



# UN FIN ISH ED

21 DAYS OF PRAYER



neighborhood  
CHURCH

**Welcome!** This year we are celebrating 75 years together as a church family. At this point, it would be easy to sit just back, relax, pat ourselves on the back and look at all that God has done.

I don't mean to suggest that we shouldn't pause and celebrate the past. We absolutely should! Neighborhood Church's journey, up to this point, has been incredibly inspiring.

However, I do want to suggest that Jesus isn't done with us yet. Our 75th Birthday is also an opportunity to be reminded that we are still Unfinished.

This year is not just an opportunity to celebrate our collective history, it's an occasion to look ahead and imagine our future. What do we want the next 75 years to look like?

Our best days as a church are still in front of us!

I love how the Apostle Paul talked about this idea:

*Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:6)*

I'm convinced Jesus isn't through with you or us. There's still work to be done. In response to this reality, we believe Jesus is inviting us to kick off our next season as a church by spending some time in prayer.

In response to this invitation, we are embarking on **21 Days of Prayer** as we intentionally seek Jesus and believe that He will move in powerful ways in our lives, our church, and our city.

I believe Jesus moves when we pray. As we begin our next season as a church, let's set our intentions by seeking Jesus first!

I'm praying FOR you and I'm praying WITH you!

Forrest Jenan



**Lead Pastor**  
**Neighborhood Church**

---

# 21 DAYS OF PRAYER FAQS

## **WHAT IS PRAYER?**

Entire books have been written on the topic of prayer. (See the resource page for a list of some of our favorites) However, if you are looking for a short simple definition of prayer, we like this...

*Prayer is being in an active relationship with Jesus.  
Prayer is simply learning to talk to Jesus.*

Prayer is not about “*saying prayers*” or learning new “*techniques*” of prayer. It’s is about doing whatever is necessary to deepen our friendship with Jesus. How? By making sure to set aside time each day.

## **HOW DO I PRAY?**

If prayer is simply learning to talk to Jesus then that means we can pray anytime, anywhere about anything that’s on our mind. We don’t have to be in a church, use special words, or put our hands together if we don’t want to. Jesus is listening. He wants to hear from us.

The authors of Scripture encourage us to always pray about all kinds of topics. We can ask Jesus to help the people we care for and talk to Him about the things we need or worry about. We can also share what we’re grateful for and say sorry when we’ve made mistakes.

We can pray by talking, thinking, or writing; we can even try drawing, crafting, or painting what we want to express. We can use our own words, or borrow someone else’s making them our own.

We don’t need to make grand speeches or pretend that everything is okay. All we need to do is:

**Keep it simple.**  
**Keep it real.**  
**Keep it up.**



# 21 DAYS OF PRAYER FAQS

## **WHAT IF I GET DISTRACTED WHILE I'M PRAYING?**

Have you ever promised God that you will try harder in prayer, only to discover you really can't? If so, you are in good company. Anyone who has ever sat down to pray has experienced a wandering and distracted mind.

But here's the thing, if prayer is about "doing it right," you're never going to pray.

When our minds wander to our money, our career, our lack of a career, our spouse, our worries, our whatever...these are the concerns that lie deep in our hearts.

When we go to pray and ask Jesus to "search our hearts" he will reveal what's going on in our hearts. We often see this as a distraction because we think prayer is some kind of spiritual performance. But we need to start seeing our wandering mind as prayer and Jesus doing exactly what we've asked him to do.

Instead of seeing a wandering mind as a failure to pray as we ought, we should see this as an opportunity to pray about the deep longings of our souls. Mind wandering is a gift; by it, the Lord shows us the treasures of our hearts. Our call is to bring this to the Lord, who meets us in the truth of ourselves as ones who need grace and mercy in these very places.

