

KIRBSTONES

ALONG THE NARROW WAY

curb-stone (kûrb'stôn') - *noun* - one of the stones or a range of stones forming a curb, as along a sidewalk or roadway. Historically, the curbstones were placed vertically along the edges of the roadbed, and the paving material was backfilled against the row of curbstones. The curbstones served ¹to hold the material in the roadbed, ²to prevent the scattering of the material along the edges, and ³to define the road itself from all the adjoining areas.

05.2026 | #277

¹ "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT. ² BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT." - MATTHEW 7:13-14 - NIV



A new congregation stands at a sacred threshold. While there is energy, possibility, and a deep sense of calling, there is also a very real vulnerability. The difference between a church that merely gathers and a church that is truly formed by God is not found in its programs, or its personalities, or its plans. *It is found in prayer.* If we are to move forward faithfully, we must become a people who are immersed in prayer—not occasionally, but continually, not superficially, but intentionally.

The *first* reason a new congregation must be grounded in prayer is that prayer aligns us with the will of God. Left to ourselves, we are inclined to follow (1) what seems right, (2) what feels comfortable, or (3) what appears successful by the world's standards. However, the church does not belong to us; *it belongs to God.* Therefore, its direction must come from him. Scripture reminds us "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us" (1 John 5:14).

Prayer is not simply presenting our plans to God for approval; *it is submitting ourselves to his purposes.* As a congregation, we must ask: Are we seeking God's will, or are we asking God to bless our preferences? Action begins here. Commit to daily personal prayer, and as a church, establish regular, focused times where we seek God's direction together. Before decisions are made, before initiatives are launched, we must first pray. In doing so, we position ourselves not as directors of the mission, but as faithful followers of the One who leads us.

The *second* reason we must be immersed in prayer is that prayer invites the power and presence of God into our life together. A church may have vision, structure, and capable leadership, but without the presence of God, it remains spiritually ineffective. The early church understood this. "They all joined together constantly in prayer" (Acts 1:14).

Long before the church expanded, before God's miracles were witnessed, and before lives were transformed, there was unified, persistent prayer. Prayer is not preparation for the real work—*it is the real work.* It is in prayer that God forms unity, deepens faith, and releases his power among his people. For us, this means we must move beyond casual or routine prayer and cultivate a shared commitment to seeking God together. Action is required!

Participate in corporate prayer opportunities. Pray with one another before and after worship. Form small prayer groups that meet regularly. When our challenges arise, *and they will arise*, respond first with prayer, not anxiety.

When opportunities appear, *and those will also*, respond first with prayer, not assumption. A church faithful to prayer becomes a powerful church, not because of its own strength, but because God is actively present within it.

The *third* reason we must be a praying congregation is that prayer sustains spiritual growth and Kingdom impact. The journey of a new church is not without obstacles. There will be moments of discouragement, many seasons of uncertainty, and very often times when our perseverance is required. Without a foundation in prayer, it is easy to lose focus or become weary. Scripture gives us a simple yet profound command: "Pray continually" (1 Thess. 5:17)

This is not a suggestion for occasional devotion; *it is a call to a lifestyle.* Prayer sustains us when enthusiasm fades. It keeps us connected to the Source of our strength. It reminds us that the work we are engaged in is not merely human effort, but participation in the ongoing work of God's Kingdom. Action in this area requires intentionality. Develop rhythms of prayer throughout the day. Begin each morning with God, seek him in moments of decision, and close the day in gratitude and reflection.

As a congregation, we must encourage one another to remain steadfast in prayer, especially when the path forward is unclear. Faithfulness in prayer leads to fruitfulness in ministry.

As we move forward together, we must recognize that prayer is not one ministry among many; *it is the single foundation of all ministry.* If we neglect prayer, we risk (1) drifting from God's will, (2) relying on our own strength, and (3) losing the spiritual vitality that marks a true church. However, if we commit ourselves to prayer—*personally and corporately*—we will find that God is faithful to guide, empower, and sustain us.

The call before us is clear. Let us become a people who pray with purpose, who seek God with sincerity, and who depend on him completely.

Let us (1) align our hearts with God's will, (2) invite the Holy Spirit's presence into every aspect of our corporate life together, and (3) persevere through all our seasons of ministry with confidence in his power.

In doing so, we will not only build a congregation—*we will become a Kingdom building church for God.*

Copyright © - 2026
Robert Wingfield Kirby III, D.Min.