

THE
Welcome
INITIATIVE

▶ PRAYER GUIDE ◀



HILLCREST

DAILY THEMES

- DAY 1** Walk in the Spirit
- DAY 2** Examine Your Relationships
- DAY 3** Love Your Community
- DAY 4** Commit Your Leadership to God
- DAY 5** Offer Yourself Fully to God
- DAY 6** Make a Commitment
- DAY 7** Expect God to Move

2018 | HILLCREST BAPTIST CHURCH
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THE *Welcome* INITIATIVE

PRAYER GUIDE

A SEVEN-DAY JOURNEY FOR
**PERSONAL REFLECTION,
SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE,
& JOYFUL PARTICIPATION**

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SENIOR PASTOR, HILLCREST

Walk in the Spirit

Personal revival begins when believers long for a closer relationship with God.

SCRIPTURES FOR REFLECTION & PREPARATION...

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. ¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. - PSALM 51

²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. - GALATIANS 6

⁶ “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”

- MATTHEW 5

ASK GOD TO...

- Reveal himself to you
- Forgive your sins and fill you with his Spirit
- Give you a deeper longing to abide in Jesus and walk by the Spirit
- Help you put your relationship with him before all things
- Remind you of his great love for you
- Draw you close to himself
- Refresh your spirit
- Renew your spiritual joy

SOMETHING TO CONSIDER...

The success of *The Welcome Initiative* at Hillcrest is directly related to my own personal spiritual preparation and condition. Before you pray, “Lord, revive us,” you first must pray, “Lord, revive me.” Am I prepared to hear from God and let him use me to bless my church and my community?

Examine Your Relationships

God's people must seek healthy relationships and mend broken ones.

SCRIPTURES FOR REFLECTION & PREPARATION...

³⁴“A new commandment I give you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another. ³⁵By this shall all people know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” - JOHN 13

¹⁹ So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding. - ROMANS 14

³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

- EPHESIANS 4

ASK GOD TO...

- Reveal any broken relationships in your life
- Give you courage to seek reconciliation and restoration
- Help you overlook offenses which are of little consequence
- Remind you to pray for those who've hurt you
- Help you go the extra mile to bless those who've offended you
- Remind you to use encouraging and beneficial words to others
- Help you “make every effort” to live in peace with others

SOMETHING TO CONSIDER...

Turning a blind eye to the damaged relationships of your life can carry serious consequences. Broken relationships can hinder your prayers, disrupt your worship, and compromise your witness. It's not always possible to live in peace with others, but peace and harmony are things God's people should always pursue.

Love Your Community

The lost condition of our world should burden God's people and compel them to action.

SCRIPTURES FOR REFLECTION & PREPARATION...

³⁹... "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

- MATTHEW 22

¹⁰ "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." - LUKE 19

¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." - MARK 1

⁸ "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." - ACTS 1

ASK GOD TO...

- Help you understand the vast lost condition of Pensacola and the world
- Give you a renewed burden for spiritually lost people
- Help you be intentional about building relationships with lost people
- Give you courage to share your story and his message of love with the lost
- Create obvious opportunities for you to share Jesus with others
- Soften the hearts of lost people you know (by name) and draw them to Christ
- Help you commit to do your part to make Hillcrest a welcoming place for all

SOMETHING TO CONSIDER...

At least 75% of the population of Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties are unsaved and unchurched, and Christ has commissioned his people to share the gospel. Some will sow, others will reap. Some will plant, others will water. The important thing is that I keep my eyes open to my lost community and intentionally engage it by starting a conversation, doing a kind deed, or building a relational bridge in order to share the story of what the Lord has done for me.

Commit Your Leaders to God

God's people should respond to their leaders with love and support them with prayer.

SCRIPTURES FOR REFLECTION & PREPARATION...

⁵ So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church. - ACTS 12

¹² ...respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³ and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. - 1 THESSALONIANS 5

¹⁸ Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things.
- HEBREWS 13

ASK GOD TO...