*Prayer is not a place to be good, it is a place to be honest.  
Prayer is not a place to perform, it is a place to be present.  
Prayer is not a place to be right, it is a place to be known.  
Prayer is not a place to prove your worth, it is a place to  
receive worth and offer yourself in truth.  
(Kyle Strobel)*

*The truly radical Christian is not the one whose life appears  
extraordinary, but the one whose unseen communion with God is  
extraordinary. Living radically is about prayer, not prominence.  
(Skey Jethani)*



# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

**21 DAYS OF PRAYER: MARCH 5-26, 2023**

You're invited to dedicate a specific time of your day for 21 Days of praying through Scriptures, Prompts, and Prayers in this book.

Use this book any way you'd like. This is a resource, not a "have to". We know prayer can be confusing, intimidating, and challenging. So we've curated this resource to serve you and help you develop the spiritual practice of prayer.

You can use as much or as little of the content offered as you'd like. The most important thing to do is to just keep praying...the how and when of your prayers is up to you. There aren't any rules other than what works best for you.

However, we've compiled a number of different resources to help give you a jumpstart when you are feeling a little stuck. We hope you find them helpful.

## 7 TIPS FROM RONALD ROLHEISER

**#1 Show Up.** There's no bad way to pray and no single starting point for prayer. The spiritual masters offer one nonnegotiable rule: you have to show up for prayer and show up regularly. Everything else is negotiable and respects your unique circumstances. Most days, we don't pray simply because we don't quite get around to it. Perhaps the best metaphor to describe our hurried and distracted lives is that of a car wash. For most of us, that's just what our typical day does to us—it sucks us through. Prayer is truly a discipline. Show up!

**#2 Quiet Your Heart.** Solitude is a form of awareness, a way of being present and perceptive within all of life. It's having a dimension of reflectiveness in our daily lives that brings gratitude, appreciation, peacefulness, enjoyment and prayer. It's the sense, within ordinary life, that life is precious, sacred, and enough. Solitude isn't something we turn on like a water faucet. It needs a body and mind slowed down enough to be attentive to the present moment. The first step is to remain quietly in God's presence in solitude, silence and prayer. If it is your first time doing this, set aside 15 minutes for prayer.



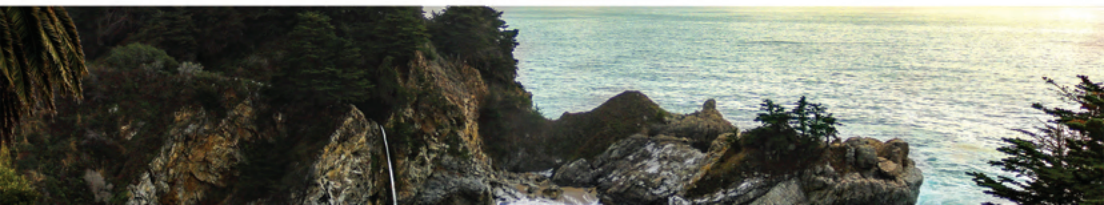
**#3 Look Inside.** Our culture can keep us so entertained, busy, preoccupied, and distracted that we lose all focus on the deeper things. We can go along like this for years until a crisis suddenly renders emptying all the stimulation and entertainment in the world. Then we're forced to look into our own depth, and it can be a frightening abyss if we've spent years avoiding it. We have to know when it's time to unplug the television, turn off the phone, shut down the computer, lay away the sports page, and resist going out for coffee with a friend, so that, for one moment, we're not avoiding making friends with the deepest part of us.

**#4 Establish a Routine and Stick with It.** The solution isn't so much new prayers and greater variety, but establishing rhythms, routines, and rituals. What's needed is a prayer form that doesn't demand additional energy. Clear rituals provide prayer that is dependent on something beyond our own energy. The rituals carry us: our tiredness, our inattentiveness, our indifference, and even our occasional distaste. They keep us praying even when we're too tired to muster up our own energy. Prayer has an ebb and flow. Sometimes we have a deep sense of God's reality, and sometimes we can't even imagine God's existence. Sometimes we have deep feelings about God's goodness and love, and sometimes we feel bored and distracted.

*At a deep level of our human relationships, the real connection between people takes place below the surface of our conversations.*

We begin to know each other through simple presence. Prayer is the same. If we pray faithfully every day, year in and year out, we can expect little excitement, lots of boredom, and regular temptations to look at the clock. But a bond and an intimacy will be growing under the surface—a deep, growing bond with our God.

