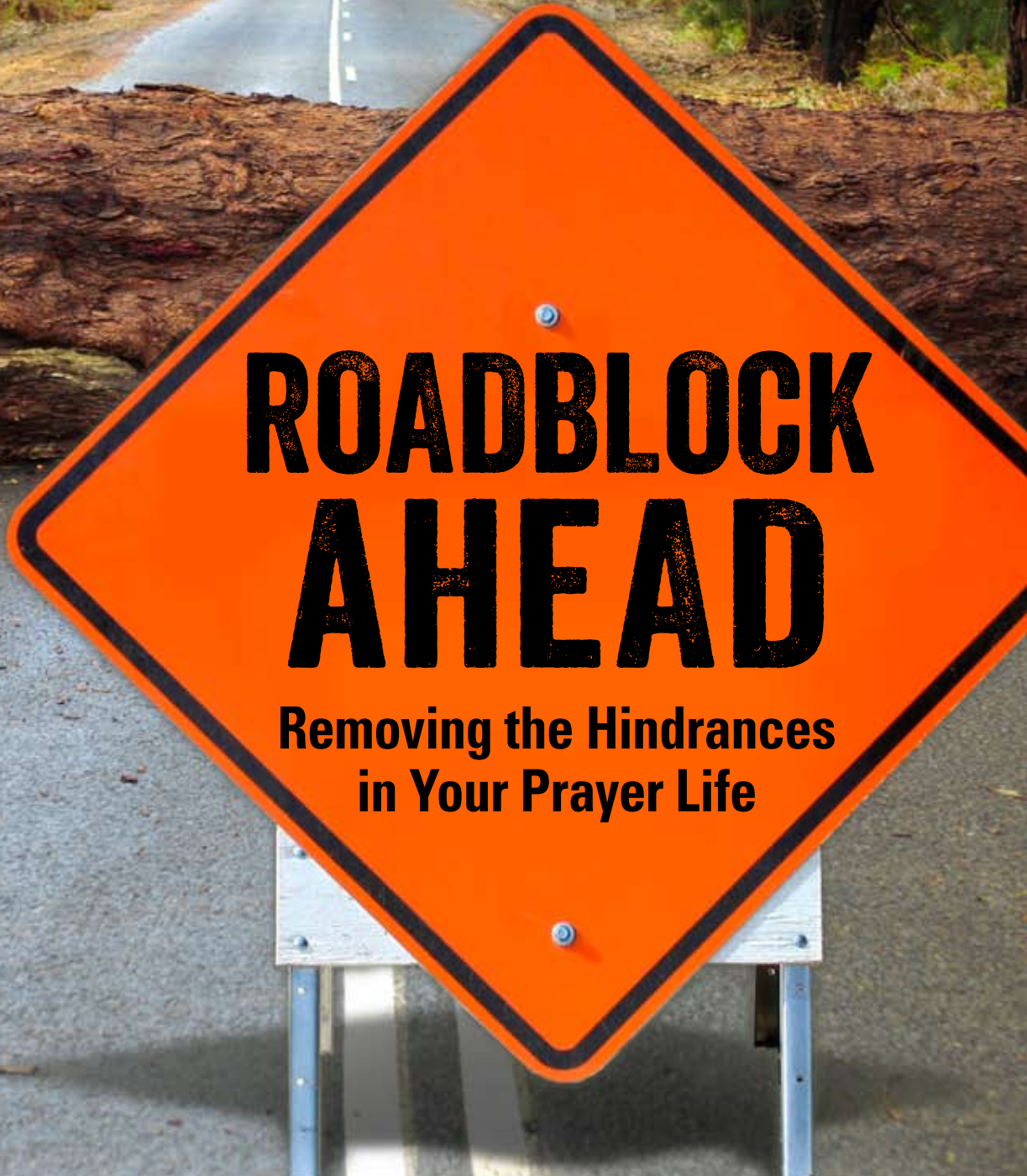


PRAYERCONNECT

Connecting to the Heart of Christ through Prayer



ROADBLOCK AHEAD

Removing the Hindrances
in Your Prayer Life

Declutter **Your Prayer Closet** | *Praying Under* Assumed Name

REVIVAL: SETTLE FOR NOTHING LESS

Subscription Information



Take Prayer to a NEW LEVEL

If you enjoy this issue of *Prayer Connect* magazine, why not start a regular subscription? There are three types of subscriptions available:

Print Subscription. Our most popular subscription, the print sub sends a hard copy of *Prayer Connect* through the mail to you every other month (5 issues per year). You also receive full digital access to all issues online at prayerconnect.net. Price: \$24.99

Digital Subscription. This version provides just the online version of *Prayer Connect*. Each issue, an email announcement is sent to you with links to the articles at our password-protected website. You can view any or all articles, and have access to the articles in all back issues. Price: \$19.99

CPLN Member Subscription. This subscription is an annual membership in the Church Prayer Leaders Network. Besides a subscription to *Prayer Connect* (U.S. members receive a print subscription and foreign members a digital subscription), members receive a bimonthly email newsletter, *Prayer Leader Online*, and discounts on most of the 500 plus products at our webstore prayershop.org. Price: \$30

Three Ways to Subscribe:

Online. Go to prayerconnect.net and click on “Purchase” on the upper right hand side of the toolbar at the top. Then simply select the type of subscription you want and follow the instructions.

Phone. Call Joanne at 1-800-217-5200 or 1-812-238-5504 and have her help you place an order (you need to have a credit card available). She is available 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM EST.

By Mail. Simply make out a check to *Prayer Connect*, in the amount of the subscription you want and mail it to us. If the address on the check is not the mailing address you want to use, please include the proper mailing address in your envelope. Mail to: **Prayer Connect, P.O. Box 10667, Terre Haute, IN 47801.**

PRAYERCONNECT

September/October 2014 | Vol. 4, No. 4



12

Roadblock Ahead

Removing Hindrances in Your Prayer Life, p. 11

- 12 When God Doesn't Respond**
12 Scriptural Reasons God May Not Be Answering Your Prayers
By Bill Elliff
- 18 7 Roadblocks to Prayer**
Declutter Your Time with the Lord
By Rebecca Shirey
- 24 The Weapon of Forgiveness**
How to Combat Satan's Chokehold on Your Prayer Life
By Kerry Shuey
- 29 A Bible Study**
Removing the Hindrances in Our Prayer Lives
By Sandra Higley


Features

- 32 What's In a Name?**
The Great Privilege of Praying in Jesus' Name
By Todd Gaddis
- 38 Spur Yourself On**
Get Ongoing Prayer Support
By Lisa Bartelt

Jesus' Name



32



24

Departments

- 5 Publisher's Note**
When Theology Ruins Faith
- 7 News & Events**
 - Christians in Iraq and Syria Desperately Need Prayer
 - Prayer Focus on International Students
 - Battle Against Pornography Sees Breakthrough
 - New Effort to Transform U.S. Launched
 - Supreme Court Upholds Prayer at Council Meetings
 - Three Streams Come Together with One Dream
 - National Prayer Assembly Before Elections
- 31 In One Accord**
Our *One* Cry Makes a Difference
- 43 Tips & Tools**
 - Managing My Good Intentions in Prayer
 - Warriors under His Wings
 - Pray the Baby's Name
 - Will You Pray with Us?
- 45 Surf's Up**
Intimacy and Ignited Intercession
- 46 Prayer Leader**
Rallying Prayer Support for Your Pastor
- 47 Classics**
The Revival We Need



www.prayershop.org

**Visit the Largest Prayer-Only
Store on the Internet**

We're Everything Prayer!

- Corporate Prayer ■ Bible Studies/Small Groups
- Personal Prayer ■ Intercession ■ Prayer Guides
- Spiritual Warfare ■ Prayer Ministry Teams
- Church ■ Women ■ Children ■ Youth ■ Men
- Conferences ■ Prayer Evangelism and
- 24 other categories

Join the CPLN
and save 20-40%
on all products

*Take an
Additional
15% Off One Order*
Use Code PCPS914
at Checkout to Receive
Discount

www.prayershop.org

Sponsored by



CONTACTUS

Business and Shipping Address

PRAYERCONNECT
3525 S. 3rd Pl. | Terre Haute, IN 47802
812.238.5504 | prayerconnect.net

Article Submissions

We are looking for general articles, ideas, and news stories on what God is doing as a result of prayer. As a start-up magazine, we are primarily looking for newly written pieces that have not appeared in other publications. Writer's guidelines are available by emailing Carol Madison at editor@prayerconnect.net. For news stories, we recommend emailing first to see if we have an interest in reporting on the event or item you wish to write about. Send your submissions to:

Carol Madison
Prayer Connect Submissions
4300 West 98th St. | Bloomington, MN 55437
editor@prayerconnect.net

Subscriptions

Prayer Connect is a bi-monthly publication, available in Church Prayer Leaders Network (CPLN) Membership (\$30 per year), Print (\$24.99 per year) or Digital (\$19.99 per year) formats. Both CPLN and Print subscriptions include access to the Digital version. To subscribe, go to prayerconnect.net. We also have multiple copy discounts available for individuals or churches who want to purchase copies for a prayer team or small groups:

prayerconnect.net
Joanne Telle
800.217.5200 or 812.238.5504

Permissions

Jonathan Graf
jong@harvestprayer.com | 812.238.5504

Reprint Permissions

If you are making copies for your small group or for church use, you have blanket permission to make up to 100 copies without asking for permission (as long as the copies are not sold or in a for-sale product). Please include the phrase: "Copied from *Prayer Connect* (Issue #). Used with permission." Contact us to gain permission for all other uses, including posting articles on the Internet. We do encourage you to put links on Facebook and Twitter to articles that are open to the public at prayerconnect.net.

Advertising

If you would like information on placing an ad in *Prayer Connect*, or if you have concerns or questions about our ads, please contact:
Prayer Connect, 3525 S. 3rd Pl. Terre Haute, IN 47802
advertising@prayerconnect.net | 812.238.5504

Need a Speaker for Your Prayer Conference or Event?

There are a number of gifted speakers associated with *Prayer Connect*. Jonathan Graf regularly ministers in churches of varying sizes. Carol Madison is also available to minister in the area of prayer for revival and community transformation. Our parent organizations, Harvest Prayer Ministries and the Church Prayer Leaders Network, have many speakers associated with their ministries. You can find their contact information at the respective emails or websites.

Jonathan Graf | jong@harvestprayer.com
Carol Madison | editor@prayerconnect.net
harvestprayer.com | prayerleader.com

Sponsored by

America's National Prayer Committee
Denominational Prayer Leaders Network
International Prayer Council

Published by

Church Prayer Leaders Network
Harvest Prayer Ministries
PrayerShop Publishing

The mission of **PRAYERCONNECT** is

1. To encourage and equip believers toward a deeper walk with Jesus Christ through prayer—our experiential connection to God.
2. To resource prayer leaders and pastors with tools to help them motivate, disciple, and mobilize believers in churches to be a part of an army that seeks to pray the purposes of God for churches, communities, and the nations.
3. To be a unifying force between prayer ministries, community transformation groups, and churches.

Publisher/Editor-in-Chief

Jonathan Graf
jong@harvestprayer.com

Editor

Carol Madison
editor@prayerconnect.net

Art Director

J. Bridget Rennie

Editorial Assistants

Joyce Ellis
Joan Sherman

Contributing Writer

Kim Butts

Subscriptions/Orders

Joanne Telle

Previously in Prayer Connect

God is actively engaged with His people, speaking through thoughts, dreams, visions, and other creative means. The real question is whether we are paying attention and listening.

The July/August 2014 issue on “God Speaks” and other back issues are available at prayershop.org



When Theology Ruins Faith

As a person with a graduate degree and a teacher's heart, I have always valued the importance of education. I love to see churches with good discipleship ministries. An understanding of theology is important. When people do not have correct theology, things can get a little wonky, especially in the prayer arena.



But I am also fascinated with the way we sometimes see God at work more clearly in places where the church is weak in teaching, where good theology is often lacking. Why is that?

Over the past few months, we have been working on the November/December 2014 issue of *Prayer Connect*, with the theme of prayer and faith. One of the articles deals with why we tend to see more miracles in third-world nations than here in the Western world. Author John Robb of the International Prayer Council is at the forefront of monitoring miraculous prayer activity around the world.

One of the major reasons John cites for the difference in the number of miracle sightings is the lack of childlike faith. He explains that adults tend to be encumbered by the baggage of doubt, fear, and a limited belief system. This keeps us from trusting God to do what He promises. We are captive to a “non-supernatural” worldview.

More than any other church in history, the Western church of the 1950s through the 1980s taught its people Bible knowledge and theology. Multiple teaching times each week from the pulpit, Sunday school classes, small groups, conferences, and evangelism training—all centered on Scripture. You would think the result would have been a stronger church. But instead we seem to have a much weaker church, an almost miracle-less church today. Why is that?

We in the Western church want everything explained to us. We need to know why and how something works. If we don't understand something, we look for an explanation. We also like three easy steps, a clear process that works every time. But when it comes to theology and prayer, it is tough to have everything perfectly explained. God so often seems to work outside of our theologies—and He won't be forced into a box.

He admires childlike faith. “More knowledge” seems to work against that simple faith of a child. For adults, the fear of doing something wrong dictates our faith. We easily slip into skepticism and doubt. We have theological responses already prepared for when God doesn't answer our prayers the way we want Him to.

