



prayer *life!*

Weekly Prayer Focus

January 3, 2016

Encore

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy. Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat. —Psalm 19:1-6

A new year has dawned. We've done our celebrations, seen the parade, and yelled our cheers. The daily grind awaits, when festivities turn into yawns, the drudgeries and demands of daily life once again take center stage. If we're not careful, we'll simply tolerate the mundane just to get to the thrills. Life will become like an addiction we can't get rid of. We endure the bad, hoping for as much good as possible.

By nature, we look at things with a cold, economic eye. We weigh cost and benefit to determine value. Assuming God is like us, we believe He will judge our lives by weighing the good against the bad, and heaven awaits if the scales tip in our favor. We view God and the life He gives in much the same way. If our pleasures outweigh our difficulties, life is worth it. Happy New Year!—maybe.

Early this March, a new life will dawn, and we'll become grandparents for the first time. I'm really looking forward to holding a tiny human bundle in my arms again and witnessing a brand new person coming into her own. Awareness awakening, interactions taking shape. New discoveries occurring, as brand new eyes take in this old world for the first time. Old cartoons and Disneyland will become fun again as I see them from a child's perspective.

But will I have the strength for this second round? Twenty years ago, another turn on a ride or another romp with a toddler bouncing on my stomach just added to the fun. "Do it again!" was as much a delight to me as it was to the two-year-old using me as a jungle gym. But will this old body be able to take it? Will our granddaughter's enthusiasm be too much to handle. I hope not. Rambunctiousness is the stuff of life, the glue of love, the essence of joy. It's not just children who say, "Do it again!" This next round promises delight for us grandparents.

New life is a chance to see the smile in God's eyes and share the delight in His heart. Existence itself is a celebration for the One who calls Himself, "I Am." God's creation tells us about our heavenly Father. Its immensity staggers us with His majesty. Its intricacy amazes us with His attention to detail. Its beauty strikes us with His artistic sense. Its design conveys His brilliance and perfect intention.

But all new life, every new day, each turn of the head to witness a new facet of the heavens and the earth, which our God created with a word, reveals the joy of existence itself. The Giver of life rejoices in all of life—the good and the bad, the pleasant and the unpleasant, the challenges and the triumphs, the drudgeries and the delights. God does not weight the good against the bad. He works all things for the good and makes all of life worth it.

God didn't make life a drudgery. Our sin did that. We weren't created to grow old and die. We chose that path when we rebelled. But God changed all that by becoming part of His creation and dying to redeem us. The risen Christ makes all things new and gives new life to all who trust Him. In Christ, each New Year is God's, "Encore!" and with each new birth He says, "Do it again!" to the daily delight of His children.

To the praise of God's glory

Prayer for the Week

Sunday (Church): Pray for John Sloan, our Lead Pastor, to feed us from God's Word and lead us in His will.

Monday (Home and Family): Pray for God to provide your parents and brothers and sisters with all they need so they grow in His grace.

Tuesday (Job/School): Pray that your spiritual example and testimony will show Christ to those around you.

Wednesday (Neighborhood and Community): Ask God to give you creative ways and good opportunities to get to know the neighbors. Pray for Christ's love to shine through you.

Thursday (The Nation): Pray that the leaders of our state and federal governments will obey God's will and turn their heart to honor Him as Lord and Savior.

Friday (The World): Ask the Lord to reign in the affairs of men throughout the world. May His justice, righteousness, truth, and grace cover all the earth.

Saturday (Praise and Rejoicing): Pray for God's provision for all your daily needs and answers to your prayers.

Prayer Record

Record specific prayers you have below. Note when and how God answers your prayers. It will help you to see that He really is paying attention.

Date	Request	Date	Answer

Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds his people, from this time forth and forevermore. –Psalm 125:1-2