**#5 Be Honest, Vulnerable, Bold.** What does it mean to be holy or perfect? To be perfect in the Hebrew mindset, simply means to walk with God, despite our flaws. It means being in the divine presence in spite of the fact we're not perfectly whole, good, true and beautiful. God asks us to bring our helplessness, weaknesses, imperfections, and sin to him, so we may walk with him and never hide from him. God understands we'll make mistakes and disappoint Him and ourselves. What God asks is simply that we come home, share our lives with him, and let him help us in those ways we're powerless to help ourselves. Every feeling and thought we have is a valid entry into prayer; no matter how irreverent, unholy, selfish, sexual, or angry that thought or feeling might seem. No matter the headache or the heartache, we need only to lift it up to God.



**#6 Let Go of Anxiety and Shame.** The opposite of faith isn't doubt. It is anxiety. It isn't so much the fear that God doesn't exist as the fear that God doesn't notice our existence. Faith doesn't make you believe you'll have no worries, you won't make mistakes, or you and your loved ones won't fall victim to accidents or illnesses. Faith gives you the assurance that God is good, can be trusted, won't forget you, and is solidly in charge. Faith says God is real, God is Lord, and there's ultimately nothing to fear. We're in safe hands. Reality is gracious, forgiving, loving, redeeming, and absolutely trustworthy. Our task is to surrender completely to that. If we're to take seriously the words of Jesus, "Change your life and believe in the good news," then the coldness and distrust brought upon us by shame must be overcome. Shame is powerful. It bites deep and leaves permanent scars. Try to bring the warmth, trust, and spontaneity of childhood into your prayers with God, a God who delights in you and has no use for crippling shame. Jesus said: "Love each other as I love you" (John 15:12). The tail end of that sentence contains the challenge. Jesus loved us by becoming vulnerable to the point of risking humiliation and rejection. We must recover our childlike trust and try to do the same.

**#7 Listen for God's Voice and Accept God's Love.** We're surrounded by many voices. How do we recognize God's voice among all these others? God is the author of everything good, whether it bears a religious label or not. Hence, God's voice is inside many things that aren't explicitly connected to faith and religion. Jesus tells us He's the Good Shepherd and His sheep will recognize His voice among all other voices. A sheep recognizes the voice of the one safeguarding it and won't follow another voice. The voice of God is the voice of someone who knows us intimately and calls us each by name. We take for granted anyone who sees us as we are (unlovely, weak, pathological, sinful, insubstantial) will, in the end, be as disappointed with us as we are with ourselves. We fear God because we've never experienced the kind of love that is manifest in God. We avoid God when we're most in need of love and acceptance. God is love, and only by letting that love into our lives can we save ourselves from shame and sadness. God understands us, accepts us, delights in us, and is eager to smile at us. Experiencing the unconditional love of God is what prayer, in the end, is all about.

Remember: your heart is made to rest in God. If Saint Augustine is right—and he is—then you can count on your restlessness to lead you into deeper prayer—the kind of prayer that leads to transformation and will not leave you empty-handed.





# PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,  
Where there is hatred, let me show love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
Where there is sadness, joy;*

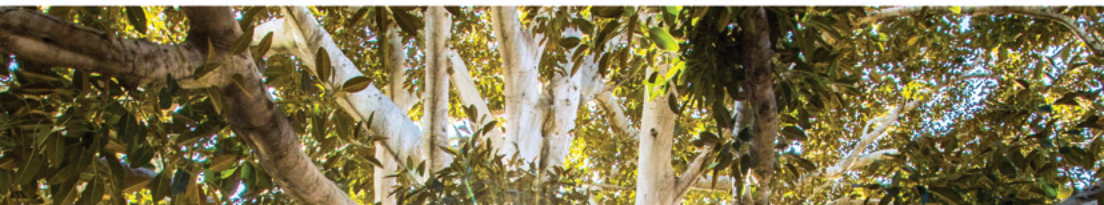
*O Divine Master,  
Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;  
To be understood, as to understand;  
To be loved, as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive.  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.  
And it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.  
Amen.*

# PRAYING THE LORD'S PRAYER

The Lord's Prayer is the Church's most famous prayer because it came right from the mouth of Jesus, himself. Throughout church history, this prayer has always served as both a model and a guide for Jesus followers around the world. When we pray The Lord's Prayer, we are entering into the prayer school of Jesus, allowing his prayers to guide our prayers. Allow each line to be thematic, adding your own words to Jesus' words.

