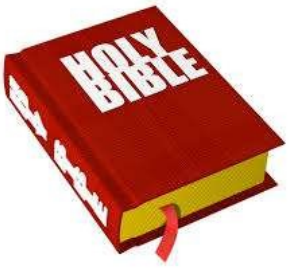


Ness Bank Church Bible Readings and Prayer Prompts for Winter 2026/27



This mini-booklet is designed for you to pull out of the church newsletter and keep, so that you can use it in the coming weeks to assist you in bible reading and in prayer.

There's nothing like the written word of God for showing you the way to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Every part of scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another – showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God's way. Through the word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us.

(2 Timothy 3.15-17, the Message paraphrase)

'Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace.

The world is full of so-called prayer warriors who are prayer-ignorant. They're full of formulas and programmes and advice, peddling techniques for getting what you want from God. Don't fall for that nonsense. This is your Father you are dealing with, and he knows better than you what you need.

With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply. Like this:

Our Father in heaven, reveal who you are, set the world right; do what's best – as above, so below. Keep us alive with three square meals. Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others. Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil. You're in charge: You can do anything You want! You're ablaze in beauty!

(Matthew 6.6-13, the Message paraphrase)

December 2026

1st Matthew 23:13-24
2nd Matthew 23:25-36
3rd Matthew 23:37-24:2
4th Matthew 24:3-14
5th Matthew 24:15-25

6th Psalm 115
7th Matthew 24:26-35
8th Matthew 24:36-44
9th Matthew 24:45-51
10th Matthew 25:1-13
11th Matthew 25:14-30
12th Matthew 25:31-46

13th Psalm 116
14th Malachi 1:1-5
15th Malachi 1:6-14
16th Malachi 2:17-3:5
17th Malachi 3: 6-12
18th Malachi 3:13-18
19th Malachi 4:1-6

20th Psalm 117
21st Luke 1:1-25
22nd Luke 1:26-38
23rd Luke 1:39-56
24th Luke 1:57-80
25th Luke 2:1-21
26th Luke 2:22-40

27th Isaiah 60:1-6
28th Luke 2:41-52
29th Luke 3:1-6
30th Luke 3:7-20
31st Luke 3:21-38

Make the book live to me, O Lord, Show me Yourself within Your word,
Show me myself, and show me my Saviour, And make the book live to me.
(H.Pope, 1879-1967)

January 2027

1st Ecclesiastes 1:1-18
2nd Ecclesiastes 2:1-26

3rd Psalm 119:1-24
4th Ecclesiastes 3:1-22
5th Ecclesiastes 5:1-20
6th Ecclesiastes 9:1-12
7th Ecclesiastes 9:13-10:15
8th Ecclesiastes 11:1-10
9th Ecclesiastes 12:1-14

10th Psalm 119:25-48
11th Luke 4:1-13
12th Luke 4:14-21
13th Luke 4:22:30
14th Luke 4:31-37
15th Luke 5:17-26
16th Luke 5:27-39

17th Psalm 119:49-72
18th Luke 6:1-11
19th Luke 6:12-16
20th Luke 6:17-26
21st Luke 6:27-35
22nd Luke 6:37-42
23rd Luke 6:43-49

24th Psalm 119:73-96
25th Deuteronomy 1:1-16
26th Deuteronomy 1:19-40
27th Deuteronomy 4:1-14,32-40
28th Deuteronomy 5:1-22
29th Deuteronomy 6:1-25
30th Deuteronomy 7:1-11

31st Psalm 119:97-112

These daily readings are a programme designed by Scripture Union. SU publishes explanatory notes to accompany the readings – called Daily Bread – or you can sign up to the Word Live service to receive the notes and readings online each day at:- www.scriptureunion.org.uk

February 2027

1st 1 Peter 1:1-12
2nd 1 Peter 1:13-21
3rd 1 Peter 1:22-2:3
4th 1 Peter 2:4-10
5th 1 Peter 2:11-17
6th 1 Peter 2:18-25

7th Psalm 119:113-128
8th 1 Peter 3:1-7
9th 1 Peter 3:8-22
10th 1 Peter 4:1-11
11th 1 Peter 4:12-19
12th 1 Peter 5:1-7
13th 1 Peter 5:8-14

14th Psalm 119:153-176
15th Lamentations 1:1-22
16th Lamentations 2:1-22
17th Lamentations 3:1-33
18th Lamentations 3:34-66
19th Lamentations 4:1-22
20th Lamentations 5:1-22

21st Psalm 119:153-176
22nd Revelation 1:1-8
23rd Revelation 1:9-20
24th Revelation 2:1-11
25th Revelation 2:12-29
26th Revelation 3:1-13
27th Revelation 3:14-22

28th Psalm 120

There are other sources for bible reading programmes, such as the Lectio 365 app, which takes users through readings, prayers and prompts for meditation each day.

