

2025 Prayer Gathering Weekend



AUGUST 1-3, 2025

SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

WHY DO THIS?

Hey everyone!

First off, thanks for being part of this prayer weekend. I know that you have probably rearranged your schedule to be part of this weekend, and for that, I am grateful.

As we have approached this weekend, I have come back to Romans 12:1-2 a few times over the last few weeks. These verses are the “present your bodies as a living sacrifice” verses that you may be familiar with if you’ve been around church for a while.

But I’ve come to appreciate the way *The Message* handles these verses better than any other version, because *presenting my body as a living sacrifice*, while it sounds good, doesn’t really resonate with me. Don’t get me wrong, I understand that verse in the context it was written, where the Jews understood what it meant to offer a dead sacrifice before a priest, but I haven’t had to do that. So, this verse, while meaningful, doesn’t impact me the way it should.

Listen to how Eugene Peterson paraphrased Romans 12:1-2 in *The Message*:

So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering.

Romans 12:1-2, *The Message*

This weekend really isn’t about doing anything drastically different than what we should be doing everyday. However, if we aren’t living this way – taking our “sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life” and placing it before God as an offering – this weekend is different. But this “different” should be our normal.

This weekend starts with us opening ourselves to God. It begins by us vowing that – for just one full day – we’re going to ask God to be radically present throughout the day, and listen and watch as He leads us in what we’re doing. And the best part? We’re not going to do anything out of the ordinary. We’re going to eat out, talk to people, shop...all the normal things we might do on a

given Saturday. ***But, instead of going through these motions and placing our minds on what we're doing, we're going to put our minds and energy into what God might be doing right around and in us.***

We're doing this again this year because I believe that when we challenge ourselves to go deeper with Jesus, He meets us in that desire. He empowers us with the Holy Spirit to take our "everyday, ordinary life" and do things we wouldn't normally do, speak in ways we don't normally speak, and to pray in ways we don't normally pray.

This weekend is our opportunity to take a step deeper with King Jesus, and your courage to participate – to step outside of your comfort zone – might be a change that goes well beyond this weekend in August.

Until Springfield knows Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason Ham". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial "J".

Jason Ham

Prayer Gatherings

Dean Trune

Just what is so significant about going to a city to pray with other people? Couldn't I just as well pray for that place from home? Also, wouldn't it be much cheaper to pray from home? Isn't it important to use our funds wisely?

There are three specific areas of insight that God would like to reveal to us as we pray onsite: **prayer, people, and potential.**

Let's consider prayer.

When I travel to a different culture or to a different city to pray, my prayers will fit the cultural context of that place. Instead of praying with my own cultural context or guessing at the cultural context, I can experience it first-hand. When I am onsite praying, I am able to pray more specifically because I can see the needs.

I will also be able to pray more effectively because I can discern the spiritual war around me. It is the same enemy but it is probably a different (part of the) war. I will pray more passionately because I have become part of the culture for which I am praying. I will pray more regularly because my commitment level is higher by being onsite. I can pray more courageously because I will understand what God is doing in that place. Finally, I will pray with more perseverance because I have become a part of what God is doing. Prayer is always a part of what God is doing.

Now let's consider the people.

When I am onsite, I will have opportunities to practically encourage the people I meet. That is hard to accomplish from my home. Local Christians will care that I have come to bless the church locally. That alone opens amazing doors for blessing the locals.

Also, when I am onsite, God will reveal His desires through divine appointments that He provides. I have seen God use divine appointments on prayer journeys and prayer gatherings that changed our focus and our plans. Also, onsite, I am

able to invest myself personally in the people that I meet. God will provide opportunities to minister in ways that I have not considered. I have also seen God use the people I meet on prayer journeys, to bless me far beyond what I thought was possible.

With most prayer journeys, I leave the country or city to return home recognizing I will no longer remain the same because of what God has done through the people I went to pray for. God is an expert at changing me internally because of what I have experienced externally on a prayer journey.

Finally, let's examine the potential.

