



DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

100 DAYS OF PRAYER

ASK &
it will be given to you;
SEEK &
you will find;
KNOCK &
the door will be opened to you.
M a t t h e w 7 : 7

SUMMER 2018

100 DAYS OF PRAYER
Summer 2018

Dear church family,

When I read the Gospels, I am amazed by the life and ministry of Jesus. He taught with authority. He loved the individuals that most people ignored and overlooked. He performed miracles, and He drew great crowds to Him. He was constantly being surrounded by people who wanted His attention and sought His healing touch.

Jesus had so many requests for His time, attention, and power. How did He decide what to do and what not to do? I think we see the answer when we see Him regularly pulling away to spend time in prayer. Amidst all the demands placed on Jesus by others, He obviously found clarity and direction in His prayer time.

I think Jesus' example has much to teach us. In the face of pressures from outside and the challenges of living together as a family of faith, it's easy to find ourselves pulled apart, distracted, and discouraged. Jesus knew, however, that the way to find peace, clarity, and power was to spend time communicating with God so that He would have a clear awareness of His priorities and calling.

With the example of Jesus in mind, I want to invite you to join me in making a commitment to praying together for our church this summer. God has blessed Hope Valley in numerous ways through the years and continues to be at work in our midst, but it is vital that we seek God and God's leadership for our church moving forward.

These daily devotions will provide you a Scripture passage to read and some thoughts to guide your reflections and praying each day for the next 100 days. I hope you will join me in making the summer of 2018 a season of prayer and listening for God's voice. It is my hope that by praying together, we will be drawn deeper into unity and faithfulness.

Bill

Friday, June 1 – Read John 17:20-26. Ask God to create unity of mind and purpose within our congregation. Jesus prayed on His final night that believers “may be one.” Join Jesus in praying this prayer for unity at Hope Valley. Pray today that God will create harmony within our midst so that the world might see God's love more clearly within us. Reflect on whether your words and actions are creating or harming the effort for unity, and pray for forgiveness where it is needed. Pray specifically for the people you have trouble loving. Ask God to help us love each other and to strengthen and give wisdom to the leaders in our church.

Saturday, June 2 – Read Romans 5:1-8. Because of what Christ has done for us, we can have hope even in suffering and difficulty. God has demonstrated a commitment to love us and reach out to us when we are powerless and needy. What can this promise mean to us as we face challenges in our lives and church? Ask God to help us develop perseverance, character, and hope. Pray that we will be filled with hope that God can and will do mighty works in and through our church. Pray for our staff and leadership to have wisdom, love, and grace for their work in the church.

Sunday, June 3 – Read 2 Chronicles 7:14-16. God calls God's people to humble themselves and seek God and God's forgiveness. Ask God today to bring genuine repentance throughout the membership of our congregation and to draw us into a deeper commitment to prayer. Spend time confessing your own sins to God. Pray for our worship service today and for our church, that we will open our hearts to the renewal and revival that God can bring.

Monday, June 4 – Read Colossians 1:3-14. As Paul describes the content of his prayer for the Colossian Christians, take note of the kinds of things Paul mentions in his prayer. What is he thankful for and what does he want to see God do in that congregation? On this

day, what about our church gives you reasons to be thankful? What do you see God doing? Will you pray for our church as Paul prayed for the Colossians, asking God to grant us all with the knowledge of God's will, divine wisdom and understanding, and a commitment to living lives worthy of and pleasing to God? Pray for spiritual growth and maturity in your life and in our congregation.

Tuesday, June 5 – Read Matthew 28:16-20. We are well aware that God calls us to “*make disciples of all nations.*” Ask God today to give you and our congregation a passion for ministry, for missions, and for evangelism. Only God can create within us a passion for people. Pray that God will develop that within us. Spend time also thinking about people you know who need to experience God's grace in their lives. Ask God to use you to share the Good News with them. Pray also for the families and individuals who have been attending our church and are seeking a church family.

Wednesday, June 6 – Read John 5:1-15. We believe that God has the power to change our circumstances and our church. Sometimes, however, we must answer the question that Jesus asked the invalid who had been waiting by the pool for thirty-eight years. “Do you want to get well?” For our church to be effective and live into God's calling, we must be willing to tell God that we want to grow spiritually and numerically and that we want to become more Christlike. Do we want to be made well? Are we willing to be changed and do things differently if needed? Pray that God will create within us a willingness to be changed so that we might fulfill His calling.

Thursday, June 7 – Read Ezekiel 37:1-14. This wonderful passage overflows with hope in the power of the life-giving God. At times we lose hope like the Israelites did. Sometimes we wonder what kind of future we might have and focus on our problems, but this passage invites us to believe in God's power to bring life where others see death. Can we believe that God will bring new life and renewal to our congregation? Pray that God's Spirit will be at work this summer to energize us and fill us with life, joy, and power.

Friday, June 8 – Read Acts 2:42-47. The earliest believers demonstrated great unity in worship, study, fellowship, and prayer. They were deeply committed to God and to each other, even to the point of sharing their possessions in common. Are we willing to be this committed to the church and to the work of the Kingdom. Ask God to create within our congregation a unity that grows from a deep, shared hunger for God's Word and for worship. Pray by name for other members of the church, perhaps focusing on your Sunday School class or other members who might need prayer.

Saturday, June 9 – Read I Kings 19:9-13. This familiar passage reminds us that God often speaks not in the loud noises of life, but in the gentle whispers that are only audible when we become quiet enough to listen. As you pray today, ask God to speak to us as a congregation, and pray also that God will grant to us the discipline to make quiet spaces where we can really listen for God's gentle whisper or still, small voice. Spend time in silence asking God to speak to you.

Sunday, June 10 – Read Psalm 19:8-14. As we worship together today, let this passage guide you into a time of self-examination and renewed personal commitment. Ask God to work within your life to make sure that your words, thoughts, and actions contribute to the growth, healing, and ministry of our congregation. Seek forgiveness for ways you have failed to build others up and commit yourself to be an encourager to others. Ask God to bring to your mind the names of people who need your care and support, and make a commitment to find a way to offer encouragement to those people this week.

