

Prayer Guide

Coming Together for a
Week of Prayer

January 7-14, 2024



"Praise the LORD! Praise, O servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD! Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and forevermore! From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the LORD is to be praised!"

Psalm 113:1-3

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Welcome!

Thanks so much for taking part in Mercy Hill's Week of Prayer! The church is always called to be praying and seeking God together, but sometimes it is good to set aside special time to do so. That's what we are looking to do this first week of the year—Sunday (1/7) thru Sunday (1/14). Here are a few things to look forward to:

- On the front end of this week (1/7), we will have a special sermon delivered in an effort to help our community see the importance of prayer in the life of the church. On the back end of this week (1/14), we will actually devote the entire service to an extended time of musical worship and prayer!
- On the first Sunday of this week (1/7), we invite you to consider fasting from breakfast, lunch, or dinner and would especially love it if you'd join us for our All Church Prayer meeting in the evening later that day.
- We will provide a Prayer Guide (you are looking at it right now!) to give you ideas of what to pray for as well as space to record your prayers and thoughts as God leads. The start of a new year naturally gets us reflecting on things—where we've been and where we hope to go. This guide has been designed to help you in this and offer a framework for your evaluation and planning.
- For families with young kids, we do encourage you to creatively use your Prayer Guide to engage them during the week as well. Beyond this, on the first Sunday of the week (1/7) we will also be providing you with kid-friendly prayer prompts that correspond with each day's focus.
- We will provide daily reminders coinciding with the Prayer Guide that will be posted to our Mercy Hill Community Facebook Group. In this space we encourage you to engage with one another—sharing your prayers, prayer requests, verses of Scripture, and anything else God may put on your heart. Please do request to join the group if you haven't already so you can take part!
- We invite you to seriously consider jumping into our online Prayer Room on Wednesday of this week (1/10) from noon to 1:00pm.
- We will be encouraging all of our Home Groups to discuss the sermon and Prayer Guide and to give additional time during their weekly meetings for prayer. (If you're not already a part of a Home Group, now's the time! Find one to join online at mercyhillchurch.org.)

We really hope you will dive into this with us. We're excited to see what our God will do!

How to Use This Guide

The Mechanics

This Prayer Guide is organized by days of the week. We encourage you to make time in your schedules each day to wait on God and pray. You might consider even putting it in your calendar like an appointment. You wouldn't skip out on appointments with coworkers or friends. Let's commit to not skipping out on these "prayer appointments" with the Lord either!

You'll notice that each day in this guide consists of three elements: a Focus, a Meditation, and a list of Prayer Points. They can be understood as follows:

- **Focus:** This sets forth the area you'll be specifically focusing your prayers on for that day. As you will see, each day's Focus calls you to consider and pray through some aspect of Mercy Hill's mission and values.
- **Meditation:** This sets forth a text from Scripture to aid in your consideration of the day's Focus and provide fodder for your prayers.
- **Prayer Points:** This sets forth various items for you to consider praying through during your time with the Lord.

Each day also has space provided for journaling and reflection. Please do utilize this to record your prayers and make note of anything God is putting on your heart. Where appropriate, consider sharing with other Mercy Hill leaders, members, etc. We don't want to forget neither what we are asking of God nor how he has been answering!

The Schedule

Here is the week's schedule at a glance:

- Sunday (1/7): Launch Day!
- Monday: The Good News of Jesus Christ
- Tuesday: Restoring Us to God | Faith (Part 1)
- Wednesday: Restoring Us to God | Faith (Part 2)
- Thursday: Restoring Us to Neighbor | Community (Part 1)
- Friday: Restoring Us to Neighbor | Community (Part 2)
- Saturday: Restoring Us to City | Mission (Part 1)
- Sunday (1/14): Restoring Us to City | Mission (Part 2)

Our Mission and Values

At Mercy Hill we speak often of our mission and values. We believe these are the things God wants us to be about as a church. Because this Prayer Guide uses our mission and values as a way of directing our prayers throughout the week, we thought it would be good to briefly remind you of them once more here at the week's outset.