When I have the opportunity to reflect on the prayer journey or a prayer gathering, God typically reveals what the potential is for me personally. Seldom do I return from a prayer event where I sense God is encouraging me to do nothing in the future. At the very minimum, I can now pray with much better insight from home. God often leads me to intercede for that country or city for years after returning home.

Being on site has allowed me to see what God is specifically doing and how I can join Him in His work whether it be short term or long term. In some cities, I have returned several times to lead prayer gatherings. In some countries and cities, God has recruited workers through us for the harvest fields.

God has a purpose for each prayer gathering. I just need to pay attention to Him and follow His lead. I personally believe that participating in a prayer gathering is one of the most exciting adventures that God has for us to experience in His Kingdom. His adventures are life changing.

Dean Trune, Healthy Churches Network
www.healthychurches.network

SCHEDULE

(Tentative: teams and individuals should feel freedom to opt in or out)

FRIDAY, AUGUST 1, 2025

- 6:00pm Dinner**
Pioneer Valley Christian Academy (PVCA - Multi-Purpose Room)
- 6:30pm Weekend welcome, prayer, worship**
- 7:00pm Orientation/Training**
- 8:00pm Team planning for Saturday**

SATURDAY, AUGUST 2, 2025

- 8:30am Breakfast with team**
- 10:00am Appointment #1** (as determined by team)
- 12:00pm Lunch, Feedback, Reorientation**
PVCA
- 1:15pm Appointment #2** (as determined by team)
- 3:00pm Appointment #3** (team determination / Prayer Walk neighborhoods)
- 4:13pm Feedback**
PVCA
- 5:00pm Dinner, worship // Personal Reflection & Mission**
PVCA

SUNDAY, AUGUST 3, 2025

- 10:00am Sunday Gathering**
PVCA

WHAT ARE APPOINTMENTS?

This weekend, we're hoping you'll do two things: ASK and LISTEN.

The God of the Scriptures still speaks to those who are willing to listen to him. Through the Scriptures, through the Holy Spirit, through the counsel of others, through events, creation, and circumstances, God speaks. But far too often, even the people that claim to follow Him fail to hear him.

The Scriptures tell us how we can not only hear God, but actually get to know Him:

Be still, and know that I am God.
PSALM 46:10

It won't work the other way. Try as we might, we can't know God (or hear him, for that matter) until we're still.

Yes, this may mean being physically still, but the original word (pronounced "ra-fa") means a relaxing that lets go and lets alone the things we preoccupy ourselves with. It's a word that goes beyond our physical being to the state of our minds, hearts, and even our very souls. It's the idea of moving from a turbulent sea to a glassy one, much like what Jesus did in the Sea of Galilee when he told the wind and the waves, "Be still!" (Mk. 4:39).

This weekend, we want you to start by asking God a few things:

- Where am I not still? What is chopping the waters for me now?
- What do I need to let go of and let alone as I seek to hear God this weekend?
- Is there something you've been wanting to say to me, Lord?

These few questions...and, more importantly, our willingness to let go of whatever God brings to mind...will give us the chance of hearing God throughout the weekend.

APPOINTMENTS WITH GOD

As we let go of the things God identifies for us, we can engage our minds, hearts, and souls to be aware of God's presence, becoming cognizant of the fact that God is always present. As David pointed out to us in Psalm 139, the issue isn't that God hasn't been there. The issue has been our awareness that he's there.

As we engage God in prayer over the course of this weekend, we have the opportunity to pray *onsite with insight*. To this end, in addition to any personal issues you desire God to speak on, we're asking you to engage God on a few questions about his desire for things here, in the Pioneer Valley.

- God, what are your desires for people of Springfield and the Pioneer Valley?
- God, what do you see happening here that your Church is missing?
- God, what people groups are being ignored here?
- God, what's my role in reaching the people of Springfield and my own town?

Ask away! God is listening and ready to answer. In the pages that follow, you've got space to process what it means to *pray onsite with insight*.

APPOINTMENTS WITH PEOPLE

As one of the most Post-Christian cities in America, the people of Springfield are largely burn-out on religious things. In fact, **9 out of 10** people here are probably never going to step foot in a religious service of any kind. So, if you're hoping to throw up a church building here and have people show up, you'll find it won't probably reach that many (at least, relative to the city size).

