



# Guide for PRAYER & DISCERNMENT





*Let no debt remain,  
except the debt to love one another.*

**ROMANS 13:8**

## **THREE PHASE PRAYER PROCESS**

### **PHASE 1: CALL TO DAILY PRAYER**

**APRIL 1 – 21**

21 Days of guided family prayer and activities using this Prayer Guide.

### **PHASE 2: PRAYER RELAY TEAMS**

**APRIL 22 – 28**

7 days covered in prayer by small groups meeting together.

Form your own group or sign up for one on April 7 or 14 after Sunday services.

Commit to one hour praying with 3-10 other members.

### **PHASE 3: FAMILY DISCERNMENT**

**APRIL 29 – MAY 4**

Choose a time during this period within your family unit to pray about your commitment to our capital campaign over a 3-year period.

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### **PRAY BY USING THE ACRONYM, A.C.T.S.**

**A - ADORATION:** Reflect on God's greatness, His power, His mercy, His love, His grace, His patience.

**C - CONFESSION:** Confess your sins. He is faithful and just to forgive.

**T - THANKSGIVING:** Thank God for His blessing to you, family, friends and church.

**S - SUPPLICATION:** Make your requests known to God.

Dear Friendswood Methodist Family:

Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed! Christians all over the world proclaim this ancient acclamation on Easter Sunday to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. His resurrection not only defeated sin and death but also gave each one of us new life as we put our faith in Him.

This Easter Sunday also launches our Freedom for the Future capital campaign. The campaign's purpose is a 3-year financial commitment over and above regular giving to set us free from the remaining building and disaffiliation debt and provide critical capital improvements in the church. Our theme verse comes from Romans 13:8, where Paul says, "Let no debt remain among you, except the debt to love one another." Eliminating our debt will free up almost a hundred thousand in interest payments yearly to invest in children, students, missions, and outreach and strengthen our staff team for ministry.

But none of this is possible without the Lord's leading and direction. I invite you to join me in spending time praying for the Lord to speak to us and our family about what he wants you to do for the future of Friendswood Methodist.

On Easter Sunday afternoon, two disciples encountered the risen Lord. The Lord spoke to them as they walked on that road to Emmaus, and later, they recalled, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

If we, too, open our hearts to the Lord Jesus like those two disciples, He will also speak to each of us today.

**BLESSINGS,**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Bass", written in a cursive style.

**Rev. Jim Bass**  
*Senior Pastor*

## *How to Use This Prayer Guide*

This Prayer Guide is designed to be used by everyone in our Church family. For all of us, there are Scriptures to read, questions to ponder, and challenges to face.

For families, there are special activities to be used to shepherd our children through the process. They, too, need to experience the blessing of watching God work among us. This Prayer Guide is divided into 3 weeks with a different theme for each week. The first day of each week contains longer passages to read and think about.

Also provided with these Scriptures, are two suggestions for families to use in communicating the heart of the biblical truth to children. We would encourage you to use one or both of these activities (or think up your own) as a family night activity.

On the remaining days of the week, you can spend a few minutes working through each of the following elements:

- **EACH DAY BEGINS WITH A PRAYER** as we allow God to prepare our minds to hear from Him.
- **SCRIPTURE MEMORY** — write it on your hearts.
- **READ** — a short passage of scripture will reveal a key truth.
- **THREE QUESTIONS** — will help you ponder the truth and its application in your life. The third question is especially designed for family participation.
- **CHALLENGE** — to help us reflect on what God's truth looks like for our daily lives.

It is our hope that this prayer guide will be an effective tool for all of us. From the youngest to the oldest at Friendswood Methodist, we look for God to answer these prayers.

# WEEK 1 — DAY 1

*To hear God's voice, I need a Pure Heart.*

## INTRODUCTION

**Take a piece of paper and pencil. Go outside and sit quietly for five minutes. Write down or draw a picture of every noise you can hear.**

**READ:** 1 Samuel 3:1-21: Samuel hears God's voice.

**THINK:** Why did God speak to Samuel and not Eli or his sons? (see 1 Samuel 2:22 – 26) Scripture says that God would honor those who honor Him. Throughout Freedom for the Future, our desire is to honor God so that we can hear him when He speaks.

