



www.facebook.com/southredlandbaptist

southredlandbaptist@gmail.com



40 days
of
Prayer
and
Dreaming

WELCOME

40 days of prayer and dreaming is about opening ourselves up to God and letting him do as he pleases both personally, as well as within our greater church family.

Let me give you a few important tips about making this time a really good experience and an enjoyable time.

Firstly , **Believe** that God wants to talk to you and be with you. (Hebrews 11:6—(NLT) And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.)

Secondly get **comfortable** before you start praying. Find a place or time where you can spend quality time with God.

Thirdly be **prepared** - have a pen a paper with you in case God speaks to you or shows you a vision.

Fourthly do not let **sin** get in the way. You are already forgiven.

These things will help you to get the most out of this time. Whilst our focus is outwardly about seeking God for church direction, the underpinning concept is for a devotional lifestyle to also be established, and your relationship to get deeper into God. This study will assist with this.

God Bless as you seek our amazing God together!

Pastors Sam & Christine Bartlett

NOTES

NOTES

Week 1

Dream

like

Joseph

Trusting the church family with your heart

Read Genesis 37 and think through these questions.

Have you reached out to other Christians and had them let you down?

Do you have trust issues with your fellow church family?

Do you worry that your dreams are not worth mentioning?

Maybe it might be time to let these things go to God and seek him first. People will let you down and sharing our thoughts and dreams makes us vulnerable. Yet this strength can often be rewarded but encouragement, if you take the risk.

Spend some time seeking God about helping move on from the past and having the courage to share your dreams with others.

Conclusion

I hope you have found this 40 days of prayer and dreaming a worth while time. As I said at the beginning it's aim has been to not only assist our church development, but also to help you to grow deeper in you connection with God.

Let me leave you with a heartfelt prayer from me to God for you.

May you, our Lord and God, help us to seek to live our lives totally devoted to you. Help us remove the obstacles that block us from being completely sold out for you, and give us the strength and desire to serve you in our everyday lives.

Amen

God Bless you

Pastors Sam & Christine Bartlett

Finally

This is the last of the devotional studies for this program. I want to leave you with one last thought. Who is God to you? We know how God sees us, but what is your relationship like with God. I am hoping that as you have worked through this time with us you have grown deeper in your relationship with him. As it was said at the beginning, we want this time to be a great experience for your personal relationship with God.

Today it's just you and God. No prayer points just what's on your heart.

Enjoy your time with Jesus.

Expecting the unexpected

Who would have thought that Joseph's dreams would come true. He was sold into slavery, then thrown into prison, and left for years with no possible hope of a future. Yet God then used Joseph to save a country. This would have been so unexpected. As we looked through the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11 we see so many heroes who became amazing soldiers for God because they refused to accept the status quo, but rather knew the immensity of their God. Do you expect the unexpected in your life?

Might be time to seek God with an open heart and not limit him to your view of your circumstances.

Spend some time worshiping our God, stating how amazing he is, then spend some time listening to him. You'd be surprised what starts to pop into your mind and your heart. He wants to talk to you about amazing things if you will give him the time. Feel free to write down or draw anything God is showing you.

Forgiveness

One of the greatest parts of the story is how Joseph shows forgiveness to his brothers who had betrayed him. This is understandably one of the greatest issues in trusting people with your heart. Sometimes the very person who has hurt you is still in your church family. A lack of forgiveness is a sin. Jesus says in Luke 17 *“If another believer sins, rebuke that person; then if there is repentance, forgive. Even if that person wrongs you seven times a day and each time turns again and asks forgiveness, you must forgive.”* The apostles said to the Lord, *“Show us how to increase our faith.”* This is an issue of faith and one we need to work on often.

Seek God for people who you need to show forgiveness too. Ask God to forgive you for sinning. Then ask him to help you to have greater faith so you can forgive them.

Spirit of Wisdom

Today's devotional material comes from <http://thisistoday.com/archives/gods-desire-for-me-2011-09-03/> I hope it speaks to you.