That said, **6 out of 10** people here are willing to engage in a spiritual conversation (a discussion of spiritual things), and an even higher ratio will let you pray for them. So, it's imperative that we understand the basics of how we can have a spiritual conversation, and how that conversation can lead us to prayer (or vice-versa). These "divine appointments" (as Dean calls them) have already been worked out by God. Our job is simply to be aware enough to know when we've entered into such a meeting.

This weekend, we're hoping you'll have a spiritual conversation through at least two divine appointments, and on the pages that follow, you'll have the opportunity to process how we have such a conversation.

SUGGESTED GOD-APPOINTMENT LOCATIONS

for Saturday, August 1, 2025

Forest Park	300 Sumner Avenue, Springfield, MA
Western New England University	1215 Wilbraham Road, Springfield, MA
Springfield College	263 Alden Street, Springfield, MA
Springfield Armory	1 Armory Street, #2, Springfield, MA
Garvey Promontory	276 Stapleton Road, Springfield, MA
Hillcrest Park Cemetery	821 Parker Street, Springfield, MA

SUGGESTED PEOPLE-APPOINTMENT LOCATIONS

for Saturday, August 1, 2025

MGM Casino/Hotel	1 MGM Way, Springfield, MA
Baystate Medical Center	759 Chestnut Street, Springfield, MA
Walmart Supercenter	1105 Boston Road, Springfield, MA
Walmart Supercenter	591 Memorial Drive, Chicopee, MA
Holyoke Mall	50 Holyoke Street, Holyoke, MA
ALDI	1284 Boston Road, Springfield, MA
Loomis Lakeside	807 Wilbraham Road, Springfield, MA
Starbucks	42 N. Main Street, E. Longmeadow, MA

PRAYER GATHERING GUIDELINES

Dean Trune

1. Our greatest priority is to pray and listen to God.

Possible questions for God:

- A. Is there anything in me that You want to address, such as worry, fear, doubt or anything else?
- B. What Scripture would you want me to pray over this city?
- C. What do You want me to pray?
- D. What is one of Satan's strategies against this place?
- E. What is Your desire for The Gathering or for my church?

2. Our second priority is to communicate with local people and listen well.

Possible questions for local people:

- A. If you could ask God anything, what would you ask Him?
- B. What is the greatest need of your city or your neighborhood?
- C. If you could change one thing in this area, what would that be?
- D. If you could change one thing about the churches in Springfield, what would you change?

3. Our third priority is to point them to some sort of spiritual community.

4. Conclusion: God how do you want me to be involved in what you are doing in this area?

- A. prayer partner
- B. encourager
- C. financial partner
- D. move here
- E. other

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ENGAGING IN SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS

Sean Thomé

²³ Jesus traveled throughout the region of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. ²⁴ News about him spread as far as Syria, and people soon began bringing to him all who were sick. And whatever their sickness or disease, or if they were demon possessed or epileptic or paralyzed—he healed them all. ²⁵ Large crowds followed him wherever he went—people from Galilee, the Ten Towns, Jerusalem, from all over Judea, and from east of the Jordan River.

MATTHEW 4:23-25 (NLT)

⁸ “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

ACTS 1:8 (NLT)

Principles:

- God is (still) drawing people to himself, and we are looking to partner in His work.
- God (still) speaks in a variety of ways, and we are listening for next steps.
- God is responsible for the fruit, and we are seeking the Kingdom of God.
- One of the evidences of the Holy Spirit is telling others about Jesus.

Question: How do we engage people in spiritual conversations?

Tool: S.T.O.P.

- **S:** Start with prayer.
- **T:** Take a look around you; observe what is unfolding.
- **O:** Open yourself to the leading of Holy Spirit’s direction.
- **P:** Practice engaging in spiritual conversations.

