

# PRAYER FOCUS NOVEMBER 2021

## “PREPARING FOR ADVENT”

This day, Friday Nov 26th is Black Friday, a day of consumerism, materialism, sales and getting great deals on “stuff.” We are a culture that gravitates toward comfort and convenience as much as we can, thinking this will bring us contentment. However, when we slow down for a minute, we know deep down that the “coolest” stuff on earth cannot satisfy or fulfil us..only God can do that. This season, let us particularly consider being grateful to God for what we **do** have as opposed to obsessing over what we don’t have, what we cannot afford, or what we wish we had. *When the world tells us “we always need more,” Jesus tells us “we will always have enough.”*

I also want to make mention of the fact that there are many who work in retail or have businesses that benefit from the income arising from Black Friday, and so want to be sensitive to that. This day, Black Friday, is primarily a reminder to check our heart and attitude toward those things that pull us away from the kingdom of God toward the kingdom of the world.

As we emerge out of Black Friday we then enter into Advent, a time of celebrating the anticipation and coming of Jesus and the new reality of the Kingdom of God that He ushers in and invites us to be a part of. In Advent, we’re reminded of how much we ourselves need a Saviour, and we look forward to our Saviour’s second coming even as we prepare to celebrate his first coming at Christmas.

In this prayer guide, we want to spend some time repenting of the ways we have married ourselves to the kingdom of the world, but then to prepare our hearts for Christmas and the coming of our King, desiring to live in the ways of the Kingdom of God.

### **1. Thanksgiving (3 mins)**

**Psalm 34:8** “Taste and see that the Lord is **good**; blessed is the man who trusts in Him.”

**Phil 4:19:** “And my God will **meet all your needs** according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.”

*\*\*Do not rush through this time of thanksgiving.*

#### **Thank the Lord for:**

- All the ways He has shown His goodness to you in your life over the years.
- His provision. Reflect particularly on this past week and thank Him for all the ways He has provided for you - materially, spiritually, emotionally.

## **2. Repentance (8 mins )**

**Acts 3:19** “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.”

**Reflect on the questions below and confess those that you feel led to ..**

**a. Greed:**

- *How do I view the money I have, mine or God's?*
- *Do I cling to my “stuff” or am I willing to share it?*
- *Am I generous with my money and my belongings?*

**b. Consumerism:**

- *Do I spend money purchasing unnecessary things?*
- *Am I aware of the ways I deplete the earth's resources?*

**c. Selfishness:**

- *Do I use others for my own advantage?*
- *Do I dismiss people? (The difficult ones, the needy ones)*

**d. Worry:**

- *Are there things that hold me in a grip of fear and anxiety...of the future? The unknown? A circumstance before me? Lack of trust?*

**Corporate prayer of Confession:** *(pray this prayer out loud)*

***Lord we confess that we have forgotten that the whole earth belongs to you; we have grasped at resources beyond our rightful share. We have built for ourselves towers of Babel; we take pride in the many things we have acquired. We have consumed at a rate that robs from our sisters and brothers around the world. We name our greed and materialism as sin. Lord, as we seek to follow you, we are aware that we are called to live in a way that is profoundly countercultural. The consumer religion tells us to believe that we are the centre of the universe, that all things were created for us and our pleasure. We are taught to hoard our resources, to keep for ourselves, to value personal comfort above service and accumulation over sacrifice. Yet you have shown us another way through the life of Jesus, in His death and resurrection. May we remember that all things were created for your pleasure, and as your followers we celebrate the invitation to participate in your work. May we, as your people, commit ourselves again to you fully, making this offering not merely a token, but a guiding principle for our lives. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.***

### **3. Prayers of invitation - As we move into the season of Advent** **(9 mins) “Hope, Peace, Love, Joy”**

#### **Hope:**

***“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the HOPE that is in you.” (1 Peter 3:15, NIV)***

\*Pray for our friends, family members and neighbours **by name** who do not know the love of Christ, that they will hear the message of HOPE this season.

\*Pray **specifically for people we know** who have experienced sorrow, **sickness, pain, or loss**, that they will find their HOPE in knowing the Lord.

#### **Peace:**

***“Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to PEACE and to mutual edification.” (Romans 14:19, NIV)***

\*Pray for those you know **by name** who are facing situations that make them **worried, anxious, or fearful**. Pray for peace.

\* Pray particularly for the denomination of the CBWC (Canadian Baptists of Western Canada) of which Southside is a part, that there would be peace in the midst of disagreements and differences over the issue of LGBTQ stance within the denomination.

#### **Love:**

***“This is how we know what LOVE is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the LOVE of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not LOVE with words or speech but with actions and in truth.” (1 John 3:16-18, NIV)***

\* Pray for our **Edmonds Outreach**, that our own hearts would be softened and moved to action for those that come. Pray for relationships to be developed with our neighbours there and a deep love for those who are less well off than we are.

\* Pray that our lives would be demonstrated by love, generosity and sharing with our brothers and sisters.

## Joy:

***“You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with JOY in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.” (Psalm 16:11, NIV)***

\* What is stealing your joy? **Name those areas in our lives where we feel drained.** Ask the Lord to fill us afresh with joy in Him.

**\*\*How did you hear the Lord speak to you during your prayer time? Be willing to share with others what you sensed the Lord saying to you.**