- Fill your pastors and leaders with a great hunger and thirst for God
- Bless your pastors and leaders with strong marriages and families who love and serve each other
- Give your pastors and leaders wisdom as they shepherd God's flock and guide us through *The Welcome Initiative* at Hillcrest
- Help your pastors and leaders protect their private devotional time with God, that they may lead from hearts which burn for God and for the gospel
- Give our ministry staff a continual love and devotion for one another that fosters unity, mutual support, and a team effort
- Protect your pastors and leaders from temptation and the manipulative schemes of the enemy

SOMETHING TO CONSIDER...

A church will never rise higher than its leadership. Many in church leadership often struggle with isolation and loneliness, and are usually the primary targets in the enemy's attacks against the church. Healthy churches have healthy leaders who are full of the Spirit, wisdom, integrity, and laughter. What can I do to better encourage and support my leaders?

Offer Yourself Fully to God

True worship means a total surrender of my life—body, mind, and will—to Jesus as Lord.

SCRIPTURES FOR REFLECTION & PREPARATION...

⁹For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.
- 2 CHRONICLES 16

³³But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. - MATTHEW 6

¹I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. - ROMANS 12

ASK GOD TO...

- Help you surrender every area of your life to Christ's lordship
- Reveal any sin in your life that you might confess it and seek forgiveness
- Help you change any patterns in your life that lead to temptation and sin
- Lead you to strong Christian friendships that encourage you to live godly
- Help you remain accountable through faithful church and Connect Group involvement

SOMETHING TO CONSIDER...

Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice for us. Salvation requires that God's people offer themselves as a sacrifice for him. The difference is that God calls every disciple to be "a living sacrifice" for God to use however he sees fit. This is self-denial, and it's the critical component of genuine discipleship. Have I truly offered my life—all of it—to God? Or am I holding something back?

Make a Commitment

Gospel mission and ministry happen because God's people generously give to support it.

SCRIPTURES FOR REFLECTION & PREPARATION...

⁹Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; ¹⁰then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine. - **PROVERBS 3**

³⁸"Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you." - **LUKE 6**

⁶...whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. - **2 CORINTHIANS 9**

ASK GOD TO...

- Develop a grateful heart for his obvious blessings to you
- Help you surrender your finances to Christ's lordship
- Help you cultivate a generous lifestyle that reflects that of Christ himself
- Help you put him first by faithfully giving a tithe of your income to the Lord
- Help you trust his promises to meet every need of your life
- Give you clarity about your financial commitment to *The Welcome Initiative*

SOMETHING TO CONSIDER...

In our abundance, the average church attender in America gives less than 3% of his/her income to support the work of Christian ministry. This hardly fits the definition of either generosity or sacrifice, both of which are required by the gospel. The Apostle Paul commended the remarkable generosity of the Macedonian believers of the first century who supported his ministry not out of their material abundance, but from their poverty. Am I truly "all in" when it comes to the ministry of my church and the mission of my Lord?

Expect God to Move

A life of faith requires bold confidence in a God whose promises have never failed.

SCRIPTURES FOR REFLECTION & PREPARATION...

³“Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.”

- JEREMIAH 33

⁵Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. - PROVERBS 3

⁹Do not be anxious about anything...¹⁹...my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. - PHILIPPIANS 4

⁸By faith Abraham...went out, not knowing where he was going. - HEBREWS 11

ASK GOD TO...

- Move in your life so as to grow you into a person of great faith
- Give you a confidence in him that no event or circumstance can shake
- Give you a willingness to obey no matter the cost
- Help you trust him as a sovereign Lord who's always in control of your life
- Provide for the ministry needs of your church, then trust him to meet them
- Perpetuate an inviting and welcoming environment for all who enter Hillcrest

SOMETHING TO CONSIDER...

The late British missionary William Carey once said, “Attempt great things for God; expect great things from God,” and for over 60 years that's what Hillcrest has done. In every capital campaign we've undertaken, God has consistently provided through our church more than the total amount committed. Amazing! As we seek God's face and fully surrender our lives to him, we should ask God to do it again—and expect that he will!



**Our desire is for
Hillcrest to be a place
where others are...**

- 1** WELCOMED INTO A SPACE INVITING TO ALL PEOPLE.
- 2** WELCOMED INTO A DISCIPLE-MAKING CULTURE.
- 3** WELCOMED INTO A FINANCIALLY SECURE FUTURE.

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**Therefore welcome
one another as Christ
has welcomed you, for
the glory of God.**

- ROMANS 15:7 -



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