Monday, June 11 – Read I Corinthians 12:4-26. Paul offers us a metaphor to help us reflect on the interdependence of every member of the Body of Christ. Spend time reflecting on where you fit into the Body of Christ and what gifts you have to offer at Hope Valley. Ask God to help you see more clearly what you can give to help our congregation grow, serve, and minister within our community.

Tuesday, June 12 – Read I Corinthians 13. This familiar passage invites us to reflect on how love is demonstrated in our lives and relationships. Consider today how well your life lives up to this description of Christlike love. Ask yourself honestly if your words and actions help others feel loved. Pray that God will fill you with this kind of love and that God will help us all grow in loving each other as Christ has first loved us. Pray also that God will develop a growing commitment to love and grace within our church.

Wednesday, June 13 – Read Ephesians 3:14-21. In these verses, Paul tells the Ephesians about His prayers for them. He prays that God will strengthen them with the power of the Holy Spirit, that Christ may dwell in their hearts, and that they might truly grasp how much God loves them. Spend time today acknowledging with Paul that God is able to do “immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us.” What might God want to do in and through us at Hope Valley? Pray that God will give to our congregation the same gifts that Paul asked God to grant the Ephesian believers.

Thursday, June 14 – Read Micah 6:6-8. Micah was reminding the people of Israel that simply showing up to worship and offer sacrifices was insufficient in God’s eyes. Worship should motivate us to move outward into the world to demonstrate justice, mercy, and humility. Pray today that God will empower our congregation to live in ways that help other people see in us justice, mercy, and humility. Think about the people in our community who need us to follow this calling. Ask God to show you and our church where we need to invest ourselves in working for justice and mercy.

Friday, June 15 – Read Matthew 18:15-35. Jesus understood that it can be difficult to live in relationship with others and to be a church family together. As a result, He talked often about the need to practice grace and forgiveness in our relationships with others. On this day, think honestly about whether there are fellow church members that you need to ask for forgiveness. Commit yourself to seek healing

where you have hurt others. Are there people you need to reach out to with grace and forgiveness? Is there any bitterness in your life that needs God’s cleansing touch? Pray for God to bring healing to any broken relationships that exist within our congregation.

Saturday, June 16 – Read Psalm 100. This passage invites us to worship God and to reflect on the goodness and love of God. Worship is not just something we do on Sundays, but should shape our daily lives. As we prepare for congregational worship tomorrow, spend time today in prayer thinking about the ways God has blessed you and this congregation. In what ways have you seen God at work recently? Offer gratitude to God and take time to praise Him for His many blessings. Be specific in thanking God for the good things in your life. Pray that our worship tomorrow will glorify God and open our eyes to God’s blessings and work.

Sunday, June 17 – Read 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. Paul learned to celebrate and boast in his weakness and struggles because in his weakness, he discovered that God’s strength is enough. Our youth leave today for Passport Camp and will be reflecting on this promise that God is enough. As we pray for our youth and their week at Passport Camp, ask yourself if you can acknowledge your weakness and neediness. Confess your self-centeredness to God, and pray that God will help us all let go of our desire for self-sufficiency in order that we might experience more fully the strength and goodness of God.

Monday, June 18 – Read Psalm 46:1-3, 10-11. The theme verse today for our youth at camp is Psalm 46:1. As our youth are being reminded that God is enough and is always with us, reflect on the ways you have experienced God’s presence in the past few days. Think about the ways God has been working in your life. Express gratitude for God’s faithfulness. Pray that God will open the eyes of our youth and our whole congregation to see the evidence of God’s love, presence, and goodness all around us.

Tuesday, June 19 – Read Psalm 139:1-14. Today, our youth at Passport will be hearing the wonderful news that God created us and that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. God gave us all the gift of life, and God loves us as we are. Reflect today on this good news. Do you honestly believe and know that God loves you deeply? So many voices in our world tell us that we are inadequate, so ask God today to help you discover afresh that you are God's beloved child. Pray for other members of our church that we might all understand more fully that God loves us all.

Wednesday, June 20 – Read Luke 12:13-21 and 1 John 3:16-18. Our youth at Passport will be hearing both of these passages today. Scripture emphasizes that love will show up in our actions. As Jesus sacrificed Himself to show His love for us, ask yourself today how willing you are to make sacrifices to show God's love to the world. Pray that God will give you a generous heart and that God will deepen our commitment to give abundantly to support God's work in the world. Consider prayerfully how you might live a life of increasing generosity.

Thursday, June 21 – Read Proverbs 31:8-9. At Passport today, the youth will be challenged to reflect on how we as God's people can work and advocate for those who are vulnerable and marginalized. Ask God to bless and inspire our youth as they approach the end of their week at camp. Spend time also praying for those who seem to have little or no voice in our society and world. Pray that God will raise up Christians – including us – to care for and love those who are so easily ignored. Ask God to show you how you might be used to work for the kind of justice and mercy that God desires.

Friday, June 22 – Read Galatians 5:16-25. When believers allow the Holy Spirit to control our lives, the fruit of the Spirit will become evident in our actions and the ways we interact with others. Paul is not telling us we can pick and choose from this list, but is emphasizing that all these qualities will be evident in those who are living faithfully. Which of these qualities seem lacking in your life? Ask

God to develop these fruit in you. Pray that in our congregation, there will be a growing commitment to Christ and that the Spirit of Christ will produce the fruit of the Spirit within each of us.

Saturday, June 23 – Read Philippians 3:7-14. Paul's life was characterized by a deep passion for Jesus Christ and a hunger to know Christ fully. Today, ask God to create such a passion and hunger within you and throughout our congregation. Are we truly focused on the goal of becoming like Jesus? What things in your life might you need to leave behind in order to become more like Jesus? Pray that God will help us set aside distractions and apathy so that we might give our whole hearts to Him.