Paul poses the question in Galatians 3:5: “So again I ask, does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law [or good theology], or by your believing what you heard?”

I am not opposed to strong theology—and I am quick to point out bad theology when I see it entering into a situation. But I also know that a person's theology can be wrong, and God is going to work the way He chooses to work, no matter how we try to explain Him in step-by-step theological terms.

I am interested now in gaining more childlike faith when I pray. It seems that when we do not have a supernatural worldview—especially regarding prayer—our theology can get a little wonky, too.

—Jonathan Graf

"Build up, build up, prepare the road! Remove the obstacles out of the way of My people."

Isaiah 57: 14



Three Streams - One Dream

City-Reaching, Revival and Prayer

November 19-20, 2014

at the Country Inn & Suites, Wheaton, Illinois

*A National Conversation on
Preparing for an Outpouring of the Spirit on Your City*

featured speakers



Bob Bakke
OneCry Prayer Summits



Brad Bush
*International
Revival Institute*



Jon Graf
*Harvest Prayer
Ministries*



Phil Miglioratti
*City Impact Roundtable
and Mission America*



Bob Smart
Pastor & Author



Patrick Black
Worship Leader

register online at:

www.International-Revival.org
or call 765-497-3199 for more information





Christians in Iraq and Syria Desperately Need Prayer

Christians in Iraq and Syria are fleeing severe violence targeted at them. The violence includes church attacks, killings, robberies, and rapes. In the past decade the Christian population in Mosul (city in northern Iraq and the capital of the Nineveh Province) shrank from 35,000 to 3,000. In recent weeks, the remaining Christians fled, according to World Watch Monitor, which analyzes the reasons behind the exodus.

In late February 2014, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) invaded Raqqa in northern Syria. They forced Christian community leaders to sign a contract agreeing to a set of stringent conditions. These included the payment of a special tax (known as *jizya*), conducting Christian rites only behind closed doors so as to be neither visible nor audible to Muslims, and adherence to Islamic commercial, dress code, and dietary regulations. In exchange for “protection,” ISIS has prohibited the ringing of church bells and all praying in public, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) reported.

An array of 175 American religious leaders recently urged the United States to support Christianity's historical heartland. U.S. Rep. Frank Wolf (R-VA), a longtime religious freedom advocate who helped create the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) in 1998, says, “These defenseless religious communities are facing an existential crisis, which threatens their very survival in the lands they have inhabited for centuries. The faith leaders . . . recognize that unless the American church begins to champion this cause, the foreign policy establishment will hardly lead the way. [These faith leaders] are committing to be their ‘brother’s keeper,’ whether in Nineveh, Cairo or Homs.”

The International Prayer Council has issued several calls to prayer that include these prayer points:

- that Christians will not be discouraged and will continue to unite in authoritative prayer for their nation



Photo by ©iStock.com/Carillet

- that Christians throughout Iraq and Syria will know the peace and presence of Jesus each day and will remain faithful to Him and clear in their testimony
- that God will bring about His purposes for these nations and the surrounding areas
- that those who are perpetuating the conflict will know the Spirit's conviction of sin and come to understand the depth of Jesus' forgiveness.

Adapted from *International Prayer Connections* (ipcprayer.org).

Prayer Focus on International Students

The first Global Day of Prayer for International Students (GD-PIS), designed to help Christians focus their faith and love on meeting the needs of visitors from abroad, will be observed on Monday, November 17. The day will be marked with united intercession by individuals and small groups, directed toward overseas visitors and those who minister to them.

International study is a growing global phenomenon. More than one million international students are now enrolled in U.S. universities and schools of higher education. In many countries, November 17 is already recognized as International



Student Day and celebrated with campus festivals and events.

The GDPIS organizing committee is an independent group made up of campus ministries, including local campus fellowships, churches, denominations

and outreach groups such as Bridges International, Chi Alpha, International Students Incorporated, International Student Ministries, and Overseas Students Mission.

The November 17 date comes just before the American Thanksgiving

holiday—a time when Christians are urged to set an extra plate at their tables for visiting foreign students.

BILL BRAY is a frequent contributor to ASSIST News Service (assistnews.net).



Battle Against Pornography Sees Breakthrough

Prayer leaders David Rowsome and Warwick Marsh, of Australia's National Day of Prayer and Repentance, report a major breakthrough in the battle against pornography: "We believe this is the result of the prayers of many around the world."

On June 6, 2014, Google, the top Internet site in the world, announced it is stopping all advertisements for pornography as well as all ads that link to sexually explicit websites. Google also agreed to stop offering sexually explicit apps in their phone app store, Google Play.

The announcement came just two weeks after a delegation of anti-porn activists met with Google executives at their offices in Washington, D.C. The organization called Porn Harms, a part of Morality in Media, organized the meeting that included Family Research Council,



Concerned Women for America, Enough Is Enough, and Focus on the Family.

Porn Harms had named Google in its "Dirty Dozen," a list of companies helpful to the porn industry. Specifically, the group complained to Google about porn on Google Play, on Google-owned YouTube, and in Google ads. Porn Harms leadership found out about Google's decision via the porn industry news sites complaining about the change.

"We thank God for this amazing news. We believe it is no accident that this was announced while we prayed and fasted during the global D-Day Prayer Storm on Friday, June 6, 2014," says the report from Rowsome and Marsh. "Our American brothers and sisters in Christ called us to a time of prayer, fasting and repentance to ask God to turn back the tide of evil in the Church and our societies."

They add, "This global call to fast and pray is built upon other prayer initiatives around the world including our own 2014 Australia National Day of Prayer and Fasting, followed by 40 Days of Prayer and Fasting, when we focused on praying for a renewal of sexual purity. So once again, we thank God for this amazing breakthrough which we believe is the greatest single victory in the battle against pornography in the last 40 years."

New Effort to Transform U.S. Launched

On July 2, a new website was launched marking the release of Renewal of America's effort to raise up 100 million intercessors who will pray faithfully for the transformation of the United States.

"Renewal of America," according to *renewalofamerica.org*, "is a movement of many Christians from all across America, united under Jesus Christ and praying for revival in America. We are young and old, rich and poor, black and white—but we all believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, and we believe that God is not done with America."

"George Washington prayed during the Revolutionary War, and he led America to victory and became our first president. When the Constitutional Congress was stuck in creating our constitution, Benjamin Franklin called for a time of prayer. Today, our country faces a new kind of crisis. We are falling

away from God and polluting the world with our immorality. Our vision is to see 100 million Christians in America—and, someday, one billion Christians around the world—band together in prayer for revival and join together to help reach our country and our world for Jesus Christ."

Birthered in the heart of businessman Bob Williamson, Renewal of America is a joint effort of many Christian business people. Teams of business leaders and prayer leaders are working together on this massive effort to raise up an army of praying believers.

Believers are encouraged to take a simple pledge expressing their interest to stand together in prayer for the nation.

Prayer information will become available to get participants praying in a unified, non-partisan way.



Vonette Bright was first to sign the pledge.

In a symbolic ceremony at a gathering of prayer leaders and businesspeople near Tallahassee, FL, June 30–July 1, 2014, Vonette Bright, the co-founder of Cru and founder of America's National Prayer Committee, became the first person to sign the site's pledge, marking its launch.

You can learn more about the movement and sign the pledge at *renewalofamerica.org*. Those who pledge can also "like" Renewal of America on Facebook and encourage their churches and friends to connect with this movement.



Supreme Court Upholds Prayer at Council Meetings

A divided Supreme Court ruled in May that legislative bodies, such as city councils, can begin their meetings with prayer, even if that prayer plainly favors a specific religion.

The court ruled 5 to 4 that Christian prayers said before meetings of an upstate New York town council did not violate the constitutional prohibition against government establishment of religion. The justices cited history and tradition.

The ruling reflected a Supreme Court that has become more lenient regarding how government may accommodate religion in civic life without crossing the line into an endorsement of a particular faith.

The court's five conservatives said legislative prayers need not be stripped of references to a specific religion—the prayers at issue often invoked Jesus Christ and the resurrection—and said those given the opportunity to pray before legislative meetings should be “unfettered” by what government officials find appropriate.

“Absent a pattern of prayers that

over time denigrate, proselytize, or betray an impermissible government purpose, a challenge based solely on the content of a particular prayer will not likely establish a constitutional violation,” Justice Anthony M. Kennedy wrote for the court's conservative majority.

The case involved the New York town of Greece, just outside Rochester, where the council regularly opened its meetings with a prayer delivered by someone from the community. The speakers were recruited from local houses of worship, which were overwhelmingly Christian.

The Supreme Court decided 30 years ago that state legislatures may begin sessions with an invocation. But the new case asked whether there might need to be different rules for local council meetings, where citizens often come to ask for favorable official action.

Kennedy also wrote: “Legislative prayer has become part of our heritage



Photo by ©iStock.com/Becquart

and tradition, part of our expressive idiom, similar to the Pledge of Allegiance, inaugural prayer, or the recitation of ‘God save the United States and this honorable Court’ at the opening of this Court's sessions.” He also said there was no evidence that Greece town council members “allocated benefits and burdens based on participation in the prayer.”

Taken from *The Informer*, Intercessors for America (ifapray.org).

Three Streams Come Together with One Dream

Leaders passionate about seeing transformation in society will meet at a first-ever gathering called a National Conversation on Preparing for an Outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Our Cities, November 19–20, 2014, in Wheaton, IL.

The event brings together leaders from three movements (city-reaching, revival, and prayer) to discuss how to unify efforts to see a national revival and spiritual awakening in the United States.

The event is sponsored by the International Revival Institute, with support and participation from Mission America Coalition, City Impact Roundtable,

Awakening Chicagoland, National Pastor's Prayer Network, and the Chicagoland Transformation Fellowship. Each group is working toward transformation in cities, but this gathering brings the streams together to talk about collaborating efforts.

Rev. Brad Bush, director of the International Revival Institute, explains: “The Lord Jesus Christ has raised up and continues to sustain and expand three distinct but related movements in our country: united and passionate prayer, preparation and expectation for revival, and coordinated efforts for reaching our cities by proclaiming in word and deed

NEED
PRAYER
?

855-704-7729

PRAYERCONNECT has partnered with the Prayer and Crisis Referral Network to offer a phone-in prayer line—with a live intercessor who will pray for your need. If you need prayer, let a trained intercessor pray for you!



the good news of the Kingdom of God.”

He adds, “Coincidence? Each of these movements originated from the heart of Christ, are sustained and guided by the Holy Spirit and led by His servants, and strategically placed in cities, communities, and regions across our land. Together, we believe these streams may comprise His preparation for the coming next Great Awakening.”

“An anticipated, prayed-for outpouring of the Spirit of Christ that impacts entire communities, cities, and regions is the dream that may become reality from these three streams,” continues Bush. “In light of this possibility, could it be time for these movements to begin to talk to each other, to build consensus on what may be coming, and to collaborate on plans that prepare the way of the Lord?”

The National Conversation will center around this question: If the Lord Jesus Christ were to pour out His Spirit upon

a community or region in response to believing prayer, how might these three streams of Kingdom life—city-reachers, revivalists, and intercessors—begin to build trust and collaborate together to help ensure lasting fruit from such a revival for the glory of the Lord? Like various groups of a community working together to prepare for an imminent flood, these ministry streams believe they can take steps to prepare for spiritual transformation of regions as well.

This groundbreaking, two-day gathering will be a roundtable of leaders and representatives of these three streams. They will meet to discern what the Spirit is saying to the Church through the process of interviews, plenary sessions, worship and prayer, Q&A, historical analysis, and sharing contemporary examples of what Christ is doing in communities in preparation for an outpouring of His Spirit.

The expectation is that participants will gain a better understanding of and a higher regard and respect for each stream, and that they will leave with action steps for working together. Time will also be devoted to discerning what further direction is needed and what issues and questions need to be addressed in future National Conversations.

Every participant is considered a plenary speaker in the roundtable setting. Some assigned preparation will be requested. Due to the nature of this initial National Conversation, registration will be limited.

The conveners ask that those who give leadership to any of these three streams prayerfully consider participating in this National Conversation. You may register at international-revival.org. For more information contact info@international-revival.org.

National Prayer Assembly Before Elections

Leaders of four major ministry coalitions have sensed a call from God to hold a National Prayer Assembly in Washington, D.C. just prior to Election Day. The Assembly will be held October 29–30, 2014, at the Pentagon Sheraton City in Arlington (next to Reagan National Airport). In addition, some time will be spent praying on-site in downtown Washington.

According to Dave Butts, chairman of America’s National Prayer Committee (NPC), the event “comes at a crucial time in our nation’s life. It is not a time for politicking or posturing, but for passionate prayer for a fresh move of God for the transformation of our nation. Our prayer focus will be on repentance, reconciliation, and revival in the spirit of God’s great promise for national restoration in 2 Chronicles 7:14.”

Sponsors hope that many spiritual

leaders and intercessors who regularly lift up the nation will hear God’s call to join in this solemn event.

“Are you sensing a call of God to a time of intense intercession for the United States?” asks Butts. “At this time of growing crisis in which our nation seems to have lost its direction morally, spiritually, politically, and economically, we are challenging anyone to come who feels a tug from the Lord to participate.”

