

24/7 Prayer Guide: Dreaming & Discerning



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INTRODUCTION TO THE PRAYER GUIDE (2 min)

The stories in the Bible establish two truths:

1. God is always up to something.
2. People have the choice to either be a part of what God is doing, or not.

We see these two truths in the Book of Acts. It is clear that God is up to something throughout this text! He has sent the Holy Spirit to propel the disciples to be Jesus' witnesses across the world (Acts 1:8). The good news of Jesus is crossing economic, social, geographic, and ethnic lines. As it spreads, it is turning those who were once enemies into brothers and sisters. It is turning those who didn't know God into His sons and daughters.

But, not everyone in Acts is a part of what God is up to. The arrival of the Holy Spirit draws some followers, yet makes others skeptical (Acts 2). When a paralyzed man is healed, some rejoice in the miracle, while others reject it (Acts 3). The open generosity of Barnabas is countered by the underhanded dealings of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 4-5). When Stephen challenges those who insist on holding to former ways of relating to God (the temple and not Jesus), his arguments are not only rejected, but he is executed (Acts 6-7). God is always up to something and people get to choose to either be a part of it, or not.

These two truths apply to us today as well. God is always on the move, but are we going to move with Him? We can sometimes be tentative to follow because moving with God involves personal risk and the disruption of comfort. We can also be hesitant because we aren't always certain what He is calling us to do! However, we don't have to be scared of risk or missing His will. If we take a posture of humble attentiveness, we can ensure we are able to see what He wants us to see and be given the courage to respond. We will also find assurance that what is waiting for us on the other side of risk is better than what we have now.

In 2020, we saw God doing something new at Redwood Park Church, Prairie Alliance Church, and Timbers Church. He has been opening doors, stirring hearts, and laying the foundation for a movement of God in Northwestern Ontario and Manitoba, as He connects our three churches with similar dreams and DNA. Some of you have been on the front lines of these developments and others have only heard the names of the other churches in passing. Let's change that! This prayer guide is an invitation for all to join in on the dreaming & discerning as we listen to God about where He is leading us and how you fit into His plans too!

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THE PRAYER GUIDE (1 min)

1) Be Intentional About Following the Prayer Guide!

Those new to praying for an entire hour will find the time allotments and instructions helpful to guide them through a new experience. Those experienced with praying for an extended period of time will not need the pragmatic assistance, but will benefit from being steered towards unity with everyone else.

Remember, we are praying as three churches *in unity* trying to discern the same things. Of course, follow the Spirit wherever you are led in your prayer, but remember that we are trying to discern what the Spirit is saying about specific things as we look to the future.

2) Remember! We are discerning opportunities, not making decisions.

This prayer guide is not about asking God to bless something we are already doing or to validate a decision that's already been made. This is about asking Him to show us which opportunities we should lean into as He's guiding us throughout 2021. This allows you to have real freedom as you pray and listen. We are not looking for reasons to do something, we are seeking to hear what God wants us to do!

3) Write down any impressions or thoughts you have along the way.

Grab a pen and paper or keep a journal on hand to take notes throughout this process. The 24/7 Prayer website has a place for you to share your thoughts to help shape our collective discernment! Please share what the Spirit may be revealing to you, every voice matters in this discernment process.

Ready? Let's begin!

TIME OF PRAYER IN THE SPIRIT

Preparation for Prayer (10 min)

Calibrating Prayer:

Lord, I am all yours for the next hour. The desire of my heart is to hear from You. I know that certain things can get in the way of that. By your Holy Spirit, could you bring those barriers between you and I to my mind so I can confess them to you and be done with them. I don't want to miss out on what You are up to.

(Prayer Tip)

Having trouble identifying a barrier? Perhaps consider some of the barriers we have seen in our study of Acts.

- Skepticism (Acts 2:13, 4:13, 5:24)
- Stubborn Pride (Acts 7:51)
- Pretension (Acts 5:1-10)
- Desire for Power (Acts 8:19)

Confession Prayer:

Lord, I confess _____. Please forgive me. Thank you that my heartfelt confession is all it takes to remove the barrier between you and me. I move ahead in our prayer time together knowing we are 100% good!

THREE OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLECTIVE ENGAGEMENT:

Each of the following opportunities have been dreamed about with our national and regional governing bodies, local elders boards, and staff leadership groups. All have come out of the doors God is beginning to open.

Opportunity #1: Starting New Churches Together (15 min)

In the book, *“Natural Church Development”*, author Christian Schwartz reminds us the fruit of a healthy apple tree isn’t an apple - but another apple tree. Similarly, the fruit of a healthy church is another church. What if PAC, Redwood, and Timbers partnered together to start new churches in communities that didn’t have a healthy church, or needed a certain kind of church?

Many small communities have very “churchy” churches - inward looking and very traditional groups, which don’t often connect easily with unchurched people. But PAC, Redwood, and Timbers are churches for people who aren’t really into church in a traditional context and we could start those kinds of churches in other communities!

