

AUDIENCE WITH GOD

24 – Hour prayer Guide for December 4th

(0-5 minutes) REACHING OUT (*Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. Romans 15:7*)

During this special time of the year we will see many people enter our church that we don't normally see. It is our privilege and responsibility to welcome them and introduce them to the Savior whom we celebrate. How do we do this? - by praying for others before they even walk through our door. Pray that God would touch them through you.

- † Those who do not frequent throughout the year. May this be a time when they are touched and changed by the message of a Savior.
- † Allow God to lead you to friends and family who don't yet know Jesus so that you can invite them to experience the joy of the Advent and Christmas season at one of our many worship opportunities in December.

(6-10 minutes) MAKING OUR WORSHIP MEANINGFUL (*How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord, of hosts! My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the Lord. Psalm 84:1-2*)

God loves to hear from His children. Not just on Sunday, not just in song, not just in times of despair, but everyday, through the way we live our lives. As we pray to experience a life of worship, be mindful that God is worthy of our praise and that the greatest praise of all is the living out of our faith.

- † SNL/Dec 6 - Children's Christmas Program, *Sing a Song of Christmas*.
- † Advent sermon series springing from Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.
- † Sunday 12/14 the Annual Christmas Cantata – *Start at the Manger. . . Then go to the Cross* – presented at all services.
- † Pray that our Pastors and Worship Leaders would be energized and remain healthy for the task of proclaiming the Good News during this extremely busy and sometimes chaotic time of year.

(11-15 minutes) OUR FAITH EXPERIENCE: (*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Acts 2:42*)

Often times we focus on others and neglect our own faith grown. God intends for our relationship with him to be personal and intimate. What am I doing to cultivate a relationship with God? It's more than 'give me this' and 'I need that' – it's about what you're doing right now - communicating with the one who loved us enough to have his own Son become like us in order that we would be redeemed. As we pray; 'Lord, make me what you want me to be' – be ready - for He will do it.

- † Really celebrate the meaning of this season. It's not just the birth of a baby, it's the birth of our Savior
- † Experience the real meaning of Immanuel – God with us (Matthew 1:23)
- † How is your faith walk different today than it was 12 months ago? Can you see significant growth?
- † Make a commitment in the new year to be a part of an on going study of the scriptures?

(16-20 minutes)SERVING OTHERS (*Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.* Matthew 25:40)

We live out our faith by serving others. It's not always about us – but about being Christ's hands of mercy to those in need. There are many who go to bed hungry and sleep without cover. This time of year can also be very difficult for those who have been hurt or are grieving the loss of someone dear. Many people need to be made aware that there is a God who is always available to be their comfort and healer. In praying for the hurting, the grieving, and the displaced, seek out how God would have you represent Him to them. Remember: God may desire to use you to answer to your own prayer. Pray for God's purpose to be accomplished in the following ministries:

- † Bell ringing for The Salvation Army
- † Holiday Giving Tree for the Mental Health Association
- † Christmas Caroling
- † Pray for: (1) those for whom life has become difficult and at times unbearable.
(2) the current Stephen Ministers, and those considering serving.
- † Shut in ministry
- † God's comfort and presence to be made known to those experiencing long term illnesses as well as their care givers.
- † Sunday, 12/21 - Longest Night Service. Pray that those with grief and loss issues during the holidays would find the peace of Christ through this worship experience.

(21-25 minutes)A GIVING HEART (*You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity.* II Corinthians 9:11)

The giving, of our time, talents, and treasure, is an expression of our gratitude for all God has done in our lives. Giving generously takes earning, saving, and praying about how we will give, especially at this time. During the Christmas season we are made aware of many in need who are without the very basic of necessities. Often when we become aware of issues, God is waking us up to a situation to which we can often be the answer. Ask God for direction as to how to reach out to others. Christmas is really not a time for gathering and hoarding – it is the time for giving. Pray about:

- † Giving to specific missions supported by the Portage UMC
- † Giving someone a gift anonymously – the satisfaction you will receive is enormous
- † Managing personal finances, remembering the message of John Wesley: *Earn all you can, Save all you can, Give all you can.*

(26-30 minutes) During the final moments of your Audience with God recognize that his all abiding presence is with you right now and will be with you after you say Amen. Enjoy living in His presence.

Conclude this time of communion with the following prayer of John Wesley:

I give you my will. I want not to will on my own. Whatever you will, I want to will also. I want to will your glory in all things, just as you do, and make that the ultimate end of whatever I do. I want to say with the psalmist, "Whom do I have in heaven but you? I do not desire anyone on earth but you." Help me to delight when doing your will, and rejoice in allowing you to help me do it. Whatever threatens me, let me say, "The Lord acts in this; let him do what seems good to him". In whatever happens, let me give thanks because he sends his will concerning me. Amen

"...give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

(I Thessalonians 5:18)