The National Prayer Assembly is sponsored by the NPC, Mission America, the International Prayer Council and Renewal of America. To register, go to nationalprayercommittee.com. The cost is \$55 (meals are not included). You may stay at any hotel, but if you choose the Sheraton, the rates are \$184 (single or double) per night until the room block is gone. Call 1 (800) 325-3535 to book at the Sheraton.

Prayer Calendar

Cry Out America
Thursday, September 11
awakeningamerica.us

See You at the Pole
Wednesday, September 24
syatp.com

Day of Prayer for the Peace of Jerusalem
Sunday, October 5
daytopray.com

Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church
Sunday, November 2
onewiththem.com

Global Day of Prayer for International Students
Monday, November 17

Roadblock Ahead

Removing the Hindrances in Your Prayer Life

I confess there's one hindrance in my prayer life that opposes me with a vengeance even before I start my day.

It's my snooze alarm.

Late nights beckon me. As a freelancer with a night-owl predisposition, I am often quite productive when most people are watching the news and wrapping things up for the day. As a result, many early mornings I keep hitting the snooze alarm *just one more time*. And each time I tap it represents a little less time available to spend with the Lord.

But this can actually be a symptom of a deeper underlying roadblock in my prayer life. It's a roadblock that can rise up at any time. It's the question that sometimes lingers in the back of my mind: *Does all this prayer really make a difference?*

The question popped up again this morning as I prayer-walked my community, asking for a Christ-awakening in every home. *Will people really become followers of Jesus because I'm out here praying? Does this really make a difference, Lord?*

Of course I know the truth—it does. The Lord wouldn't call us to pray if it didn't matter. But sometimes, I wonder. And just that little bit of questioning can slip in as a hindrance to praying with faith.

I'm thankful the Lord graciously reminds me in various ways that, yes, our prayers do matter. Recently, while reading through Exodus, I came across a note in the margin next to Exodus 31:2-6 (NLT): "Look, I have specifically chosen Bezalel . . . I have filled him with the Spirit of God, giving him great wisdom, ability, and expertise in all kinds of crafts. . . . He is a master at every craft!"

I had written that I prayed this passage for my friend Evan in September of 2009. I have no idea why. So after rereading the passage, I mentioned it to Evan.

"That's just crazy," he said. Apparently, at that exact time, Evan was in Bolivia helping record a Christian album. The process was not what he expected, and he ended up having to play many of the instruments and percussion himself—something he was not skilled to do. "I had no idea how I was going to pull it off," he said. But God suddenly made him a "master at every craft."

It was, once again, the reminder I needed that God invites us to pray because He has every intention of answering! We just need persistence in overcoming the barriers.

Unending Struggles

Obviously my snooze alarm and my questioning thoughts are only a couple examples of the many hindrances and roadblocks that can affect the prayer lives of many well-meaning believers. We know we should pray. We are always glad when we do pray. Yet the struggles seem unending.

In this issue, Bill Elliff tackles various reasons God might not be responding to our prayers. Scripture is clear that sin, pride, unforgiveness, and broken relationships can affect the way God listens. Rebecca Shirey sheds light on everyday roadblocks we may experience (time, distractions, delays, interruptions) and offers practical suggestions for overcoming them. And Kerry Shuey delves into one of the strongest roadblocks: unforgiveness.

But when we faithfully pursue Christ, pray even when it's difficult or uncertainty arises, and when we seek to push through the roadblocks, God blesses us with the joy of being in relationship with Him through this gift of prayer.

And sometimes the answers are "just crazy."

CAROL MADISON is editor of *Prayer Connect*.



When God

Does

Wait

When my high school friend invited me to work with him on his car, I was happy to join him. One problem: I knew *nothing* about cars! He told me to start taking the engine apart and we would put it back together later. I did, he did—and for the next six months the engine parts lay in his yard.

We actually worked hard, but our work was worse than useless. It merely created a junkyard on a really nice street!

Many believers today are getting desperate. Seeing the moral and spiritual free fall in the world around us and the declining condition of the church in our land drives us to cry out to God. We need Him. We need His manifest presence. We need revival in the church and spiritual awakening among the unbelieving. We need our nation to be restored to its Kingdom calling as a mighty, gospel-sending station to the world.

12
**Scriptural Reasons
God May Not
Be Answering
Your Prayers**



esn't Respond

According to Scripture, the precursor to any great movement of God is always humble, repentant prayer. We thank God that people across the country are praying in record numbers. But wouldn't it be tragic to discover that our prayers are not effective? Wouldn't it be heartbreaking to learn that some things in our lives prevent our prayers from accomplishing what is so desperately needed? Wouldn't it be devastating to find out that all our hard work in prayer is doing nothing to advance the Kingdom?

What if we are simply littering heaven's yard with unusable prayers?

Evaluating Our Prayer Lives

While Scripture contains hundreds of positive promises regarding answered prayer, God also outlines many things that will hinder our prayers. No one prays perfectly, and God is not playing with us. He does not make intercession so unattainable that only the super-spiritual can be effective. He understands our weakness. But He is also very clear about those things that can hinder our prayers.

By Bill Elliff

LET YOUR CHURCH BE A PRAYER CATALYST

HOST A REGIONAL



CHURCH PRAYER LEADERS NETWORK EVENT

Fire up your people to pray

Position yourself as a regional church

Bless your community with an
excellent prayer resource

A recent conference host-church prayer
leader reported:

"Please share a huge thank you and praise with your team. . . . Our small group saw revival tonight as I have never witnessed in our church. Half of them were not even at the conference, but those that were shared with such testimony and passion that the entire group went to prayer on our knees . . . in humbleness and repentance and brokenness before the Lord. We made a commitment tonight to be the start of Spiritual Awakening in our church, community and beyond."

**WE ARE CURRENTLY LOOKING
FOR HOST CHURCHES FOR 2013**

WHAT'S INVOLVED?

The CPLN brings in two keynote speakers and additional workshop teachers, you provide the facilities, worship and local logistics. Depending on which package you select, your costs beyond facility use range from free to \$2,000.

Contact the CPLN today for more details.

Email jong@harvestprayer.com
for information.

www.prayerleader.com

Are we willing to evaluate the effectiveness of our prayer lives? It may help to walk through the following questions, step-by-step, with an honest heart. And when God shows us areas of need, we can turn to Him in repentance and take the necessary steps to adjust our lives to encounter Him afresh in prayer.

1. Are we simply praying?

1. You do not have because you do not ask God (James 4:2).

Many people do not see prayers answered because they do not pray. They talk about prayer, teach and preach about prayer, and tell people "I'm praying for you!" But it is often hypocrisy. If you do not see God's activity in and through your life, it may be because you have not taken the steps to become a man or woman who is simply praying.

2. Are we praying simply?

2. "When you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him" (Matt. 6:7-8, NASB).

God is not impressed by flowery words or fine oratory. He loves sincere, simple hearts. He knows our needs and is not waiting for us to petition Him with perfect elocution. He longs for His children to climb up in His lap and enjoy Him.

One of the most liberating moments in prayer is to realize you can come to Him in sincerity, honesty, and simplicity—speaking to Him as friend to friend or child to loving Father.

3. Are we entering in?

3. "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you" (Matt. 6:6).

"Hurry is the death of prayer," said Samuel Chadwick. Many have not learned how to enter into God's presence. If we had the opportunity to enter physically into His presence, we would not pop in, read a laundry list of requests, and pop out. We would quiet our souls. His magnificence would humble us. We would worship and adore Him.

We can enter into the closet of prayer anywhere—in a room with a few friends or a congregation of thousands. But only when we enter in, shut the door, and turn our gaze to the Father, will we position ourselves to hear from Him. And only as we hear from Him are we able to pray Spirit-initiated prayers.

4. Are we praying Spirit-initiated prayers?

Jesus said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him . . . I speak the things which I have seen with My Father" (John 8:28-29, 38, NASB).

Effective prayer is a loop that begins in heaven, travels through our hearts and minds, and then returns to heaven. Jesus always did and said what His Father was initiating. The activity did not begin with the Man, Jesus, but with the Father to the Man and through the Man. In this way, Jesus was constantly doing His Father's will, and His prayers were perfectly aligned and stunningly effective.

To be heard, listen first! Find out what the Spirit is saying and then pray in alignment with Him. God always answers prayers that He initiates!

5. Are we aligning our motives with God's?

You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that

you may spend it on your pleasures. You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God (James 4:3–4).

Your kingdom come; your will be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:10).

God gives no promise to bless our plans and our will, only His. In fact, He specifically reminds us that He will not hear and answer prayers that are selfish. Prayer is not aligning God with what we want, but spending time in His presence to align us with *His* will and plan.

6. Are we praying to be seen by men?

“When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full” (Matt. 6:5).

When we pray to impress others, only *they* will hear us. Becoming overly conscious of those around us can drown out our consciousness of the One to whom we are praying. Self-exalting prayers are not prayers at all. They are merely expressions of a proud heart.

7. Are we harboring known sin?

If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened (Psalm 66:18).

Everyone who prays is sinful and fights an ongoing battle against the world, the flesh, and the devil. But there is a difference between fighting against sin and harboring sin.

God knows our struggle. He was tempted in all points like us, therefore we can “approach God’s throne of grace

with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (Heb. 4:16). But often God will withhold His presence and His provision to get our attention so that we will deal with the sins that are destroying us and those around us.

8. Are we right with those around us?

“If you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering” (Matt. 5:23–24, NASB).

The Father is aggressively concerned about the unity of His family. When His children are not right with each other, He uses every means to bring them

back into right relationship. He wants us to be in perfect unity with Him and with one another.

Of all the things Jesus could have prayed for in His final, high priestly prayer, this is what He requested of the Father (John 17:21). He knows we cannot hear Him and find His will if we are withholding forgiveness from others.

9. Are we treating our mates with respect and honor?

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers (1 Peter 3:7).

Our homes are our first church. They are the proving grounds, the laboratory for the things of God, so He wants us to

The image is a promotional graphic for OneCry. At the top, the word "ONECRY" is written in a large, bold, blue font. The letter "O" is white with a blue outline, and the letter "1" is a solid blue number. Below the logo, the text "A Nationwide Call for Spiritual Awakening" is written in a smaller, black font. In the center, the words "TURN // PRAY // UNITE" are displayed in a large, bold, blue font, with double slashes between the words. Below each word is a short description: "in humble repentance from every sin God reveals to us" under "TURN", "with urgency for spiritual recovery and awakening" under "PRAY", and "with other believers in spreading the hope of revival" under "UNITE". At the bottom, a silhouette of a city skyline is shown against a dark background. Below the skyline, the text "To learn more about OneCry and to join the movement, visit" is written in a small, white font, followed by the website address "www.onecry.com" in a large, bold, white font.

first learn how to walk rightly with our families. God warns us that a dishonoring relationship with our spouse can destroy our effectiveness in prayer. This verse means exactly what it says. If I were to callously dishonor a friend's child, he would have a hard time listening to any request I would make of him. The same is true of God.

10. Are we praying with a proud, unbroken heart?

"Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'
"But the tax collector, standing some

distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'

"I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 18:10–14).

God hates pride—lifting ourselves up above Him. In fact, Scripture says He "resists the proud" (James 4:6, NKJV). This is a resistance we cannot afford to experience. A proud, judgmental, unbroken heart will skew prayer. How great it would be if our first prayer became, "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner!"

11. Are we listening to and gladly responding to God's Word?

He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, even his prayer is an abomination (Prov. 28:9, NASB).

The Bible is not a collection of man's thoughts about God. It is God speaking! Since prayer needs to be God-initiated to be effective, how can we pray such prayers if we are unwilling to listen and respond to His Word?

It is arrogant to believe we can ignore what *He* is saying and then expect Him to pay attention to what *we* are saying. God longs for us to be effective in intercession for His Kingdom's sake. He knows this is best accomplished as we listen and respond to His Word.

12. Are we giving up in prayer?

[Jesus] was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart (Luke 18:1).

The parable Jesus shared in Luke 18 calls us to enduring prayer. George Mueller prayed all his life for the salvation of

two of his boyhood friends. When asked if he had stopped praying for them, he replied that he could not give up because God had assured him of the answer. One of his friends was saved at Mueller's funeral, the other six months after his death.

The timing of God's answers must be left in the hands of a Sovereign God who does all things perfectly. He knows what He's doing.

Peeling Back Layers of Hindrance

Several years ago I found myself in a very dry time—bland Bible study and hindered prayers. Worst of all, my love for Christ had grown cold. As the New Year began, I felt God calling me to spend an extended time in fasting, simply to lay aside everything that was clouding my heart so I could hear Him.

The first days of fasting usually just make me mad as I miss my food! But this time, as the days continued, I found my heart softening. The Lord peeled back layers of sin and showed me ways I had been disregarding Him. He began to speak to me in new ways through His Word. He placed fresh, heaven-sent prayers into my soul. I fell in love with Him all over again.

Not long after this time, God answered one of the great prayers of my heart and sent a mighty work of revival to the church I pastor. That revival lasted five weeks, three to four hours every night. I do not pretend that my solitary prayers, once rightly aligned, brought revival. But I know that He prepared my heart for what He was about to accomplish. And I know He was graciously initiating and answering prayer afresh in my life. ☑



BILL ELLIFF, the teaching and directional pastor of The Summit Church in Little Rock, AK, also serves on the executive leadership team of OneCry (onecry.com).