Ephesians 1:17

I keep asking that ... God ... may give you the Spirit of wisdom ... so that you may know him better.

Growing in wisdom is about cultivating a character that is Christlike. If we want that wisdom, then the words of Ephesians 1 are a great discovery and encouragement.

What is striking about these verses is how they tell us we don't have to figure this all out on our own. It's not a project for which God gives us a textbook and tests us with a final exam at the end of life. God is not a “hands off” teacher.

In Ephesians 1 Paul explains that he prays for people to have wisdom, and he asks God to be involved in the process—because that is what God promises. Paul goes on to mention “the Spirit of wisdom,” and he isn't asking only for the Spirit to help us; Paul asks that the Spirit of wisdom be given to us.

Why? So that we may know God better.

Suddenly this matter of gaining wisdom is not just about learning some Christian way of living. It is about an interactive God who wants to live in us and be part of our faith growth by becoming part of us.

We can simplify all that to this: God wants us to have wisdom. So we can make this prayer our own, saying, “I want to have the Spirit of wisdom and revelation because I want to know God better.”

Spiritual vs Practical gifting's

A friend of mine is an accountant for a major company. He was extremely gifted as the church treasurer in his church. One day he went to his pastor because he loved Children's ministry and also had a strong mission interest. After a period of transition he stepped down from church treasurer and became a Sunday school teacher. Within 2 years he was serving with SIM overseas in a hospital to do their accounts. This is a perfect example of a person's practical gifting's at times lining up with their spiritual call, and at other times not. Just because you're a plumber does not mean you need to help the elderly with plumbing. Maybe you want to preach, or share the gospel with youth. When doing the gifting's test's its important to do them with a spirit lead heart, and not just head decisions.

Seek God and think through your gifting's test, or place you are serving. Is it where God wants you?

A legacy that follows.

What legacy are we going to leave behind. If your like me, I want to take as many people to heaven with me Yet I also want people to live a life on earth that is fruitful. Joseph's life was very fruitful. He saved a nation, his own people, and created a future for a race of Jews. All because he was obedient no matter what. At South Redland Baptist, we want to be a church that creates a future hope for the generations to come.

Please join with me in putting our request to God for a church that will serve him all it's days. Also ask him to give us wisdom as we look at how to place those underlying structures in place to achieve this goal.

Week 2
Gods overall
desire for
Redland Bay

Potential

When I first started in ministry I was not what many people would think of as a person God could use. In some ways the people were correct, yet in another way God saw something that not many people saw. I had potential. A word that is often looked down upon, yet is the greatest compliment.

People don't like being on a journey of growth in a society where we want to be the boss in the first week. Yet it took me 13 years of ministry to start Gods call in my life and I am still growing into the person that he wants me to be. I still have potential to be something more for God, and so do you.

No matter where you are in your faith journey, God has a ministry based call on your life. Do you know what that is? Do you know how he has gifted you to serve him? If you don't know I can help you to find your sweet spot in serving God. If you do know, are you functioning in that area?

Set aside some time to seek God regarding the questions raised from this devotion.

Week 6

Gods desire for me

God chooses the outcomes

The king's heart is like a stream of water directed by the Lord; he guides it wherever he pleases. (Proverbs 21:1).

This week we are looking at God's plan for Redland Bay. This thinking helps us to consider the direction that we as a church will minister in our community. Thinking along lines of demographics, future development, over riding culture and geographical positioning can help us to think through the way our church might function. Yet the main thing behind all this thinking is; **What does God want?** Without this thought in mind we are simple running a business and not a church. In what way does God want us to move in our area? Who does he want us to focus our direction towards? How does he want us to serve our community and each other? What does he want our church to look like? Ultimately it is God who is going to make a difference! We are just his tools for the job.

We need to make sure that our heart is open to the leading of God. As fluid as a river that is guided by the Holy Spirit.

Spend some time today writing down all your thoughts you can about what God might want to do in Redland Bay. Then put it aside and sit quietly in his presence. Either with some worship music playing or in silence. Give God a chance to speak to you without your own thoughts blocking his voice. At the end of the week, pick up your piece of paper and see if God highlights anything to you. If so email me :)

God Bless!!