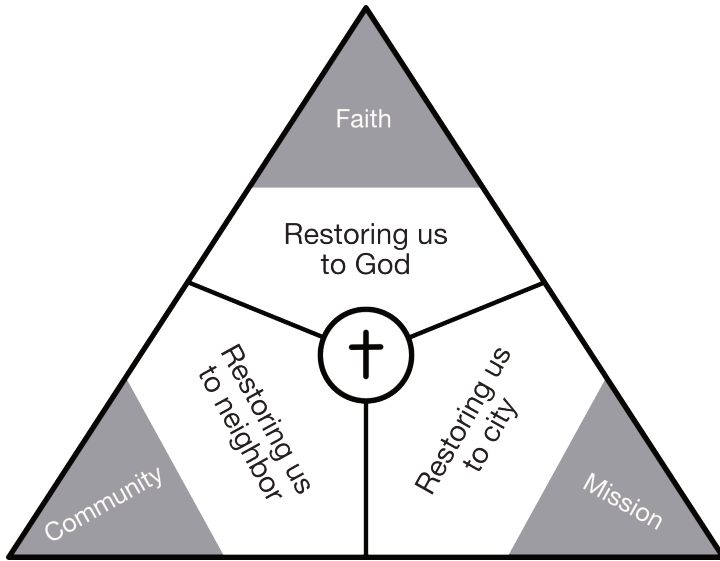
- **Our Mission:** Mercy Hill Church exists to help restore us to God, neighbor, and city through the good news of Jesus Christ.
- **Our Values:** (1) Faith; (2) Community; and (3) Mission.

Our mission locates the gospel as the centerpiece of everything and, from there, our church is propelled in three directions: *upward* (to God), *inward* (to neighbor), and *outward* (to city). We are restored in relationship with our Creator, restored in our relationship with other people, and restored in our sense of purpose and joy in the place God has put us . . . all through the gospel!

Our three values really serve to put a finer point on the three directions identified in our mission statement. In every case, they answer the question: *how?*

- How is a person restored upward to God through the good news of Jesus Christ? Answer: By *Faith* that is fixed upon that good news.
- How is a person restored inward to neighbor through the good news of Jesus Christ? Answer: By *Community* that is centered around that good news.
- How is a person restored outward to city through the good news of Jesus Christ? Answer: By *Mission* that is mobilized by that good news.

What follows is a diagram to help you visualize these things:



This is what we want to be about as a church. Therefore, this is what we want to pray about as a church. May God help us fulfill this mission and live out these values!

An Opening Plea

Before you begin, let us first say: beware! Ours is an ADD generation. No longer can we say that Attention Deficit Disorder is merely a diagnosis concerning particular individuals. In one sense at least, it is now a characteristic that has come to mark our culture as a whole. As modern people in this modern world, we have lost the ability to wait, to focus, to stop, to sit. And such a thing is the death of true prayer.

We find ourselves unwilling to do that which we must do—what the Puritans and old pastors like Jack Miller often spoke of—namely, to *“pray until we pray.”* What is meant by these words is simply this: when we attempt to get alone with God in prayer, whatever else we are doing at the beginning, it isn’t yet prayer. Our minds are either distracted or else blank, either racing with anxieties or else slow and thick as mud. In either case we are not yet centered on the Lord and truly engaging him from our hearts.

Such a thing takes patience and resilience. But, sadly, too often we flitter around in our “prayers” for a few minutes and then quit. And we walk away

wondering why prayer always feels so unfulfilling and God always feels so distant. We are like men who've heard rumors of gold in the hills but after digging around for a bit in the topsoil they conclude there's nothing to be found in them after all.

Brothers and sisters, let us assure you: there is gold in the hills! It just requires more than a passing effort to unearth it. We must resolve not to leave our times with God until we can say we have truly met with him, until we have encountered something more of his presence and glory, until we are confident that we have been heard by him and, more importantly, that we have heard from him . . . until we have uncovered gold! We must learn to dig until we find, to pray until we pray, to push back on this ADD generation and make space in our busy schedules and cluttered hearts to meet with the God of all generations. We must truly have a prayer *life*! May God be gracious to grant such a thing to you even this very week!

