

# The South Florida Avenue MESSENGER

**A Friendly Church With a Vital Message Proclaiming the Unsearchable Riches of the Lord Jesus.**  
The Messenger is published weekly by the South Florida Ave. Church of Christ meeting at 1807 South Florida Ave - Lakeland, FL 33803 Vol. 70 No. 013 03-28-17

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## SUNDAY SERVICES

Bible Study.....9:30 a.m.  
Worship.....10:30 a.m.  
Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.

## WEDNESDAY

Ladies Class.....10:00 a.m.  
Bible Study.....7:00 p.m.

## HOME OF

Florida School of Preaching

## MISSION FIELDS

Dub Hill.....Russia  
Don Iverson.....India  
Marc Veary.....Malawi, Africa  
Graham McDonald..Scotland  
J. Paguaga.....Honduras, C.A.  
Joey Treat.....Pacific Islands  
Ted Wheeler.....Ghana, W.A.

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IN  
**SEARCH**  
OF THE LORD'S WAY

Sundays @ 8:30 a.m. Check local listings

## Basics of Prayer

Hiram Kemp

Prayer is one of the major spiritual blessings to the child of God (Eph. 1:3). The word “pray” is mentioned 508 times in the King James Version of the Bible, while the word “prayer” is mentioned 128 times. Not only does prayer have a prominent place in Scripture, but it also should be in the lives of God’s people. According to a survey done by Pew Research Center, 55% of Americans say they pray every day, and 45% of Americans said they rely on prayer for decision making (Lipka). Even those who claim to be atheist have been known to pray out of desperation (Boorstein). While it is good that people are thinking about prayer and acknowledging its importance, we need to have a grasp on what the Bible teaches about prayer. If we do not know what the Bible says about prayer, we may fail to do it properly and fail to appreciate its power. A good place to start with any spiritual topic is with the basics (1 Pet. 2:2). Let’s notice some of the basics concerning the spiritual discipline of prayer.

## Directed to God

The first thing to appreciate about prayer is that it is directed to God. While this may seem overly simple, we must appreciate this truth. Prayer is directed to God who is both holy and sovereign. Jesus in the model prayer says God is to be addressed with recognition concerning the holiness of his name (Mt. 6:9). The basic definition of prayer is communication with God. Since prayer is directed to God, this should give us pause and confidence. We should have caution so as not to approach God flippantly but to do so reverently (Psa. 111:9). We live in a day where what is casual is in, and everything holy and serious is out. We must be careful not to carry the careless attitude of our times into the presence of God. God is concerned with how his name is used and we should be concerned with how we use it (Ex. 20:7). We should also take confidence from the fact that we are praying to God. If we were simply praying to humans or some fictitious deity, we would be wasting our time. However, if we are approaching the God who made us in his image and wants to hear from us, we can come into prayer with a boldness and assurance (Heb. 4:16).

## Prerequisites

Before a person could take an advanced Calculus class there would be some basic algebra classes that first need to be taken. These are *(continued on page 2)*

called prerequisites. In prayer, we need to appreciate that there are some prerequisites as well. God is not obligated to hear and answer every prayer that is offered up to him. In fact, he has said he would not. The wicked person needs to know that sin separates him from God and hinders prayers that are offered (Isa. 59:1-2). When a person turns his or her ear from hearing God's law, God turns His ear from hearing his or her prayer (Prov. 28:9). If we want to have our prayers heard by God, we need to be sure that our lives are in harmony with his will. Do not think of this as if we can bribe God with a holy life, but see it as the proper response for God's opening the line of prayer to us in the first place. The eyes of the Lord are in every place, but his ears are only open to the prayers of the righteous (Prov. 15:3; 1 Pet. 3:12). One cannot live a sinful life and expect to have prayers answered by a holy God. When we approach the topic of prayer, it is important to understand that everyone is not in a spiritual condition to pray.

## God's Power

The power of God is something to underscore when considering prayer. If I properly address my prayer to God, live a life acceptable to him, I must then take courage in the fact that God is powerful enough to answer my prayers. While children sometimes ask parents for things that cannot be given due to a lack of resources, God does not have this problem. Paul says God is able to do more than we can ask or even think (Eph. 3:20-21). God is not lacking in anyway the power that is necessary to honor our request. Our faith must be increased to grasp this truth (Mk. 11:22). The God who spoke the world into existence bends his ear to earth so that we can communicate with him. Pray as if God can do something about the circumstances for which we pray. Christians are told to pray without ceasing because there is a God who never ceases to listen. Acknowledge the power of God in prayer and may it encourage us as we pray.