Phone Line Intercessors Needed

The Prayer and Crisis Referral Network needs intercessors who can commit to a minimum of 2 hours a week to pray for those who call in—from the comfort of your own home.

GO TO
prayerandcrisisreferral.org
AND CLICK ON VOLUNTEER
FOR INFORMATION.

The PCRN handles prayer calls for *Prayer Connect* magazine.



Do you want encouragement to grow in prayer?
Would you like tools to help you connect with God more?

Let Harvest Prayer Ministries assist you.

*We exist to transform lives
through teaching prayer.*

Harvest provides services to help individuals and churches catch a passion and vision for deeper levels of prayer. Through prayer weekends, consulting, resources, and its web offerings, HPM will challenge, encourage and equip you and your church to grow deeper in prayer.



Harvest Prayer
MINISTRIES

P.O. Box 10667 • Terre Haute, IN 47801

1-812-238-5504

harvestprayer.com

prayerleader.com

prayershop.org

prayerretreat.net

strategicpi.org

prayerconnect.net

prayertoday.org

praytheword.net

Check out
our websites:





By Rebecca Shirey

Is our commitment to prayer strong enough to knock down the many roadblocks the enemy throws in front of us? “Prayer can never be in excess,” said Charles Spurgeon, a 19th-century British minister and writer. Most of us agree with Spurgeon, yet we may struggle with various roadblocks to prayer. We understand that being still before the Lord requires disengaging from intrusions in order to concentrate on Him, but unwelcome thoughts often hijack our focus.

When we think about the Luke 10 account of Jesus visiting the home of

Mary and Martha, most of us aspire to be Mary, seated at the feet of Jesus and choosing the better way (v. 42). But too often we are Martha, “distracted by all the preparations” needing our attention (v. 40). Like this biblical example of *distracted*, we are *pulled different ways at the same time* by the busyness of life.

Our instant-results, fast-forward society also challenges our prayer lives. Joseph Parker, a London preacher, once complained, “I’m in a hurry but God isn’t!” We can identify with Parker—especially when we don’t get immediate answers to our prayers, and when waiting on God stretches on and on without the resolution we seek.

On the following pages, you’ll find advice from several people with longstanding commitments to prayer, and from my own experience, regarding overcoming roadblocks to prayer. Without exception, we all agree on the first essential—giving prayer priority.

to Prayer

Declutter Your Time with the Lord

WAITING

on God is active, anticipating, and maturing.

Roadblock #1: Not Enough Time

We can pray anytime and anywhere. The Apostle Paul encourages us to “pray continually” (1 Thess. 5:17). But a regular time of prayer encourages a lifestyle of prayer.

For 31 years Doug and Carla McMurray have risen every morning at 5:00 a.m. to pray for another Great Awakening in America. Your best time might not be 5:00 a.m. But determining your

prime time can help you make prayer a regular part of your day.

King David indicated *his* best time: “You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you” (Ps. 63:1). As the King James Version renders this verse, the word *earnestly* can mean *early*—first thing in the morning or first in order of priority. Like David, many people of prayer choose to enjoy time with God before the day’s events crowd their schedule—before turning on the morning news, checking social media, reading the latest emails, or eating breakfast. God deserves first place.

But if morning isn’t ideal for you, find a time when you can give God undivided attention. Since He neither slumbers nor sleeps, every moment of the day is like morning to Him.

When we block out time in our

schedule, we are less apt to find an excuse to postpone our prayers or allow the disturbance of the moment to sabotage our time with God. One mother of young children says, “Nothing short of an ER visit bumps my appointment with the Lord. A consistent time to pray sets the tone for my day, my week, and ultimately my life.”

But even more than an appointment to keep, prayer is a relationship to enjoy.

Roadblock #2: No Accountability

When Doug and Carla pray each morning, they pray one hour separately and then unite to pray for an additional hour together. Although they haven’t yet seen the Great Awakening they have been praying for, they remain faithful to their commitment to pray. From their experience the McMurrays suggest finding a prayer partner if you don’t already have one.

Although they pray separately for the first hour, being accountable to each other helps them stay faithful to their commitment to pray. A prayer partner doesn’t necessarily have to be a person you pray with regularly, but he or she can simply be someone who encourages you in prayer.

Roadblock #3: Lack of a Specific, Dedicated, Personal Place to Pray

Several years ago I visited a prayer room in a Modesto, CA, church. It was the boiler room of prayer for the church, complete with a sign over the door: The Furnace. The space was fueled by the Holy Spirit, filled with intercessors, and saturated with prayer. The atmosphere invited prayer because The Furnace was where prayer happened consistently. We can also cultivate an atmosphere of prayer in our homes. Having a consistent place to pray conditions us to spend time talking with

START THE DISCUSSION

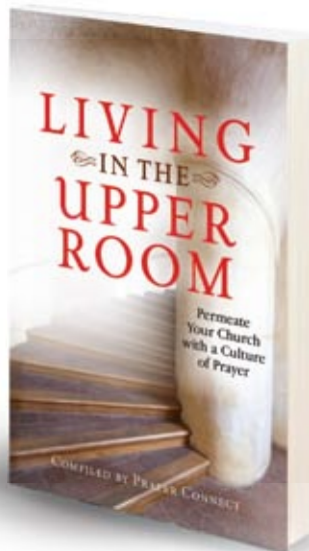
DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF PRAYER IN YOUR CHURCH

Engage your elders and staff in making prayer part of your church’s DNA.

Living in the Upper Room is a 48-page, 4 x 6 booklet that includes the theme articles of *Prayer Connect* issue 10. It offers both a picture of how dynamic a praying church can be and practical steps on how to get there. This content can inspire your leadership team to desire becoming a praying church right out of the Book of Acts.

Multiple Copy Discounts:

1 copy: \$2.99 • 2 – 9 copies: \$1.99
10 – 24 copies: \$1.49 • 25 – 99 copies: .99
100 or more copies: .59



 PRAYERSHOP
PUBLISHING
www.prayershop.org

God. Your spot might be a space in your bedroom, a chair in the corner of your family room, or a place at your kitchen table. Make the space welcoming. Keep a basket there—containing your Bible, a notebook, and a pen—as reminders to meet with God. After a while, entering your space will signal prayer.

My spot is a walk-in closet off my bedroom. It might not seem like the most comfortable place, but I don't mind sitting on the floor. It's separated from household responsibilities, and I'm less likely to be interrupted since reaching me requires opening three doors.

Because I'm a highly visual person, the darkened seclusion of my closet helps me more easily block out distractions. I can't see the pillow to fluff or the picture to straighten. I've even learned to ignore the clutter of shoes on the floor. I turn on the light to read Scripture. I turn off the light to listen to God.

The closet works for me. Experiment to discover the space that works for you, and go there day after day.

Roadblock #4: Unwelcome Distractions

Shutting the door means far more than closing those three doors along the path to my walk-in closet. It's also about shutting the door to unwelcome intrusions clouding my thoughts and disturbing my peace. It's about turning off social media and ignoring text messages or phone calls.

One intercessor said that the computer and the phone often infringed on her prayer time. Then one morning she sensed God say to her, "Whose voice do you crave most in the morning?" Now she refuses to engage with those technological intrusions until after her time with the Lord.

Sometimes, though, no matter how much willpower I exert, I'm helpless to quiet my mind. At those times, I bring my distractions before the Lord. I yield to the Holy Spirit's help. We are not alone when we pray. The Holy Spirit is

right there with us, helping us in our weakness. The psalmist reminds us, "Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you" (Ps. 55:22).

Here are ways to keep us focused on the Lord while in our closet or quiet place:

- **Praying aloud.** Research shows that the average person thinks in excess of 700 words per minute but only

speaks 100–150 words per minute. Praying aloud helps stem the rush of anxious thoughts and allows for articulating one thought at a time.

- **Writing your prayers.** Writing also helps slow your pace. And you can read back over your prayers later and gain encouragement from your growth and God's answers.

ALERT ALERT ALERT ALERT

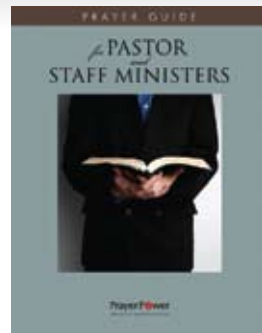
SHEPHERD IN DANGER

In his plan to render your church ineffective, *Satan's first point of attack is your Pastor!*

God has commanded us to pray for those in authority over us. To lead your church through these perilous times, your Pastor and Staff Ministers need your prayers!

Pray the Scriptures for those in authority; you can depend on God to honor His Word!

Here is your best resource. It's for you, your prayer group, your Bible study class, or your entire church... all who desire wisdom, strength, protection and power for your Pastor and Staff Ministers.



Go to prayerpowerministries.com; click on *Products* and then *Prayer Guides*. Select the guide for *Pastor and Staff Ministers*. Take advantage of quantity discounts, and equip everyone to be praying in unity. Do God's business God's way! PRAY!

\$3 (Order 100 or more for \$1.75 each!)

Now available at
www.prayerpowerministries.com

PrayerPower

Helping God's people learn to pray.

PrayerPower Ministries P.O. Box 801368 Dallas, TX 75380-1368 1-800-949-PRAY
prayerpower@prayerpowerministries.com



- **Praying Scripture.** Join with Jesus in praying the Psalms. They were His prayer book during His time on earth. Recognizing that I'm praying the same words as Jesus prayed helps calm my wandering thoughts. Praying Scripture aloud can be doubly effective. In addition to doing battle in the heavenlies, the sound of our prayers comes out of our mouth, goes in through our ears, and encourages our souls.
- **Harnessing the to-do list.** That list dominating your mind isn't always the enemy trying to distract you. Sometimes it's the Holy Spirit reminding you. Rather than becoming irritated, quickly write down what you need to remember, invite God into that event in your daily schedule, and then get back to prayer.
- **Naming your blessings.** Gratitude can deter restlessness in prayer. A

grateful heart keeps you focused on the Lord's goodness—and there are plenty of ways to thank Him!

Roadblock #5: Interruptions from Children

For parents with younger children, an uninterrupted prayer time may seem impossible. One mom uses her children's nap-time as her quiet time. When they awaken early, she sits them next to her with a book until she finishes her time with the Lord. Another mom often has a two-year-old curled up in her lap as she prays.

Both mothers see these times as opportunities to model prayer for their children. One of the moms found each of her girls, on separate occasions, lying in her bed with a Bible and pen. They told her they were having their "God time," just like her.

"That was all the encouragement I

needed to make prayer a priority!" she says.

Roadblock #6: Disappointing Delays

In prayer, as in other areas of our spiritual journey, we experience God-purposed times of waiting. Waiting on God is not like the foot-tapping impatience we experience when we discover we're once again in the slowest line in the grocery store.

Waiting on God is active, anticipating, and maturing. We wait with head erect and neck outstretched in expectation of the answer. This strengthens our confidence in the Lord and our assurance that He will indeed answer.

And as we wait, we can rest in His goodness. We can recognize that He desires the very best for us and for those we love. We can understand that He is working behind the scenes to accomplish the greatest possible outcome.

iPrayerCenter

Effective Prayer Request Management for Your Church or Ministry!

The iPrayerCenter is a full-featured prayer request and praise report management center. With our system you will be able to integrate a request form and an optional prayer wall right into your existing website.

- Use on Any Device
- Online Access
- Customizable
- Private Groups
- Moderated
- No Limits
- No Contracts
- No Setup Fees



Check us out online @ www.iprayercenter.com

One intercessor I know types out, laminates, and then places her longstanding prayer concerns on a key ring. Sometimes she reads each need, bringing them individually before the Lord. Other times she simply lifts the keychain heavenward, releasing the timing to Him.

When we experience the disappointment of delay, we can ask God to renew our passion to pray. We can ask Him to grace us with His perspective. We can find rest in these words: “I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning” (Ps. 130:5–6, ESV).

Rest in Him during the waiting time.

Roadblock #7: Preconceived Ideas

Prayer isn't a formula. We can be natural and at ease. A prayer pattern working


for someone else might not be your most comfortable way of connecting with God. Allow God to be personal to you. Eliminate preconceived ideas about prayer and simply enjoy being with Him. Ask Him, “What do You have for me today?” He will lead you into a satisfying relationship with Him through prayer.

Matthew 6:6 communicates the essence of simplicity before Him. “Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace” (MSG).

The Gospel of Mark records another account of peace and simplicity, although it certainly doesn't start out that way. It's the story of Jesus clearing the temple. Can you imagine the shock of the crowd when Jesus enters the temple grounds and begins overturning tables,

driving out the money changers? Can you hear the commotion of people yelling, money clanging, doves flapping? Do you hear His announcement? “My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations” (Mark 11:17).

Once the offenders noisily clear out, imagine the scene again: do you hear the quiet now? Do you sense the peace?

Jesus can do the same for you. Invite Him to overturn the roadblocks, quiet the noise, and drive out the concerns cluttering your life. Ask Him to make your temple a house of prayer. And you'll be able to say with Spurgeon, “Prayer can never be in excess.” 



REBECCA SHIREY travels internationally as a speaker at conferences and retreats. She and her husband Lou also serve the denominational prayer ministry of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church.

read your favorite prayer blogs in one location.

