Be Strong and Courageous in Prayer

4 Weeks of Prayer & Spiritual Growth

Week 2

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Adapted from
South Bay Community Church - Freemont

Dear Corona United Methodist Church Family,

This week we are invited to practice trust - not by striving for certainty or outcome, but by drawing nearer to God through prayer.

Joshua 3 reminds us that the people of Israel did not begin with clarity. They began by focusing their attention on where God was leading and by responding to the next step they were invited to take - even when that step felt small or uncertain. In the same way, this week is not about having all the answers, but about learning to stay attentive to God and faithful in the present moment.

As you move through these daily reflections. I encourage you to engage the embodied prayer practice included in this guide. Move slowly. Pause with each movement. Allow space between the steps. Rather than trying to do the prayer "right," let your body express what is stirring in your heart. Sometimes trust forms not through words alone, but through attentive presence.

May this week help you discover that God meets us not only beyond the step - but within it.

Peace and blessings,
Pastor Susan

Week 2

Taking the 1st Step

Be Strong and Courageous in Prayer

This week invites us to trust God not by seeking certainty or outcomes, but by drawing nearer through prayer - learning to take one faithful step at a time.

DAY 1 — Standing at the Edge

Morning Devotional

Scripture (NLT)
"For we live by faith, not by sight."

Reflection
Faith rarely begins with certainty. More often, it begins with willingness - choosing to trust God when the way forward is not yet clear.

Prayer can bring us to this place of unknowing. Familiar supports are set aside, and we become more awre of how much we wnat clarity before we move. Scripture reminds us that faith is not the absence of uncertainty, but the decision to trust God within it. We see this lived out when Israel stands at the edge of the Jordan, invited to move forrwar before th water parts (Joshua 3:1-6).

- *Where in your life are you longing for clarity before taking the next step?*
- *What does it feel like to trust without seeing the whole path?*

Breath Prayer
Inhale: I trust You
Exhale: Even when I cannot see

Closing Invitation
As you begin this day, release the need to know what comes next. Trust God meets you at the edge and goes before you.

Midday Embodied Prayer Flow

Practice "Stepping into Trust"
(See diagrams at end of guide)
Let the movements become prayer - without rushing, without striving. Repeat today's breath prayer as part of your prayer flow.

Evening Examen

- Where did I find myself standing at an "edge" today?
- Where did I notice God's presence?
- What do I sense God may have been saying to me today?
- What do I want to say to God in return?

Rest in God's presence.

DAY 2 — Trusting God's Presence

Morning Devotional

Scripture (NLT)

"The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." Deuteronomy 31:8

Reflection

God's promise has always been presence before explanation. Long before Israel crossed the river, God reassured them that the Living God was among them (Joshua 3:10).

Prayer heightens our awareness of this truth. As distractions lessen, we may notice restlessness or longing. Neither is a failure; both can become invitations to turn toward God's nearness. Courage grows when we trust that God is already with us.

- *Where do you most need to trust God?*
- *What has prayer revealed about where you seek reassurance?*
- *How might your heart or attitude change if presence became your anchor?*

Breath Prayer

Inhale: You are with me
Exhale: I am not alone

Closing Invitation

Begin this day rooted in God's presence. You do not walk this path alone.

Midday Embodied Prayer Flow

Practice "Stepping into Trust"

(See diagrams at end of guide)
Allow your body to remind you that God goes before you.
Repeat today's breath prayer as part of your prayer flow.

Evening Examen

- How did I practice trusting God's presence today?
- Where did I notice God's presence?
- What do I sense God may have been saying to me today?
- What do I want to say to God in return?

Entrust these reflections to God.

DAY 3 — Obedience Without Clarity

Morning Devotional

Scripture (NLT)
"Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding."
- Proverbs 3:5

Reflection
Trust often requires movement before understanding. In the Jordan crossing, the people stepped forward before the waters parted (Joshua 3:13). Obedience came first.

Prayer slows our impulse control outcomes. It invited us to practice faithfulness with the light we have rather than waiting for certainty. Trust does not demand answers - it asks for willingness.

- *Where are you waiting for certainty before you are willing to trust?*
- *What small step of faithfulness feels available to you today?*
- *How has prayer surfaced your desire for control?*

Breath Prayer
Inhale: I lean toward trust
Exhale: I release control

Closing Invitation
As you begin this day, offer God your willingness, not your certainty. Let obedience be gentle and faithful.

Midday Embodied Prayer Flow

Practice "Stepping into Trust"
(See diagrams at end of guide)
Notice where obedience feels simple - and where it feels costly.
Repeat today's breath prayer as part of your prayer flow.

Evening Examen

- What step of trust did I practice today?
- Where did I notice God's presence?
- What do I want to say to God in return?

Rest in God's timing.