Levels of Spiritual Conversations:

- **Casual Conversation:** Simple, normal conversation
 - *“Hey, how are you?”*
- **Meaningful Conversation:** Communication where the person engaged shares a fact that would have otherwise been left hidden
 - *“It’s been a hard time lately. My Dad died 18 months ago...”*
- **Spiritual Conversation:** Communication that brings God or a religious perspective into the conversation
 - *“I used to go to the catholic church down the street...”*
- **Discovery Conversation:** Communication that invites a response from the person engaged, usually where permission is granted for a follow-up response
 - *“Is there anything I can pray for you, your family, etc. for the next 30 days?”// “How can I find out what God did 30 days from now?”*
 - *“Can I help you with...?”*
 - *“Have you ever heard of (a particular resource)...”*
 - *“We are having a public gathering this Sunday, would you like to join us?”*
 - *“Would you like to follow up and discover what the Bible has to say about...?”*

“After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

Luke 10:1-2

TEAM PLAN FOR SATURDAY, 8.1.2025

MY TEAM:

OUR PLAN:

NOTES

BREAKFAST: 8.5.2025

APPOINTMENT #1

LUNCH @ PVCA

APPOINTMENT #2

PRAYER WALKING YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

(OR ANY AREA)

Courtesy of the International Mission Board // by Shelley Stott

What Is Prayer Walking?

Prayer walking is exactly what the words imply: walking and praying. Prayer walking has been described as “praying on site with insight.” When you hear the sounds and see the sights of a particular place, you understand better how to pray for the people in that location.

For example, you can read a magazine article about a city that is rigidly Islamic. That, however, is very different than walking the streets of that same city and seeing Islamic writings on every lamppost, qur’anic scripture verses posted in the windows, and hearing the call to prayer over loudspeakers five times every day.

On a prayer walk, you might smell the freshness of a recent tropical rain and ask God to refresh the land with his Word. You might hear children laughing and pray that God would show himself even to the young people of the area. Prayer walkers must be sensitive to all that is going on around them, which will help them pray with insight. That includes being ready to speak to or pray with people they encounter along the way.

A few years have passed since I joined the Filipina ladies who prayed to the Lord of the harvest for workers in that difficult location. Since then I am happy to report that the Lord has answered those prayers. More Christian workers have come to plant their lives among the people in the area. Despite hardships like loneliness, suspicion, and health issues, God’s people persevere for the sake of sharing the gospel.

Five Things to Remember When Prayer Walking

1. Be alert.

If you prayer walk with a partner, don’t get distracted by conversation with each other. It’s helpful to agree ahead of time that you will keep conversation to a minimum to keep the focus on prayer. You might want to meet beforehand or gather to debrief after your walk, but the time you set aside for prayer walking should be focused on just that.

2. **Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit.**

Just as your five senses gather information from your surroundings, remember to keep your heart open to what the Holy Spirit is telling you as well. Perhaps you feel impressed to stop and talk to someone or to go down a new street. Listen to and obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit as you go.

3. **Be ready.**

You may encounter someone who needs prayer or is willing to engage in a spiritual conversation with you. Be ready to interact with those around you. Ask your pastor about evangelism training if you haven't been trained already. Be willing to ask people if you can pray for them. Find out what is heavy on their heart and be ready to listen and pray. If people are not open to letting you pray right there—or if you're not in an environment where you can openly pray because of government restrictions or persecution—you can still assure them that you will pray for them later.

4. **Be a doer.**

You can't really learn to prayer walk unless you just do it. Even if you feel apprehensive or you don't feel that you can wrap your mind around it, go ahead and try it. As your team debriefs, you may learn better ways to prayer walk that you can implement in your next walk. As a team, you can begin marking a map so you can see the areas you have prayer walked. But don't stop at marking maps. Put your shoes on and put yourself in the neighborhoods.

5. **Be on the lookout for God at work.**

Make your prayer walk an opportunity for thanking the Lord. Be assured that you didn't beat God into the neighborhood. He has been there working long before you arrived. What an awesome privilege we have to join God as he draws people to himself.