Sunday, June 24 – Read Philippians 4:4-9. As we gather again for worship on this Lord's Day, we are reminded that God calls us to resist anxiety and instead to bring everything to God in prayer with thanksgiving. Reflect today on how well you live up to this calling. What worries are you carrying with you? Can you prayerfully turn your anxieties over to God? Ask God to help us trust God more fully and deepen our congregation's commitment to prayer.

Monday, June 25 – Read Acts 5:1-6. The story of Ananias and Sapphira is one of the sad stories in the Scriptures. While others were selling everything and sharing it with fellow believers, they gave only part of what they had and pretended they were giving it all. Our church can fulfill our potential only if we offer our whole being to God. Ask God to show you today what you may be holding back from God. Spend time reflecting and meditating, then prayerfully offer yourself fully to God. Pray that God will give you strength to let go of whatever may be keeping you from greater faithfulness.

Tuesday, June 26 – Read Luke 4:14-21. In His initial sermon in Luke's Gospel, Jesus announces that He came to bring good news to the poor, freedom to the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, and freedom for the oppressed. Jesus saw these tasks as central to His

calling. Pray today that God will show us clearly how we too can follow the example of Jesus in bringing love and good news to the poor and vulnerable. Ask God not to let us become so comfortable in what we have that we forget our calling to care for those living in need. Pray also for the people in this community who need our ministry. What individuals and groups might God be calling us to reach out to with tangible examples of God's love?

Wednesday, June 27 – Read Isaiah 6:1-8. During Isaiah's vision, he became acutely aware of his sin and unworthiness. After confessing his sin and being cleansed by God, he was able to answer God's call to carry God's message to the people of Israel. Spend time in confession today and then look inward to determine if you are truly willing to say to God, as Isaiah did, "Here I am. Send me!" We are surrounded by a community with many needs. Are you willing to make yourself fully available to God? Pray that God will cleanse us and send us.

Thursday, June 28 – Read Psalm 23. This familiar and much-loved psalm is so familiar, we sometimes miss the wonderful promises it contains. Read this passage slowly several times to soak in the message. God promises to walk with us and lead us no matter what we face. What difference does it make to know that God is the shepherd who will guide and protect us as our church follows Him into the future? Ask God to give us strength, vision, and courage to follow Him even when we don't know what the future holds.

Friday, June 29 – Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-21. What a blessing it is to know that God can make new creations of us. Give thanks for the ways God is making you a new creation. Are there areas of your life that still need God's cleansing touch? Offer those areas to God. As new creations, however, we are also called to be ambassadors for Christ. We have been given a ministry of reconciliation. Reflect today on where there are broken relationships in your life. Where do you need to seek reconciliation with others? How can you seek to model and bring reconciliation in the church, in your home, and in all

areas of your life? Pray that God will bring healing to broken relationships in the church and in our lives.

Saturday, June 30 – Read James 2:14-26. Though we do not always know what God wants us to do in life, we must also admit that there are many things we already know about God's will but fail to put into practice. Often, we know more about the calling of the Gospel than we are willing to follow. In what areas of your life do you need to put your faith into action? Are our words of care and love for others showing up in the ways we treat others and, in particular, those who are hungry and in need? Pray today that God will help us find new ways to show our faith through what we do in our community and world.

Sunday, July 1 – Read Isaiah 41:13-20. This passage speaks a powerful reminder that God wants to take us by the hand, ease our anxieties, and make us useful instruments in God's work. If God can bring water and life into the barren desert, God can create new life in our midst. As we gather for worship today, pray that God will indeed walk with us, use us, and bring new life into our congregation. Ask God to bring divine refreshment to the dry areas of our souls and bring new life into our church.

Monday, July 2 – Read Matthew 5:13-16. Jesus reminds us that we are blessed in order that we might be a blessing to the world. God has given us light so that we might share it with others. How well are you doing in letting God's light shine through you so that others see your good deeds and give praise to God? How well is our church doing at making a positive impact in our neighborhood? Ask God to give us all the courage, strength, and commitment necessary to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

Tuesday, July 3 – Read John 1:35-42. Andrew doesn't get mentioned in sermons and Sunday School lessons nearly as much as his brother, Simon Peter, does. Notice, however, that it was Andrew who first met

Jesus and then went and brought his brother to meet Jesus. How different might the history of the church have been if Andrew hadn't introduced Peter to Jesus? Today, spend time praying for family and friends who don't know Jesus. Ask God to bring to your mind those God wants you to introduce to Jesus. Pray that God will give you courage and boldness as well as the right words to share your faith with others.

Wednesday, July 4 – Read Micah 4:1-5. As we celebrate the birthday of our great country and thank God for the blessings and freedom we enjoy, pray for our local, state, and national leaders. Ask God to grant them wisdom. In a culture of political divisions and partisanship, pray that God will bring healing and grace. Let us also pray for our whole world and for the peace that God can bring to our broken world. Reflect also on this question: Are we living lives that demonstrate the peace of God? Are we as a church living into God's vision of peace? Pray that God's peace will come into the world, beginning in our hearts and lives.

Thursday, July 5 – Read Proverbs 3:1-8. The familiar words of verses 5 and 6 call us to a faith that trusts God with our whole hearts. We must allow God to guide us on the path of life. As individuals and as a church, we need such trust. Ask God to reveal to us where our faith is lacking and to forgive us for placing our own agendas and desires ahead of God's plans for us. Pray that God will strengthen our faith so that we may trust fully as we follow God each and every day.

Friday, July 6 – Read Matthew 5:38-48. In life and even in the church, it is difficult to get along with everyone. God calls us, however, to turn the other cheek and to love those who hurt us. Take a few moments today to think about those people who have hurt you and who you find it difficult to love. Ask God to help you see those people as God does and love them like God loves them. Pray that God will deepen our church's love for all people.