DAY 4 — Consecration: Setting Ourselves Apart

Morning Devotional

Scripture (NLT)
"Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God." Romans 12:1

Reflection
Before Israel crossed the river, they were told to consecrate themselves (Joshua 3:5). To consecrate means to set oneself apart - not to earn God's favor, but to intentionally orient one's life toward God.

Prayer helps us notice what competes for our attention. As we release what usually fills our hands or minds, we make space for reverence, surrender, and deeper attentiveness to God. Consecration is not about perfection; it is about intention.

- *What has prayer revealed about what holds your attention?*
- *Where might God be inviting you to set yourself apart in this season?*
- *How could letting go become an act of worship?*

Breath Prayer
Inhale: I belong to You
Exhale: I set myself apart

Closing Invitation
As you begin this day, release what competes for your attention. Let intention - not perfection - shape your prayer.

Midday Embodied Prayer Flow

Practice "Stepping into Trust"
(See diagrams at end of guide)
Let your movements express your intention to belong fully to God. Repeat today's breath prayer as part of your prayer flow.

Evening Examen

- Where did I practice surrender today?
- Where did I notice God's presence?
- What do I sense God may have been saying to me today?
- What do I want to release or entrust to God?

Offer these moments to God.

DAY 5 — Offering ourselves

Morning Devotional

Scripture (NLT)
"I offer you my life as a living sacrifice."
Romans 12:1 (paraphrase)

Reflection
The priests were asked to stand in the river, bearing the weights so others could cross (Joshua 3:8) Faithfulness looked steady, not dramatic.

Prayer invites us to offer ourselves in the same way - not our productivity or certainty, but our availability. Sometimes the most courageous act is to remain present where God has placed us.

- *What does offering yourself to God look like today?*
- *Where might God be inviting you to remain present rather than rush ahead?*
- *How could this moment become an act of quiet worship?*

Breath Prayer
Inhale: Here I am
Exhale: I offer myself

Closing Invitation
Begin this day by offering your presence to God. Faithfulness may look quiet, steady and unseen.

Midday Embodied Prayer Flow

Practice "Stepping into Trust"
(See diagrams at end of guide)
Allow availability - not achievement - to guide your prayer.
Repeat today's breath prayer as part of your prayer flow.

Evening Examen

- How did you practice availability today?
- Where did I notice God's presence?
- What do I sense God may have been saying to me today?
- What do I want to say to God in return?

Rest in God's presence.

DAY 6 — Integrating the Week

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Scripture (NLT)

"Let us examine our ways and turn back to the Lord."
Lamentations 3:40

Reflection

Today is a day to look back - not to measure success, but to notice what prayer and fasting revealed. Slowing down often brings patterns into view: resistance, distraction and deeper awareness.

Awareness itself is a gift. Nothing revealed is wasted when it is held honestly before God.

- What has prayer revealed about your inner life this week?
- Where did you notice resistance or increased attentiveness?
- What might God be gently inviting you to receive?

DAY 7 — Sabbath Rest

Scripture (NLT)

"In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." — Isaiah 30:15

Reflection

Sabbath invites us to stop striving and rest in God's faithfulness. Prayer is sustained not only by effort, but by trust, gratitude and rest.

Today there is nothing to accomplish.

Rest. Worship. Receive God' s presence with gratitude.

Midday Embodied Prayer Flow

"Stepping into Trust"

This is an embodied prayer. These movements are prayer offered through the body. You may do this prayer standing or seated. If a movement is not accessible, imagine it - God receives your prayer. Move slowly. Breathe naturally.

1. Grounded Readiness

Stand with feet about hip-width apart, knees soft.
Arms rest naturally at your side.
If seated, place both feet flat on the floor.
Breath Prayer

2. Hands to the Heart - Attentive Trust

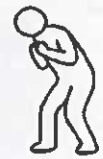
Bring one or both hands gently to your heart or chest. Let your shoulders relax.
Breath Prayer

3. Forward Lean - Choosing Obedience

Keeping both feet where they are,
gently lean your upper body forward
just enough to feel your weight shift.
If seated, lean forward slightly from the hips.
Breath Prayer

4. Bend at the Knees - Surrender

From the lean, softly, slightly bend your knees like beginning to sit, without going far.
Your torso stays upright.
If seated, simply soften your posture
Breath Prayer



5. Arms Open - Offering & Dependence

Slowly open your arms to the sides and slightly forward, palms facing upward.
If seated, open your arms gently in the same way.
Breath Prayer

6. The Step Forward - Trust in Motion

Gently step one foot forward, just a small step.
If seated, imagine this step clearly.
Breath Prayer

7. Bringing Back Foot Forward

- **Step into Trust**

Step your back foot forward to meet the front foot, so your whole body has moved ahead.
If seated, imagine yourself fully stepping onto new ground.
Stand balanced and steady.
Breath Prayer

8. Stillness - God Meets Me Here

Remain standing, or sit comfortably.
Let your arms rest.
Be still.
Breath Prayer

Be strong & courageous!