APPOINTMENT #3

EVENING INSIGHTS:

SUNDAY GATHERING @ PVCA

Sunday, August 3, 2025 @ 10am

ADDITIONAL SPACE

APPENDIX A:

TYPES OF PRAYER

from Adele Calhoun's "Spiritual Disciplines Handbook"

Breath Prayer

Prayer that is linked to the rhythms of breathing: inhalation, calling on a biblical name or image of God; exhalation, breathing out a simple, God-given desire

Centering Prayer

Prayer that quiets scattered thoughts and desires in Christ's presence through one "centered" word given through thoughts or the Scriptures

Contemplative Prayer

Prayer that waits with an awake heart towards God's presence and Word, that pushes away from the expression of personal desire and gravitates towards who God says he is

Conversational Prayer

Praying in a conversation (potentially with another person) where thoughts are offered, received, and processed as in a conversation, where one topic at a time is discussed

Fasting

The intentional self-denial of normal (or perceived as normal) necessities in order to refocus on God

Fixed-Hour Prayer

Regular and consistent patterns of attending to God in prayer throughout the day

Inner-Healing Prayer

Prayer that specifically targets placing those with significant inner wounds (emotional, psychological, mental, spiritual) in the healing presence of Jesus Christ, asking for wholeness and freedom

Intercessory Prayer

Prayer that moves us into God's profound care for ourselves, others, and the world, while seeking what God wants ahead of our desires

Labyrinth Prayer

Prayer that exists as a pilgrimage of (1) leaving the world by journeying away from the noise of the world, (2) stopping to rest with Christ, then (3) returning home to live a more obedient life to what Christ has revealed

Listening Prayer

Prayer that allows God to set the agenda, then sees the receiver respond to the word given

Liturgical Prayer

Prayer that is pre-written or memorized which serves as a framework for individual or corporate worship and devotion

Prayer of Lament

Prayers that approach God with the realities of sorrow, frustration, and angst that consume and distract

Prayer Partners

Having a partner for support through prayer in regular and consistent in-person or virtual contact, both for personal and world concerns

Praying Scripture

Praying through the content of Scripture, specifically using the text to guide the direction of the prayer

Prayer of Recollection

Prayer that targets letting go of distractions in order to center on your God-spoken identity, for the purposes of connecting to the reality that God lives inside the pray-er through the Holy Spirit

Prayer Walking

Prayer that physically walks with Jesus through specific places of concern. Through proximity, prayers are offered.

Welcoming Prayer

Prayer as a means of detachment from the need to be liked, secure, and in control, and instead looks to attach the believer to the welcome offered by Jesus Christ

APPENDIX B: **POSTURES OF PRAYER**

from Adele Calhoun's "Spiritual Disciplines Handbook"

STANDING

1 Kings 19:11; Mark 11:25; Genesis 18:22

OUTSTRETCHED ARMS

Psalms 141:2; Psalm 63:4; Psalm 77:2; 1 Timothy 2:8

UPLIFTED EYES

Psalms 123:1-2; Mark 7:34; Mark 6:41; John 17:1

KNEELING

1 Kings 8:54; Acts 9:40; Daniel 6:10; Mark 1:40

PROSTRATE

Genesis 17:3; Exodus 4:31; Nehemiah 8:6; 2 Chronicles 20:18; Luke 5:12; Luke 8:47;
Psalms 72:11; Psalm 66:4

APPENDIX C:

BASIC SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES FOR BEING STILL

Besides just fighting to “be still” to hear God, is there anything we can do to enable this stillness?

Adele Calhoun, in her excellent work “Spiritual Disciplines Handbook”, has given us a significant guide to several disciplines that enable us to still ourselves before God. A few of them are reprinted here with permission:

- **SILENCE:** freeing oneself from the addiction to and distraction of noise so you can be totally present to the Lord; to open ourselves to God in the place beyond words
- **SOLITUDE:** to leave people behind to enter into time with God
- **SLOWING:** to curb the addiction to busyness, hurry, and workaholism; to learn to savor the moment
- **RETREAT:** to make space in my life for God alone
- **PRACTICING THE PRESENCE:** to develop a continual openness and awareness of Christ’s presence living in me