Okay, enough already . . . *let's pray!*

Sunday (1/7)

Focus: Launch Day!

On this first day of our Week of Prayer, we invite you to consider fasting from breakfast, lunch, or dinner and joining us in the evening for our All Church Prayer meeting where we'll spend an extended time of prayer together (see the church calendar online at mercyhillchurch.org for more details).

Before coming together, we recommend that you briefly flip through this guide and get acquainted with all the various ways you can be praying for yourself personally and for our church corporately. We anticipate this opening meeting will be a mash-up of all these items and more as the Lord leads!

Meditation: Psalm 113:1-3

"Praise the LORD! Praise, O servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD! Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and forevermore! From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the LORD is to be praised!"

Prayer Points: See Below

- Pray through the meditation text above. Consider reading it in context. Turn it over in your mind and heart. What is God speaking to you through it? Let it inform and influence your prayers this day.
- Ask God to prepare your heart for this week and beg that he might be pleased to meet with us and do more than we can even think to ask or imagine (Eph. 3:20).
- Consider your plan for engaging this Week of Prayer. When will you pray? Where will you pray? For how long will you pray? Will you ask another Mercy Hill member—perhaps from your Home Group or DNA Group—to pray along with you?¹
- Here at the outset of the week, consider what has already been on your heart for your own life and the life of our church. What have you already been praying for? Ask God to give you his heart and desires for this new year. Surrender yourself to him completely.
- If you kept a journal during last year's Week of Prayer, you might consider flipping back through it at this point and making note of how things developed throughout the year.

¹ If you'd like help finding a "prayer partner," please reach out to us at info@mercyhillchurch.org.

Monday

Focus: The Good News of Jesus Christ

Mercy Hill Church exists to help restore us to God, neighbor, and city, *through the good news of Jesus Christ.*

As we fully dive into this Week of Prayer together, let's begin with a focus on the gospel—the good news of Jesus Christ! Too often we come into prayer with our laundry list of demands instead of our adoration and gratitude. His grace is all around us. Can you see it? God is and has been on the move for good. Let's identify what he's already been up to and give thanks for that before we start asking him for more!

Meditation: Psalm 100:4

"Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!"

Prayer Points: See Below

- Pray through the meditation text above. Consider reading it in context. Turn it over in your mind and heart. What is God speaking to you through it? Let it inform and influence your prayers this day.
- Spend time praising God for the glory of his grace (Eph. 1:6). Consider the cross and the cost of your redemption. Recount how he has saved you and brought you to himself.
- Thank God for the privilege of prayer. Read Hebrews 10:19-22. Jesus gave his life so that we could draw near. We are washed. We are clean. We are welcome in his presence. We are his kids and he is our Father. Hallelujah, what a Savior!
- Think about the past months and year. What has God done for you personally? What have you seen God do at Mercy Hill? Give him thanks for these things. Record them in your journal as a memorial to his faithfulness (Josh. 4:1-7). Tell someone else about them as a testimony to his glory (Ps. 22:22; Acts 21:19-20a).

Tuesday

Focus: Restoring Us to God | Faith (Part 1)

Mercy Hill Church exists to help restore us to God. We believe this happens when a person's *Faith* is fixed upon the good news of Jesus Christ. This aspect of our mission and values directs our energies as a church upward. Today, let's pray through this aspect of our mission and values with concern for ourselves *personally*.

Meditation: Psalm 113:4-9

"The LORD is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens! Who is like the LORD our God, who is seated on high, who looks far down on the heavens and the earth? He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes, with the princes of his people. He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children. Praise the LORD!"

