

Growing Deeper *Sway*

Pathfinder Church Launch Weekend *Nehemiah 9:19-21*

As we celebrate the next phase of our church together, we'd like to take a pause in our Growing Deeper daily study and have an intentional time of prayer focused on God's plans for us both as a church and individually. We know there is great power in prayer, especially when God's people are unified in seeking his will. So, please join us each day by using the prayer prompts to pray for the future of our church.

"Because of your great compassion you did not abandon them in the wilderness. By day the pillar of cloud did not fail to guide them on their path, nor the pillar of fire by night to shine on the way they were to take. You gave your good Spirit to instruct them. You did not withhold your manna from their mouths, and you gave them water for their thirst. For forty years you sustained them in the wilderness; they lacked nothing, their clothes did not wear out nor did their feet become swollen." Nehemiah 9:19-21

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. Nehemiah recounts many of the ways that God provided for his people as they journeyed through the desert, away from bondage and toward the promise of freedom. As a church, we also have a long and storied past. Like Nehemiah, we know it is important to remember what God has done. Spend your FIFTEEN by thanking God for all of the ways he has provided for us as a church for the last 168 years. If it is helpful, jot down a list before you begin praying. Ask God to bring to mind some of the things you may have forgotten.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

2. Not only is it important to recall what God has done for us as a church, it is also important to remember what he has done for us in our own life and the lives of our family. Spend your FIFTEEN by thanking God for all of the ways he has provided for you and your family. If it is helpful, jot down a list before you begin praying. Ask God to give you a fresh awareness of all of the ways he has cared for you.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Three

3. Earlier in the same chapter of Nehemiah, Nehemiah led his people in a time of confession to acknowledge the ways they had forgotten God's faithfulness. Spend your FIFTEEN by confessing to God those times when you may have forgotten his goodness to you, or even taken it for granted. If it is helpful, look over the list you made during the two previous days, and note any specific instances that you had taken for granted. Ask God to give you eyes to see those times when you have failed to appreciate the work he has done in your life.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Four

4. At Pathfinder Church, we hope to exhibit unconditional acceptance and a true-to-life approach, with messages that not only inspire but are relevant and helpful. We want to inspire connections and help people along on their God-directed journey. Hopefully, this has been your experience. Earlier this week we asked you to give thanks for all God has done in your life, and we sincerely hope that your time at St. John/Pathfinder Church is one of the things for which you gave thanks to God. Now think about the people in your life, not just your friends and family, but the people with whom you regularly come in contact: your children's teachers, the cashier at the grocery store, the person that you always see at the gym. Spend your FIFTEEN by asking God to help you identify some people for whom you should pray. Ask him to work in their lives, to make them open to spiritual conversations or invitations to take steps toward discovering what Jesus wants to offer. Finally, pray that our church would continue to be warm and welcoming. Pray that all who enter our doors, or find us on live stream, experience life change by meeting the true Jesus, the one who wants to give them wholeness and abundant life.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Five

5. Ephesians 2:8-10 says, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” As the apostle Paul reminds us in this verse, God has created each of us for a purpose. At Pathfinder Church, we use the 1.1.15.6 to remind ourselves to take steps to live out the path God has planned for us. Spend your FIFTEEN by looking over the 1.1.15.6, and ask God to help you determine your next steps. Finish by asking him to help you accomplish your goal.

1 | Give **ONE DAY** a week to God in Worship & rest.

God has designed us for a rhythm of work and rest. He has called us to set aside one day each week to find rest in shared worship and a retreat from everyday life. We also worship God when we actively support the mission of the local church with our resources, including our time, energy, gifts, passions, abilities, and finances. *Hebrews 10:24–25*

1 | Be some**ONE** to another person in an intentional relationship.

Life transformation happens best when we are in relationship with others. Whether one-on-one mentoring relationships, small groups, or any other form of intentional, committed, Christian community, life is meant to be shared. We are also called to form genuine relationships with people who don’t know Jesus as savior. *John 13:34–35*

15 | Spend **FIFTEEN MINUTES** each day in a faith-building discipline.

Our relationship with God grows as we learn to daily connect with Him. Bible reading, prayer, fasting, meditation, confession, and the Growing Deeper—or other Christian resources—are ways to connect with God all week long. *John 15:5*

6 | Live the **SIX** other **DAYS** serving God by serving others.