**READ:** Jeremiah 17:9 and Psalm 51: The Condition of our Heart

**THINK:** What does God say about our hearts? There are things we say, think or do that are not like what God would say, think or do. Only God knows our heart, our motives and the things we think we have hidden from everyone else. God gives us a solution to getting rid of things that we may not even be aware that we have hidden.

**MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK:**

*"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."*

**PSALM 51:10 (NIV)**

Look at all the words in this verse and make sure you understand what they mean. A dictionary may help you discover the complete meanings. Read it three times today and every day this week. Pray it back to God and listen to what He tells you.

**WEEK 1 PRAYER REQUESTS:**

- Pray for unity in the body as we prepare our hearts for Commitment Sunday on May 5.
- Pray for God to begin His miracle work among us.
- Pray for open hearts to make the commitments necessary to do God's will.

# WEEK 1 — FAMILY ACTIVITIES

## ACTIVITY #1

**MATERIALS:** An empty bag and a bag full of toiletry items (i.e. soap, shampoo, perfume, brush, etc). The more, the better!

Take each item out of the bag and discuss its purpose. After laying out the items, discover what they all have in common. (They are all used to make the outside of our body look good.) Now, hold up the empty bag. If we wanted the inside of our body to look good, what would we put in this bag? (Answers include God's Word, prayer, confession, accountability...) Point out the difference in the bags.

*A Thought to Ponder:* Most of us spend more time trying to make our outsides look good, but little time making sure our heart and conscience is clean. We can cleanse our hearts by looking into the mirror of God's Word and repenting of the sins that we see. If we do that, God will cleanse us on the inside (1 John 1:9). Then we will be pure so we can hear His voice. Pray right now that God will show you what needs to be cleaned up on the inside. Apply this truth by writing 1 John 1:9 on a paper and hang it by your soap dish to remind you that we have to clean the inside too.

## ACTIVITY #2

**MATERIALS:** Blindfold, large marshmallows and a grocery sack

It's the Marshmallow Toss Game! Player #1 is blindfolded and holds ten marshmallows. Their goal is to get marshmallows into the bag. Player #2 holds the bag and wants to be helpful. But they can only whisper and must stand still wherever the rest of the players place them. The rest of the players try to confuse Player #1 with wrong advice about where to throw (without touching Player #1 or the Marshmallows). Go! When player one is out of marshmallows, trade places and try again.

*A Thought to Ponder:* This game was a lot like listening for God's voice. Sometimes there are many different voices to listen to, but you have to work hard at hearing God's voice. Was it frustrating that the helpful voice was only whispering when the other voices were loud? We have to listen carefully for God's voice, because so many other voices can get in the way.

# WEEK 1 — DAY 2

*To hear God's voice, we need a Heart of Purity.*

**Lord, I need a pure heart to stay unified in focusing on Your will.**

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY:** (Write it on a card and look at it often today.)

*"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."*

**PSALM 51:10 (NIV)**

**READ:** Psalm 119:9 – 11 and Psalm 139:23, 24

1. What two things in this passage will keep us from sin? Do you practice them on a regular basis?
2. In Psalm 139, why does God ask us to pray this way?
3. If I told you that I had a pan of brownies, would you want one? What if my recipe included one tablespoon of dirt? Would you still want some? Why not? Compare these brownies to the heart we offer to God.

**CHALLENGE:** In light of looking for God to act miraculously through Freedom for the Future, what hindrances can you think of that would prevent you from hearing His voice?

**TAKE NOTE:** Write down what God is saying to you. \_\_\_\_\_

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*Pray for unity in the body as we prepare our hearts for Commitment Sunday on May 5.*

# WEEK 1 — DAY 3

*To hear God's voice, we need a Heart of Thankfulness.*

**Lord, help me to have a thankful heart today as I look expectantly toward tomorrow.**

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY:** (Try to say it three times today.)

*"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."*

**PSALM 51:10 (NIV)**

**READ:** 1 Thessalonians 5:16 – 18

1. Which things are we to be thankful for? What events or circumstances are not included? Why?
2. Do you think we have to like everything that God allows in our life? Should we be thankful for only what we like?
3. Name two things you find it hard to thank God for. Ask Him to give you a thankful heart for these.

**CHALLENGE:** For many of us, it's hard to thank God for things we cannot see or for things that stretch us out of our comfort zone. What does a thankful heart in the areas of money and material possessions look like in your life as we embrace the Freedom for the Future campaign?