Saturday, July 7 – Read John 13:1-17. On the last night of His life, Jesus offered His disciples a lesson in servanthood and then called them to follow His example. What might it look like if we truly followed Jesus' example? Though we are familiar with the Biblical call to be servants, our culture makes it difficult for us to live lives of servanthood. Do people see in you a servant's heart or do they see us being more focused on ourselves and our wishes? Do people see our church serving our community? In what ways is God calling us to serve the people around us? Let us pray together today that God will help all of us renew our commitment to being servants of each other and of the people in our neighborhood.

Sunday, July 8 – Read John 6:35-40. At the beginning of John 6, Jesus has fed the 5000 with only 5 loaves and 2 fish. Here Jesus draws again on the image of bread to emphasize that He is able to feed the deepest hunger of our souls. As the church gathers for worship and Sunday School today, pray that God will feed our congregation with the Bread of Life and will create in us a hunger to dig deeper into God's Word that we might be filled with knowledge, wisdom, and faith. Pray specifically for our Sunday School teachers and other church leaders as we gather for Bible study and worship.

Monday, July 9 – Read Revelation 3:14-22. These are harsh and difficult words to read. Today, take some time to read and reread these words. Ask yourself if these words describe the state of your spiritual life and your relationship with God. Reflect on whether God might want to speak this same message to our church. Confess to God if you feel like your faith has been lukewarm. Ask God to stir up passion and energy in our church and our commitment to Christ so that the community will truly see that we are "on fire" for Jesus.

Tuesday, July 10 – Read Hebrews 4:12-16. How wonderful it is to know that God understands and sympathizes with us in all that we face and has given us the Scriptures to shape our lives. God also invites us to come before Him in prayer with confidence and boldness. Trusting that God understands us and wants to do mighty works in our lives and

through us, pray boldly today that God will bring revival, renewal, and a time of growth in the life of our church.

Wednesday, July 11 – Read I John 4:7-12, 19-21. The old song reminds us that “They’ll Know We are Christians By Our Love.” Today, spend time examining your life and relationships to determine how well other can see God’s love in you. Though we like to talk about how warm our congregation is, how clearly does our community see God’s love reflected in our church and how we relate to each other? Pray that God will pour out love on us and empower us to love all people as God loves them. Pray in particular that God will help you love individuals and people you find it difficult to love and that God will help you recognize practical ways you can show love to others today.

Thursday, July 12 – Read Matthew 8:5-13. The faith of the centurion impressed even Jesus who willingly responded to the man’s faith by healing the centurion’s servant. Spend time today asking yourself honestly if your faith in God’s power is as strong as that of the centurion. Do we really believe and expect God to speak to our church and to use us to make an impact in our community? Pray that God will create in us expectant hearts as we attend worship each week and as we serve God together.

Friday, July 13 – Read Judges 7:1-8. Sometimes we measure the strength of a church by numbers. Our reading today reminds us that God can use a small group of deeply committed servants to accomplish great things. While we are tempted to make excuses that focus on what we think we lack, God can bring victory and hope when we recognize that we are dependent on God. Pray today that God will create in us a deep sense of dependence so that we might see what God’s power can do in us and through us.

Saturday, July 14 – Read Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23. This parable provides an honest picture of mixed results that we see when we are

faithful in spreading God’s Word. Jesus doesn’t tell us, however, to spread the seed only where it will grow well. The sower spreads the seed extravagantly wherever he goes, and we must be willing to share God’s love wherever we go. Pray today that you and our congregation will grow in our passion and boldness in spreading the seed of God’s Word. Pray specifically for our Vacation Bible School that begins tomorrow, asking that God will use us to plant seeds in the lives of the children and families who will be with us in VBS.

Sunday, July 15 – Read Luke 15:1-24. As we begin VBS today, the kids will be studying these parables about lost things. Another pastor has written, “Jesus leaving the 99 to find the 1 seems irrational and senseless – until that 1 is you.” As we teach the children that Jesus rescues us, spend time reflecting on the good news that God loves us enough to leave the 99 to find us when we wander away. Can you grasp that you are so special in God’s eyes? Thank God for the gift of amazing grace and pray that the children in VBS will experience God’s rescuing love. Pray for all our VBS workers so that we can all make God’s love visible in word and deed.

Monday, July 16 – Read Luke 10:38-42. Today in VBS, the kids will be learning about Mary and Martha. They will discuss Martha’s frustration and learn that Jesus rescues us when we are worried. Some have suggested that Martha gets a raw deal in this passage. Most of us are more comfortable being busy than being quiet and still. We often have much on our “to do” list, but Jesus reminds us that sitting and listening to Him is vital for our spiritual health and stress management. As a church, we need to deepen our commitment to being quiet in God’s presence so we can listen for God’s voice and vision for our church. Ask God today to give us open ears to hear His voice. Commit to spend some time today listening in silence.

Tuesday, July 17 – Read Luke 22:39-54. The children will be hearing in VBS today about Jesus’ arrest and the disciples attempt to rescue Him. The disciples are much like us in that we often rush ahead of God and do things the way we think they should be done. Too often

we act first and pray later. Sometimes we ask God to bless our work instead of waiting to see what God's plan is. As you meditate on this story today, ask God to forgive you for the times you try to do things your way. Pray that we as a church will learn to seek God and God's will first and foremost and that we will then be willing to follow God's leading and calling.

Wednesday, July 18 – Read Luke 23:26-24:12. This is the day that the children in VBS will be hearing a presentation of the Gospel message and will be invited to follow Jesus. They will learn about Jesus offering grace to a criminal who was hanging on a cross next to Him and will hear about Jesus' death and His ultimate resurrection. Pray that God will touch the hearts of the children and all the volunteers as well today. Ask God to open the hearts of those attending so that people will come to faith in Jesus as they hear the Gospel message.

Thursday, July 19 – Read Acts 3:1-26. The VBS children will be learning about the time Peter and John heal a man in Jesus' name. They will be taught that Jesus rescues those who are powerless. Often, we become preoccupied with what material resources we do or do not have, but in this passage Peter recognized that he had a resource to offer that was greater than silver or gold. He had the name and power of Jesus Christ. As Christians who have been promised the Holy Spirit, we too have such power to offer the world. Ask God today to fill us with the power of the Holy Spirit and to help us recognize that we have a great resource to offer a needy world.

