you.

By taking time to write these affirmations in a card you are increasing the value on the gift you are providing each person. In addition, you are giving something they can keep as a special token that reminds them of how much they mean to you.

There are many ways you can do this, including buying the cards or making the cards. Or, you could use postcards with pictures of your favourite places. You could use photos of you and the recipient to remind them how much they mean to you.

In Latin America, the word “bendiciones” is regularly heard amongst families as the children leave their home to go about their day. This word means “blessings”. Parents give a “blessing” to their children and kids ask for it if parents forget that consist of a prayer, verse, or words of wisdom. What makes this ritual so powerful it is spoken on a daily basis.

Family Activity 5: Set a savings plan for a family goal.

The summer holidays (in NZ) are a great time to set new goals as they prepare us for the year ahead. Including your entire household in these goals is the ONLY way to get buy-in and participation. So, if you’ve got trouble with everyone in your household committing to your goals, try including them a little more!

Family savings goals are like glue that stick everyone together.

If you've never done this before you may like to start with a smaller objective than buying a tropical island. What about:

- a trip to the zoo
- going out for lunch
- buying a new board game
- shouting your friends to the movies

If setting goals is your "normal" activity, try setting the bar a little higher and stretch yourself to achieve more with your money. (And if you do secure a tropical island, please let us know!)

"Financial Goals are what put feet on your dreams." - Phil Strong

The first step in setting goals is to **brainstorm**. Give everyone some chocolate (for inspiration) and then ask them to add to the Family List of Goals. This may give you more than you need, but it's a good idea to start with an open field.

The second step is to **prioritise** your goals. In this activity challenge, the aim is to set family savings goals you can achieve in a short timeframe. The reason for this is the achievement of goals motivates us to achieve more goals. So, start small and grow bigger over time.

Then, make a step by step **plan** of how you can achieve that goal. It comes down to "how much do we need to gather together and how soon?" Maybe you might discover you need to save \$50 per month for your goal. The next part of the plan would be "where does that money come from?" This should give you a plan you can implement.

With all this talk about money you may be asking, what does this have to do with Church Without Walls? You're right for asking that question!

Part of church life is discipleship and discipleship includes helping your family to grow. So, if you include your family and encourage them to develop sound, biblical financial disciplines... isn't that church?

In all of life we must make sure we do not make the object of our attention the object of our obsession. That would be making false idols.

Remember to teach your family that we cannot serve both God and money.

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

(Matthew 6: 24)

Family Activity 6: Watch the sun rise with God's Son.

Getting up early to watch the sun rise may be something you are not excited by. However, when we do something outside of our ordinary we often discover new revelations. This is especially true in our relationship with God.

It may be a shock for your body but the sunrise is good for your soul.

If the early morning isn't your friend you may choose to watch the sun set and enjoy the splendour of God's creation at the end of the day. The point of this challenge is not the time of day, but the connection you make with God.

A family adventure to see a family sunrise is a special memory.

Gather the household together and make a decision of where you would like to go to see the sunrise or sunset. Do you prefer a beach or a mountain top? How far will you travel and what will you need when you get there? These are all exciting discussions in making a plan to connect with the Son of God.

Be intentional about planning a devotion of some sort when you are there. Give thanks to God for the season you are in and the lessons He is teaching you. Give thanks for your family, your friends, your church family and your community. Ask God to guide you and lead you as you enter the new year. And give Him praise for being a loving, merciful God.

If you have children, invite each of them to prepare a short prayer they can bring as part of the time you have together.

Remember, Church Without Walls happens when we gather together and invite Jesus to be in our midst.

"I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

(Matthew 18: 19-20)

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavour, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men."

"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lamp stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

(Matthew 5: 13-16)



CHURCH WITHOUT WALLS

PRAYER

In this series of 'Church Without Walls' we're suggesting to you that church looks like developing your prayer life by speaking with God and pausing to listen to His voice.

PRAYING THROUGH SCRIPTURE IS A GREAT WAY TO DEVELOP YOUR PRAYER LIFE.

Prayer Activity 1:
Pray Scripture and personalise it.

In your prayer time, read Psalm 23 as a personal prayer.

The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need.

He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams.

He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honour to his name.

Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me.

Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me.

You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies.

You honour me by anointing my head with oil.