Prayer Connect Currently Features the Blogs of 9 Popular Prayer Teachers



Cynthia Bezek
Let's Talk



Dave Butts
Prayer
Awakenings



Kim Butts
Prayer as
Everyday Life



Linda Fegins
Lady of Prayer



Jonathan Graf
Prayer
Points



Daniel Henderson
Strategic Renewal
E-Devotional



Carol Madison
Just Carol
Pondering



Phil Miglioratti
Prayer Leader



Beth Rudy
Prayer Pal

View them at prayerconnect.net/blogs or have them automatically emailed to you.
Be encouraged or challenged in prayer every day!

PRAYERCONNECT.NET

We

How to Combat Satan's Chokehold on Your Prayer Life



By Kerry Shuey

The apoon of Forgiveness

M

y husband and I had the humbling opportunity of traveling to Pakistan in 2008—our second time—to minister to precious brothers and sisters who live amidst great challenges

and danger. In a mountain campground setting, we were teaching and praying with people, some of whom had traveled long distances for many hours to be taught the Word of God. One of the topics I taught was forgiveness.

As one who had a healthy dose of self-righteousness and who had battled criticism and judgment, I had been learning much about asking for and extending forgiveness.

Forgiveness as a Weapon

I began learning about the power of forgiveness years earlier when I studied the account of Stephen (Acts 6–7). This first martyr of the early Church died a painful death by stoning, and these words were his last: “Lord, do not hold this sin against them” (Acts 7:60). After Stephen forgave his enemies and murderers (including Saul, who stood by watching), the Church began to grow and spread. Eventually Saul, the great persecutor, became Paul, the great missionary.

God began to show me that forgiveness is a weapon we can use to defeat the enemy. It is a key that will unlock many doors for us. I learned that forgiveness releases us from a cage of resentment and bitterness that can cause all kinds of destruction in our lives and the lives of others. God showed

My unforgiveness and bitterness yields ground in my life to Satan.



me that I needed to forgive because I had been forgiven of so many of my own sins (Ps. 103:3). He showed me that if I want to be like Jesus, I need to forgive (Luke 23:34). And He showed me that if I want to be forgiven by God, I need to forgive others (Matt. 6:12).

My unforgiveness and bitterness, I learned, yields ground in my life to Satan, and that can lead to all kinds of sickness—emotional, physical, and spiritual—and hinder me from fulfilling my calling.

We witnessed a sad example of this while ministering in India. We traveled all evening to a remote village where many poor and sick people had assembled and were worshipping. After we spoke, many came for prayer—mostly for physical healing. Without medical help, they were desperate. But they believed Jesus could heal them. As we prayed for them, almost all were touched by God's power and healed, including a baby who was burning up with a raging fever. As the young mother with pleading eyes handed the baby to me, I felt the heat of his little body, and cried out to God. I could feel the fever going away, and his eyes became bright and alive!

Last to be prayed for was an elder's wife who was crippled with arthritis and with obvious bitterness. I asked her if she had resentment toward someone, and she said she had been wronged over a boundary dispute and that she would "never forgive that person!" I am sad to say that she left, taking her bitterness and painful arthritis with her; God would not answer her prayer. Psalms 66:18 says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (KJV).

Forgiveness Defined

In my journey to learn about the power of forgiveness, God has been teaching me what forgiveness *is* and what it *is not*.

1. Forgiveness is excusing a fault, completely canceling the expected payment for a wrong, and giving up my right to hurt someone for hurting me.
2. Forgiveness is not approval or denial of a wrong committed.
3. Forgiveness is not forgetting or pretending the wrong never happened.
4. Forgiveness is a process whereby we acknowledge our hurt but "drop our case" and surrender our pain to the Lord.

Hindrance to Answered Prayer

I also learned another important lesson: my unforgiving spirit can hinder answers to my prayers. I read in Matthew 6:14–15 that if I forgive others, God will forgive me. But if I don't, He won't forgive me. The same message comes across in Matthew 18:27–35.

Then I read this in Mark 11:25–26: "When you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins." My unforgiving, resentful attitude hindered me from the joy of an intimate walk with God. It robbed me of the victory and revival in which God wanted me to live. It caused me to not even want to pray, which is Satan's delight!

When I began to see and understand these valuable truths, I passionately wanted to be one who is quick to forgive. I realized that every opportunity to be offended or bitter is a trap of Satan to destroy my prayer life! And the more I practice forgiveness, the greater my capacity is to love, forgive, pray, and intercede for others.

God began to open doors for me to speak and teach on forgiveness. As the Holy Spirit touched people's hearts, minds, and bodies, they began experiencing healing and freedom. They were overcome with tears of repentance and joy.

Much of the bondage and defeat in people's lives is due to unforgiveness. Much of the Army of God is crippled, powerless, and *prayerless*, because they have not used the weapon of forgiveness. In their bitterness and woundedness, they have dropped out of the battle—or they are hanging out in the "M.A.S.H. Unit" way too long. They delay their healing by deciding not to forgive every offense and offender. Forgiveness is an act of obedience followed by God's grace. When we forgive, we can even love and pray for our enemies (Matt. 5:44).

Even the Most Grievous

So here we were in Pakistan, where many of our brothers and sister had experienced terrible abuse, mistreatment, and persecution. While teaching on forgiveness I noticed a young lady with a sad, troubled countenance. By the end of the message, when we offered a time to forgive, her tears were flowing. Obviously the Holy Spirit was working.

Later, during testimony time, this young woman made her way to the microphone. She told her story of how she and her family lived in the area where the Taliban is very strong. She had seen much oppression and death in the Christian community. Her own mother had been killed by the Taliban. As she spoke, I couldn't hold back the tears.

"Today, I was able to forgive my enemies," she said, "even those who killed my mother. I want to now help others receive this healing and deliverance from the bitterness and pain we can live under."

Before she left, this precious girl asked me to pray a "mother's blessing" over her,

which I gladly and humbly did. We have corresponded ever since. She went on to get more training in China and England, and she now teaches healing prayer, especially to the victims of suicide bombings. She is praying for a building to be used as a healing prayer center. Her prayers avail much! As she forgave that which might seem unforgiveable, God's grace turned her life around and catapulted her forward into a life of prayer ministry.

I have another amazing friend who has learned the freedom and blessing of forgiveness, and what God will do in an almost "unforgiveable" situation. As a child, my friend was repeatedly molested by her father. Understandably, she left home as soon as she could, but the pain and brokenness of her childhood followed her until God's grace enabled her to forgive her father. When she did, her prayer for his salvation was answered. Later, she was able to minister to him in a time of great weakness, and he asked her to forgive him for what he had done to her.

She has gone on to become an intercessor who serves on her church's prayer team. She is especially effective in ministry to victims of sexual abuse, sharing the message of forgiveness.

Effective Prayer Warriors Needed

God wants to release those in the Body of Christ who are crippled by an unforgiving spirit. This is an hour when an army of effective prayer warriors is needed. So, how do we forgive?

1. Admit that you are tired of living in the bitterness and consequences of unforgiveness. Choose not to let it reign in your heart.
2. Decide that you want the freedom of forgiveness. This choice is not based on whether the person—living or dead—deserves forgiveness or confesses any wrongdoing. It is an act of our will in obedience to God.
3. Ask God to forgive and bless those who have offended you—if they

are still living. Forgiveness is always followed by God's grace. Obviously you cannot bless those who are not living, but you can still forgive in your heart.

Let us frequently use the weapon of forgiveness, so that we may be like Jesus. He offered the ultimate forgiveness—and He is the greatest Intercessor. Let's join

Him, advancing His Kingdom through our prayers. He has called us to love the lost, the hurting, and even our enemies. **PC**



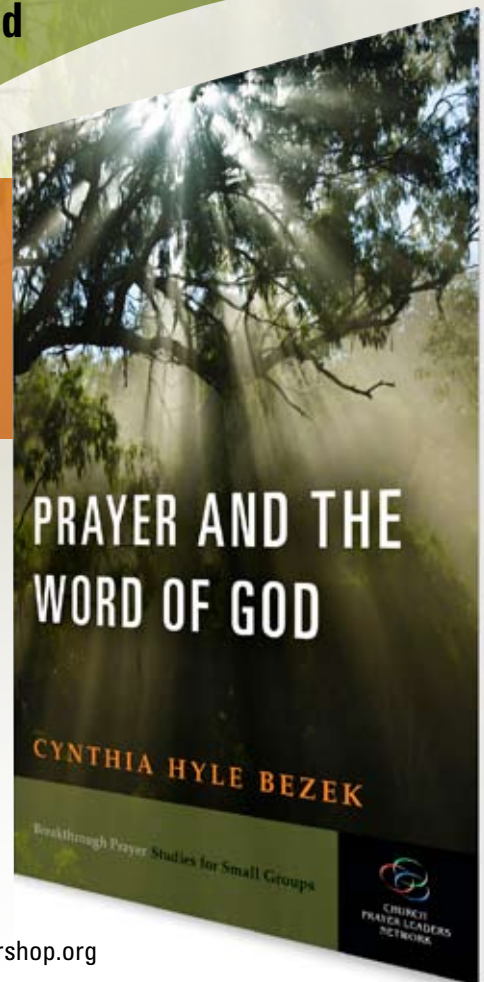
KERRY SHUEY is co-founder of KingdomQuest Ministries. She and her husband John travel internationally, training and mentoring leaders. They have co-authored the book *Breaking Free to Your Destiny* (kquestministries.org).

New Bible Study Resource

Understand the Connection between Prayer and the Word of God

Introducing a new 6-week study by **CYNTHIA HYLE BEZEK**, the former editor of *Pray!* magazine.

Prayer and the Word of God explores the relationship between prayer and responding to the Word of God—both the written Word and the spoken Word. It will help you understand how God speaks, and how to respond to His voice.



Available through your local Christian bookstore or at prayershop.org

(Use Code **PWG513** at prayershop.org to receive 10% discount)

800 217-5200 | 812 238-5504

Dick Eastman and **Every Home for Christ**, the creators of **"The World Prayer Map"** (with over five million copies in circulation globally) **present:**

THE UNITED STATES PRAYER MAP



MAP FEATURES:

A systematic calendar guide to pray for every state each month (including daily focuses for needs impacting our culture)

A guide to pray daily for America's three branches of government (including photos of the Supreme Court justices)

A plan to implement Mission America Coalition's "Prayer, Care, Share" strategy in your neighborhood...plus much more!

Pray for Revival in America!

Get Your
FREE
COPY NOW!

"Join me and a growing army of concerned intercessors in praying daily for revival and awakening across America."

Dick Eastman, International President, EHC

Order your free copy of Every Home for Christ's newly released U.S. Prayer Map (www.ehc.org). Request extra copies for your prayer group or church. Then pray for EHC's plans for an Every Home America initiative to "love our neighbors into the kingdom" in cooperation with the Mission America Coalition (www.love2020.org).



By Sandra Higley

A Bible

Removing the Hindrances in Our Prayer Lives

Study

Note: This Bible study is formatted for small group open discussion. If you use this study by yourself, we suggest you journal your answers to the discussion questions. Also, please use suggested translations where indicated. Biblegateway.com is an excellent source for translations you may not have on hand.

prayer closet—not my bedroom, not my craft room, not my kitchen. I took it to be a symbolic wake-up call that something undesirable had worked its way into my prayer life. When I asked, the Holy Spirit showed me things that were not what they should be—and a spiritual housecleaning ensued.

Several years ago, during a particularly dry prayer session with the Lord, I sat in my prayer closet in what you might describe as a palpable weariness. Having passed frustration long before, I had reached the advanced stages of “weary.” Somehow the freshness I had always enjoyed with the Lord had evaporated. No matter what expectations I brought, no matter what stirring worship music I employed, no matter which inspiring passage I read first, I could not shake the spiritual malaise that had overtaken my prayer times.

Sitting there with my eyes at half-mast, I thought I detected something moving on the floor a little to the right. I had turned down the closet light’s dimmer switch, so it was difficult to be sure. But yes, there it was again. I roused myself and looked closer. There, eyeballing me with as much haughtiness as only a member of its species could muster, was—a *snake!*

True, I had left a window open in my garden-level apartment. True, it could have been just coincidence. But that seemingly harmless little garter snake had found its way into my

Discussion Questions

On a scale of one to ten (ten being dynamic), how would you rate your prayer life? Why would you give it that rating?

Some of us have been taught since we were young that “God *always* hears our prayers.” Describe how the following verses may give a different perspective on the use of the word *always* (2 Chron. 7:14; Ps. 66:18; Isa. 1:15; 1 John 5:14–15).

What can you find in Song of Songs 2:14–16 that indicates our relationship with the Lord might be hindered by little things that creep into our lives?

Read Psalm 15, and ask the Holy Spirit to help you identify little foxes that may have crept into your own vineyard.

Bill Elliff encourages us to evaluate the effectiveness of our prayer lives by taking an honest assessment. In the following verses look for at least 12 specific areas that deserve our consideration (Ps. 66:18; Prov. 28:9; Matt. 5:23–24, 6:5–8; Luke 18:1, 10–14; John 8:28–29, 38, NASB; James 4:3–4, 6, NKJV; 1 Peter 3:7).

Based on this assessment, what specific areas can you identify in your personal life that need attention?

Kerry Shuey tells us that “much of the Army of God is crippled, powerless, and *prayerless*” because of unforgiveness. Read Psalm 103:3; Matthew 5:44, 6:12–15, 18:27–35; Mark 11:25–26; Luke 23:34, and Acts 7:60. What role does forgiveness play as a weapon in a powerful, effective life of prayer?

