

## **ARBC VISION 2023 – 40 DAYS OF PRAYER**

Dear Ashley River Family,

Using the Lord's Prayer as our model, we will walk through these next 40 days asking God to show us His will for our church. Our hearts joined in prayer over the next 40 days will help draw us closer to Him, closer to each other, and closer to the work He has planned for us to do. My prayer is that each of us will commit to this crucial spiritual discipline as we seek to call on God for His guidance and direction. Blessings to you as we embark on this journey – 40 Days of Prayer!

### **Day 1 – April 26 – *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.***

Prayer is our invitation to commune with God Himself and in its purest form, begins as worship simply by addressing Our Father in heaven. We acknowledge His place in the world and our lives. We honor His name and His power. The spoken words to a loving Heavenly Father are a testament to His authority and divinity. Our prayers are futile if they are directed toward any other entity. We worship our Father when we acknowledge His rightful place on the throne, and we express our faith in a sovereign God when we make known our requests. To pray is to worship.

*Spend time with God in prayer, reflecting on Him as your Father in heaven.*

### **Day 2 – April 27 – THE NAME OF GOD (PROVERBS 18:10)**

Jesus is our strong tower, protector, refuge, strength, and our source of peace and safety. This is something we cannot find in anything or anywhere from the world. In these past few years, our family of faith has faced "uncertain times," and that may have been troubling for many of us. Uncertain times can cause all sorts of emotions because it means we might not have walked that road before or cannot predict what is happening. However, if we look to the truth found in Proverbs 18:10, we see that God has given us the promise that in these very times, He is our strong tower and the One we should be running towards in the midst of whatever circumstances we face.

Security can't be found in circumstances. Circumstances can change. They can take us by surprise. But God, our fortress, our strong tower, never changes, and nothing ever catches Him by surprise. No other person, and nothing else on this earth, can bring us the peace and safety that He can...and does...and will. So, as we walk toward our future Vision, we can be certain of this: Our help comes from the Lord our God. So let's run to Him and stand firm in Him and live in the certainty of His love and provision for us.

*Spend time with God in prayer, reflecting on His Names:*

Elohim = All-Powerful Creator  
El Chayim = The Living God  
El Elyon = God Most High  
El Kanna = God is Jealous  
El Roi = God Who Sees  
El Shaddai: All-Sufficient One, Almighty  
Jehovah Jireh = God Provides  
Jehovah Nissi = God, our Banner  
Jehovah Ro'I = God the Shepherd  
Jehovah Shalom = God is Peace  
Yahweh = "I AM," Self-Existent One  
Abba = Father

### **Day 3 – April 28 – HE IS HOLY (EXODUS 15:11)**

The holiness of God appears in all our new beginnings – the one that began when He found us at the end of ourselves; the one that began when we learned to trust Him to take the lead; the painful ones and the joyful ones alike. The holy, holy, holy God was there. Because we are His and because He is holy, we are able to begin again.

He is matchless in perfection. He is able to do abundantly more than we can imagine. This God, who knows the beginning and end of all creation, radiates holiness. Yet here He is, enveloping us. He sits beside our spouses at the same time He watches over our children. He walks with our mothers just as He rejoices with our grandparents in eternity. Can you comprehend it? His holiness surrounds us daily. His holy mercy greets us in the morning with the warmth of the sun. His holy providence guides us as we work, study, and accomplish mundane day-to-day tasks. His holy love pierces through our fears as we lay down to sleep.

As we anticipate the new beginning He is writing for our church, we can trust in His ever-faithful hand on our lives. We can choose to praise Him with a victory song in the here and now; knowing full well that there is no one like our God: "Who among the gods is like you, Lord? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders (Ex.15:11).

*Spend time with God in prayer, reflecting on His holiness.*

### **Day 4 – April 29 – HE IS SOVEREIGN (DANIEL 2:20-22)**

The God who creates all things with a word, who splits the seas, who orchestrates the universe, who knows each star by name, sees you. The God who clothes the lilies, who feeds the birds, who knows the number of hairs on our head, knows your name. The God who commands the stormy seas to be

still, who brings life from a barren womb, who fells fortress walls with sounds of trumpets, hears your cry and sees your pain.

This same God, our Father in heaven, invites our church into His presence, into His very throne room. Through Jesus, the Great "I AM" has restored this safe place of intimate fellowship, a two-way sacred conversation. The holy, almighty, all-powerful, strong, most high God beckons us to "Come, and abide." Mindful of our unworthiness yet drawn by His grace-filled promise of love, we enter, always welcome. We may boldly draw near as we open our hearts to His listening ear. We listen in turn, in unhindered trust and surrender. He whispers, "Shalom." We fall into His embrace in thankfulness and worship.

*Spend time with God in prayer, reflecting on His sovereignty.*

#### **Day 5 – April 30 – HE IS BEAUTY (PSALM 27:4)**

Change is hard. Transitions are hard. Life is hard. We have had to navigate sudden change this last year but He has carried us through the process of mourning to a place of healing. God brought us together and has elevated us to a new view of His goodness and faithfulness. These small shifts in our lives of eternity remind us of the very real fact that we are human, and we are limited – limited to fear, to anxiety, and we are vulnerable to faithlessness.

In one of King David's darkest moments, he pens this simple yet profound thought – that at the end of our unraveling, there is only one thing worth asking in prayer, one thing that will allow us to throw away our laundry list of prayer requests, and that is to simply be in the presence of our Father.

In this verse, the beauty of the Lord is so much more than something to behold with our eyes, but it is the very power that will allow us to find our footing when the world falls out from underneath our feet. Within the beauty of the Lord lies the authority to destroy and to establish, and King David reminds us of this in these simple lines of text: There is nothing too out of control that cannot be brought into control with one glimpse of heaven.

*Spend time with God in prayer, reflecting on His Beauty.*

#### **DAY 6 – May 1 – HE RULES IN HEAVEN (COLOSSIANS 1:16-17)**

Anyone who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder to those who diligently seek Him (Heb.11:6). These words are so profound that we must wonder if we truly understand the magnitude of the statement. Many people pray but are unaware of the One to whom they are praying. However, when we Christians, we do so with the assurance that we are praying to the one true God. He is the very Creator of all that exists in both the physical and spiritual worlds. He has no beginning and no end. He has always existed and will always exist forever. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, ever-present, and sovereign over all the earth.

And within His infinite power lies His infinite love for us. This love is so great that He sent His only begotten Son to die for our salvation even though we have done nothing to deserve it. We pray to this loving God. We trust that because He loves us, He also hears us. He cares about every detail of our lives and desires an intimate relationship with us.

Oh, what a joy it is that we can come to such a holy God in prayer knowing that He may be reigning in heaven, but He is also reigning in our lives!

*Spend time with God in prayer, reflecting on His Love and Majesty.*

### **Day 7 – May 2 – GOD IS LOVE (1 JOHN 3:1; 4:8, 16)**

God is love. May we all praise Him for who He is, what He has done, what He is doing, and what He will do through our local body of believers called Ashley River Baptist Church. May we be a Christian family that loves the Lord our God with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and love our neighbors as ourselves. Jesus said, “Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. May we all demonstrate this sacrificial love toward our great God and Savior and toward everyone we encounter, in our families, our church, and our community.

Let us reflect on God’s great love for us and may He reveal to us our value as His children. He created us in His image and He wants us to bear that image to His creation. May we honor Him as we serve as His representatives on earth, in every facet of our lives.

*Spend time with God in prayer, reflecting on His Fatherly Love.*