*One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." "This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. (Luke 11:1; Matthew 6:9-13)*

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE >**



## **OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN**

Begin with prayers of affection. In the way Jesus addresses God, he reminds us of three holy realities: God's majesty, approachability, and restoration. God is "in heaven," holy and other. He is incomprehensibly powerful and the true source and satisfaction of every human desire. God is also "Father," inviting us to come before Him not merely as beggars but as children and heirs to His Kingdom. Through Jesus, God is more than just my Father but "Our Father." He makes everyone—my family, friends, co-workers, even strangers, and passers-by—into sister and brother.

## **HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME**

To hallow means to set aside as holy. Spend a moment recognizing God as holy - as the unique one worthy of your affection.

## **YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE**

Spend a few minutes asking for God's will to be done in your life. This part of the prayer is about releasing control. What are you currently wrestling for control over—something you've never released from God or find yourself grabbing back from him? Name it and release it to God. You may want to repeatedly pray, "Your will be done," a few times. Releasing our own control

## **GIVE US TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD**

Now spend a few minutes praying for specific needs and wants in your life or that of your community—a job, healing, or wisdom to make a decision.

## **FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE ALSO HAVE FORGIVEN OUR DEBTORS**

Ask God for forgiveness for specific areas in your life, and releasing others to forgiveness. You may just want to pray aloud the short phrase, "Father, forgive me" or "Father, help me forgive."

## **AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE**

Finally, spend a few minutes praying against temptation — this word can also be translated as trouble — in your life. Pray against any kind of evil - spiritual evil, human evil or oppression, natural disasters, systemic injustice, etc. Pray against bad things in your life or community, and ask for God's blessing - the divine flow of good things into your life and community.

**FOR YOURS IS THE KINGDOM  
AND THE POWER  
AND THE GLORY  
FOREVER AND EVER.  
AMEN.**



# PRAYING THE APOSTLES' CREED

One of the earliest written statements of faith for the Christian Church (dating back 1800 years) is what we call The Apostle's Creed. It reminds us that while there is certainly much diversity in Christian thought there are a few non-negotiables.

People have been praying this creed for hundreds and hundreds of years. You may want to give it a try as well.

*I believe in God the Father Almighty  
Creator of Heaven and Earth  
I believe in Jesus Christ, His Only Son, Our Lord  
He Was Conceived By The Power of the Holy Spirit  
And Born of the Virgin Mary  
He Suffered Under Pontius Pilate,  
Was Crucified, Died, and Buried  
He Descended to the Dead  
On the Third Day, He Rose Again  
He Ascended Into Heaven  
And is Seated at the Right Hand of the Father  
He Will Come Again to Judge the Living and the Dead  
I Believe in the Holy Spirit  
The Holy Christian Church  
The Communion of Saints  
The Forgiveness of Sins  
The Resurrection of the Body  
And the Life Everlasting.  
Amen.*



# PRAYER OF EXAMEN

The Prayer of Examen is a reflective prayer exercise best done with a journal but not a necessity. The Examen was developed by a 16th Priest and Theologian named Ignatius of Loyola.

There are 5-Parts to the Examen...