Praying for ourselves, our community, our world – and for God's kingdom to come!

O Thou the reflection of whose transcendent glory did once appear unbroken in the face of Jesus Christ, give me today a heart like His – a brave heart, a true heart, a tender heart, a heart with great room in it, a heart fixed on Thyself; for His name's sake.
Amen.
(John Baillie: A diary of private prayer, OUP London, 1972)

These headings and suggestions are to help you pray for our church, our family, our world, and above all, to pray that God will build his kingdom. Please use them in any way that suits.

O God of Bethel! by whose hand thy people still are fed;
Who through this weary pilgrimage hast all our fathers led:

You may well recognise these words as they are the opening verse of a paraphrase of words from the book of Genesis 28. We have been singing them in Scotland like this since 1781, and although the language is a little stilted and dated, yet the truth which they convey is unchanging. Praying through familiar hymns can be a very helpful way of focusing our thoughts and hearts, the words come easily, but we can take time to make them personal.
This opening verse is an invitation to remember God's faithfulness to his people in the past, and to affirm our trust in his continued presence in and provision for our own lives. We proclaim our connection with previous generations, and affirm our complete dependence on God in our own turn. He has promised, and he will not fail. As we come in prayer, we recall God's faithfulness in our own lives, and give thanks.

Our vows, our prayers we now present before thy throne of grace:
God of our fathers! be the God of their succeeding race.

We come because we trust that God is present, and has plans and purposes for us in building his kingdom. This verse reminds us that we have free access to God – to the creator and sustainer of all things, the only true and holy one, the all-powerful who will one day make all things new – this is the one who welcomes us into his presence. What a privilege and a relief it is to come as beloved children to share all our joys and sorrows, our problems and our celebrations with our loving Father. Come wearily, come eagerly, come in sorrow or in joy – only come!

Through each perplexing path of life our wandering footsteps guide;
Give us each day our daily bread, and raiment fit provide.

I think we can all relate to that phrase, "each perplexing path" as we journey through life, often feeling buffeted by circumstances and the decisions and actions of other people. The words of this verse are an invitation to reflect on how the people of Israel wandered in the desert, complaining, rebelling, suffering and yet receiving God's provision and finally arriving at the destination which was promised. We can live in humble trust that our loving God knows where we are going, and that as we live each day for and with him, he will bear with us and keep us close to himself. The journey may go down unexpected paths, but we are never alone, and never without the guiding of God – through his word, through the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. We are encouraged to pray for today's rations of strength, patience, faith, hope and perseverance, and courage to trust our guide even though we may fear the path down which he is leading us.

O spread thy covering wings around, till all our wanderings cease,
And at our Father's loved abode our souls arrive in peace.

As followers of Jesus, we believe that we are already safely at home with him and beyond the power of sin and death to harm us – nothing can take us from our Father's side now that Jesus has died for us. But, we also know that until the glorious day of God's making all things new, we will live in a world and in bodies which are bearing the consequences of sin, with death a present reality and suffering and loss inextricably mixed with joy and blessings. And so we pray for God's protection of our minds, our hearts and our bodies – so that we might walk by faith and bear the trials of this world as those who know that there is so much more to come! Whatever life may hold for us, we can pray for this covering, this sheltering from God – because to know his presence with us is like a shield protecting us from doubt, despair, hopelessness and fear. Nothing that happens to us can separate us from God's love for us in Jesus, and in that lies our ultimate peace.

Such blessings from thy gracious hand our humble prayers implore;
And thou shalt be our chosen God and portion evermore.