## Answers to Prayer

God hears and answers prayer, though he does not always do so in the way we would sometimes like. Jesus prayed that if there were any other way for redemption to come apart from the cross, let the cup of suffering pass; nevertheless, let God's will be done (Lk. 22:42). God's answer to Jesus' prayer was no. There was no other way to redeem mankind apart from the cross. Yet, God did supply an angel to strengthen Jesus as he went to the cross (Lk. 22:43). Notice that while God declined the request, he supplied what was needed. God does this with us. He does not always supply immediate deliverance from trials when we pray, knowing sometimes trials build strength that we need, but he does supply the strength to endure (1 Cor. 10:13). Also, notice the way Jesus prayed. He left room for the wisdom of His Father, "thy will be done." We need to pray and offer our request but always recognize that God knows best. God knows what we need, and even if he says no, that may be a blessing. God sometimes says yes, sometimes he says no, but he always gets it right. Since God knows everything and we do not, we should pray knowing his answers to our problems are better than ours.

## What to Pray For

Those who do not study the Bible are not ready to pray. Prayers should be Biblical in nature. This does not mean every request must come directly from a passage, but we should outline our prayers based on what we find in Scripture (1 Jn. 5:14). Paul often prayed for open doors to share the gospel (Col. 4:2-3). Paul requested prayers to be delivered from physical trouble (2 Thess. 3:1-2). Occasionally, prayer requests are made for the spiritual growth of others and boldness to speak for God (Eph. 1:16-18, 6:19-20). Are our prayers directed more toward physical or spiritual things? We are physical beings and live in a material world. We have needs that must be met, and we can pray for those things (Mt. 7:7-11). Yet, we should pray for eternal things more than we do the temporal.

As we think about the blessings of prayer, may we grow deeper and more diligent in this endeavor. Realize prayers are to God and a godly life must accompany our petitions. Furthermore, God is strong enough to answer prayer even if it is not the answer we hoped for, and may we examine Scripture for the content of our prayers.

## Works Cited

Boorstein, Michelle. "Some Nonbelievers Still Find Solace in Prayer." *WashingtonPost.com*. 24 June 2013.  
Lipka, Michael. "5 Facts About Prayer." *PewResearchCenter.org*. 4 May 216.

# SFA FAMILY MATTERS

## Prayer List

**Our Members:** Home sick this week were Cheryl Barker, Becky Sheumaker, and Darlene Thompson. Jacqueline Dopwell is under hospice care at home and would like visitors, but please call before going. Keep in prayer Jim Turner, Ginny Hamby, Kenny French, JoAnn Hoback, Bob McAnally, Sharon Washington, and Margaret Coone.

**Relatives:** Tonya Mathis, Dee Moore, Margie Bolding, Sarah Blevins, Owen Lewis, Bobby Cole, Preston Craft and Evie McCormack.

**Shut In Members:** Virginia Plumlee, Dick & Joyce Burbage, Don Starks, Sharon Edler and Duane Nelson.

**Others:** Joyce Stearsman, Chrissi Fuesner, Elizabeth Tubbs, Charles Miller, Robin Pack and Jack Pinckert. Charles Miller, a friend of Tim Croson was in a motorcycle accident last week and is in a coma. Shawn and his daughter, a friend of Sharon Egolf.

## Upcoming Events

**Wednesday March 29th:** Celebrate Avery Grimes 1st Birthday after evening Bible study. No gifts just come enjoy some cake.

**Saturday April 1st:** Ladies Brunch 9 a.m. in fellowship room. Please remember what you signed up to bring. \*Ladies please plan to stay after for a Ladies Day planning meeting

**Sunday April 2nd:** Fellowship In Service at 5 p.m. before evening services.

**Sunday April 2nd:** 85th Annual Homecoming, Orange St. church of Christ. The speaker will be Daniel Stearsman.

**Sunday April 9th:** Baby Shower for Chaz & Molly Hine after morning worship service. Please bring food and drinks for the fellowship meal. See Kathy Sweeney or Kelcey Grimes to help or contribute to the money tree.

**Saturday April 15th:** Easter Egg Hunt at the Bingle's at 10 a.m.

## Sympathy

Our sympathy to Sharon Egolf in the passing of her brother-in-law. He was 100 years old.

## Opportunity to Help

Rene Bingle will be making Easter Baskets for children in a women's shelter. See her if you would like to contribute to this. Items or donations are needed by April 9th.