Prayer Points: See Below

- Pray through the meditation text above. Consider reading it in context. Turn it over in your mind and heart. What is God speaking to you through it? Let it inform and influence your prayers this day.
- How are you doing with God? How has your faith been lately? Where have you been strong? Where have you been weak? Where have you seen growth? Where have you been struggling? Ask God to take you deeper in your relationship with him and show you the way forward. Make a plan.
- Jesus says: "Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit" (John 15:5). Have you been abiding lately? Prayerfully consider what it might look like to pursue more of this in the months and year ahead. Do you spend time with the Lord daily in his Word and in prayer? If so, what ways might God be calling you to grow further in it? If not, how can you start? What needs to change in your schedule and routines to make space for meeting with God and abiding in Jesus?
- Sometimes people ask God to give them a Scripture verse for the year. You might consider doing the same. What verse is on your heart? What verse do you hope comes to fly like a banner over the months and year ahead?

Wednesday

Focus: Restoring Us to God | Faith (Part 2)

Yesterday, we prayed through this aspect of our mission and values with concern for ourselves personally. Today, let's pray with concern for our church *corporately*. Think of the members and ministries of Mercy Hill in particular.

Meditation: Ephesians 2:4-7

"But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."

Prayer Points: See Below

- Pray through the meditation text above. Consider reading it in context. Turn it over in your mind and heart. What is God speaking to you through it? Let it inform and influence your prayers this day.
- **Sunday Service:** Pray that God would meet us and be glorified; that there would be an "atmosphere of anticipation" as we gather together each week.
- **Preaching & Teaching:** Pray that God would anoint our preachers and teachers of his Word; that the gospel would be kept central; that people's eyes, ears, and hearts would be opened; that sinners would be saved and saints strengthened; that God would raise up more who are skilled in the handling of Scripture.
- **Musical Worship:** Pray that God would equip, unite, and build out our Worship Team; that our community would authentically and happily participate in making a joyful noise to the Lord (Ps. 100:1); that our worship wouldn't just be in way of music but in way of life (Rom. 12:1).
- **Prayer:** Pray that Mercy Hill would truly be a "house of prayer" (Isa. 56:7; Luke 19:46); that we would learn the secret of unceasing prayer (1 Thess. 5:17); that our prayer meetings would grow in fervor and in number; that God's Spirit would fall, fill, and fuel for the furtherance of his kingdom in this city and world (Acts 4:31)!
- **Other Churches:** Consider other churches in our city. Pray for them along these lines as well.

Thursday

Focus: Restoring Us to Neighbor | Community (Part 1)

Mercy Hill Church exists to help restore us to *neighbor*. We believe this happens when a person is brought into a *Community* that is centered around the good news of Jesus Christ. This aspect of our mission and values directs our energies as a church inward. Today, let's pray through this aspect of our mission and values with concern for ourselves *personally*.

Meditation: 1 Samuel 1:6-7, 10-11

"And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb. So it went on year by year. As often as she went up to the house of the LORD, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat. She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly. And she . . . said, 'O LORD of hosts, . . . look on the affliction of your servant and remember me . . .'"

Prayer Points: See Below

- Pray through the meditation text above. Consider reading it in context. Turn it over in your mind and heart. What is God speaking to you through it? Let it inform and influence your prayers this day.
- How are you doing with others in the church? How has your community been lately? Pray through your relationships with your spouse, kids, Home Group, DNA Group, extended family, friends, etc. Is the gospel at the center? Where have things been strong? Where have things been weak? Where have you seen growth? Where have you been struggling? Ask God to take you deeper in your relationship with others and show you the way forward. Make a plan.
- Read Matthew 5:23-24. Here Jesus speaks of the importance of reconciling and being at peace with others. Insofar as it depends upon you, are you at peace with others (Rom. 12:18)? Pray through your relationships once more. How can you go out of your way to show the love of Christ to these in your life?
- Prayerfully reflect on the last year and identify those individuals who have blessed you significantly in one way or another. Thank God for them. And then consider reaching out to them to thank them personally and encourage them as they've encouraged you.

Friday

Focus: Restoring Us to Neighbor | Community (Part 2)

Yesterday, we prayed through this aspect of our mission and values with concern for ourselves personally. Today, let's pray with concern for our church *corporately*. Think of the members and ministries of Mercy Hill in particular.

Meditation: Luke 1:24-25

"After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, 'Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.'"