- 1) GIVE THANKS.** Spend a few moments in gratitude. Write down at least one thing you are grateful for today.
- 2) ASK FOR CLARITY.** Ask Jesus to show you places He was at work today through events, people, and places.
- 3) REVIEW THE DAY.** Think back over your day: who you were with, where you were, what you did—however ordinary. Recall the sights, sounds, smells, conversations, thoughts, and feelings you experienced. What gave you life? What discouraged you? Give your attention to those moments, and offer them to Jesus.
- 4) FACE YOUR LIMITATIONS.** As you consider your day, reflect honestly on the moments you felt out of tune with God—something you said, a missed opportunity, some way you wish you had acted differently. For what do you need forgiveness? Do you need to make things right with someone else? Look at your shortcomings, and allow Jesus to heal them. In the words of Psalm 51:10-12: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.”
- 5) LOOK TOWARD THE DAY TO COME.** As you end your day, look to tomorrow. What are you looking forward to, and what concerns you? Ask for Jesus’ help in the future: to open your eyes, your ears, and your heart to see where God is working. Remember that God will again be present tomorrow—in all things large and small—guiding you toward fullness in your life

As you close consider these words from the ancient Jewish poet...  
*I raise my eyes toward the mountains. Where will my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. The Lord will protect you on your journeys—whether going or coming—from now until forever from now. (Psalm 121:1-2, 8)*



# OTHER PRAYERS YOU MAY WANT TO PRAY

*Take, Lord, as your right, and receive as my gift, all my freedom, my memory, my mind, and my will. Whatever I am and whatever I possess, you have given to me; I give it back to you. Dispose of me, and the powers you gave me, according to your will. Give me only a love for you, and the gift of your grace; then I am rich enough, and ask for nothing more. Amen. (Ignatius of Loyola)*

*Lord, help me to realize that you will be speaking to me through the events of the day, through people, through things, and through all creation. Give me ears, eyes, and heart to perceive you, however, veiled your presence may be. Give me the insight to see through the exterior of things to the interior truth. Give me your Spirit of discernment. O Lord, you know how busy I must be this day. If I forget you, do not forget me. Amen. (Jacob Astley)*

*Give me, O Lord, a steadfast heart, which no selfish desires may drag downwards give me an unconquered heart, which no troubles can wear out give me an upright heart, which no unworthy ambitions may tempt aside. Give me also, O Lord our God, understanding to know you, perseverance to seek you, wisdom to find you, and a faithfulness that may finally embrace you through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Thomas Aquinas)*

*Blessed be your name, Lord God, who has set before me life and death, and has invited me to choose life. Now, Lord God, I chose life, with all my heart. I chose you, my God, for you are my life. Lord, make me completely holy, that all my spirit, soul, and body may be a temple for you. Live in me, and be my God and I will be your servant. Amen. (Thomas Ken)*

*God guide me with your wisdom  
God chastise me with your justice,  
God help me with your mercy,  
God protect me with your strength,  
God shield me with your shade,  
God fill me with your grace,  
For the sake of your anointed Son.  
Amen.  
(Gaelic Tradition)*



# OTHER PRAYERS YOU MAY WANT TO PRAY

*Good Jesus, my God and my all,  
That I may be all yours, and all of you will be mine.  
Make me cheerful under every cross,  
For love of your cross;  
Take from me all which displeases you,  
Or hinders your love in me,  
That I may deeply love you.  
Melt me with your love,  
That I may be all love,  
And with my whole being love you.  
Good Jesus, who gave yourself for me,  
Give me of the fullness of your love,  
That for all your love,  
With your love, I may love you.  
Amen. (Edward Bouverie Pusey)*

*Who is like you, Jesus?  
You are the light of those who are spiritually lost  
You are the life of those who are spiritually dead  
You are the liberation of those who are imprisoned by guilt  
You are the glory of those who hate themselves  
You are the guardian of those who are paralyzed by fear  
You are the guide of those who are bewildered by falsehood  
You are the peace of those who are in turmoil  
You are the prince of those who yearn to be led  
You are the priest of those who seek the truth  
Amen. (Johann Freylinghausen)*

*O Lord Jesus Christ, I long to live in your presence, to see your human form, and to watch you walking on earth. I do not want to see you through the darkened glass of tradition, nor through the eyes of today's values and prejudices. I want to see you as you were, as you are, and as you always will be. I want to see you as an offense to human pride, as a man of humility, walking amongst the lowliest of men, and yet as the savior and redeemer of the human race.  
Amen. (Soren Kierkegaard)*