My cup overflows with blessings.

Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me

all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord forever.

PERSONALISE YOUR PRAYER LIFE

Here are the key points that may help:

1. Use a verse or passage to shape your prayer.
2. Turn a verse into a first- or third-person prayer.
3. Pick a verse and declare it as truth for a people group or nation.

INVITE OTHERS INTO YOUR PRAYER LIFE

Praying with others can be a little bit scary when you first start, but it helps us to grow and gives us a focus outside of ourselves. If you choose to pray scripture this may help to take the

scary part away as it gives you “what to pray” and makes the “how to pray” pretty straightforward.

The point of inviting others to pray with you is all part of God’s design for church. Learning how to ‘be’ the church without walls empowers us to grow stronger in our prayer life.

If you’re not sure what scriptures to pray, this list may help you.

- When you can’t sleep, pray **Psalm 3:5**.
- When you need help with negative thinking and speaking, pray **Psalm 19:14**.
- When you need guidance from God, pray **Psalm 25:4**.
- When you are afraid, pray **Psalm 27:1**.
- When you are sad or brokenhearted, pray **Psalm 34:17-18**.
- When you need to repent of sin, pray **Psalm 51:1-2**.
- When you need to refocus, pray **Psalm 51:10**.
- When you need to feel God’s protection, pray **Psalm 61:2-3**.
- When you simply want to praise God, pray **Psalm 70:4**.
- When you face temptation, pray **Psalm 141:4**.
- When you want to seek out God’s will, pray **Psalm 143:10**.

Prayer Activity 2: Ask God what He loves about you.

God loves you.

It’s unlikely you will argue against the statement that God loves you. However, agreeing that God loves you and accepting God’s love are two different things.

The Bible states how God loves us many times.

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5: 8)

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-it is by grace you have been saved. (Ephesians 2: 4-5)

Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,” says the Lord, who has compassion on you. (Isaiah 54: 10)

Why is it hard to accept God’s love?

To answer this question we need to turn back to the beginning of human nature and look at Adam and Eve’s response to God after they sinned.

And they (Adam and Eve) heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. (Genesis 3: 8)

Adam and Eve hid themselves from God's love because they perceived they were not worthy to receive his love. And, while that is true when sin is present, God covers our sin with the blood of Jesus. We are not worthy to accept the love of God without Jesus. If we have faith in Jesus as our Saviour then we have been made worthy to receive all that God has for us.

You must begin by choosing to accept God's love.

NOW ASK GOD A QUESTION ABOUT HIS LOVE

Your challenge in this activity is to ask God one simple question that will undoubtedly have a profound answer.

ASK: God, what is one thing you love about me?

INVITE SOMEONE ELSE INTO YOUR CONVERSATION

When you choose to accept God's love you will be able to hear His answer to this question. Make sure you write it down as a step of faith. Thank God for His gift of love and reaffirm His answer in your personal prayer time.

Now, invite someone into this conversation and share with them what God has been saying to you. Ask them to pray with you to "lock in" the revelation of God's love. And then, ask God to tell you something else!

Prayer Activity 3: Meet with someone and pray together.

In this activity challenge we encourage you to meet with someone and pray together.

- pray for your year ahead (work, school, home)
- pray for Zion and Zion family
- pray for the people of Te Awamutu
- pray for our Missions partners, including
- Hope Village Indonesia
- Indonesian Churches
- Ps Paul and Cathy in India
- Brave 2 Love in South Africa

CHURCH WITHOUT WALLS

Meditate on these scriptures as part of your personal quiet time.

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. (1 Timothy 2: 1-2)

One day Jesus told his disciples a story to show that they should always pray and never give up. "There was a judge in a certain city," he said, "who neither feared God nor cared about people. A widow of that city came to him repeatedly, saying, 'Give me justice in this dispute with my enemy.' The judge ignored her for a while, but finally he said to himself, 'I don't fear God or care about people, but this woman is driving me crazy. I'm going to see that she gets justice, because she is wearing me out with her constant requests!'"

Then the Lord said, "Learn a lesson from this unjust judge. Even he rendered a just decision in the end. So don't you think God will surely give justice to his chosen people who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will grant justice to them quickly! But when the Son of Man returns, how many will he find on the earth who have faith?"

(Luke 18: 1-8)