What other things can hinder our relationship with God (1 Sam. 15:23; Matt. 7:1–2; James 3:14–18, 4:6)?

Rebecca Shirey reminds us that living distracted, rather than engaged, can profoundly affect our prayer lives. She cites Martha of Bethany as the classic example of a Christian life filled with busy “essentials” that can clutter our to-do lists.

Read Luke 10:38–42 and John 11:1–5. What observations can you make about Jesus’ relationship with Mary and Martha in these passages?

Compare what Martha said to Jesus (John 11:21) with what Mary said to Him (John 11:32).

How did Jesus respond to Martha, the distracted sister (John 11:23–25)? How did He respond to the sister who was not distracted (vv. 33–35, 43–44)?

In these passages what parallels can you draw between moving the heart of God in prayer through our involvement versus things that distract us? Explain.

Action Steps

Is it time to de-clutter (or de-snake, as the case may be)? Rebecca Shirey lists effective prayer roadblocks. As you look at the following list, ask the Holy Spirit to help you pinpoint at least one thing you can work on this week—then make a commitment to follow through: (1) Time management, (2) No accountability, (3) Lack of a specific, dedicated, personal place to pray, (4) Unwelcome distractions, (5) Interruptions from children, (6) Disappointing delays in waiting on God, and (7) Preconceived ideas about prayer.

How will you respond?

SANDRA HIGLEY is the editor of the youth editions of Real Life Downloaded, a free Sunday school curriculum supplement available at reallifedownloaded.com.



Our *One* Cry Makes a Difference | By Byron Paulus

Indelibly etched in my memory are a number of agonizing cries. As a teenager, I will never forget, in particular, the heartbreaking cry of my mother as I watched two army officers approach the back door of our farmhouse to tell our family about the death of my older brother in Vietnam. That piercing cry still echoes in my heart.

Have you ever experienced a deep, heart-rending cry? Sometimes our cries are born out of anger—cries *at* or cries *for* or cries *because of*. . . .

But there is one cry that goes beyond those kinds of cries.

It is a cry *up*. It's a *vertical* cry. It's the cry of Moses when he asked God to spare the nation of Israel from destruction. Or when the Israelites came together to grieve after the ark of God had been stolen and the nation had lost the glory of God.

It is reminiscent of the cry of Psalm 85, when broken hearts looked toward heaven and pleaded, "Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?" (v. 6, ESV). Or when Isaiah cried with prophetic passion, "Oh, that you would burst forth from the heavens and come down!" (Isa. 64:1, NLT).

A vertical cry is not always a corporate cry for a beleaguered nation, a hurting community, a lifeless church, or even a messed-up family. Sometimes it's a very personal cry erupting from deep spiritual need. And that is where it must begin, in the circle of our own heart.

It is a cry like Allison's story that follows, and thousands more in our nation who cannot stop weeping over the condition of their own troubled soul:

God found me not only broken but completely shattered. I was a truly pathetic mess for years. Rape,

thoughts of suicide, pot and alcohol abuse, and self-inflicting harm. I was ashamed of all that and more. I tried my hardest to deal with it on my own. How would my parents be able to face the church if their own daughter wasn't leaning on God for her problems? My father, a pastor, shouldn't have a daughter doing those things. *I called upon God when He had about 33% of me. Now, I'm all His.* I am slowly telling my parents, and without the passion I now have for God, I wouldn't be able to do anything. I can't do it alone. I never should have tried. — Allison

It is the anguish of the soul.



No matter how difficult or hopeless the situation, God is waiting for our cry, our one cry. And this one cry is the cry of the soul that longs for God to come in all His glory.

Seeking Fervently at All Costs

This kind of heartfelt, passionate cry, this anguish of soul, is what it means to seek God fervently. The late David Wilkerson emanated this type of cry when he poured out his heart in anguish over the condition of our nation. (Go to onecrybook.com for the book containing his powerful prayer.)

It is this kind of cry that Jesus poured forth when He wept over the city of Jerusalem. This anguish of heart and soul is also reflected in the intensity of the cry of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 19:41; Heb. 5:7). As Jesus experienced, seeking God earnestly may require great personal sacrifice.

But some things are so important that they are worth the cost. And once we see the value of the power and presence of God in our lives, as well as consider the alternatives without Him, I believe we will cry out to God like never before—for everything.

The cry of a God-seeker is not a morbid, defeated cry. *It is a cry of hope.* A cry that looks to heaven and changes the way we live on earth. A cry that resets priorities and rearranges schedules. A cry that will turn you from a prayer spectator into a prayer warrior. A cry that will take you to places you've never imagined, and demand sacrifices on a level you never anticipated.

But it will also cause you to love and live more like Christ than you ever thought possible.

This cry, this one cry, is a turnaround moment. It's a moment when we admit that we don't have the answers. We don't have solutions. We can't fix what's broken in our world. Our one cry upward to God, borne in humility, is our ultimate admission of our need before Him.

And when we admit our need, when we humble ourselves before the Lord, He gives grace. And everything changes. Not because of us, but because of Him. **PC**

This article was adapted from *One Cry: A Nationwide Call for Spiritual Awakening*, Part 1. ©2014 by Byron Paulus and Bill Elliff. Published by Moody Publishers, Chicago.

The Great Privilege of Praying
in Jesus' Name



What's In a



A

lexander the Great (356-323 B.C.), one of the all-time great military generals, conquered most of the known world of his day with his mighty army. One night, struggling to sleep, he left his tent to walk around the camp and came across a soldier asleep on guard duty—a very serious offense. The penalty for falling asleep while on guard could be instant death.

As Alexander approached, the waking soldier recognized him and feared for his life.

The great leader called out to him, “Do you know the penalty for falling asleep on guard duty?”

“Yes, sir,” responded the soldier in a shaky voice.

“Soldier, what’s your name?”

“Alexander, Sir.”

Alexander the Great repeated the question. “What is your name?”

“My name is Alexander, Sir.”

Again, more loudly this time, the general demanded, “What is your name?”

By Todd Gaddis

No name can ever rise to the heights of the matchless name of Jesus.



“My name is Alexander, Sir,” the soldier meekly answered.

Looking intently at the young man, Alexander the Great said, “Soldier, either change your name or change your conduct.”

The Matchless Name



Names in Bible times carried much more meaning than merely identifying or distinguishing a person. “Names in Scripture represent the very essence of the person. A person’s personality, character, reputation and authority are all wrapped up in his name.”¹ Jacob, whose name means “he deceives,” lived up to the designation by manipulating those around him for selfish gain. That all changed, however, after he wrestled with God at the River Jabbok. There he received a new name, *Israel*, which means, “he struggles with God” (Gen. 32:28).

A name often suggested power and influence, as was the case with Alexander. Yet no name can ever rise to the

heights of the matchless name of Jesus. This is particularly true within the realm of prayer. If learning the intercessory methods of our Lord grants you the “college degree,” then understanding what it means to pray in the name of Jesus takes you to the masters level.

What Does It Mean?

Praying in the name of Jesus *doesn't* mean simply closing a prayer with “in Jesus’ name.” It’s not a secret code or magic formula. Author Jack Taylor writes, “To pray in his name is more than a *declaration*, it is a *disposition*.”²

So, if it’s not a matter of voicing three short words, then what is it?

Note first that praying in Jesus’ name opens the door or offers *admittance* to *salvation*. One Old Testament verse carries such significance that two different New Testament writers quote it. During his powerful sermon at Pentecost, Peter proclaimed to a crowd of Jews, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Acts 2:21; Joel 2:32). Paul included those same words when describing salvation to the church in Rome (Rom. 10:13).

Calling on the name of the Lord and receiving His free gift of salvation is the crucial first step in establishing a relationship with Him. When praying in His name, there is significance in the word *admit*—both noun and verb—as it relates to our salvation.

Several years ago, an acquaintance invited me to play golf at the Athletic Club of Atlanta, a prestigious course that has hosted many professional tournaments. Arriving at the entry gate with great excitement and anticipation, I gained

admission to the grounds by simply giving the security guard the name of the man who invited me.

As a noun, *admission* means “access.” Paul writes, “In him [Christ] and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence” (Eph. 3:12). Even though the word *name* doesn’t appear in this verse, the implied truth is that Jesus provided direct passage to God by way of His precious blood that paid the penalty for our sins. He and His name are one.

Scripture says, “Let us then approach the throne of grace with *confidence*, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (Heb. 4:16, emphasis added). This confidence is certainly not due to our own merit, but it is based on the great High Priest Jesus who paved the way.

As a verb, *admit* means acknowledging that something is true. Taylor writes, “When we respond to the command to pray in Jesus’ name, we are admitting the bankruptcy of our own name. We are renouncing our own worth and merit at the throne of grace. We are admitting that in our flesh dwells no good thing, that we have no worth whereby His grace to claim.”³

As we approach God in prayer—in Jesus’ name—we peel away layers of pride and toss aside the cloak of self. We bow before Him on the merits of His Son alone.

Praying under an Assumed Name

This leads nicely into the next truth about praying in the name of Jesus, which is assuming His *identity*. Identity

theft, particularly in this electronic age, is a common, costly crime. Illegally obtaining another person's Social Security number and credit card number often offers tremendous financial gain as well as a new identity. Identity theft is reprehensible in our temporal world, yet it is encouraged—demanded, in fact—from an eternal perspective.

“To pray in Jesus’ name is to pray under an assumed name.”⁴ Our own names carry no weight, nor do they wield any influence as we kneel in the presence of God. “All our righteous acts are like filthy rags” (Isa. 64:6). Yet the name that is above every name—Jesus—unlocks the doors of heaven and rolls out a red carpet to the very throne of God.

When we come to Christ, our identity changes. We are new creations. “The old has gone, the new is here!” (2 Cor. 5:17). That new creation identity, synonymous with Jesus Himself, provides an entrée we could never have on our own.

Closely aligned with assuming Christ's identity in prayer is interceding by His *authority*. Since He now resides at the right hand of the Father, we are His Spirit-filled representatives on this fallen earth, acting by His authority.

God's Word says, “We are . . . Christ's ambassadors” (2 Cor. 5:20). Generally speaking, an ambassador is an authorized attaché or messenger for a high-ranking official. As born-again believers, we are the Lord's representatives on earth, acting by His authority. That authority applies to our prayer lives as well.

Power of Attorney



Praying in the name of Jesus also gives us, in effect, the power of attorney. A power-of-attorney document is a written instrument authorizing a person to act as a representative in private, business, or legal affairs. In the Kingdom of God, Taylor writes,

“Jesus has given every believer unlimited and general power of attorney in all matters and with this the right to use his name in every situation!”⁵ Prayer is one of those occasions.

During his third missionary journey, while in Ephesus, Paul encountered Jews trying to cast out demons in Jesus' name. On one occasion an evil spirit said to the Jews: “Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?” (Acts 19:15). The demon-possessed man then turned on the Jewish exorcists, beating them badly.

Common Desires, Common Goals



Praying in Jesus' name means complying with His *will*. In other words, praying in Christ's name is fruitless unless, by knowing Him, you want what He wants

and have His best interests in mind.

Scripture promises us, “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him” (1 John 5:14–15).

Praying in His name means sifting through our wants and wishes, making sure they line up with His. We discover His desires by reading the Word, relying on the indwelling Spirit, communicating with mature believers, and using God-given common sense. He's not going to answer in a way contrary to His character or inconsistent with His Word.

When President Abraham Lincoln was touring a Civil War battlefield, a wounded Union soldier looked up at him and said, “Mr. President, don't you think that we should pray that God would be on our side?”

START THE DISCUSSION

DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF PRAYER IN YOUR CHURCH

Engage your elders and staff in making prayer part of your church's DNA.

Living in the Upper Room is a 48-page, 4 x 6 booklet that includes the theme articles of *Prayer Connect* issue 10. It offers both a picture of how dynamic a praying church can be and practical steps on how to get there. This content can inspire your leadership team to desire becoming a praying church right out of the Book of Acts.

Multiple Copy Discounts:
 1 copy: \$2.99 • 2 – 9 copies: \$1.99
 10 – 24 copies: \$1.49 • 25 – 99 copies: .99
 100 or more copies: .59

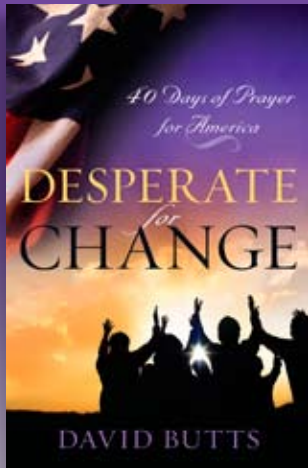


PRAYERSHOP PUBLISHING
www.prayershop.org



Imagine What God Would Do...

If we cried out
with one voice . . .
With a unified
voice desperate
for change.



Millions are seeking God for our nation. With humble repentance and a plea for mercy and blessing, we are storming heaven on behalf of America. Why not join this movement.

WE RECOMMEND USING
THIS GUIDE TO PRAY STARTING
40 DAYS PRIOR TO ELECTION
DAY (SEPT 26) OR STARTING
JANUARY 1ST.

Note: Guide is not time sensitive, but can be
prayed through at any time of the year.

