

Prayers for First Responders



Ways to Show Appreciation and Support

By Dave and Kim Butts

When tragedy strikes, we all look for help.

We believe the vast majority of the U.S. population appreciates and honors those trained to provide crisis-situation help—protection, medical care, or rescue. Yet we also witness our authorities under attack. Growing misunderstandings and distrust can severely affect our first responders. In a day of global unrest and terrorism it is important that we pray for our police, fire, and medical response teams.

Strategic Prayers

Here are ten ways to bless and cover our first responders in prayer. Each point includes Scriptures and a prayer. We encourage you to develop your own prayers based on both the verses and the written prayers.

1. Give thanks to the Lord for those who

often put their lives on the line for others.

Peter 4:11: "If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ."

Colossians 1:3: "We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you."

Father, we are so blessed to have men and women who work diligently for our safety and well-being, even when their jobs are difficult and often thankless. Help us remember to thank You for their sacrifices and service to our community. May we touch heaven with prayers of gratitude whenever we see or personally encounter first responders. Give them the strength that You provide so that as they serve, You will be honored.

2. Pray for spiritual salvation for first responders, and a faith in Christ to sustain them in the face of danger.

1 Timothy 2:1-4: "I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."

Psalm 27:1: "The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?"

Lord Jesus, we pray for first responders everywhere who have not yet made You their Lord and Savior. Please put Your people in their paths, so that they might learn to seek You first and honor You. It's so important to have godly men and women in

these positions of influence for the sake of Your Kingdom. We also pray that You will intervene in the lives of those who once knew You well but have fallen away from You due to the pressures of their jobs. Reignite their hearts with passion for all that You are, Lord Jesus! Stir people all over our nation to pray fervently that our first responders will be salt and light in dark places and beacons of hope to the hopeless. Help them to minister in a very difficult occupation so that they might be change agents for the sake of Your name!

3. Pray for their protection and safety because many first responders are in situations of significant danger.

Isaiah 54:17: "No weapon forged against you will prevail."

Psalms 91:1-4, 14-16: "Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.' Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

"'Because he loves me,' says the Lord, 'I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.'"

Gracious God, first responders have such dangerous jobs! Help them to dwell in Your shadow. May You always be their refuge in difficult situations. May they trust in You completely, moment by moment. Show them Your power when they find themselves in unsafe situations or when they face people who threaten to harm them. Keep them safe for the glory of Your name!

4. Pray for wisdom and discernment as they face every crisis. Pray for increased skill and effectiveness in their daily tasks of coming to the aid of others.

2 Chronicles 20:12: "We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you."

Psalm 5:8: "Lead me, Lord, in your righteousness because of my enemies—make your way straight before me."

Lord, every day first responders have to make difficult and complicated decisions. Help them to choose wisely and well in every situation. Give them clarity and help them to stay calm and collected in the most tense moments they face. Help them call out to You whenever they don't know what to do. May they always keep their eyes fixed upon You.

5. Pray for courage and strength as they enter harm's way.

Joshua 1:9: "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Zechariah 4:6: "'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty."

Father, every shift first responders' work requires them to be prepared and ready for whatever comes. Give them the ability to stand strong. Fill them with courage. Help them to be aware of Your presence and see their need for You in every challenging situation.

6. Pray for vigilance as they keep watch. Ask God to give them confidence in their abilities to help others.

Psalm 130:5–6: "I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope. I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning."

Mark 14:38: "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."



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Father, as our first responders watch over us and respond to the needs in our community, please keep them alert and always ready. Keep them sharp, confident, and prepared in every way. May they place their hope in Your Word and wait upon You.

7. Pray for emotional protection for first responders, that the Father would guard their hearts, especially in the face of criticism or anger from others.

Galatians 6:9–10: “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”

Philippians 4:5–7: “Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Father, please keep our first responders emotionally strong but spiritually tender when they are confronted by the evil and brokenness around them. Give them Your peace as they deal with the pain and suffering of others—and at times experience injustice. May they have compassion for those whose lives are broken and may they demonstrate kindness to them. Help them to recognize that when others express hate and anger toward them, they can find their security in You.

8. Pray that the words and deeds of every believing first responder will reflect

the life of Jesus Christ in every situation.

Psalm 141:3: "Set a guard over my mouth, Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips." Psalm 19:14: "May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer."

Father, give words and actions to Your people who serve their community as first responders. Even in the most intense situations, we ask that they will look to You to show them how to react and what to say. May they bring honor to You and be godly examples to their unbelieving coworkers and to others with whom they interact on a daily basis.

9. Pray for peace for the first responders' family members who are aware of the dangers their loved ones face. Ask God to guard their marriage and family relationships.

Ephesians 5:31-33: "'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' . . . each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband."

Isaiah 26:3 – "You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you."

Lord God, the families of first responders experience so much stress and fear. As a result many marriages among first responders are broken and the divorce rate is high. Bring Your peace to their families, Lord. Help these men and women to keep their eyes fixed upon You so that they might love their spouses as You have instructed, and so that they might train

up their children in godly ways. Help them to find quality and quantity time with their families.

10. Pray they will feel supported and loved by their communities.

1 Peter 5:6–7: “Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”

Romans 13:7: “Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.”

Lord God Almighty, help us to show our first responders how much they are appreciated. May these brave men and women know that their God and their community supports them and cares for them! Give us ways to demonstrate our gratitude and thankfulness for their difficult sacrifices every day.

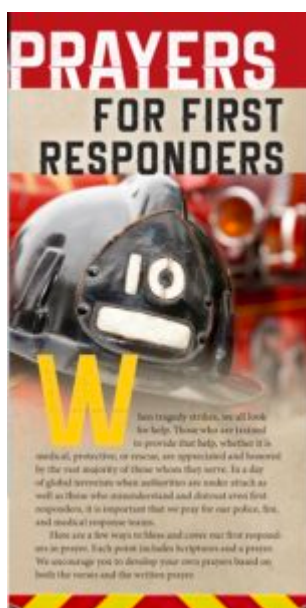
Adding Action to Your Prayers

There are other specific ways that you can express support for first responders:

- Establish a Shield-A-Badge prayer team for first responders in your church or community. This program is designed to pray strategically for police officers (shield-a-badge.org).
- Check out what the city of Omaha is doing through their First Responders Foundation. Their mission is to enhance public safety and build community appreciation and respect for first responders by providing resources (firstrespondersomaha.org/foundation).
- Find practical ways to show your appreciation to first responders and their families. This Pinterest board is filled with great ideas (pinterest.com/erinw27/first-responder-appreciation).

Thank the first responders when you come into contact with them. Tell them how much you appreciate what they do every day—and ask how you can pray for them. If they are receptive, ask permission to do it right then! Pray that God will use first responders to bring peace and security to our families and communities.

DAVE AND KIM BUTTS are co-founders of Harvest Prayer Ministries. They are the authors of several books (available at prayershop.org). Dave is also the chairperson of America's National Prayer Committee. This article is adapted from their prayer guide for first responders. It originally appeared in *Prayer Connect* magazine. To receive regular articles like this, subscribe to *Prayer Connect*.



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