Friday, July 20 – Read Matthew 18:1-6. In a culture that thought children should not be seen or heard, Jesus encourages His followers to welcome children and learn from them. We have spent the week welcoming and loving the children in VBS, but we also can learn from these children. He calls us to be childlike in our faith and humble in our approach to God. Ask God today to create in us a humble and childlike faith. Pray for those who have attended VBS, asking that the

seeds planted will take root and grow into a vibrant faith. Pray for the workers and volunteers to find some rest and energy after a busy week.

Saturday, July 21 – Read I Corinthians 9:19-23. Paul was willing to do whatever was necessary to meet people where they were and show them God's love. Are we willing to do whatever is needed to meet people where they are? Are we willing to step out of our comfort zones to meet and engage new people? Ask God today to show us as individuals and a church how we can connect with people in ways that will open doors to share God's love.

Sunday, July 22 – Read Psalm 121. Many of us have spent the week in VBS being reminded that Jesus rescues us. On this Lord's Day, as we gather again for worship, we are reminded by the psalmist that God helps us and protects us. God watches over us moment by moment and day by day. Spend time today thanking God for God's attention, care, and protection. Reflect on the ways you have experienced God as a source of help and care. Praise God for God's goodness and care! Pray that God will help us all be more aware of God's presence and protection.

Monday, July 23 – Read Matthew 17:14-21. This passage highlights a failure of the disciples. Though Jesus had already sent out the disciples in Matthew 10 and given them the power to drive out evil spirits, heal diseases, and preach about the kingdom, the disciples are still failing to demonstrate the power they have been given. In this way, the disciples are much like us. We have been given power to be witnesses, to make disciples, and to minister in Jesus' name. Do we really have faith that God can use us to bring change in the lives of others? Do we really believe we can be instruments of God's work in our community? Pray today that God will strengthen our faith and trust in His ability to work through us. Offer yourself fully to be used by God.

Tuesday, July 24 – Read Jeremiah 29:11-13. Reflect on this promise from Jeremiah. Though Jeremiah is speaking specifically to the people of Israel in exile, we are also invited to think about what plans and desires God has for us. What might God have in store for our future? Are we willing to commit ourselves to pray for God’s leading? Pray that our congregation will help us grow in our understanding of God’s plans for us. Ask God to reveal God’s desires and vision to us and to empower us to follow God’s leading.

Wednesday, July 25 – Read Matthew 19:16-30. The rich, young man who approached Jesus had much going for him. He was wealthy and was a very good person. Jesus, however, looked into his heart and saw that he was not yet ready to give himself fully to God. He loved his wealth more than he loved God. What is it in our lives that is more important to us than God? If we let God look into our hearts, what priorities would He see in us? Are we willing to leave behind anything that keeps us from giving God our whole heart? Are we as a church willing to leave behind any programs or patterns that are not God’s best for us? Ask God to show us where our priorities need to be rearranged.

Thursday, July 26 – Read Mark 10:46-52. When Bartimaeus heard that Jesus was passing by, he refused to be silent until he got the attention of Jesus. Then, Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” Can we approach God today with the boldness of Bartimaeus? Imagine also today that Jesus asks you, “What do you want me to do for you?” What answer would you give for yourself? For our church? Open your heart and your hopes to God today, praying boldly for yourself and our church.

Friday, July 27 – Read Psalm 130. How wonderful it is to know that God is merciful, is always ready to hear us, and keeps no record of our sins. Take some time today to thank God for the forgiveness and grace you have experienced in your life. What sin and struggle do you still need to confess to God? Are there temptations that continue to have power over you? Will you confess these sins and failures to God now?

Ask God also to give you strength in the face of temptation so that you might stand strong today and in the days ahead. Pray that God will also strengthen our congregation to live faithfully.

Saturday, July 28 – Read Matthew 7:15-23. Jesus reminds us that we can know what is in our hearts by the fruit that we bear. Spend some time today reflecting honestly on how well your words and actions reflect the love of Jesus. Do people really see in us Christlike love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control? (Galatians 5:22-23) Ask God to forgive us for the ways we fall short of Christlikeness. Pray that God will continue to shape your life so that the fruit of the Spirit will be evident in your words and actions.

Sunday, July 29 – Read I Samuel 3:1-10. During the days of Samuel, the Word of the Lord was rare. In our day, we often have trouble hearing from God because we fill our lives with so much activity and noise. Do we believe that God has a word for us? Do we believe God has a word and a vision for our church? If we are going to hear it, we need to follow Samuel’s example in saying, “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.” On this day of worship, pray those words and spend time listening for God’s voice. Ask God to speak clearly to you and to our church.

Monday, July 30 – Read Matthew 5:21-24. In church families, just like in our families at home, there come times when we are in conflict with others. At times, we become angry at those who hurt us or act in ways that make us mad. Jesus tells us, however, that before we can worship, we need to make things right in our relationships with others. Whom in our church do you struggle to relate to? Who has hurt you? To whom do you need to go and ask for forgiveness for things you have said and done? Ask God to bring healing to the broken relationships in our church, but pray also that God will give you strength to seek out those with whom you need reconciliation.

Tuesday, July 31 – Read Philippians 2:1-11. In a world that celebrates assertive people and tells us to look out for number one, the Gospel calls us to follow the example of Christ who humbly left the glory of heaven to give Himself away for us. Thank God today for the example of Jesus. Ask God to help you let go of your selfish ambitions and to create in you a servant's heart. Spend time reflecting on ways that you can follow Christ's example in being a servant to others. Pray also that God will help shape our church to become true servants to our community and those who need to experience God's love.

Wednesday, August 1 – Read I Thessalonians 2:1-13. In these verses, Paul describes his approach to ministry. Though he was a gifted preacher, he understood that people hear and receive the Gospel better when they sense God's love through relationships. Paul made a commitment to loving others and sharing his life with them. Who do you know that needs you to reach out to them with love, care, and gentleness so that they might see, feel, and hear the love of Christ? Ask God to show you how you might follow the example of Christ in reaching out with love. Pray for those in your life who need to experience the love of Christ through you in tangible ways.