My God is so BIG, so STRONG and so MIGHTY....

...there's nothing my God can not do!!! What a great kids song. Here is another, He has the whole world in his hands, or I'm to young to fight in the infantry....but I'm in the Lords army!

These songs many of us sang as children, and yet we forget these very real truths in our lives as adults. Our God is so big, he is the creator of the entire universe, exist outside of time has the whole world in the palm of his hands, and yet has chosen us to relate with!!! C'mon seriously????? YES!!! God chooses us even though he is big. But this does not make him small and we can't let our thinking be tainted in that way.

Today is about growing our thinking so that we dream about what God can do with our church, whilst remembering how indescribable he is.

However you want to do it spend time praising God today.

Forward - Discipleship.

In my few years in pastoring I have noticed a change from a focus on structured education of leaders, to a return to an apprentice style model. It has been noticed that people who are simple taught facts about something, lack the practical application that is needed to see it come to fruition. This is very much the case in churches. Matthew 28:9 say; *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations..."* This word disciples in Greek means both to be a disciple and also make disciples. It is a give and take word within this scripture. This emphasises the importance of Christians being both a mentor to others, plus learning from others. This is from a leadership level through to a general ministry level. Each of us should be learning and growing with someone else, whilst also helping someone who is not as far in their faith journey as us.

Spend some time with God asking him if he has someone he wants you to be accountable to and to mentor. This could be a defining moment in your faith. I hope so.

Forward - Changes in Culture

	Builders (born pre-1945)	Baby boomers (1945-65)	New generation (1966+)
Value	Faithful	Productive	Involved
First commitment	Organisation	Ministry	People
Role of leader	Stability & direction	Produce growth	Consult/understand
Working with others	Prefer alone	See need for team	Only work in team
Key question	Is it true?	Does it work?	How does it feel?
What counts	Experience	Competence	Involvement
Facing disagreement	Avoid, direct	Be pragmatic	Consult, listen

This table is from an article written By John Sweetman, the Principle of Malyon college. It's aim was to highlight that leadership development and peoples expectations are changing in not only how they see church, but also what they look for in their church leaders. I thought it would be a good thing to look over and pray through. The full article is found at <http://malyonleadership.org/the-changing-face-of-leadership-john-sweetman/>

Please spend some time thinking on this and asking God if it means anything for our church.

Meeting the Mountain Mover

This devotion has been taken from a section in Bill Hybels devotional book called *"Prayer; Too busy not to pray"*(1994).

Meeting the Mountain-Mover

Acts 4:23-31

According to the Bible, believers can be confident that their prayers will be answered. Our prayers are more than wishes, hopes or feeble aspirations—but only if we pray with believing, faith-filled hearts. That is the kind of prayer that moves mountains.

How do you pray a prayer so filled with faith that it can move a mountain? By shifting the focus from the size of your mountain to the sufficiency of the mountain-mover, and by stepping forward in obedience. As you walk with God, your faith will grow, your confidence will increase and your prayer will have power.

I challenge you to shift the focus of your prayer. Don't spend a lot of time describing your mountain to the Lord. He knows what it is. Instead, focus your attention on the mountain-mover—his glory, power and faithfulness. Then start walking in faith, following his leading, and watch that mountain step aside.

Timing is so important

2Peter 3:8-10

But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment.

Is it possible that Redland Bay could become a bible belt with most people living here being Christian? The answer is both yes and no. Yes because history is still to see what God will do with a people sold out to him alone, and no because of the same reason. People have a tendency to place everything in front of their relationship with God. It is often done out of a desire to please God, but even our acts of service are sometimes actions (works) rather than service (faith). God's wants our whole heart.

Yet our God is amazingly patient. As a thousand years is as a day to him. He is waiting for more people to meet with him and be his children.

Imagine what it would be like if our church was absolutely sold out for our God. Can you imagine the impact this would have on the Redland Bay community? Do you want to be a part of that? Let these questions direct your time with God today.