**TAKE NOTE:** Write down what God is saying to you. \_\_\_\_\_

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# WEEK 1 — DAY 4

*To hear God's voice, we need a Heart of Trust.*

**Lord, give your people at Friendswood Methodist hearts that look to You for everything.**

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY:** (Try to say it from memory.)

*"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."*

**PSALM 51:10 (NIV)**

**READ:** Matthew 6:28 - 34

1. What makes humans more valuable than the birds? Do you believe it? Why or why not?
2. Can you write a definition of faith based on reading this passage?
3. Can you think of any flowers that don't have petals? Why or why not? God makes sure that every flower has petals.

**CHALLENGE:** List five worries that could get in the way of looking for what God might do through you in the Freedom for the Future campaign. Pray today for openness, as we gather to begin the next exciting phase in the life of our church.

**TAKE NOTE:** Write down what God is saying to you. \_\_\_\_\_

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*Pray for God to begin His miracle work among us.*

# WEEK 1 — DAY 5

*To hear God's voice, we need a Heart of Contentment.*

**Lord, help us, as a church family, to be satisfied in You alone.**

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY:** (Pray this verse back to God before you begin today.)

*"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."*

**PSALM 51:10 (NIV)**

**READ:** 1 Timothy 6:6 - 10 and Luke 12:15 - 20

1. What are the symptoms of sin and discontentment? Are you infected?
2. Where are you spending most of your resources, on building up earthly treasures or heavenly ones? What was the last thing that you did that affected eternity?
3. List five things that you treasure the most. How can you use them to make a difference for God at school? at work? at church? at home?

**CHALLENGE:** It is easy to put our hope and trust in money and material possessions. The problem is that there is never enough. Pray for a godly perspective on "things" as we begin the Freedom for the Future process.

**TAKE NOTE:** Write down what God is saying to you. \_\_\_\_\_

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# WEEK 1 — DAY 6

*To hear God's voice, we need a Heart of Compassion.*

**Lord, as we look to expand our borders, give us a heart of compassion for those who need You.**

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY:** (Pray for an opportunity to share this verse with someone today.)

*"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."*

**PSALM 51:10 (NIV)**

**READ:** John 11:32 - 36

1. What emotion did Jesus show? Why?
2. Jesus spent much of His time on earth cultivating life-changing relationships. What next step do you need to take to cultivate life-changing relationships?
3. Imagine that a new child in town has just walked into your classroom or moved into your neighborhood. How do you think they feel? Discuss how you might reach out to help him feel accepted.

**CHALLENGE:** Changed lives ... Priceless! Is your compassion helping others to experience life-change? Praise God for the need to make room for the larger number of people who are experiencing life change at Friendswood Methodist.

**TAKE NOTE:** Write down what God is saying to you. \_\_\_\_\_

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*Pray for open hearts to make commitments necessary to do God's will.*

# WEEK 1 — DAY 7

*To hear God's voice, we need a Heart of Sacrifice.*

**Lord, show me my heart and give me a heart of sacrifice.**

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY:** (Pray that God will use this verse today to reveal something you need to sacrifice for His glory.)

*"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."*

**PSALM 51:10 (NIV)**

**READ:** Philippians 2:5 - 8

1. List specific sacrifices Christ made from these verses. What did obedience cost Him?
2. Does God ask us to make greater sacrifices than He asked from His own Son? (Read Philippians 3:7) What can you do to be more like Jesus?
3. Do you find it difficult to obey certain things you are asked to do? Do you obey when no one is watching? Are you willing to obey as a sacrifice to God, even when you don't feel like it?

**CHALLENGE:** What are you willing to sacrifice for Him? Your time? Your treasure? Your position? Write down three things that would be hard to sacrifice right now if God called you to do so for Freedom for the Future.

**TAKE NOTE:** Write down what God is saying to you. \_\_\_\_\_

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# WEEK 2 — DAY 1

*To hear God's voice, I need a Transformed Mind.*

## INTRODUCTION

***In Ephesians 5:1, we are called to imitate our all-wise, all-knowing and completely perfect God. But have you noticed how different you and I are from God? We think very differently than He does. If we are to imitate him, how can we start thinking like He does?***

**READ:** Acts 9:1-19: Saul Meets Jesus.

**THINK:** By what was Saul characterized at the beginning of this passage? What did he witness and approve of in Acts 7:59 – 8:1? Would you have chosen Saul to be a servant of God? Why or why not? Does it seem normal to you that in just a few days, someone's character could be so changed? God is all-powerful and doesn't think or do things like we do. He changed "Saul" to "Paul the Apostle" for His own glory.