Prayer Points: See Below

- Pray through the meditation text above. Consider reading it in context. Turn it over in your mind and heart. What is God speaking to you through it? Let it inform and influence your prayers this day.
- **Leaders:** Pray that God would guide, unite, and protect our elders and deacons; that they "lead from down low" and not lord it over those in their care; that God would raise up more for the work!
- **Members:** Pray for any church members that God lays on your heart; that those hurting would find comfort; that those in sin would be brought to repentance; that those on the sidelines would be brought further in; that those not yet serving would use their gifts; that those moving would find a new church home; that marriages and families would be healthy; that friendships would be formed; etc.
- **Home Groups:** Pray for their health in areas of Faith, Community, and Mission; that the leaders would have vision and passion for the work; that every member of our church would find themselves plugged into one and doing life together; that the neighborhoods in which these groups meet would be reached for Christ!
- **DNA Groups:** Pray that God would raise up more; that our church would be full of disciples of Christ busy making disciples of Christ.
- **Mercy Hill Kids:** Pray that God would continue to bless and expand this ministry; that he would reach our kids with the gospel; that more volunteers would be raised up for the sustaining of this critical work.

Saturday

Focus: Restoring Us to City | Mission (Part 1)

Mercy Hill Church exists to help restore us to *city*. We believe this happens when a person's *Mission* is mobilized by the good news of Jesus Christ. This aspect of our mission and values directs our energies as a church outward. Today, let's pray through this aspect of our mission and values with concern for ourselves *personally*.

Meditation: Hebrews 13:12-16

"So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."

Prayer Points: See Below

- Pray through the meditation text above. Consider reading it in context. Turn it over in your mind and heart. What is God speaking to you through it? Let it inform and influence your prayers this day.
- In Jesus, God calls and equips us to be on mission for him in the place that he's put us (our "city"). There's a reason we are here. Pray through why God has you in the Bay Area. Have you been living on his mission or your own? What might God be calling you to change so that in the coming months and year you can live more for him? Make a plan.
- In Romans 9:2 Paul says that, when he considers those who don't know Christ, he has "great sorrow and unceasing anguish in [his] heart." Do you feel this way as well? Have you ever felt this way? Pray through these things. Ask God to burden your heart for those that don't know him. Begin to pray for the unbelieving in your family, neighborhood, workplace, networks, city, and world.
- Sometimes people ask God to put one person on their heart whom they might especially pray for and reach out to this year. You might consider doing the same. Jesus leaves the 99 to go after the one (Luke 15:4). Ask God: who is my *one*?!

Sunday (1/14)

Focus: Restoring Us to City | Mission (Part 2)

Yesterday, we prayed through this aspect of our mission and values with concern for ourselves personally. Today, let's pray with concern for our church *corporately*. Think of the members and ministries of Mercy Hill in particular.

Meditation: Ephesians 2:8-10

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

Prayer Points: See Below

- Pray through the meditation text above. Consider reading it in context. Turn it over in your mind and heart. What is God speaking to you through it? Let it inform and influence your prayers this day.
- **Vocations:** Pray for our members in their various callings; that God would equip and encourage us as faithful mothers, fathers, employees, bosses, students, etc.; that we would see God at work in and through our own work.
- **Evangelism & Missions:** Pray that God would move our church outward in compassion for the city and world; that we would minister the gospel in word and in deed; that we would have boldness to speak the truth in love; that we would fear God more than people; that we would see conversions and baptisms—people coming into saving relationships with Jesus; that God would pour out his Holy Spirit and bring revival in this place; that Mercy Hill's GO! Team would be led by him as they seek to lead us.
- **Ministry Partnerships:** Pray for our various partnerships around this city and world (e.g. Acts 29, Kids Club, Foster the City, CityTeam, International Students, Inc., the Sihora Clinic, Wycliff Bible Translators, Arms of Love, etc.³); that our partnerships would grow stronger; that more would develop.

³ You can find more information about these ministries online at mercyhill-church.org under the Mission tab. Please continue to pray for them all the year long!

Thank You!

Thanks so much for taking the time to pray along with us this week! We encourage you to take what God has been laying on your heart and to share it with the leaders and other members of Mercy Hill as you feel led. We look forward to hearing from you!