Outward - Evangelism Option 2

Note - It will be clear what my bias is and I am sorry for this, but please seek God for your own thoughts.

Bill Hybels - Just Walk Across The Room

This idea aims to be the Jesus to people who do not know him. It is about praying for specific people in our lives, and making new friends who do not know Jesus ...yet. It is not about evangelism in words only, but about the combination of words and actions and love. It encourages people to walk across the room and make a friend with a non Christian. Not to get them saved (although this is also the aim), but to be their friend.

Strengths

- ◆ You don't have to be an extraverted evangelist to do this.
- ◆ It focusses on God love and our need to be salt and light in our community.
- ◆ Anyone in the church can do it.

Weaknesses

- ◆ Its success in numbers of conversions is hard to acquire as it is a long process.
- ◆ People can use it as an excuse not to share their faith at all.
- ◆ Involves Christians being passionate about God in their everyday lives (a negative because of the growing number of nominal, half hearted Christians in churches)

Outward - Evangelism Option 1

NOTE - Whilst these next two are practical, I hope they create the question of sharing your faith in general as well.

Kirk Cameron - The Way Of The Master

This idea aims to ask people if they are good enough to go to heaven. It then utilises the 10 commandment as a means of highlighting that all people have failed because we all make mistakes. Therefore because we have failed we are not good enough to go to heaven. Jesus is the only way to heaven for us. It is a direct form of evangelism that uses sin as the pointer towards Jesus being our saviour.

Strengths

- ◆ People quickly see that Jesus is the answer.
- ◆ It is direct and so see's results instantly as people go from no knowledge to accepting Jesus.
- ◆ In some cultures, where people are very direct, it has had success.

Weaknesses

- ◆ Uses the Old Testament commandments and not the Gospel of Good news.
- ◆ Is confrontational and can be seen as irrelevant in our current culture.
- ◆ Uses sin/revenge and not love/forgiveness as a means of outlining the character of God

Week 3
Gods
bigger picture
for SRB

What is church? - Part A

Ekklesia is the Greek word that is usually translated as church. Yet this is not totally accurate. It has a meaning that is more assembly or congregation of people. It is not the building but rather the group of people. In Acts 20:28 it states; *“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock (**poimnion**) of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church (**Ekklesisa**) of God, which he bought with his own blood.”* It is the word *poimnion* that makes it about a group of Christians.

1Thesalonians 1:1 Has Paul writing to the church (Ekklesia) of the Thessalonians. It was a general letter not a specific written to a building or individual church group. Also in 1 Timothy 3 when Paul is telling Timothy how to establish church leadership, he uses the general term Congregation “...you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household (*oikos*), which is the church (Ekklesia) of the living God...”(1 Tim3:15). It is the word *oikos* that highlights the collection of people in one place.

So why is all this important when looking at the bigger picture. It helps us to look at our church gathering in the correct mindset. Not as a building but as a people group, gathered together for God's purpose.

Today lets seek God about how this might impact our thinking. Does he tell you anything. If so I'd love to hear it. Shoot me an email if it's for the church, or if its for you store it in your heart.

Week 5
What does
Outward (evangelism),
Forward (discipleship)
look like?

Inward - Culture

As a church the culture we create is of extreme importance. I believe God also sees Culture as important. One of the inferred teachings of scripture (from my reading) is that when God is starting something new, he enforces it more than further down the track. This is seen in the Old Testament after the Law was given. In Exodus 32, 300 Israelites are killed for worshipping a golden calf right after God had told them how to live. Yet later this punishment of idolatry was much less. This is also seen in Acts 5 with Ananias and Sapphira. Here we see them test God by lying and were killed instantly. The Culture God was creating at that time, was community, and they were going for pride and prestige instead.

As a church we are starting out and the culture we create is really important. Many of us have come to this church because we felt other churches were un-inviting, or not inclusive. We must not become like that. Do you love other people?

We need to seek God and ask him to help us to think of others before ourselves and share his love through our own church family.