812 238-5504 • 800 217-5200

www.prayershop.org

(Multiple Copy Discounts Available)



Praying in the name of Jesus ignites jubilation.

Lincoln responded, "Sir, my concern is not whether God is on our side, my greatest concern is to be on God's side, for God is always right."⁶

I'll never forget the reply an elderly gentleman gave when I asked him his opinion on a decision that needed to be made. He answered, "Todd, I like what you like." In other words, he apparently felt we had the same mindset.

Praying in the name of Jesus means aligning ourselves with His will. Aligning ourselves with His will means acknowledging that He's always right and that we want that rightness to prevail in our lives and in the world. We like what He likes, and we want as many people as possible to like it, too.

The Sheer Joy



inally, praying in the name of Jesus ignites *jubilation*. On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus said to the disciples, "Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive and your joy will be complete" (John 16:24).

I recently read that the joy exhibited in the lives of believers is the #1 factor that attracts unsaved people to church. Understanding this, Satan does anything he can to oppress and suppress it. Scripture says he "comes only to steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10).

Our salvation is safe because of the blood of Jesus and His solid grip on our souls. Knowing that, the adversary and his henchmen will do all within their power to steal our joy. Bold and consistent prayer in the name of Jesus helps establish joy in our lives, while at the same time building a wall of protection to keep the enemy away.

An unbeliever in Africa was taken

prisoner of war. Around his neck, he wore a charm with a small leather case attached. When this was taken away from him one day, he went into a mad frenzy, begging that it be returned. He was even prepared to sacrifice his right hand for it. As it turned out, the little amulet that he valued as life itself contained a small piece of paper, on which was written the word *God*. He thought that simply wearing this charm protected him from evil. When, at last, the amulet was returned to him, he was so overjoyed that he cried, fell to the ground, and kissed the feet of the man who gave it back to him.

The name of Jesus goes far beyond words written on paper or a phrase voiced to conclude a prayer. Transformed by His name, with humbled heart, we receive salvation of our souls, admission to His presence, identification with His Person, authorization to minister on His behalf, unification with His will, and jubilation in His name.

Discover the unsearchable things that await those willing to do what it takes to pray in His name.

"Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know" (Jer. 33:3). **PC**

¹allaboutprayer.org/in-the-name-of-jesus-faq.htm.

²Jack R. Taylor, *Prayer: Life's Limitless Reach* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1977), 69.

³Ibid, 71.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/a/abraham_lincoln.html.



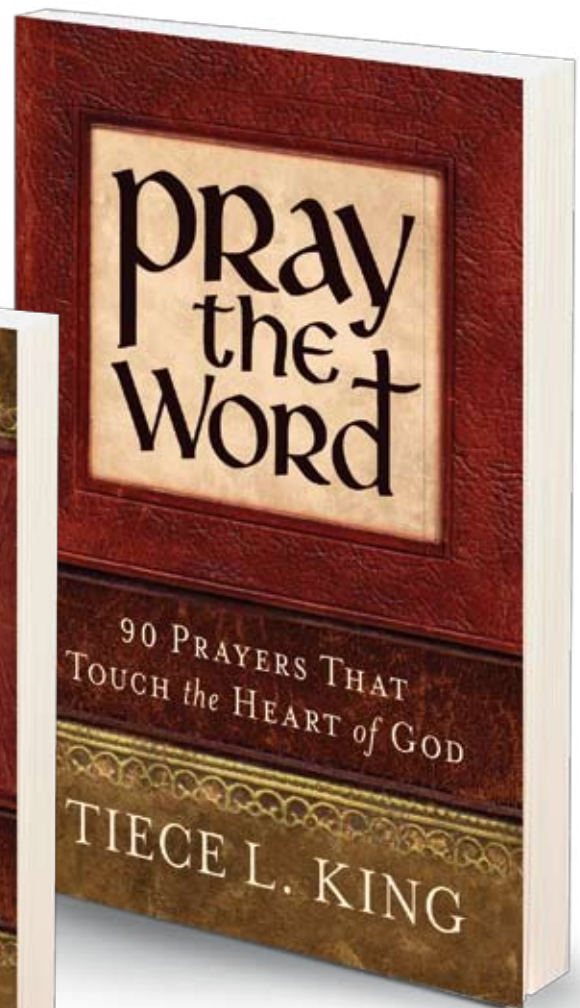
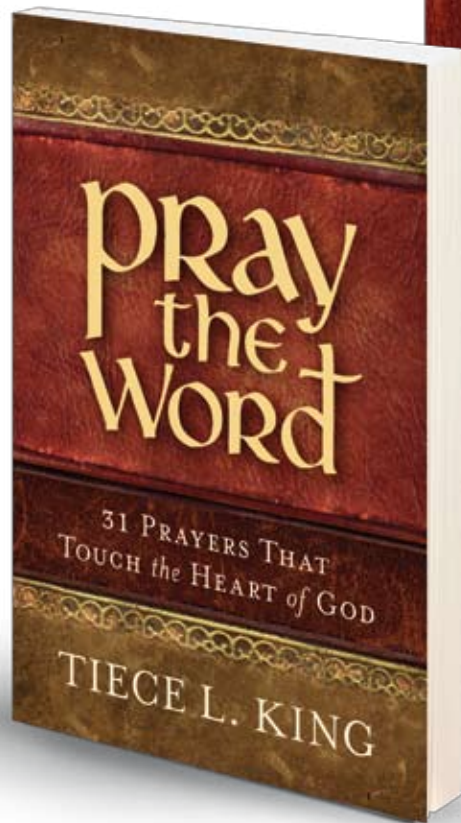
TODD GADDIS is pastor of First Baptist Church of Lafayette, GA. This article is taken from his tenth book *Unsearchable Things*, to be published early 2015 (toddgaddis.com).

Introducing a Resource Line with
the Potential to Change Your Life . . .
to Change Your Church . . .

to Change Your World

Pray the Word resources will teach believers to pray Scripture, but they focus on spiritual development and warfare in the life of a believer, not on fix-this-problem praying. Believers who *Pray the Word* will grow rapidly and become kingdom-changers.

Pray the Word:
*31 Prayers That Touch
the Heart of God*




Pray the Word: *90 Prayers
That Touch the Heart of God*

Available through your local Christian bookstore or prayershop.org
Also available in e-book formats

praytheword.net | www.prayershop.org | 800-217-5200 | 812-238-5504







Spur Yourself

Not long ago, my husband and I received a letter from a friend's son. This teenager, about to go on his first mission trip, was asking for prayer and financial support. In our years of working

with youth at various churches, we've received numerous letters like this as young people step out in faith to follow God's leading on a particular path.

Such letters remind me of the first time I wrote one. In college, and a new Christian at the time, I desperately wanted to join my peers on a spring break

mission trip to a children's home in Oklahoma. The pastor of my home church encouraged me to write a letter to the congregation, asking for prayer and for help to pay the costs of the trip.

I did so reluctantly, wondering if anyone would respond.

The result? Their support overwhelmed me.

By Lisa Bartelt

Get Ongoing
Prayer
Support

n

We are not alone in our mission.

regularly or for the duration of the trip. Rarely, though, have I seen it outside the context of missions.

A writer friend pointed this out recently. No matter our gifts or vocation, we're all called to be missionaries. Shouldn't we, then, ask for prayer support for the mission God has given us?

Her questions prompted us to form a small group of writers who pray for each other in the trials and triumphs of pursuing the call to write. It is a reminder that we are not alone in our mission. The writer of Hebrews says, "Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up

meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Heb. 10:24–25).

Before my friend's plea for support from other writers, I had come to a similar conclusion: Even though I was not a missionary in the traditional sense of the word, writing was my mission, and I needed the support of a team. So nine months ago, I rallied an "inner circle" of ten friends to pray for my writing. And knowing I have their support keeps me going. They have made Paul's words to the Galatians a reality: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (Gal. 6:9).

Whether you're serving in full-time

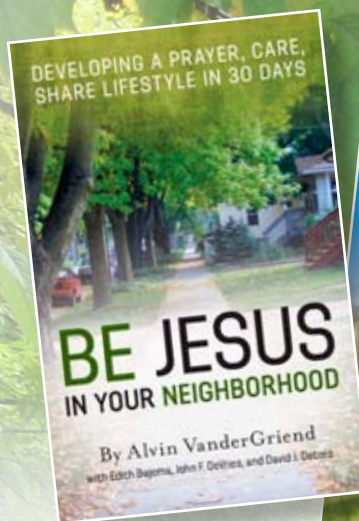
Prayer Teams: Not Just for Missionaries

In the years I've been a Christian I've noticed this theme: missionaries, long- and short-term ones, routinely ask for prayer support. They mobilize a group of people who commit to pray for them

Inspire Your People to Pray for the Lost

MOST PEOPLE NEED GENTLE reminders and encouragement to faithfully pray for the salvation of neighbors and coworkers. *Be Jesus in Your Neighborhood* and *Shine His Light* are two complementary books that encourage people to make "prayer, care and share" a lifestyle.

Shine His Light will inspire people of the possibilities and *Be Jesus in Your Neighborhood* is a 30-day devotional to equip and motivate them to pray for, care for, and share Jesus with those around them.



Developed by prayer evangelism expert, Dr. Alvin VanderGriend, these two products have quantity discounts.

www.prayershop.org | 800-217-5200 | 812-238-5504



ministry, in full-time employment, in all-the-time parenting, or in a volunteer position in the church, it might be time to think like a missionary and assemble a prayer team.

1. Identify your mission. What is the ministry or work you're most passionate about or most involved in? For me, it's writing. I've been a full-time journalist, part-time freelancer, and unpaid blogger. I'm currently working on my first novel, and I know that moving ahead with the calling God has for me will require much prayer and reliance on His Spirit.

Are you in leadership at your job? Does your heart thrill to work with children's ministry? Is your job stressful or unpredictable? Do you struggle with parenting your kids? In whatever you spend the bulk of your time doing or want to do better,

partnering with people who will support you in prayer can be a first step toward growth.

2. Make a list. Who are the people in your life who know your heart for this work and are committed to prayer? I asked ten trustworthy friends if they would consider praying for me on a monthly basis. I've known some of these people for a lifetime; others I've only recently met. I wasn't sure they would all say yes, but they did. Maybe you don't need ten people. Maybe you need one or two. Try to think of individuals you can regularly connect with either in person or through email. My team is a mix of both.

3. Make a plan. When asking these friends to pray, I proposed sending an email near the beginning of the month, listing specific ways they could pray for

my writing. And I pledged to pray for them one day a week throughout the month. Occasionally, if an urgent need comes up, I'll send an additional email or message. Though they have committed to this, I don't want to be a nuisance, so I aim for fewer messages. Your plan might be a weekly email or text message or phone call to check in about the week ahead and the week that passed. Figure out what works for you and your prayer-support partner(s), but don't be afraid to change if it's not working.

4. Give grace. Allow for people to tell you no or to withdraw if the commitment becomes too great. Circumstances change and a commitment in one season of life might last only during that season. Trust that God will give you the right person or people for your team, and

Get Your Group Better Connected

PRAYERCONNECT now offers multi-copy subscriptions at a

Reduced Rate

GET IT FOR ...

... YOUR PRAYER MINISTRY TEAM ... CHURCH STAFF AND ELDERS ... SMALL GROUP

Purchase in multiples of 10 for \$24.99 each issue.

Your credit card will be charged automatically with each new issue. You can end the subscription at any time. Go to the Prayer Connect subscription section of prayershop.org to order.



www.prayershop.org | 800-217-5200 | 812-238-5504

trust that He will work regardless of the number.

Unexpected Results

When I enacted this plan, I wasn't sure what to expect. I had no grand ideas that God would automatically open wide the publishing doors because I'd enlisted a

prayer team. I just needed the support. But I've found that having a prayer team offers benefits I didn't imagine.

First, there's *accountability*. Every month when I send the email about my opportunities in writing, I follow up on the items from the previous month. Sometimes I've completed them. Sometimes I haven't.

Either way, I'm putting my goals in writing for other people to see. It's much harder to continue procrastinating when I know I have a report to give each month. And my reports encourage people to ask me how my writing is coming along. In the past, when I've kept my writing to myself, it was much easier to get discouraged.

This leads to the second benefit of having a prayer team: *encouragement*. We all need it. Even if we're working at something we love, whether paid or not, we can feel discouraged or drained from time to time. When I've been honest about my struggles to write during a particular month, a short "Keep up the good work" note from one of my prayer team members reminds me that I'm not in it alone.

And that fosters *community*, the third benefit of a prayer team. Sometimes I'm reluctant to talk about my writing, but my husband will tell everyone what I'm working on. During a recent small group gathering from our church, he talked about my current project. I don't always expect to be taken seriously as a writer because it's not a full-time job yet. But our small group members encouraged me and prayed for my creativity and success as a writer. Having a prayer team invites people into my life and reminds me that I can't do this alone.

Near the end of his letter to the Romans, Paul, in essence, sends a prayer request to the church: "Strive together with me in your prayers to God . . . that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints" (Rom. 15:30–31, NASB).

God expects us to "work for the Kingdom" in relationship with others. Having a prayer team can remind us of the importance of our work and the need for togetherness. **PC**



LISA BARTELT is a freelance writer and frequent blogger (lmbartelt.wordpress.com). Her work has also appeared in curriculum for Group Publishing.

