

Prayers of Blessing

Interceding for Favor, Peace, and Increase

It's sobering to remember that about a year ago most of us found ourselves in the early stages of a pandemic lockdown. At first, we thought the restrictions would last for just a couple of weeks. Flatten the curve; slow the spread of the virus. Then weeks stretched into months. And more months.

Early on I wrote a note to my building management company, pleading with them to keep the exercise room, pool, and other amenities open. I argued for personal responsibility. I received no response—and pretty quickly realized we had no voices in the looming shutdowns.

In fact, one day I discovered a brand-new plunger in front of my door—and all the other doors in my complex. There was no explanation, but the message was clear: you are now on your own!

We had no idea how much this pandemic would affect our daily lives. Churches moved to online services, businesses began relying on Zoom interactions, schools eliminated in-person classroom teaching, masks covered our smiles, and most of us felt isolated from family and friends.

It has been a season fraught with challenges, disappointments, fears, and restrictions.

May His Favor Be Upon You

But out of this tsunami of change arose an anthem that brought hope and encouragement to people around the world. “The Blessing” song by Cody Carnes, Kari Jobe, and Elevation

Worship swept the Internet as people were confined to their homes.

“The Blessing” was first popular through the original artists, but the performances grew to include multiple people in a variety of languages harmonizing on Zoom calls. By mid-pandemic, virtual choirs were singing the hymn in more than 160 languages.

The song’s simplicity, based on an ancient Scripture, captures our attention and causes our spirits to soar. The lyrics are taken from Numbers 6:24–26 (often referred to as the Aaronic blessing):

“The Lord bless you
and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you
and give you peace.”

The artists continue the song lyrics with the hope that the Lord’s favor will rest on your family, your children, your children’s children, and a thousand generations. It’s a blessing prayer that has no end!

Prayer for the Ages

This issue is devoted to the power of blessing prayer, which typically includes asking God for favor, peace, and increase. In the lead article, Alvin VanderGriend explores the meaning of blessing prayer, including the idea of blessing the Lord and each other. Niko Peele tackles the challenge of blessing our enemies—and how God uses that obedience to bring healing in relationships. Kim Butts shares encouraging stories about the impact of praying blessings over others. She includes helpful scriptural blessings and practical application.

“The Blessing” song received a Grammy nomination and a Dove Award for Worship Recorded Song of the Year in 2020. Just think of it—a prayer of blessing from the days of Moses still

ministers to millions of people around the world in the midst of a pandemic. I'm sure Aaron never imagined that the priestly blessing he offered over the people of Israel would be set to contemporary worship music thousands of years later and sent simultaneously to the ends of the earth.

I call that a powerful prayer for the ages!

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