Furthermore, what if we also partnered to train the pastors for those new churches? There is a lack of available graduates from bible colleges and seminaries. What if we combined formal academic training with pragmatic church experience to train church planting pastors?

(Prayer Tip)

One of the most common tendencies we have when praying is to use the word “pray” or other religious sounding words. But this has the tendency to make our prayers vague and impersonal. Billy Graham sums it up perfectly: “Prayer is simply a two-way conversation between you and God.”

Consider this prayer a parent might say for their 16 year old son: *“Lord I pray for _____ , that you would bless him and protect him.”* Now consider how much more involved your heart might be as you get more intentional and real in your language: *“Lord, I remember 16 as being both a hard age and tremendously exciting. Protect _____ as he drives himself around. I also ask you to give him supernatural discipline in his online life. Give him strength, through the Holy Spirit, to avoid sexual temptation and pornography.”*

Learn to pray that second way, and your prayer life will grow in realism and depth. The first way keeps it artificial and boring.

Here are some things you can pray for:

- For God to open doors in new communities and to facilitate strong early connections with local believers whose hearts are aligned with what God is beginning to do at PAC, Redwood, and Timbers.
- Early connections in Fort Frances, Atikokan, and Gimli to bear fruit
- New connections in Kenora to emerge
- Recruitment of church planting pastors for a potential “Church Planter in Residence” program

- Funding partnerships with District and National offices of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

Now... Take time to listen:

- Take a look at the regions surrounding our churches (Thunder Bay, Dryden, Portage La Prairie) on Google Maps. What communities stand out to you? Where has God already been stirring your heart?
- Think of who you might know who could be a part of a new church.

Next... Give Thanks:

- God has blessed you with a great church! Give thanks for PAC, Redwood, or Timbers.
- God wants others to enjoy what you enjoy!

Opportunity #2: Building Each Other Up (15 min)

Each church has its own strengths and weaknesses. How can the unique strengths of each church help strengthen the others? COVID-19 has put some of the dreams of joint Elders/Board retreats, conferences, and training sessions on hold, but already we have seen the pastors at PAC & Redwood partnering with Sunday morning teaching and planning. There is so much potential here to share resources and edify each other down the road. But for now, one of the best ways we can build each other up and grow in love for one another is to pray for each other.

Each church prayer partner has contributed prayer requests unique to their community. Let's build each other up in prayer:

PAC

- Neepawa, MB (PAC Campus just celebrated it's 5 year anniversary!)
 - Isolated people in community
 - Filipino immigrants working at Hylife (hog processing facility) who don't have family here and are living in crowded and lonely apartments
 - Elderly who live alone and with no family in the area
 - Courage for our church to be creative to step out and love and welcome these people in,
 - For Neepawa to know Jesus
 - For Campus Pastors Rylan and Sonia Friesen - for strength in their marriage; to find a healthy balance between being spouses and co-pastors.

- Dauphin, MB (New PAC Campus just started in spring of 2020; meeting in a home)
 - For our core group to continue growing closer together as they wait for COVID-19 restrictions to be lifted
 - For a compelling sense of how to be a blessing to Dauphin. What has PAC been given by God to give to Dauphin?
 - For contacts and conversations now that will lead to invitations once restrictions are removed
 - For creativity as we consider next steps for a meeting space once we outgrow the Dandos' living room
 - For a pastor/planter/shepherd to care for this site as things develop
 - For good connections with church leaders in town who will welcome us as co-workers.
 - For healing - between churches; between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people

- Portage La Prairie, MB (The "mother church" for the other two campuses)
 - For hope and perseverance for ministry leaders, House Church leaders, and staff
 - For trust to be built with Indigenous leaders
 - To resist complacency, to continue to reach those who don't go to church

- For clarity around dreams of how to partner with the local Dakota Nation with social services opportunities (Day Care / Retirement Complex / etc.)

REDWOOD

- For an exciting and powerful God-sized vision for our Redwood community that we can only accomplish through the Holy Spirit. This is an opportunity to listen to the Spirit's leading! Please be sure to share what God may be showing you.
- For strength, creativity, wisdom and endurance for our Elder's Board, Staff, and Volunteer Leaders
- Prayer for Indigenous reconciliation in Thunder Bay
 - For a meaningful relationship and partnership with Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School
 - For the Fort William First Nation
 - For wisdom to know how to best begin to address past wrongs of the Canadian church against Indigenous people of Canada
 - For God's guidance as we seek to address the need for clean drinking water for our Indigenous brothers and sisters in Northwestern Ontario
- That the people of Thunder Bay would come to know, believe and follow Jesus
 - To become a church that our local neighbourhood would miss if we no longer existed
 - That our Food Bank would meet the practical needs of Thunder Bay and be a bridge to Jesus
- For the flourishing of Worship and Creative Arts and an outpouring of Spirit-led creativity that leads us to worship the Creator and steward the gifts He has given us through multiple creative arts expression
- That all generations would grow in faith to become life-long followers of Jesus
- That we would know how to best move forward maximizing the hidden opportunities afforded us by COVID-19 (online presence, etc.)
- That we would grow in friendship with Jesus this coming year, knowing His voice, and following His leading