**READ:** Isaiah 55:8-9 and Job 38: God's thoughts are infinitely higher than our thoughts.

**THINK:** What do these passages say about God's thoughts vs. our thoughts? First, God's thinking is unnatural or upside down to the natural mind. Secondly, God's thinking is much deeper than we can imagine. Freedom for the Future may seem impossible to our natural mind. We need to see the future possibilities through God's eyes.

## MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK:

*"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will."*

**ROMANS 12:2 (NIV)**

## WEEK 2 PRAYER REQUESTS:

- Pray for each of us to be in attendance on May 5, Commitment Sunday.
- Pray that our family of believers will expectantly wait for God to act in a big way.
- Pray for open hearts to be open to the commitment God wants from each of us.

# WEEK 2 — FAMILY ACTIVITIES

## ACTIVITY #1

**MATERIALS:** Penny, glass, water

Do you know whose picture is on this penny? I wonder how many people were able to see or imagine Abraham Lincoln being the President of The United States when he was only a boy. Let's put this coin under the glass. Still see him? Ok. Now, Let's fill the glass with water to represent all the years of his life before he became president. Can you still see the image of Mr. Lincoln? (Let them answer.) You are right. When we look directly down into the glass, the water changes the angle at which the light is reflected into our eyes. When looking from the side of the glass, we can't see him at all. Now, focus your eyes directly down into the glass. A long-term perspective comes from seeing how he was supposed to end up. God sees us the same way. He sees our whole life at once before it has even happened. To get a better glimpse of God's perspective, we need to look directly at Him through reading His word daily to learn His thoughts and by talking to Him in prayer. Let's pray right now that God will help us to see His perspective and help us to think like He does.

## ACTIVITY #2

**MATERIALS:** Paper clips, small piece of tissue paper, bowl of water

Ask the children if they think paper clips can float. "We may think that they should sink, but I believe that they will float." (Drop them into a bowl of water to show their natural inability to float. Then place one on a square of tissue paper, that is slightly larger than the clip, in the bowl. After a time, the paper will sink, leaving the paper clip floating because the surface tension will not be broken.) "Well, what did you think about that? Did it seem unnatural or weird? In the same way that the idea of metal objects floating on water seems weird or upside down to us, God's thoughts and ways can seem weird or upside-down to us too." Let's thank God that even though we don't always understand His ways, they are always perfect.

# WEEK 2 — DAY 2

*To think like God, I must see the world's thinking as foolish.*

**Lord, transform my mind so I will really believe that Your ways are wise, though the world calls them foolish.**

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY:** (Write it down and look at it often today.)

*“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

**ROMANS 12:2 (NIV)**

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 1:18, 26 - 31

1. What is it that God values so much but that the world sees as foolishness? (Verse 18) Why doesn't the world embrace it?
2. When God called you, were you wise by human standards? Were you influential in the world? Were you born to a noble family? If you were any of these things, who allowed them?
3. Name three things that you tend to boast about. Are they gifts that God gave to you? What is the only thing that God says that it is okay to boast about?

**CHALLENGE:** The world would think it foolish to ask God for a miracle in Freedom for the Future while using ordinary people like us. Are you comfortable being “foolish” in this way? Ask God for His mind in this area.

**TAKE NOTE:** Write down what God is saying to you. \_\_\_\_\_

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# WEEK 2 — DAY 3

*To think like God, we must see the value of serving sacrificially.*

**Lord, help us as a church family to be quick to serve one another in humility.**

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY:** (Try to say it three times today.)

*“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

**ROMANS 12:2 (NIV)**

**READ:** Mark 10:35 - 45

1. What was the desire of both James and John? What did James and John ask? Why?
2. Does Christ’s view of greatness match our view of greatness? To be great in Christ’s eyes, what character trait do you need? Why?
3. If you were at the “front” of a line and then discovered that they started at the other end, how would you respond? Have you ever chosen to be last in line so others could go first?

**CHALLENGE:** Our natural thought is to serve and give “reasonably.” Could God work a miracle in Freedom for the Future if we are not willing to follow Him sacrificially? Pray for open hearts as we gather on May 5, Commitment Sunday.