Every minute of every day is an opportunity to live as God’s representatives in the world. Whether in our neighborhoods, at school, on the job, with friends, on the field, or out in the community, we have been uniquely positioned to reflect God’s love in the world as we serve others. *Matthew 5:14–16*

Week One: Choose to Ask
John 4:4-42

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. Read John 4:4-26. Who asked the first question? What happened as a result?
2. Do you think Jesus was aiming to have a spiritual conversation with the woman at the well? When you ask questions, do you need to drive the conversation in a spiritual direction? Why or why not?
3. Read Colossians 4:6. Salt is used to flavor and to preserve, too much and it overpowers the taste of food. How do you add “salt” to your conversations without overpowering the discussion?
4. According to Jewish customs (or boundaries) at the time, Jesus should have avoided the woman. She was a female Samaritan with a shady past. Yet he chose to ask her for help in getting a drink. Whom do you seek to avoid? Why? Is the boundary that you have actually a barrier to keep that person away or truly a boundary?
5. How do you show others that you care by the questions you ask?
6. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for the opportunities to ask questions to show that you care. Pray about the boundaries that you have and ask God to break them down if they are unhealthy.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

7. Look again at John 4:4-26. Once Jesus asked the first question, the conversation was off and running. What questions did the woman ask Jesus?
8. The woman at the well didn't assume her understanding of the conversation. She asked several questions of Jesus in order to clarify her understanding of what he was explaining to her. What questions do we bring to Jesus?
9. Do you think it is okay to question God? Why or why not? (See Jeremiah 33:3 and Matthew 7:7-8 for insight.)
10. As the conversation continued, the woman moved from asking Jesus questions to telling Jesus her understanding of who Jesus was and what the Messiah will do. Who do you think Jesus is?
11. Read John 6:35, 8:12, 9:5, 10:7-9, 10:11-14, 11:25, 14:6, 15:1-5. How is Jesus described in these verses?
12. Do you need to ask someone to help you know Jesus better? What can you do to know more about Jesus or to have a

more personal relationship with him?

13. As you close your FIFTEEN in prayer, ask to know Jesus better. When we know Jesus better, we can share who he is and what he does with others.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Three

14. Read John 4:27-38. The disciples returned from wherever they had been and joined Jesus at the well. What is their reaction to Jesus' conversation?
15. Based on their reaction, what do you think the disciples might be assuming?
16. Don't you love the last part of John 4:27? "But no one asked...." What was the only question the disciples asked Jesus in the verses John 4:27-38?
17. Do you see yourself in the disciples? So often, we get wrapped up in the physical details of day-to-day living. We miss the bigger opportunities to celebrate what God is doing in the lives of those around us or in our own lives. How can we become more attuned to what God is doing in our lives and in the lives of others?
18. Jesus tells his disciples to open their eyes and look (verse 35). As you end your FIFTEEN, pray that God will open your eyes to the opportunities to see him working in your life and the lives of those around you. Thank God for his work that has already been happening without your knowing it!

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Four

19. Read John 4:10-30. Jesus refers to living water and a spring of water that wells up to eternal life. He is pointing to the fact that he is the source of eternal life. By the end of the passage, does the woman at the well understand who Jesus is?
20. When we choose to ask questions in order to understand, we are giving up the opportunity to assume, and it may feel like we are giving up our opportunity to be heard. Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?
21. As Jesus interacted with the woman and answered her questions, his opportunity to be heard was grown. Why was the woman open to Jesus' teaching?
22. When you are known, truly known, it can be a vulnerable feeling. Yet, we are known and loved by Christ—even in all our sinfulness—just like the woman at the well. As you finish your FIFTEEN in prayer, reflect on how well Jesus knows you AND how well he loves you. If you are in a space that allows, reflect on the words of Tauren Wells' song, "Known," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gbQ6Lfh5L14>

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Five

23. Do you need practice in seeking to understand others' points of view? Look at this article by Franklin Covey. <https://www.franklincovey.com/the-7-habits/habit-5.html> List a take-away that you can put to use.
24. Have you had an encounter with Jesus? If so, describe it. If you're not sure, what would you expect it to be like?
25. Read John 4:28-30, 39-42. How did the Samaritans react to the woman's news?
26. What do you think the disciples were thinking and feeling as they watched Jesus interact with the Samaritans for two days?
27. Who do you identify with more: the woman, the crowd of Samaritans, or the disciples? Why?
28. The power of Jesus' influence was felt far beyond just the woman as she told others about him and they pressed him to stay two more days to teach them himself. As you conclude your final FIFTEEN this week, pray for God to open doors to new conversations through the power of questions and to magnify his influence through you in ways that you do not expect.