# OTHER PRAYERS YOU MAY WANT TO PRAY

## **ST. TERESA OF ÁVILA'S "GUIDANCE PRAYER"**

*Lord, grant that I may always allow myself to be guided by You, always follow Your plans, and perfectly accomplish Your Holy Will. Grant that in all things, great and small, today and all the days of my life, I may do whatever You require of me. Help me respond to the slightest prompting of Your Grace, so that I may be Your trustworthy instrument for Your honor. May Your Will be done in time and in eternity by me, in me, and through me. Amen.*

## **St. Teresa of Ávila's "Bookmark Prayer"\***

*Let nothing disturb you;  
Let nothing frighten you.  
All things are passing.  
God never changes.  
Patience obtains all things.  
Nothing is wanting to him who possesses God.  
God alone suffices.*

\*Named "Bookmark Prayer" because it was found on a handwritten bookmark upon her death.



# OUR UNFINISHED PRAYER

*Father, thank you for the amazing work you've done through Neighborhood Church over the past 75 years.*

*We're grateful for what we've accomplished together, but we know you're not finished with us.*

*We want to continue to make a real difference in our world.*

*Give us the courage to step out of our comfort zones as we practice generosity for the sake of others.*

*Please take the resources we invest and use them to transform lives.*

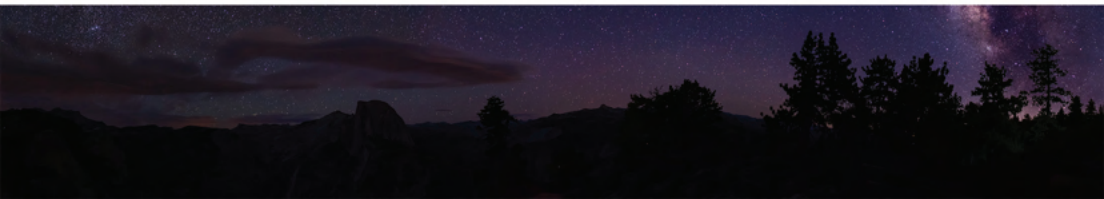
*Lead us.*

*Humble us.*

*Use us.*

*Grow us.*

*In Jesus' name, amen.*





# RESOURCES + FURTHER LEARNING

## BOOKS

*What if Jesus was Serious About Prayer, by Skye Jethani*

*How to Pray, by Peter Greig*

*God on Mute, by Peter Greig*

*Prayer, by Timothy Keller*

*Where Prayer Becomes Real, by Kyle Strobel*

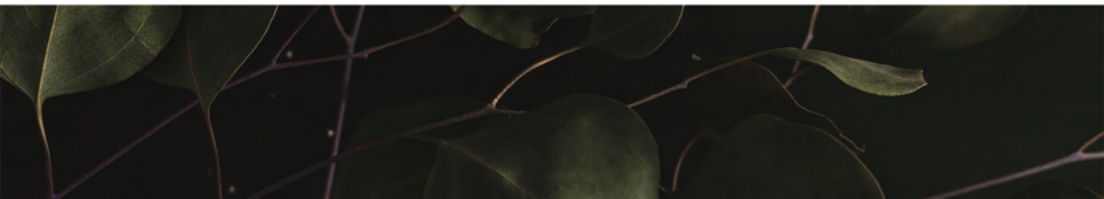
*The Lord and His Prayer, by N.T. Wright*

*Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools, Tyler Stanton*

*How to Pray: A Guide for Young Explorers (8-11-year-olds), by Peter Greig*

## VIDEOS + COURSES

Scan the code below to access.



# NOTES

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---


---


---

---


---





 [ncvisalia.com](http://ncvisalia.com)

 [facebook.com/ncvisalia](https://facebook.com/ncvisalia)

 [instagram.com/ncvisalia](https://instagram.com/ncvisalia)



neighborhood  
CHURCH