## Visitors

Rudy Brooks; Deloris Crosby; Shane C.; Kenneth Harrison; Mr. & Mrs. Alan Highers; Jane Jessie; Jack & Sheree Locklin; Oscar Locklin; Dolly Martin; Joe & Ruth Morgan; Chad & Sabrina Tagtow & children; Mary Moore; Anthony Payne; T'Jean Tomlinson; and Victor Travis and Alexis.

## SCHEDULED TO SERVE

### April

Stacey Paulin..... **Table** ..... Josh Estridge  
Fred Rapley ..... **Assist** ..... David Anderson

### Sunday, April 2, 2017 9:30 A.M.

**Song at Bible Class** ..... Tucker Sweeney  
**Prayer**..... Ken Walker

### 10:30 A.M.

**Announcements**..... Jimmy Sweeney  
**Song Leader**..... Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Bobby Sheumaker  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Tim Croson

### 6:00 P.M.

**Song Leader**..... David Williams  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Kyle Bingle  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Jeff Bingle

**Greeters** ..... Longfellows  
**Att. Cards**..... Willcut boy's  
**Open & Close Building**..... David Anderson

### Wed. April 5, 2017

**Song Leader** ..... Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Kenny French  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Bobby Sheumaker

*Please meet in the library. If you cannot serve, please call Chuck Wyatt so he can get a replacement - (863) 602-9005*

### Sunday, April 9, 2017 9:30 A.M.

**Song at Bible Class** ..... Jim Turner  
**Prayer**..... David Anderson

### 10:30 A.M.

**Announcements**..... Jimmy Sweeney  
**Song Leader** ..... Jason Hendrix  
**Opening Prayer** ..... John McShane  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Paul Romine

### 6:00 P.M.

**Song Leader** ..... David Williams  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Steve Hunley  
**Sermon**..... Hiram Kemp  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Tim Croson

**Greeters** ..... Kenny & Reba French  
**Att. Cards**..... Paul and Sebastian  
**Open & Close Building**..... David Anderson

### Wed. April 12, 2017

**Song Leader** ..... Steve Hunley  
**Opening Prayer** ..... Kyle Bingle  
**Closing Prayer** ..... Charles Paulin

## ~ HOW ARE WE GIVING ~

Mar. 05 .....	\$5,216.90
Mar. 12.....	\$5,050.96
Mar. 19.....	\$4,800.48
Mar. 26.....	\$5,396.66
<b>Contribution Average</b> .....	<b>\$5,376.34</b>
<b>2016 Weekly Budget</b> .....	<b>\$4,716.51</b>

# Pre-Creation P's

Paul said that Deity “chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved” (Eph. 1:4-6). Of all the great “nuggets” in these verses, let us consider the phrase “before the foundation of the world.” God had a plan, a people, and a place already chosen before He created the universe. First, consider the plan of salvation. Paul said that Christians have “hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began” (Titus 1:2). This plan was not revealed fully in the Old Testament (Matthew 13:35), but was revealed with the coming of Christ in flesh. Jesus “indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (1 Peter 1:20). Jesus, the “Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8). God had a plan from before the creation of time! Second, before light was created, God already chose a precious people (Ephesians 1:4-6). God did not unconditionally choose people to be saved or lost as per Calvinism, but He chose people based on the system of salvation He predetermined. That is, whoever accepts His plan of salvation will be saved (1 Peter 2:6-8). Yes, God knows exactly who will be lost and who will be saved, but He does *(continued below)*



*South Florida Avenue*  
**CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
1807 South Florida Avenue  
Lakeland, FL 33803-2653

Return Service Requested



The End of Your Search for a Friendly Church . . .

**Sanctify them through thy truth:  
thy word is truth. (John 17:17)**



Pray for our YES II campaign to Penonome, Panama, July 1-9, 2017. Thirteen of our young people and their chaperones are planning to go. If you would like to help by contributing funds, see the elders.

**If you want an opportunity to “help a sister out,” please bring empty egg crates and give them to Sandra. She could use some.**



*(continued from above)* not force people to accept or reject the Gospel. Similarly, Jesus knew Judas would betray Him (John 13:25-20), but that does not mean Jesus made Judas betray Him (James 1:13)! Third, because Deity had already chosen a people before the universe was created, based on a plan that was in God’s mind from eternity, Deity, logically, would have already chosen an eternal place of abode before He spoke the universe into existence. In that great Judgment scene, “the King [Jesus] will say to those on His right hand, Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34). God wants each of us to be with Him eternally! He has made provisions and continues to encourage us through His word. Won’t you accept His invitation and be saved from sin and be a child of God? ❤️ *Brian*