Thursday, August 2 – Read Jonah 1:1-17. We all have times when we resist God's call or work in our lives. Jonah fled from God rather than go and preach to the hated Ninevites. Though we know we are called to "make disciples of all nations," our own prejudices sometimes cause us, like Jonah, to avoid certain individuals and groups. Do we still harbor prejudice against certain people or groups? Pray that God will forgive us for our prejudice and help us to see where our hearts need to be transformed. Ask God to help us love those who are different than we are and to give us opportunities to minister to those we would prefer to ignore.

Friday, August 3 – Read Luke 7:36-50. The woman in this story shows her love to Jesus in an extravagant way. While she refused to count the cost of the expensive perfume, our giving to God often

seems very limited and calculated. Think about how much of your time, talents, and resources you truly offer to God. Are we holding too much back from God? Pray today that God will develop generous and sacrificial hearts in us so that we are willing to give extravagantly to the work of God's kingdom and to the church

Saturday, August 4 – Read Colossians 4:2-6. In these verses, Paul encourages the believers to be faithful in prayer and to pray for him as he preaches and ministers. He knew he depended on the prayer support of the churches. Today, pray for our ministerial staff and for our Sunday School teachers as they prepare to lead in worship and Bible study tomorrow. Ask God to strengthen our leaders and members so that we might use our gifts effectively in ministering inside and outside the church.

Sunday, August 5 – Read Psalm 42:1-8. The psalmist speaks of his great longing for God. He wants nothing more than to know God and have God quench the thirst of his soul. Do we have that kind of hunger and thirst for God and God's righteousness? Are we trying to quench the thirst of our soul with things other than God? Can we truly say we have a passion for God that others can see? As we worship and study today, pray that God will create in us this kind of hunger and thirst for God. Ask God to create a genuine revival in our congregation.

Monday, August 6 – Read Matthew 25:14-30. This familiar parable provides an opportunity for us to examine what talents we have and what talents we offer to the church and to God's work. As God works in your life, do you think He would say to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant"? What more do you have to offer that might help our church or help someone else experience God's love in a practical way? Spend some time reflecting on what talents and resources our church has. Pray that God will empower us to use the gifts we have been given in outreach and ministry.

Tuesday, August 7 – Read Isaiah 43:16-21. In this passage, God reminded the people of Israel of the way God led them through the Red Sea during their escape from Egypt, but then God called them to quit focusing on the good in the past and to begin looking for the future He could bring them. Ask God today to help us grow excited about what God wants to do at Hope Valley. While we have much in our past to celebrate, pray that God will help us focus our eyes forward as we seek His will for us. What new things might God be wanting to do in and through our congregation? Are we willing to change to participate in God's new work?

Wednesday, August 8 – Read Luke 5:1-11. Have you ever spent a great deal of energy on a project, only to see it turn out poorly? Have you ever felt like your best efforts were making no difference at all? Imagine how Simon Peter felt after this encounter with Jesus. He discovered that there is an infinite difference between our best efforts and what God can do in and through us. What does this passage have to say to us? Are we doing church using only our strength and knowledge? Or are we making ourselves available to be instruments of God's work and power? Pray today that we will let God do God's good work through us. Ask God to create within us a vision of what God can do in and through Hope Valley.

Thursday, August 9 – Read Luke 14:25-35. We live in a world that encourages moderation and discourages fanaticism. Given what this passage says about God's expectations, however, can we truly say that we love God more than anything else in our lives? Spend some time today honestly examining your priorities. Is God truly the Lord of your life? Does your faith in God shape everything you do daily? Are we willing to leave anything and everything behind in order to follow Jesus? Pray that God will stir up within each of us a deeper level of commitment to Him and His kingdom.

Friday, August 10 – Read John 13:1-17. On the last night of His life, Jesus offered His disciples a lesson in servanthood and then called them to follow His example. Though we are familiar with the Biblical

call to be servants, our culture does not celebrate servanthood. Do people see in you a servant's heart? Do people see our church serving our community? In what ways is God calling us to serve the people around us? Let us pray together today that God will help all of us renew our commitment to being servants of each other and of the people around us.

Saturday, August 11 – Read Jeremiah 1:4-10. Like so many people called by God, Jeremiah made excuses and tried to avoid God's call. We can understand those feelings, but just as God gave to Jeremiah the words he would need to speak, God promises to give us whatever we need to fulfill our calling. Are we willing to say "Yes" to God's call? Ask God to help us see clearly as individuals and as a church what God calls us to do. Spend time today quietly reflecting on where you think God might be leading you to serve.

Sunday, August 12 – Read John 1:1-14. John opens his Gospel by reminding us of the significance of Jesus Christ who came to live among us in the flesh. How wonderful it is to know that we can be called "children of God." Meditate today on what it means to you to be a child of God. What are the privileges AND the responsibilities that come with being part of God's family? Take time to thank God for the privilege of being His child. As we gather for worship, praise God joyfully for welcoming you into God's family, and while celebrating the gift of being God's child, begin praying for our children and young people who will be heading back to school soon.

Monday, August 13 – Read Matthew 4:1-11. As we read about the temptations Jesus faced and the strength He found in God's Word, take time today to reflect honestly on what temptations continue to give you the greatest difficulty. Where do you keep falling short of God's desires for you? What is it in your life that is keeping you from being closer to God? Take time today to ask God to forgive you for your failures. Ask God to give you strength to resist these temptations in the days ahead.

Tuesday, August 14 – Read John 2:1-11. In turning water into wine, Jesus offers a sign that reveals His glory and power. The people were amazed that Jesus offered something so much better than anything they had tasted. In a similar way, Jesus offers us joy and abundant life that far exceeds what we have previously known. Does your life reflect this overflowing joy in Jesus Christ? Does our community see the goodness and joy of God in us? Pray today that God will fill us with the joy and power of Jesus Christ.