**TAKE NOTE:** Write down what God is saying to you. \_\_\_\_\_

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# WEEK 2 — DAY 4

*To think like God, I must embrace slavery.*

**Lord, help me understand that true freedom is found in being your slave.**

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY:** (Try to say it from memory.)

*“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

**ROMANS 12:2 (NIV)**

**READ:** Matthew 20:26 – 28

1. These verses define “servant leadership.” Spend a few moments contrasting the rights of a slave with a free person. Why does God say such radical service is necessary for leadership?
2. Does anything prevent you from fully committing to God’s service? Close relationships? Possessions or wants? Time at work?
3. Think of a younger person who looks up to you. Can you serve them by spending time doing something they would like to do instead of what you want? Try to honor them today by doing something for them that only you and God know about.

**CHALLENGE:** Since slaves don’t own anything, try to list three things that are difficult to admit belong to God. Perhaps you need to write a “deed” for those things and sign them over to their rightful owner – God.

**TAKE NOTE:** Write down what God is saying to you. \_\_\_\_\_

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*Pray that our family of believers will expectantly wait for God to act in a big way.*

# WEEK 2 — DAY 5

*To think like God, we must lose our lives to save them.*

**Lord, transform our minds to understand that losing our lives to Christ will save them.**

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY:** (Pray this verse back to God before you begin today.)

*“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

**ROMANS 12:2 (NIV)**

**READ:** Luke 9:23 – 26

1. What does the passage mean that to save your life you must lose it? How can an eternal perspective keep our focus on God?
2. Jesus gave up a lot to obey the Father. The nails in Christ's hands and feet are a testimony to a real commitment. What are you willing to give up in order to follow God?
3. Imagine this scenario on a farm: The animals wanted to do something special by making a ham and egg breakfast for the farmer. The pig, quite upset, said, “For the chicken, that’s a nice gesture, but from me that would be a real commitment!” Are you a chicken or pig in making your commitment?

**CHALLENGE:** List your commitments to Christ in the three areas of time, talent, and treasure. Prayerfully lay those before God and ask that He begin to reveal to you what “losing your life” might look like.

**TAKE NOTE:** Write down what God is saying to you. \_\_\_\_\_

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# WEEK 2 — DAY 6

*To think like God, I must admit weakness to be strong.*

**Lord, transform my mind so that I will know that when I am weak, then You will be strong.**

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY:** (Pray for an opportunity to share this verse with someone today.)

*“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

**ROMANS 12:2 (NIV)**

**READ:** 2 Corinthians 12:9 - 10

1. Paul recognizes a common human problem. From this passage, can you explain why God’s power is not often seen in daily life?
2. Has God allowed something hard in your life that you don’t understand? From this passage, why do you think God has allowed this?
3. Do you ever boast? What about? What should you do about it?

**CHALLENGE:** Reflect on Paul’s list in verse 10. Have you experienced any of these? Spend time thanking God for your “thorn” and ask God not to allow any hindrance to obedience as we move forward together in Freedom for the Future.

**TAKE NOTE:** Write down what God is saying to you. \_\_\_\_\_

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*Pray for our hearts to be open to the commitment God wants from each of us.*

# WEEK 2 — DAY 7

*To think like God, I must be a giver to be receiver.*

**Lord, transform me to understand YOUR investment plan.**

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY:** (Pray that God will use this verse today to reveal something you need to sacrifice for His glory.)

*“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

**ROMANS 12:2 (NIV)**

**READ:** Proverbs 11:24 - 26

1. Proverbs is a book of general truths. Try to put these verses into your own words. Explain how or why this principle usually works.
2. Will you remember a year from now how you are using today’s resources of time, treasure, and talents? Ten years? How can you demonstrate that you live according to this principle?
3. Let’s say your friend Bill always shares, but your friend Harry struggles with selfishness. Who would you prefer to spend time with? Why? Would others feel the same way? Are you a Bill or a Harry?

**CHALLENGE:** As we look ahead to God moving in a big way, spend time in prayer today asking God for openness to hear Him speak to us about our treasure, time and talents for Freedom for the Future. He desires to use us for His kingdom.

