November 07/08, 2026
"Growing Together"
Pastor Aaron Buer

Beyond the Weekend

SPEND DAILY TIME WITH GOD AS YOU READ, THINK, PRAY, + ACT.

2026 Focus: 12 Months of Prayer | **November**: Thanksgiving

Each month, journey through a different biblical model of prayer.

Day 1 Acts 2:41–47 | The Apostles' Teaching

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42

After Peter finishes speaking, the unthinkable happens. About three thousand people accept his message and are baptized! What is his message? Jesus, his rabbi, is the Lord and Messiah who died for the sins of the world and rose again. This sudden expansion leaves Peter and his fellow disciples with a problem. How can they teach three thousand new believers to follow Jesus? Led by the Holy Spirit, they invite this new community to devote themselves to their teaching and to fellowship. Luke calls these leaders apostles, which means "sent ones." They are God's messengers, and their Spirit-inspired teaching becomes the foundation of our New Testament.

God invites us, too, to devote ourselves to the apostles' teaching. The same Holy Spirit inspired every book of the Bible, and all of it is useful for teaching and training us (2 Timothy 3:16). The apostles taught how the Old Testament points to Jesus and reveals the human story. The New Testament records their encounters with Jesus and shows how salvation is lived out in community. Like the early church, we devote ourselves to Scripture by studying it and applying it to our lives. This devotion takes many forms: spending time with God each morning, reading the Bible as a family, memorizing Scripture, or engaging with it in a small group. One thing is clear, though: returning to it often is vital.

TODAY: Ask God to open your heart to his Word. Pray, "Father, open my heart to what you have to say in Scripture. Help me fall more in love with your Word daily."

Day 2 Genesis 2:18 | Fellowship

The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Genesis 2:18

The story of the Bible explodes off the page as God speaks creation into existence. Planets and stars, along with everything that grows, swims, and crawls, come into being at the sound of his voice. God crafts human beings in his image to reflect who he is to the world. He breathes life into human lungs. Then he declares that it is not good for the man to be alone, and he creates Eve. This fellowship reflects a key characteristic of God. In a way we can't fully understand, God is one God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is a perfect community, the model of shared life. God desires humanity to experience this fellowship and reflect its beauty.

It's easy to assume that the spiritual life is something we do alone. Our culture celebrates stories of individuals who overcome the odds and achieve great things. Then it pastes that idea onto the spiritual journey, often portrayed as a steep hike only a few can finish. But every relationship whispers a different truth: we are made for the shared life. Life in its fullness begins with God and spills over into every other relationship we have. To thrive spiritually, we cannot hike alone. We must show up and lean in. We show up by gathering weekly around God's Word and opening our lives to one another. We lean in by rubbing shoulders through acts of service and praying for each other. This is the call of every Jesus follower.

TODAY: Write down one way you need to step toward or lean into your church community. Commit to following through.

Day 3 Acts 2:46 | **Gospel Joy**

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts. Acts 2:46

The centerpiece of the meal the believers share is the overwhelming joy that fills their hearts. When they had first heard Peter's words, they were filled with desperate conviction. Their hearts knew the message they were hearing was true. Their sin had caused the death of God's Son. However, this idea that God has been victorious and that, in Jesus's resurrection, their sins are forgiven? Gladness can't begin to describe how they feel! These early believers know one thing: they must keep meeting to learn more. As they do, it is this gospel joy that brings them closer together around the table and with each other.

The gospel joy that these early believers felt is the same joy God offers us today. We share in the sober reality of our world's condition. Sin has broken our world, and we feel its weight. It has hurt us, as we have hurt others. Jesus was nailed to the cross as judgment for our sin. And yet, he chose this. As judgment fell on his willing shoulders, he extended an invitation made possible through his resurrection: new life. Anyone who accepts this invitation is restored to a relationship with God and welcomed into his family. Gladness doesn't even begin to describe the gospel joy that is waiting for us!

TODAY: Gospel joy is calling your name. Make today the moment you accept Jesus's saving work on the cross and surrender to him as Lord of your life. If you already follow Jesus, thank him for his finished work on the cross. Then celebrate with us by listening to "Finished Work of Christ" by Ada Bible Worship.

For more encouragement, listen to the *Beyond the Weekend Podcast* as the team discusses what it means to grow together—find it wherever you listen to podcasts or watch on YouTube HERE.

Day 4 **Acts 2:42** | **Devotion**

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42

Luke, the author of Acts, chooses his words carefully. As he describes the early church's commitment to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, he uses a word our Bible translates as "devoted." It means to be "obstinately persistent." In other words, their dedication to the practices of Jesus is unyielding. Nothing can interrupt their learning more about Jesus and becoming like him. Nothing will stop their new life together. The only thing that explains this level of commitment is that they fully believe in Jesus's resurrection. Wholly devoted, they reorient their lives around growing in the knowledge and character of their Lord and Savior.

Are we convinced like the early church was? The way they spent their time reveals what they were most devoted to. They gathered daily in the temple courts. The content they consumed was the apostles' teaching.

The people they shared their lives with were others who encouraged them in their faith. If we use the same grid, we must consider how the places, content, and people of our lives speak to where our devotion is. Without diligence, our devotion will be captured by whatever grabs our attention. It could be travel sports or the big game. It could be climbing the ladder at work or the content we view on our phones. We must be persistent in the daily reordering of our lives.

TODAY: An excellent way to diagnose your devotion is to reflect on how you spend your time. Look back over the past week and journal about whether your schedule reflects the disciple you want to be. Then, ask God to help you stay devoted to his way.



Day 5 1 Chronicles 16:1–36 | David's Thanksgiving

This year in Beyond the Weekend, journey through different biblical models of prayer—one each month. November's focus is Thanksgiving: expressing gratitude to God.

Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts. 1 Chronicles 16:8–9

The ark of the covenant makes its long-awaited arrival in Jerusalem, and joyful excitement is palpable (1 Chronicles 15). Israelites dance in the streets as David leads the people of God in collective prayer and praise for all God has done. Israel neglected the ark during Saul's leadership (1 Chronicles 13:3). But now, David has brought it to Jerusalem, where it symbolizes God's presence and reign among his people. In response, David appoints Asaph to lead the people in a song of thanks for God's provision.

David's joyful response to the work of God should also be the rhythm of our lives. Although the default tendency of our fallen hearts is to complain or grumble, God is always deserving of our gratitude. When we slow down enough to recall all that God has done for us, it should lead to our praise and thanks. He has not treated us as our sins deserve but has shown us mercy, grace, and kindness (Psalm 103:10–14). And it was this praise of God and his kindness that David wanted the nations to hear. Similarly, when we develop the habit of remembering and thanking God for all he has done for us, our gratitude should spill over into our conversations with others.

TODAY: Give God thanks for who he is and all that he has done. Take the opportunity this week to tell a close friend or family member about God's faithfulness and the reasons for your thanksgiving.