What is church? - Part B

The biblical view of Church is varied. If we start in the beginning, Adam and Eve did church by simply spending time with God each evening. Abraham simply lived his life sold out for God. After the Law an established system was set up with Priests. The Early New Testament church met daily in what we would call a commune, each selling their belongings to support the others. Then they moved to a house church model, still meeting daily in some cases.

The system or structure seems to be of less importance to God than the act itself. Hebrews 10:25 clearly outlines the importance of meeting together on a regular basis and this has been modelled in the early church system. 1 Corinthians 14 gives details that there should be singing and teaching, but also tongues, prophecy and direct revelation from God. Our modern churches have taken some of this and ignored the rest.

Ultimately, we need to be open to do church how God wants us to. As times change so does church. This is not something to be scared of but rather embraced as we move within our community and the needs of the upcoming generations.

Please seek God to see how he is leading our church in structures and systems.

Large group vs small group?

NCLS is an excellent survey group that run surveys of churches for statistics and trends information. They also outline ways to be a healthy church and can help churches see their strengths and weaknesses. Below is a quote from their website (<http://www.ncls.org.au/default.aspx?sitemapid=853>)

Conclusions

While the worldwide statistics tend to favour small church as generally more healthy than large church, Australian statistics suggest that large churches are marginally healthier. I don't have space to tackle possible reasons for this divergence of research. Some combination of large (through networking) and small (through small groups) church is probably the best, but failing that, you need to decide what size church best matches your gifts and vision. There is no need for your church to grow large to be healthy and effective.

What best matches our gifts and vision? Where do you want to see SRB? What do you feel God is telling us as a church to head towards? Let's continue to wait on God, with a pen handy, to outline some dreams that pop into our hearts.

Inward - Commandment

John 13:34-35

'A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.'

Loving one another in a church setting is not optional. It is a command. It is also with the premise of intensity equal to that of Jesus' love for us. Can you love someone and not like them. NO! This is a misconception thrown around as an excuse to not show tolerance and acceptance of others. This is also one of the reasons the church is seen as hypocritical. Jesus not only showed intense love for his disciples, but he washed Judas' feet knowing he would betray him (John 13). This act of love and sacrifice is the thing needed to grow a truly God centred church.

Today is about you and God. Do you need to repent for some attitudes?

Upward - Revelation and Response

Psalm 147:3-5

He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds.

He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name.

Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.

Psalm 116

I love the Lord, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy

One of the parts of worship that is often forgotten is that it is made up of revelation and response. By this I mean some songs are about the character of God, whilst others are our response to the revelation about who God is. Some people say that the songs that are about us loving God are not worship, but that is response. Others say that story songs are not worship, but that is revelation. We have already looked at how worship is not just about music so today we are going to right our own worship.

Join with me as we right down as much revelation as we can about God, and then what our response is. This is a personal activity so only share it if you really want to.

Who am I?

Individually this is a question we have all asked at different times in our lives. What are the things I value? What do I want to become? Where will I place my time? What are my priorities? etc... In some ways the organism of the church is no different. Because it is growing and changing and impacting other peoples lives, it has similar attributes to us. So what does our church want to become, place its time, have its values and priorities? What do we want SRB to be known as in the community. When others talk about us, what do we want them to say? The early Church in Acts 4 were known as generous, caring, supportive, evangelistic, miraculous.

Spend some time getting into a place with God and think on the above questions. Do other scriptures and examples come to your mind?

Upward - Romans 12:1-2

Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.

The worship mentioned in the above verse is the same word used for the Old Testament practice of worship. It is also the word used for the commandment to worship the Lord God only. Yet this is talking about lifestyle and not singing.

When we think of worship we think of singing. Whilst this is a form of worship, it is not the only genre. The psalms are songs of worship and the Levites worshiped God with instruments and song. Therefore this is obviously ok with God. But it is not the solitary way of worship.

Spend some time thinking on this and talking to God about it. Any thoughts I am happy to talk to you about them.

Week 4
What does
Upward (worship),
Inward (loving each other)
look like?