Wednesday, August 15 – Read Ephesians 4:1-6. Paul calls the body of Christ to live in unity and emphasizes that we can maintain unity by being humble, gentle, patient, and loving. Reflect honestly on this question: Does your life demonstrate these qualities? Pray that God will develop unity within our congregation and that we will follow God's will and desire for our church. Ask God to help you demonstrate humility, gentleness, patience, and love in your relationships with fellow church members.

Thursday, August 16 – Read Jeremiah 18:1-12. This passage contains harsh words for Israel, but the image of clay in the hands of the potter is one we all need to hear. Thank God today for the assurance that we are in God's hands, but then take time to ask yourself whether our lives and our church are at a point where we need God to reshape us. What does God need to do so that we will be useful in God's hands? Pray again for our staff, leaders, and fellow members. Ask God to grant all of us wisdom and clarity for our roles in the church.

Friday, August 17 – Read James 3:1-12. Most of us don't have to be reminded about the power of words to build up or tear down. We all have experienced both the power of encouraging words and the pain of destructive words. Reflect today on whether your words help to build up the body of Christ. Are we falling victim to the temptation to talk about people instead of to them? Pray for forgiveness for words that have caused pain and division, and ask God to help you use your words to build up others and spread the Good News of God's love.

Ask God to help all of us in the congregation avoid gossip and destructive talk.

Saturday, August 18 – Read Ephesians 1:15-23. This passage provides another glimpse into the content of Paul's prayers. Today, let Paul's prayer guide your praying. Pray for our congregation the prayer that Paul was offering for the Ephesians. Pray that we at Hope Valley will have the eyes of our hearts enlightened so that we might know the hope that Christ offers, the riches of His inheritance, and the incomparably great power that God wants to pour out on those who believe. Can you imagine what our church might look like if we really grasped and received these gifts that God wants to give us? Pray that we will experience the transforming power of God.

Sunday, August 19 – Read I Timothy 2:1-7. Paul urged the believers to be people committed to prayer and intercession. He asked believers to pray for all people, including Paul himself. He needed prayer support in order to fulfill his calling as a teacher. As we move closer to fall and a new church year, we must recognize the importance of prayer. In order for our Sunday School to grow and flourish, we must support and pray for our teachers and classes. Pray today for our teachers and our Sunday School ministry, asking God to create a growing commitment to Bible study among our members. Pray also for those who teach in other areas of the church, especially those who have roles teaching our children and youth. Ask God to fill them with love, patience, knowledge, and wisdom as they shape young lives.

Monday, August 20 – Read Numbers 13:1-2, 17-33. Moses sent a group of men to explore the land of Canaan. While most of the men focused on problems and obstacles that might prevent them from moving into the Promised Land, Caleb believed that with God's help, they could claim the land God promised them. As a church, it is easy to focus on our limitations, weaknesses, and struggles. We often make excuses, but God gives us all we need to be the church God calls us to be. God gives us the Holy Spirit! Ask God today to fill us with expectation and hope about our future. Pray that God will give us faith

to follow God's guidance, even when the road ahead seems difficult and challenging.

Tuesday, August 21 – Read Isaiah 2:1-5. This passage invites us to envision the kingdom of God where war will end and where God's people will walk in faithfulness. Though we may not achieve complete peace in this world, God's kingdom is present among us, and we should strive to live up to this vision. Pray today that God will create peace and harmony in our congregation so that we might "walk in the light of the Lord." Ask God also to show you how you can be a peacemaker in your life, your relationships, and in the world around you. How might God be calling us to work for peace and justice in our world?

Wednesday, August 22 – Read Mark 5:1-20. Though we don't talk often about demon possession these days, we can recognize that there are struggles, temptations, and sin that bind us and keep us from experiencing the fullness of God's power. Despite our best efforts, we fall into the same patterns and sin over and over again. Only God's power is sufficient to bring us release and healing from that which binds us. Ask God to help us recognize where our lives are bound by sin. Pray that God will bring us release and strength to overcome temptation. Take some time to reflect on the life of our church and where we might be bound by bad patterns and sin. Ask God to help our church overcome what binds and limits us.

Thursday, August 23 – Read Acts 4:32-37. Can you imagine what it must have been like to be part of this early community of faith? Reflect on this picture of the church and what God's Spirit was able to create among the believers. It seems unrealistic to imagine ourselves living in such a close and trusting community, but this passage gives us a vision of what church at its best can be. Pray that God's Spirit will be at work in our church so that we might be filled with power, unity, and generosity. Ask God to show us what is hindering us from living as a true family of faith, and pray that we can become what God calls us to be.

Friday, August 24 – Read Isaiah 40:28-31. God through the Holy Spirit is the source of all the power, energy, and enthusiasm the church needs to be effective in ministry. Pray today that God will pour out the Spirit on our congregation so that we might renew our strength and might discover great energy and power for ministry in our community. If you find yourself tired and weary, ask God to fulfill the promise of this passage in your life.

Saturday, August 25 – Read Philippians 1:3-11. Paul's personal words express great warmth to the Philippians for their partnership and support. Knowing that ministry is always a partnership, pray today especially for our ministerial staff and lay leadership. Ask God to help each of us recognize how we can contribute to the ministry of our church. Pray also that we can grow in confidence that God will continue and complete the good work God has begun at Hope Valley.

Sunday, August 26 – Read John 4:4-26. Like many people of that day, the Samaritan woman believed that God should be worshipped in certain locations. Jesus taught that true worship was not limited to certain holy places, but depended far more on the attitude and spirit of the worshipper. As we gather again for worship today, are we approaching God with an expectant spirit and commitment to the truth? Are our hearts and minds truly focused on God who promises to be present with us always? Pray today that our worship will offer God the praise God deserves and will open our lives to God's presence and power.