**TAKE NOTE:** Write down what God is saying to you. \_\_\_\_\_

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# WEEK 3 — DAY 1

*Because we are blessed to be a blessing, we need ready hands.*

## INTRODUCTION

**We at Friendswood Methodist have been blessed incredibly. Great eternal rewards await many who have stepped out to serve God among us. Have you wondered why God has chosen to bless us? Or why God has chosen to bless you? This week, we hope to learn the truth behind a line from a song we sing in worship, "It's all about you, Jesus. It's not about me."**

**READ:** Genesis 12:1 – 4, 1 Samuel 6:1 - 13, Isaiah 6:1 - 8

**THINK:** For each of the above passages, answer the following questions: Whom did God choose? What was God's plan for him? Why did God choose to bless these men? God has chosen to bless each of us as well. Write down twenty ways that God has blessed you.

**READ:** Isaiah 6:1 - 8, Deuteronomy 9:6

**THINK:** Why did God choose Isaiah? Why does God choose anyone? God does not need us. He could accomplish His will without any of us! However, He chooses to bless us so that we can be His instruments to bless others. What might God be calling you to do with His blessings that you listed above? May 5 will be the day we choose to be faithful in obedience to what God is calling us to do. Are you ready?

**MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK:**

*"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."*

**1 PETER 4:10 [NIV]**

**WEEK 3 PRAYER REQUESTS:**

- Pray for unity in the body and all in attendance on May 5, Commitment Sunday.
- Pray for God's miracle to be revealed to us.
- Pray that each person in the Friendswood Methodist family will commit to do what God has revealed to them.

# WEEK 3 — FAMILY ACTIVITIES

## ACTIVITY #1

**MATERIALS:** Bible, ice cream, banana split toppings

Play a short guessing game of any kind where the prizes are the toppings for a banana split. In the end, each person should win a “prize.” After the game, take out a family-sized portion of ice cream for yourself and announce that everyone may start eating his or her own dessert. Comment on how plain it is to eat the ice cream all by itself. Ask leading questions to encourage each person to choose to contribute his/her item to create family banana splits for everyone with all the toppings. As you were blessed with a part of the dessert, you had a chance to bless others with what you had been given.

## ACTIVITY #2

**MATERIALS:** One piece of paper and scissors for everyone

Hold up a piece of paper. Ask the children how many corners the paper has. (Have the children count them out loud.) Blessing someone is like me giving a corner of this paper. I gave “Ann” only one corner of my paper, but how many corners do I have left? (Count them out loud.) There are now five corners. Now how many corners does “Ann” have? I only gave one corner of my paper away, but it became three corners that “Ann” received. Now “Ann” can keep her corner and still give away two. (Have child cut two corners from her triangle and give to two other family members.) With surprise say, “But wait!” Now “Ann” has five corners and they each now have three and I still have more corners of my own to give away! (Have everyone cut corners from their paper till everyone has a corner from each person.) Could you give away a corner without receiving one? How does this remind us of God’s promises about blessing? God wants us to use what He give us to bless others. When we are obedient to do God’s will, God continues to multiply back blessings to us. What do you have right now that God wants you to bless someone else with? How does God want you to bless someone else with something you have right now?

# WEEK 3 — DAY 2

## *The call of Moses*

**Lord, as I look for Your direction, help me to hear your voice and obey.**

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY:** (Write it on a card. Take it with you today and read it often.)

*"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others,  
faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."*

**1 PETER 4:10 [NIV]**

**READ:** Exodus 3 and 4:1 - 17

1. Obedience for Moses was scary and costly. What has God already asked you to do that seems scary or costly?
2. Was obedience worth it for Moses? What were the benefits for him and for others? Is obedience worth it for you?
3. Can you think of a time when you chose to give up something you enjoy in obedience, and because you obeyed, you ended up having more enjoyment?

**CHALLENGE:** When we obey, God's blessing radiates through us to others. As our family of believers has been obedient in the past, God has allowed us to touch even more people. As you pray for God to expand our church's ministry, ask God to help you choose obedience and expand your ministry.

**TAKE NOTE:** Write down what God is saying to you. \_\_\_\_\_

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*Pray for unity in the body and all in attendance on Commitment Sunday, May 5.*

# WEEK 3 — DAY 3

*The equipping of the saints*

**Lord, help me to be ready to bless others with the gifts you have given.**

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY:** (Try to say it three times today.)