TIMBERS

- Direction as we move ahead with what church looks like next year. We've been feeling like we are still in a holding pattern, but we believe that God is shaping our leadership for what is ahead, both individually and corporately. This is a new season!
- Teen Challenge and our involvement there, as well as the big picture issue of addiction within Dryden.
- Pray for fringe members/adherents at Timbers and how to best re-engage amidst COVID-19 mentality

- For the emerging partnership with PAC and Redwood and for what that will look like in the Region.
- For communities throughout Northwestern Ontario to come to know a strong presence of God
- For healing of past hurts caused by the church in our community so that people will turn back to the Father and find redemption.

Now... Take time to listen:

- For a word of insight or knowledge for a congregation you don't attend. For example, if you are part of Timbers - what might God be saying to Dauphin? If you attend PAC Neepawa - what might God be saying for Redwood? Spend a few minutes with each congregation in your mind.
- If you received an impression or a thought, consider that it might actually be for your church! God occasionally sneaks some info to us that way, when we don't have our guard up to protect what we already love and know!

Next... Give Thanks:

- It is truly a work of God that our congregations are connecting in this way! Acknowledge God's activity by giving Him thanks for what has happened already! If some of this is absolutely new to you, check out the January 10, 2021 sermon, on either the PAC or Redwood website, where Nathan discussed the beginnings of our church partnership. You can pray after you watch that sermon. For now, move on to Opportunity #3.

Opportunity #3: Reconciliation & Aviation (15 min)

There is no doubt God is stirring the hearts of our congregations towards reconciliation with Indigenous communities. As individuals, we control our attitudes and choose our friends, and it is relatively easy to move towards reconciliation when we are thinking personally. We can each take steps against racism and towards justice.

However, when we think corporately, it is much more difficult to figure out what to do together. It is easier to mis-step, to use the wrong angle or approach, or have intentions misinterpreted when you are acting as a “church”. This means it is very important to see where God is opening doors so we don’t do more damage to relationships that are already fragile.

One of the ways God is opening doors is through aviation. There are many lines of convergence pointing in this direction in this season.

Consider:

- PAC has a licensed aircraft mechanic on staff
- Portage La Prairie is 5 km from Southport; a flight training center
- PAC connection with Eagles Wings Flight School (for at risk youth)
- Central Midwest District of Christian and Missionary Alliance frustrated by lack of access to remote pastors and cost of commercial flights. They have invited us to make an aviation proposal in March 2021.
- Connections with an Indigenous pastor with large Facebook ministries within Northern Communities; imagine supporting this online ministry with in-person connections and teams
- Redwood connections with aviation opportunities and Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School
- Dryden dreams about sports clinics, mechanics, and physicians, with access to remote communities.
- Indications of financial support from large churches in Alberta for projects along these lines
- At least two pilots who have expressed a willingness to serve
- Best way to reach the isolated Northern communities.

Pray for:

- God to either swing the doors wide open on the airplane idea or slam them shut! It is a costly path to go down in both time and finances, and unless it has a huge

kingdom upside, best to not walk too far down that road without confirmation from the Holy Spirit.

- More partners! Specifically those who are not ideologically committed to a “colonial” model of Christianity where Indigenous expressions of faith are minimized or necessarily rejected. Our Indigenous brothers and sisters have much to teach us about Jesus, and we need partners in ministry who will come humbly.

Now... Take time to listen:

- Ask God to give you a picture of who this ministry might bless? What is their current situation? What do they need? How is God already working in their midst?

Next... Give thanks:

- For the call on Redwood, PAC, and Timbers to be reconcilers.
- For our strategic location along the #1 Highway, to be and to plant gateway churches for the North.
- For an emerging desire for reconciliation among all generations and all people. Typically these sorts of movements are characteristic of youth, but all ages at PAC, Redwood, and Timbers have hearts moving in this direction.

CLOSING PRAYER (2 min)

Jesus, I know that the best place for me personally, for my church community, and for our partner churches to be is in Your presence and seeking Your will. Thank you for the opportunity over this past hour to listen to your Spirit, to pour out my requests to you, and to give you thanks for how you are working, and how you will work in the future through us!

As I conclude this time of prayer, I ask that you would remind all who pray this week of Your good love for us. Remind us that we are people called into deeper friendship with you and people who are called on mission to those around us. In these last moments, I pause in silence to listen for any final word or a picture you might give to me, for my benefit, or for the benefit of others.

(pause for 1 min of silence)

Thank you, fill me afresh with your Holy Spirit now. It is in your name I pray all of this Jesus.

Amen

FINAL ACTION

If the Holy Spirit has revealed something to you over this past hour of prayer that you feel you should share, we want to hear what He is saying! Please go to the [24/7 Prayer website](#) and fill out the form with your comments.

Thank you for participating and we encourage you to continue praying!