Monday, August 27 – Read John 4:27-42. The Samaritan woman went to the well that day without any expectation that her life was about to be changed. To her credit, however, when she met Jesus and opened her life to His grace, she could not keep the good news to herself. She immediately became an evangelist who told others what Jesus had done in her life. How often do we take advantage of the opportunity to tell others what Jesus has done in our lives? Ask God today to help you see opportunities to tell others about Him. Pray that

God will give you boldness to share and that God will grant all of us at Hope Valley the courage to share the Good News.

Tuesday, August 28 – Read Psalm 119:97-112. These words speak of a deep commitment to God’s Word. If we are going to hear God’s voice, we need to renew our commitment to studying and meditating on God’s Word. Ask God to give all of us a deeper commitment to Bible study – both personally, in Sunday School, and in other Bible study opportunities. Renew your commitment to regular Bible study. Pray that God will give each of us the discipline to study and listen to the Scriptures.

Wednesday, August 29 – Read Exodus 3:1-15. Even as he heard the voice of God, Moses struggled to believe in God’s power. When God called him to rescue the Israelites, Moses felt inadequate and made excuses. Ultimately, God told him, “I will be with you.” As we think about ministering in our community, what a gift it is to know that God is still assuring us, “I will be with you.” Ask God to strengthen our faith so that we can make ourselves fully available to Him. Pray that God will empower us so that we can be God’s hands and feet in our community.

Thursday, August 30 – Read Nehemiah 1:1-11. The task facing Israel was formidable. After the exile, they wanted to rebuild Jerusalem, but struggled with limited resources and general discouragement. Nehemiah sought God earnestly in prayer, acknowledging Israel’s sin and committing himself to be an instrument of God’s work. Let Nehemiah’s prayer guide your praying today. Acknowledge our sin before God and ask for God’s power and presence to help us overcome discouragement and to build us into the church God wants us to be.

Friday, August 31 – Read I Samuel 16:1-13. Like so many stories in the Bible, this passage reminds us that God’s ways are not our ways. God’s values are not our values. God chooses people based not on

appearance, prestige, power, or wealth. God looks at the heart. Can you believe today that God calls you and sees possibilities in you? When God looks into our hearts, is God pleased by our level of commitment to and our availability? When God examines our congregation, does God see a people ready and willing to serve Christ in this community? Pray today that God will give you and all of us hearts willing to be instruments in God’s service.

Saturday, September 1 – Read Mark 2:1-12. This passage invites us to reflect on the ability of Jesus both to heal and to forgive. Give thanks for the power of God working in your life. For today, however, reflect on what might have happened to the paralytic if his friends had not been willing to carry him to Jesus. What might have happened if his friends had given up when they saw the crowds? In some sense, this story provides us a picture of what ministry is like. Ministry happens when we bring hurting people into the presence of Jesus who can heal and forgive them. Ask God today to help you be a friend who brings others to Jesus. As you pray for friends or family members who need a loving touch from Jesus, imagine that you are laying them at the feet of Jesus and trusting Him to care for them.

Sunday, September 2 – Read Ephesians 2:1-10. Paul reminds us in these verses about the amazing work that God has done for us. We are welcomed by the grace of God into new life in Jesus Christ. As we worship today, we have so many reasons to praise God. God offers us the gift of grace and love. With this gift, however, comes the expectation that we will do good works. Praise God today for the gift of grace and the wonderful reminder that we are God’s workmanship. Ask God to show you what good works you can do this week.

Monday, September 3 – Read Isaiah 43:1-7. Though these words are written to Israel, they are words God wants to speak to us as well. Read this passage slowly as God’s promise to you. Put your name in where it speaks to Jacob and Israel. Read this as God’s love letter to you. What does it mean to you to know that God is with you when you pass through the rivers and walk through the fires of life?

Meditate on the wonderful news that you are precious and honored in God's sight. How different might our daily lives be if we truly grasped this promise of God's love and protection?

Tuesday, September 4 – Read Mark 12:28-34. God's desire for us is that we love God and love others. Spend time today reflecting on how well you are fulfilling this calling. Can you honestly say that you love God with your whole heart, soul, mind and strength? Do others know that you love them as God does? Do people sense from our church that we love them like Jesus does? Confess your shortcomings to God and pray that He will fill all of us with Christlike love.

Wednesday, September 5 – Read Luke 10:25-37. This parable still speaks powerfully about what it means to be a neighbor. In a community that is increasingly diverse, God calls us to be a neighbor to many people who have been beaten down by life and by the difficulties of the world. There are many people who need us to respond with the compassion of the Good Samaritan. Ask God today to help you see those people who need your compassion and ministry. Pray that God will help our church develop and strengthen ministries to help those in need.

Thursday, September 6 – Read Genesis 12:1-5. Can you imagine what Abram must have felt when he heard God calling him to pack up the life he knew and go to a land that God would show him? At the beginning of this journey, Abram had nothing more than an invitation to follow God into an unclear future. As a church, we have to be willing to follow God to a future that God will show us when we get there. We do not know the destination when we agree to follow. Can we trust God enough to leave behind the past and go where God is leading us? Ask God to strengthen our faith and to give us courage to follow, wherever the path might go.

Friday, September 7 – Read Matthew 6:25-34. In our honest moments, most of us admit that we struggle with worry, even when we

know that Jesus taught us not to worry. So many things in our lives create anxiety. These are difficult days to be church, and sometimes we worry about our church and what our future might look like. Can we trust God with our individual future and with the future of Hope Valley Baptist Church? Pray that God will strengthen our faith and give us courage to seek first the Kingdom of God and to live the values and priorities of the Kingdom. As we approach the end of this prayer emphasis, commit yourself to continue praying for our church and our faithfulness.

Saturday, September 8 – Read Acts 2:1-41. At Pentecost, the power of the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles and changed everything. The ragtag group of often-confused disciples were filled with power and began doing the work of Jesus. As we conclude 100 days of prayer together, we need the power of the Spirit to accomplish our mission. We need nothing more than the power of the Holy Spirit at work in us to fulfill our calling. Pray today that God will fill our church with the power of the Spirit and that we will be willing to be used by God in the days and weeks ahead.