*“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.”*

**1 PETER 4:10 (NIV)**

**READ:** 1 Peter 4:10-11 (or quote the first verse from memory.)

1. Scripture assumes that each believer has received spiritual gifts. What does this Scripture say you are doing when you use your gifts faithfully?
2. What spiritual gifts have you received from God? How are you serving God with your gifts right now in our church family?
3. God loves to use kids and families to serve Him. Discuss some of the ways God might be able to bless others through you as you serve Him.

**CHALLENGE:** Freedom for the Future will allow us as a family of believers to be used by God to bless more people. What would your ministry look like if you allowed God to expand it to bless others?

**TAKE NOTE:** Write down what God is saying to you. \_\_\_\_\_

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# WEEK 3 — DAY 4

*God has a place for each of us.*

**God, help me look for my unique role in serving you.**

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY:** (Try to say it from memory.)

*“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.”*

**1 PETER 4:10 (NIV)**

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 12:18

1. Why are you living in this area of Texas? Did you move here for work? In spite of the reason, what does this Scripture teach?
2. Can you list all the areas of your life that this Scripture applies to? Can you look with fresh eyes in every area and ask why God has placed you there?
3. The Bible compares the church to the human body. Each member is like a different part. If God made you to be a foot and you decided that you wouldn’t do that anymore, what would happen to the rest of the body?

**CHALLENGE:** God calls all of us to actively serve one another. As our Church family grows, so do the opportunities to serve! As we look to Freedom for the Future, be ready to hear from God what your role will be with regard to your time, your talents and your treasures.

**TAKE NOTE:** Write down what God is saying to you. \_\_\_\_\_

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*Pray for God’s miracle to be revealed in us.*

# WEEK 3 — DAY 5

*I can serve.*

**Lord, help me to see the value of the little jobs as well as the big jobs.**

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY:** (Pray this verse back to God before you begin today.)

*“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others,  
faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.”*

**1 PETER 4:10 (NIV)**

**READ:** Matthew 10:39

1. We tend to rank the value of something by how big of a “splash” it can make. Is there a hint in this passage of the measure of value God uses in service to Him?
2. What in our human nature makes us do nothing in service for God if we can’t do something “big” or “up front” or visible?
3. Little things can be missed big! If we took out the tiniest bone in our body, we would never hear again. What other small things are very important?

**CHALLENGE:** God wants us to value His kingdom so much that we see even little things as a big deal. What small opportunities to serve Him have you been missing out on? Do you struggle with thinking the gift of your treasure would be too small to make a difference? In Freedom for the Future, no gift is too small to accomplish life-change.

**TAKE NOTE:** Write down what God is saying to you. \_\_\_\_\_

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# WEEK 3 — DAY 6

*I must serve.*

**Lord, help me to see Your passion for using my resources for your Kingdom.**

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY:** (Pray for an opportunity to share this verse with someone today.)

*"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."*

**1 PETER 4:10 [NIV]**

**READ:** Matthew 25:14-30 (focusing on verses 24-27)

1. When someone's talent goes unused, we often say something like, "That's too bad." What would be a more accurate reflection of God's opinion of those who don't use their gifts to advance His Kingdom?
2. What judgment would you receive from the Master if you had to give an account today of how you have used the resources He has given you?
3. Are your chores optional? God has things that He wants His children to do as well? And, like undone chores, there are consequences when we disobey! Can you list some?

**CHALLENGE:** Using our resources to advance God's Kingdom isn't an optional activity. Spend time today making an inventory of your time, your talents and your treasures. Be ready to listen to God as He speaks to you during Freedom for the Future.

**TAKE NOTE:** Write down what God is saying to you. \_\_\_\_\_

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*Pray that each person in the Church family will commit to do what God has revealed to them.*

# WEEK 3 — DAY 7

*God is ready to speak*

**Lord, help me to hear from you this month as I seek your will.**

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY:** (Try to say it from memory today.)

*"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."*

**1 PETER 4:10 (NIV)**

**READ:** Jeremiah 29:12 - 13

1. What does it mean to search for God with your whole heart? Are you searching? If so, how?
2. In these verses God promises Himself to those who seek Him. Is that enough? Why or why not?
3. If I told you there were a million dollars (or Beanie Babies or a go-cart or ice cream) for you behind a locked door and then told you where to find the key, would you go get it? Would you run? What would it look like to want Jesus just as badly as you wanted that key?