We ask in the same way that Jesus encouraged us to ask; we ask like children coming to a loving Father who delights to hear and respond to our requests, but who also knows so much better than we do just what is best.
So we close our prayers with a request to our Father to fulfil his plans for us, since they are for our good and his glory. We ask – like Jesus – that God's will should be done in our lives and in the world. And we affirm that whatever the outcome of our prayers, we shall

continue to trust in and depend upon God, who has made us his own through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord.

Prayer prompts
A few years ago, a friend shared a very helpful little prayer 'reminder' tool with me, which I want in turn to share with you, as an easy way to think about praying for the many situations in our lives and our world which burden and distress us.
Hold up your hand; then think about the significance of each finger in these ways:-

Index finger – we use it to point don't we?! So we pray for those who point the way – people with wisdom; Christian leaders and teachers; those whose actions and investments can change the direction in which society is moving.
As you think about a war zone for example; pray for those who are trying to negotiate peace between the parties; pray for the invisible but powerful influences which can make or break a deal.
As you look at our society, which has many troubles but also many good things, pray for those who think deeply and influence the way that policies develop – thorough research and serious wrestling with deep problems needs to be done before wise decisions can be made.

Middle finger – which usually stretches out beyond all the others, and invites us to pray for those who are noticeable in leadership – in politics, in business, in entertainment and social media.
As you think about our country, pray for those who have the responsibility to make decisions which impact our lives. It is a huge and demanding job, and we want our leaders to be people who know their weaknesses, and who respect others, and who truly desire to serve us. Give thanks for those in leadership who set an example of integrity, generosity, compassion and a clear commitment to the greater good. Pray for a responsible exercise of power, and pray against exploitation. Pray especially for Christians in leadership – in politics, in business, in entertainment – that they will be wise, will be protected from folly and temptation traps, and will be able to inspire others in their faith in the public realm.

Ring finger – where we wear wedding rings, and we think of those whom we love, family and friends whose wellbeing is particularly important to us. While the wider world situation may not directly impact our loved ones, we can certainly pray for those it does! Pray for the families of service men and women, who have to deal with separation, deep anxiety and the consequences of conflict on mental and physical health. Pray for the families of those who are overseas sharing in God's work in other countries, and parted from parents, siblings and friends, isolated and sometimes in danger.
And we can always pray for our loved ones, since we know that all human loves are merely an echo of the great Love with which God loves us. Our griefs and sorrows are

understood by our Father; he knows how we yearn over estranged family members, how we grieve over long-term suffering and the heavy burdens which our loved ones bear. All of these things we bring to our Father in confidence, and let him carry us as we love them in his name.

Little finger – the least and weakest of our fingers, an invitation to pray for the weak, the vulnerable, the least and the forgotten. It is not hard to think how this one works out – look around the town and see the folk on our streets whose lives are in chaos because of addiction; remember the population in the care homes, and the invisible isolated elderly at home alone for days on end with no one to share life with. Pray for policies and people which can make a real difference to these precious folk, who are not forgotten by God. Pray for the little children growing up in our community, exposed to so much that threatens them, and yet so full of potential – ask God to strengthen their families, protect them from harm, and bring them to adulthood to flourish and to know and love him.

Thumb – last but not least, we use our thumbs to indicate that everything is okay, or that it is good – a reminder to consider just how much we have to be grateful for. Our thumbs are the only ones which can point back toward us, and we can pray for ourselves too!

There are many things shared in the newsletter for which to give thanks, over and above our personal lives – the work of Inverness Street Pastors, Inverness Foodstuff, and the global ministry of L'Arche. Take time to be grateful, to notice and celebrate God's goodness, the beauty of creation, and the gift of each new day.

Finally, we do take time to pray for ourselves, to bring our burdens to God in confidence and – with his help – not to pick them up again! We remember his goodness to us, and commit ourselves to trust him for the future; we ask him to go on working in our lives, to make us more like Jesus, channels of love in a world in need.

As we have prayed using our hands, we pray also for our hands – to be instruments for good, for love, for help and for God's glory in our world. We have only one life, a few years to give to God, let's make the most of them and be ready to take every opportunity to do good for Jesus' sake!

Delight yourselves in the Lord, yes, find your joy in him at all times. Have a reputation for gentleness, and never forget the nearness of your Lord.
Don't worry over anything whatever; tell God every detail of your needs in earnest and thankful prayer, and the peace of God, which transcends human understanding, will keep constant guard over your hearts and minds as they rest in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4.4-7; JB Phillips translation)