Week Two: *Choose to Forgive*

Mark 2:1-12

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. To begin your first FIFTEEN of the week, read Mark 2:1-12 on your own a couple of times. Note anything that jumps out at you.
2. Put yourself in the story; imagine you were in Capernaum. After healing many people, Jesus returns and is mobbed by adoring crowds. The crowds are so large, in fact, that there is “no room left, not even outside the door.” As everyone crowds around, you listen intently to every word Jesus speaks. Can you imagine what that was like? Can you put yourself in that room, listening to Jesus preach? What would that have felt like?
3. If Jesus was speaking somewhere near you today, would you put up with the crowds to be near him? Would you wait in line for hours just to catch a glimpse of him? Would you pack into a tiny room, pressed up against others, just to hear him speak?
4. Suddenly, men begin tearing the roof off the house and lower a man down into the room on a mat. As a result, verse 5 says, “When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralyzed man, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’” What do you think that means? How did Jesus see their faith?
5. One way Jesus saw their faith was by their actions. They had so much faith in God that they were willing to tear the roof off the house because they knew Jesus would heal their friend. Now that’s faith! Can you relate to this kind of faith?
6. To finish your FIFTEEN for today, think about practical ways you have either proven your faith or shown doubt in your faith. You probably haven’t torn the roof off a house so Jesus could heal your friend, but what have you done? Then, ask God to help you continue to grow your faith and trust in him.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

7. To begin your FIFTEEN for today, read Mark 2:1-12 again. Why do you think Jesus forgave the paralyzed man’s sins before healing him, even though the man was brought to Jesus for healing?
8. Notice in verses 6 and 7 that the teachers of the law didn’t say anything out loud, but Jesus still knew what they were thinking. How does that make you feel?
9. Which do you think is easier for Jesus, to forgive sins or heal a paralyzed man? Why?
10. Maybe we can’t miraculously heal people, at least not by our own power, but is it easy for you to forgive? Why or why not?

11. To finish your FIFTEEN for today, spend some time thinking about times when you've had trouble forgiving others. Why did you have trouble? Spend some time in prayer thanking God for the forgiveness he gives to each one of us and asking him to help you better forgive like he does.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

12. Read Colossians 3:13. What does it have to say about forgiveness?
13. What kind of qualifications does Colossians 3:13 put on forgiveness, if any?
14. Let's go back to Mark 2:1-12 again. Verse 10 says, "But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." Was Jesus more concerned with healing the paralyzed man or forgiving his sins? Why?
15. In verse 11, Jesus tells the man to get up and go home. Verse 12 simply says, "He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all." Are you surprised by the seemingly ordinary explanation of the man's miraculous healing? Why or why not?
16. It seems that this passage puts more emphasis on Jesus' forgiving the paralyzed man than his actual healing. Why do you think that is?
17. To finish your FIFTEEN for today, spend more time thinking about times in the past when you had a hard time forgiving someone who sinned against you. Why do you think that was? Even if the other person is unrepentant, God still calls us to forgive them. Once again, ask God to help you better forgive like he does.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Four

18. Read Ephesians 4:31-32. What do these verses have to say about forgiveness?
19. Before talking about forgiveness in verse 32, what is required in verse 31?
20. Verse 31 says we are to "get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice." In your experience, is it easy to forgive someone else if you're still holding on to "every form of malice"? Why or why not?
21. Looking back at Mark 2:1-12, verse 12 says, "He (the formerly paralyzed man) got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!" What do you think the people were referring to in verse 12? Do you think they were more amazed by the forgiving or the healing?

22. To finish your FIFTEEN for today, think about the significance of Jesus' healing versus his forgiveness. Then ask God to help you not to take the forgiveness he offers you for granted.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Five

23. To begin your final FIFTEEN of the week, read Mark 2:1-12 once more. Did anything new stick out to you this time?

24. It's easy for us to notice a miraculous healing like Jesus performed in this passage. We don't see that every day. Have you ever known or heard about someone who was healed after being given no hope by the doctors? How did you feel when you heard their story?

25. It can be hard, even impossible, for us to really understand what receiving a miraculous healing might feel like. It can seem like too much to believe. Yet receiving Jesus' forgiveness is even more important than physical healing. Do we tend to have the same kind of awe and wonder when we think about the miraculous forgiveness Jesus offers? Why or why not?

26. Think again of a time when you struggled to forgive someone. Looking back, who felt the pain of that more, you or them?

27. Often, the person withholding forgiveness is more hurt by it than the person in need of forgiveness. Why do you think that is?

28. Jesus wants to heal us from the pain and scars often caused in relationships. But to do that, we need to forgive. And with Jesus' help, we can do just that. To finish your FIFTEEN for today, ask God to once again help bring to mind those in your life you need to forgive. Then ask for his Spirit to give you the power and ability to forgive those you need to as God forgives you as well.