**CHALLENGE:** God wants to speak. God wants to do miracles among us. There is nothing more exciting! List three ways you could be more whole hearted about hearing Rev. Jim Bass as he speaks throughout the Freedom for the Future prayer process.

**TAKE NOTE:** Write down what God is saying to you. \_\_\_\_\_

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# *Suggested Guide for Prayer Relay Teams*

The purpose of the Prayer Relay Team is to assist in laying the spiritual foundation for the Freedom for the Future campaign. Gather with a small group (3-10 people) sometime **during the week of April 22-28** to lift your prayers together for the campaign. You may choose to follow this suggested outline for your Prayer Group or you may organize it differently. Give each person time to participate during the prayer process.

1. **READ LUKE 6:12-13.** Prayer was of utmost importance to Jesus. He often prayed all night. He prayed before important events in His life. Freedom for the Future is one of the most important events our church will undertake. It calls for our church to be on its knees before God. Let each person give prayers of Adoration to God.
2. **HAVE A TIME OF SILENT PRAYER** for the Confession of sins and acceptance of forgiveness.
3. **LET EACH PERSON PRESENT PRAY** short, one-sentence prayers of Thanksgiving for: Church, Pastors, Staff, Congregants, Ministries and Leaders.
4. **FOCUS THE GROUP TO PRAY ALOUD** for the church specifically during the Freedom for the Future campaign (Supplication). Pray in particular for:
  - a. The leadership of the Holy Spirit to direct each church member regarding their responsibility to give.
  - b. The openness for each church member to hear God in what he/she will commit sacrificially.
  - c. The obedience of each church member to be faithful to God in their decision.
  - d. That every church member would be in worship as we dedicate our commitments to Freedom for the Future.
5. **CLOSE WITH A TIME OF PRIVATE PRAYER** as each person in the room prays for:
  - a. His/her sacrificial commitment.
  - b. His/her willingness to be obedient to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.
  - c. Being a positive influence during the Freedom for the Future campaign in everything said and done.

# *How to Hold a Family Discernment Time*

A ONE-TIME GATHERING AT ANY TIME BETWEEN APRIL 29 - MAY 4

*The purpose of the Family Discernment Time is to determine what God is leading your family to give to the Freedom for the Future campaign.*

## PREPARATION:

1. Participate in the preceding devotions in this guide so that God has the opportunity to prepare every family member.
2. Set an appointed time for this discernment, free of distraction, for the family to meet, pray, study and discuss what the commitment will be. The conference will likely take 30 minutes to an hour, depending upon the age of the children.
3. Instruct each family member to begin thinking of sacrifices that God wants that person and the entire family to make in order to give.

## DATES:

We want to encourage your family to take time out for this special event some time between **April 29 and May 4**. Our commitment cards will be turned in on **May 5, Commitment Sunday**.

## SUGGESTED STEPS:

1. Leaders should begin with prayer, inviting God's presence and leadership in the conference and asking God to give a spirit of love, unity and unselfishness.
2. Ask family members to recall principles they remember about giving and sacrifice from the "Prayer Guide." Write these thoughts down.

3. Read and discuss the Bible passages listed below. Write down God's principles for giving.

**MATTHEW 6:19-21 (NIV)**  
**1 TIMOTHY 6:17-19 (NIV)**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-12 (NIV)**

4. Ask family members to talk about sacrifices they and the family could make in order to give to God through Freedom for the Future now and over the next three years. Be sure to include each child so that every family member has the opportunity to experience the joy of giving sacrificially to God. List family ideas.
5. Spend time praying as a family. Let each member pray sentence prayers:
  - Thanking and praising God.
  - Asking God for direction and help in making a family decision according to His will.

Review the 21 days of prayer in the Prayer Guide. What has God shown each of you during the 21 days of prayer?

6. Compare God's principles for giving with the ideas your family has come up with. Add any other suggestions that anyone offers.
7. Decide as a family what you will give, and write it down on the commitment card you will receive in the mail.
8. Close in a prayer of commitment asking God to provide for your family as you step out in faith, asking Him to give you joy in giving and thanking Him for what He has done and will do.

# Freedom FOR THE FUTURE

*“Let no debt remain,  
except the debt to love one another.”*  
ROMANS 13:8

## Friendswood Methodist Church CAPITAL CAMPAIGN



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