

Lakeshore Community Church 2005–2008

Family Devotional Guide



*"The Lord sparked their enthusiasm...
they came and **began their work** on the house of the Lord
Almighty, their God."*

Haggai 1:14, NLT

*"Be sure to **finish the work** the Lord gave you."*

Colossians 4:17, NCV

A Note From Pastor Vince

I encourage you to make this 14-Day Devotional Guide a part of your daily routine, especially as we prepare for and go through the *Home Improvements* campaign. Here are some tips that will help you make the most of this devotional guide:

1. Select a specific time that best fits your lifestyle.
2. Choose a special place that is free from distractions.
3. Follow the plan in your 14-Day Devotional Guide.
4. If you miss a day, don't give up! Pick it up where you left off.

On Sunday, November 20, my hope is that everyone will make a 3-year pledge to *Home Improvements* so we can complete the vision of *A Place To Call Home*... for our children, for our community, and for our church.

This guide will help you prepare spiritually as you pray, "Lord, what do You want to do through me to accomplish Your will for Lakeshore?"

God's best,
Pastor Vince

Key Dates For *Home Improvements*

Nov. 13–19

Hold your family conference using the guide provided at home meetings or at church.

Nov. 20

Make your 3-year financial commitment to "HI" during one of the services (or you can mail it in).

Dec. 4

Turn in your "up front" gift at this service and begin monthly giving in January 2006.

14-DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

This devotional guide is simple to follow. Its purpose is to prepare you to get closer to God so you can seek His will for your spiritual growth and your part in *Home Improvements*. The daily devotions are centered on key aspects of the Christian life and mesh with our series *Pulling Together*. Each devotion is divided into five parts: Read, Reflect, Pray, Prepare and Apply. By spending 1-2 minutes with each part, you will have invested 5-10 minutes strengthening your relationship with God and considering your involvement in the giving campaign.

Read: Read the Bible passage thoughtfully and perhaps read it out loud. It is always beneficial to hear yourself read out loud the truth of the Bible. Why? The Bible states that your faith is increased when you hear the Word of God.

Reflect: Reflect by considering the meditative thought that explains each day's chosen Bible passage. Using the meditative thought as a stimulus, ask yourself how the daily Bible passage applies to your life situation.

Pray: Pray the principle you gained in your reflection time. Remember that prayer is simply conversation with God.

Prepare: Prepare yourself to help discern God's will for your part in *Home Improvements* by considering what God could do with these projects, especially the *Lakeshore Community Center*.

Apply: As you work through each day's devotion, write down in the space provided any thoughts or ideas that apply to your growth as a Christ-follower and to your involvement in the *Home Improvements* campaign.

DAY 1:

United because of Jesus' prayer for us

Read: John 17:20–26

Reflect: It is a truly amazing thought to consider that Jesus prayed for every Christian (even those of us who are Christians today) that we would be one! United and “pulling together” so we might reveal His love to others (see v.23). How awesome.

Pray: “Lord, I pray that I would be an answer to Your prayer for unity so our church can communicate Your love to others.”

Prepare: Imagine what could happen if everyone at Lakeshore realized Jesus prayed for our unity and we so loved each other that we all saw His love in our church? *Home Improvements* can truly help this occur!

Apply: _____

DAY 2:

Only God brings a church together

Read: Ephesians 2:11–22, 4:3

Reflect: Consider the fact that all of us were so far from God that we were aliens to Him (not Martians, just aliens!). But God made peace with us through Christ and brought us into the church, uniting us with other believers. What a long, strange trip that was, huh?

Pray: “Lord, only you could have rescued me and forgiven my sin. Thank you. Help me to preserve the unity you create at church.”

Prepare: Imagine how great it could be if we all humbly expressed our love to God and it lead to great unity in our church as we let Christ lead us? That is what *Home Improvements* is about!

Apply: _____

DAY 3:

The beauty of unity and community

Read: Psalm 133

Reflect: When a group of believers is united, there is virtually no greater blessing we can experience! Oil and dew in the passage symbolize joy. We should remember that unity is what empowers joy in both our church and personal families.

Pray: “Lord, I want to know the joy of unity. Help me appreciate it when I see it, and affirm it often so I experience more of it in my life.”

Prepare: Imagine what a beautiful scene it will be to experience the beauty and joy of unity with others for various events held in the *Lakeshore Community Center*? God will use *Home Improvements* to make it happen!

Apply: _____

DAY 4:

The power of pulling together

Read: Ecclesiastes 4:9–12

Reflect: Why is it important to find people we can “pull together” with in life? How are we stronger together than we are alone?

Pray: “Lord, help me to partner with others so that I can help them, they can help me so Your cause can be helped and advanced.”

Prepare: Imagine what could happen if everyone at Lakeshore pulled together to serve, to love, to grow, and to give? Imagine what could happen if this occurred for *Home Improvements*?

Apply: _____

DAY 5:

The danger of divisiveness

Read: Mark 3:20–30

Reflect: Accused of doing miracles through the power of Satan, Jesus reminded us that a house divided cannot stand. Why is that so obvious yet not often-enough applied in our homes, churches and world? How can we be less divisive when unity is needed?

Pray: “Lord, I realize a division between right and wrong is good. But help me to never let division occur for any other reason.”

Prepare: Imagine the damage that can occur if people divide during the *Home Improvements* campaign? No amount of financial success could ever overcome that! May God keep division out and unity in.

Apply: _____

DAY 6:

Pulling together when you're not ready

Read: Haggai 1:1–13

Reflect: The people of Israel had a priority problem. They had returned to Jerusalem and got sidetracked from rebuilding God's Temple and instead rebuilt their homes. Have you ever had to readjust your priorities for God?

Pray: "Lord, may I always put You first in all that I say, think and do. May I avoid putting my needs above Your wishes in my life."

Prepare: Imagine what could happen if we all simply asked God to help us prioritize Him in our lives? *Home Improvements* is a great opportunity to learn to put God first as we seek His will for our role in this effort. If we all put God first, great results follow.

Apply: _____

DAY 7:

Pulling together... priceless!

Read: Haggai 1:14–2:23

Reflect: After Haggai’s exhortation, Israel got their priorities straight. They began rebuilding God’s Temple and God promised to show them His glory as a result. When we put God first, how does God bless us in return?

Pray: “Lord, as I put You first in my life, help me to remember that You’ll bless me in return, in Your time and in Your own perfect way.”

Prepare: Imagine the parallels between Haggai and Lakeshore: God sparked our enthusiasm in the “Place To Call Home” campaign; now He calls us to prioritize Him by finishing the work. *Home Improvements* is our chance to experience this priceless joy... together!

Apply: _____

DAY 8:

Fresh starts together

Read: Ezra 3

Reflect: When Israel rebuilt the altar and laid the foundation of the Temple, it produced such an overflow of joy that they shouted praise to God and cried tears of joy. Why does starting something great bring such excitement? Why do we like new starts?

Pray: “Lord, help me to appreciate all the ways You let me have new, fresh starts. Help me to live each new day for You.”

Prepare: Imagine what it will be like to have the new start of the *Lakeshore Community Center*, new needed equipment, and the new parking lot paid for? These will be provided for with *Home Improvements!*

Apply: _____

DAY 9:

Rallying to a cause together

Read: Nehemiah 2

Reflect: After risking his life asking King Artaxerxes for release from work and assistance, and after inspecting the walls of Jerusalem, Nehemiah challenged Israel to see the need and rebuild the wall with him. They responded with enthusiasm. What makes a vision for the future so compelling?

Pray: “Lord, help me to see Your vision for my life. Help me rally my energies to fulfill it.”

Prepare: Imagine seeing God do a great work at Lakeshore and seeing people rally to give to the vision of *Home Improvements* with their finances and with their energies volunteering in the construction process?

Apply: _____

DAY 10:

Ushering in a new era together

Read: 1 Chronicles 29

Reflect: Talk about a big dose of new! In the previous chapter, David announced his son Solomon would become king, he would build Israel's very first Temple and Israel would finance the project. But in spite of all the "new," the people embraced it together and David died in peace. What makes something new easier to embrace?

Pray: "Lord, help me to appreciate and embrace all the new things You bring into my life."

Prepare: Imagine all the new things that God will do at Lakeshore as we together embrace the future through *Home Improvements*?

Apply: _____

DAY 11:

Giving too much together?

Read: Exodus 35:1–36:7

Reflect: Before Israel ever built the first Temple under Solomon or the second Temple and the walls around Jerusalem, they worshipped God using a portable, but elaborate, tabernacle. Moses called on Israel to support the project. The response was so overwhelming, Moses asked them to stop giving (36:6)! Can we give God too much?

Pray: “Lord, help me to be such a generous person that I bring a smile to Your face.”

Prepare: Imagine if every single person at Lakeshore supported *Home Improvements* and we had more than enough for the projects?

Apply:

DAY 12:

Giving that makes God smile

Read: 2 Corinthians 9:6–15

Reflect: What kind of giving makes God smile? Here we read that God loves people who give with two key motivations: giving with a cheerful (not reluctant) attitude and giving that meet the needs of others. Why do you think they are so important to God?

Pray: “Lord, help me to see giving to You as an honor, not a chore. Help me to give to the causes that please You the most.”

Prepare: Imagine what all the gifts to *Home Improvements* could do to help people in our church? Our community? Our children? Doesn't that make you smile?

Apply: _____

DAY 13:

Making a decision for God as a family

Read: Joshua 24:14–18

Reflect: Joshua, Israel’s leader, had to follow in the sandals of Moses. After leading Israel into the promised land, he warned them of the pitfalls that lay ahead. He called for them to decide who they would live for and then says, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” Why is such decisive living so important for your family’s vitality?

Pray: “Lord, I never want to waver in my commitment to you. Help me and my family to serve you faithfully.”

Prepare: Imagine having great family unity in your devotion to God? The *Family Conference Guide* will give you an opportunity to decide your giving to God together.

Apply: _____

DAY 14:

The church at its best

Read: Acts 2:42–47

Reflect: Recall that for “Day 1” we read John 17 and Jesus’ prayer that the church would be one. In the early days of the church, just after Christ’s resurrection, we see Jesus’ prayer answered in Acts 2:42-47. This is the church at its best! In what ways was the church unified? In what ways can you see that joy was present there?

Pray: “Lord, help me to do my part in making Lakeshore a united, “Acts 2” church just like Jesus prayed it would be.”

Prepare: Imagine if God used *Home Improvements* to unite our church as never before? He wants to do it. The key question is: will we let Him do it... first in our hearts?

Apply: _____

*Lord, what do You want to do
through me to accomplish
Your will for Lakeshore?*



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