Calling Intercessors

to the NATIONAL PRAYER ASSEMBLY

National prayer leaders are sensing a call to gather in Washington D.C. to pray for our nation.

We are inviting those whom God is likewise calling to join us.

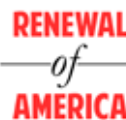
This is a non-political gathering where we will in humble repentance, pray over our nation at this critical time.

Washington, D.C.
October 29–30, 2014

For information go to:
nationalprayercommittee.com

(Or read article on page 10)

Co-sponsored by





Managing My Prayer Lists

I'm trying out a new app for my iPhone that is helping me organize my prayer life and manage my list of requests. Echo Prayer Manager is designed to keep track of names and prayer requests—and then serve them up to you in a way that keeps you praying at various times during the day.

It can be hard to get through a long list of prayer needs during your daily quiet time. One of the great features of Echo is the ability to assign repeating prayer reminders throughout the day. I can schedule some requests for a daily rotation; others on a certain day of the week at a certain time. But there is also a feature that allows me to set times during the day when the app pushes notifications to my phone to pray for a request. I've chosen to set hourly reminders

throughout the day to pray. Then Echo randomly selects prayer requests and sends me an alert. If I'm at a place where I can quickly pray, I stop and take a few minutes to pray for the request.

When I want to take more extended time to pray, I can simply pray through my entire list that is again served to me randomly. When I go on a walk, I can use the feature that allows me to “swipe” through my requests as I walk and pray.

I'm enjoying being surprised at various times throughout the day when I'm notified to pray for a friend or family member—and I trust God is orchestrating that timing. By the end of the day I've prayed through my list.

Echo has a nice, clean look to it, with plenty of space to write more detailed requests. It can also organize requests



with hashtags for family, church, health needs, etc. There is even a way to show your requests on a TV or projector, which is great for small groups.

There are plans to add an Android platform and ways to share requests with other Echo app users. You can learn more at the website: new.echoprayer.com.

CAROL MADISON is editor of *Prayer Connect*.

Warriors under His Wings

It started with an email from my son Ben during the Iraq War. The email subject line caught my attention that summer day: “In the Sandbox.” I knew what it meant. Ben, a Navy Flyer in 2006, was on the ground in Iraq.

Inhaling sharply, I fought the welling tears. I trembled as I responded to my son's unexpected announcement. Before that time I'd found some comfort that Ben was relatively safe, flying off an aircraft carrier on the Persian Gulf. Now my son had been sent to the war zone on special duty. I'd already lost my only daughter to cancer. God was stretching my faith and trust to the limits.

God, why have You placed my son in even greater danger?

Then I remembered God's assignment for His Son. And I wept. And I submitted myself to His will. I knew I needed to entrust my son into the Lord's hands.

A friend shared Psalm 91 as a way

to pray. Begging the Lord to shield Ben should he ever be in danger, I prayed the Psalm with heartfelt assurance. Other days my faith was frayed and weak, but I continued to claim the verses in Psalm 91.

Soon my focus expanded. There were other military families who shared my fear. So I added their warriors to my prayers. I now keep a list in my Bible so I can lift them up by name.

This is what I pray through Psalm 91:

- *Safety*: “Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare” (v. 3).
- *Freedom from fear*: “You will not fear the terror of night” (v. 5).
- *His angels to protect*: “He will command His angels concerning you to guard you” (v. 11).
- *Success in their mission*: “You will tread on the lion and the cobra” (v. 13).
- *Salvation through Jesus*: “If you say, ‘The Lord is my refuge’ . . . no harm will overtake you” (vv. 9–10).

Ben came home safely from that first deployment. There have been two more since then. Each time I have lifted him up in prayer and believed the promises of Psalm 91.

By now, I have the Psalm memorized. It is tucked in my heart just as my list of warriors is tucked in my Bible. Most of the service men and women I pray for have no idea I am lifting them up in prayer each day.

While I understand that not all of my prayers are answered according to my desires, I believe the Lord has called me to this prayer ministry. And I know that He is working, whether I see the answers or not. He has called me to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17, KJV). I leave the results with Him.

ELAINE MARIE COOPER is the author of *Fields of the Fatherless* and *Bethany's Calendar*, a memoir of her daughter's battle with brain cancer (elainemariecooper.com).

Pray the **B****A****B****Y**'s Name

On a recent trip to the Middle East, I experienced a very powerful prayer practice that is common among Nigerian Christians. I was privileged to be the pastor at a special event of blessing a newborn's name.

Patterned after Luke 1:57–66 where Zechariah declared that his child's name was to be John, Nigerian believers do not announce the name of their child until the 8th day of his or her life. This is done at a prayer gathering of family and friends.

With everyone standing, the parents and child were positioned in the middle. We first sang some choruses. Next, I invited anyone who wanted to bless the child and parents to pray. In typical Nigerian style, we all prayed out loud at

once. Then the parents prayed over their little one. Finally I prayed a prayer of blessing over the little boy.

After prayer, the father shared why he picked the names (for Nigerians most children have multiple names given to them by family members). In this case, the mother shared a testimony about some of the blessings of the pregnancy and birth. At the end we passed a plate and people chipped in money toward a bank account for the child.

It was a deeply moving experience. In our Western culture, people might not value the meaning and significance of a child's name. But imagine what a blessing it would be for friends and families

to bless a newborn's family with such a prayer gathering! Blessings are powerful. Even though in some cultures a child's name is usually given at birth, having a gathering to pray over a newborn would be very meaningful to a family. You can look up what the child's name means and introduce it before prayer so that people gathered can pray those traits over and for the little one.

Creating this kind of new tradition in families and churches can serve to get people praying for a children at the start of their lives. What a beautiful beginning!

JONATHAN GRAF is publisher of *Prayer Connect*.

FREE
DOWNLOADS

A central location
that points you to
free prayer resources.

harvestprayer.com

Click on
Resources/Free Downloads

 **Harvest Prayer**
MINISTRIES

Will You Pray with Us?

Prayer Connect magazine needs you! We are grateful for readers who will come alongside us and uphold us in prayer:

- Pray that God will continue to expand the reach of *Prayer Connect* into churches, prayer teams, pastoral staffs, and ministry leadership. Some churches order bulk copies or send individual subscriptions to key church leaders. Please pray for additional subscriptions. We need them!
- Pray that the editorial staff will be sensitive to the Spirit's leading about the themes and content of each issue. What is the Spirit saying to the Church—and how can we communicate that? Please pray that our staff will discern the times and purposes of the Lord.
- Pray for the unification of the many prayer movements emerging in our nation toward a common goal of prayer for revival and spiritual awakening. We are encouraged that God is raising up more ministries with the same call. Pray that *Prayer Connect* can help serve all these movements as a unifying voice.
- Pray for finances to sustain the magazine and Harvest Prayer Ministries, the parent ministry for *Prayer Connect*. Pray for Dave and Kim Butts and Jon Graf as they travel extensively, representing the ministries and teaching in churches and at conferences.

Thank you for keeping us in your prayers. Send us an email to let us know how you are praying—and if the Lord is speaking anything to you that we need to hear (editor@prayerconnect.net). Some of you have responded with an email, which greatly encourages us!



Intimacy and Ignited Intercession

Dick LaFountain has a passion to motivate a renewed love for prayer and the presence of God in churches. As a retired pastor, he has created a website (prayertoday.org) with a wealth of prayer resources to help pastors, church leaders, and congregations discover power through a disciplined daily walk in prayer. There are so many resources here that you can spend considerable time just poking around and reading articles, helpful hints, and even lengthy books!

Under LaFountain's leadership, his former church became a place known for experiencing the manifest presence of God. Revival, repentance, healings, and conversions were common. He now mentors and coaches pastors in ministry, in prayer disciplines, and in strategic planning. This website is a gift gleaned from his years of experience as a pastor and prayer leader.

Exploring the Site

You can begin anywhere on the website to access the same information in different contexts. Here are a few features to get started:

Prayer Coach: If you look in the center column of the home page, you will find powerful prayer disciplines to help you focus your prayer life. Click on Free Downloads to find the newest information posted on the site. As of this writing it was *A Guide to Intercessory Prayer*, which includes a 12-step prayer guide and prayer training. The material is valuable for individuals, families, and churches to key in on the principles of intercession. The prayer guide is put into three-minute segments.

PDF Resources: There are also several comprehensive resources available

as PDF documents. You will find photos set apart in boxes with a variety of topics to choose from. Each is in a blog-style format and very engaging. A particularly helpful one is *7 Days of Solitude* ("Breaking the habit of noise, busyness, and people-addictions"), which discusses the principles of Sabbath rest and includes a plan for Seven Days of Fasting and Silence. Other topics are *Praying the Word*, *Prayer Retreats*, *Prayer Sabbaticals*, and *16 Prayer Disciplines*.

Sidebars: On both side columns of the home page, you will see several topics. The right side features many PDFs that you can download for personal use. There are *Helps and Hints*, *Prayer Guides*, *Prayer Strategies*, and many worksheets with topics such as: *Believing Prayer Survey*, *Daily Prayer Chart*, *Spiritual Life Inventory*, *Hindrances to Prayer*, and *Your Prayer Habits*. LaFountain writes in a very engaging and easy-to-understand way yet gives insightful wisdom to help both the beginner and the more seasoned intercessor.

Retreats and Prayer Concerts: Also on the right-hand side is a section titled *Retreats and Concerts*. One of the most helpful topics is *Cheap Prayer Retreats*. LaFountain gives helpful suggestions about places to go for an inexpensive retreat time with God. Here is some advice about things to avoid as you search for a private retreat:

- Avoid going with other people. It is not fellowship you seek.
- Avoid crowded areas and peak holiday times.
- Avoid motels. They are often more temptation than quiet.
- Avoid toys. You are not there to play. Leave your TV, computer, and radios at home.

- Avoid recreation. Stay away from recreation areas, where there is too much to do.
- Avoid the poison ivy!

The heading, *Two Prayer Concerts*, presents two unique and engaging concerts of prayer formats. Most concerts of prayer are done in a corporate setting. LaFountain's design offers an opportunity to enjoy the presence of the Lord with others present; however, it also allows individuals to seek God on their own. Check out his suggestion for two types of rooms that are uniquely equipped for two different modes of intercession: *Oasis* rooms for quiet and personal preparation of hearts before God, and *Outpost* rooms equipped with helpful resources for the work of intercession. As LaFountain says, "There is nothing like praying to teach you to pray."

Get yourself a cup of coffee or tea and sit down to peruse prayertoday.org. It will take you awhile, but you will glean a wealth of information and be challenged to expand and change your prayer life. As the website says, "We exist to train God-hungry people in the disciplines of prayer." 📖

What's Not to Like?



Here are some prayer pages on Facebook we encourage you to "Like." (Add www.facebook.com before the / on each address.)

Prayer Connect

/prayerconnect

Harvest Prayer Ministries

/harvestprayer

Pray the Word

/praytheword

Rallying Prayer Support for Your Pastor | By Kaye Johns

Most churches have great intentions regarding prayer for their pastoral staff. But getting people to pray for their pastor(s) consistently is a bit more difficult. If you have a heart to pray for your pastor and a desire to identify and encourage others to pray as well, where do you start? Here is a simple plan:

Pray about it. Ask God to lead you to others with a similar desire, and to prepare their hearts to want to join you. Pray about which individuals, specifically, to ask before you contact them. You will have more success in recruiting people who already have a heart to pray this way—and the Spirit will lead you to them.

Begin with a core group. Don't worry about the numbers. Start with a small group of committed people. You'll want to name the group so it can be readily identified within the church. It's important to define the group with a stated purpose, simple guidelines, and expectations. You also want to be sure that the church leaders know about your group and are willing to endorse it.

Invite the people on your list to a start-up meeting. Explain your heart for praying for the pastor and ask them to join you. Explain how you will be organized, generally, but ask for their input. Some things to consider:

- What is the purpose of your group? Your purpose will be to pray for your pastor, and, if you choose, for his or her family. Keep the purpose simple, clear, and focused. If you have a larger staff, you will need to decide if you are praying primarily for the senior pastor or for all the pastors.
- How long are you asking people to commit to pray? Having a specific time frame of three months, six

months, or a year provides a way for people to make a realistic initial commitment.

- How will you communicate with the group? Email is one of the most efficient ways. Create an email contact group and email people on a regular basis to keep them informed and motivated.
- What will the group be expected to pray for? Some pastors may provide prayer requests, but in the beginning it will be helpful to center the group's prayer around Scripture.
- How often are you asking them to commit to pray—daily? Once a week? Be sure to include the words "at least" daily or once a week, or "as the Lord leads." You want to help people set realistic commitments they can succeed in keeping.
- After your initial meeting, send out revised guidelines based on your discussion to those who attended the meeting and others who may join your group later.

Support and encourage your group. Once people have committed to pray, they will need your encouragement to stay on task over a period of time. Consider these things:

- What prayer resources will you provide? Perhaps the most important thing will be Scripture prayers or verses they can use as personal prayer prompts. When you come across other encouraging resources, be sure to share them.
- How often will you provide resources? Once a week you could send new verses or prayers. These can serve as weekly reminders to pray.
- Will you meet together periodically?

Coming together will give you the opportunity to pray corporately and share prayer resources. As you conclude your first year, you might consider a more formal gathering, perhaps with the pastor. Use the occasion to thank people and provide the opportunity for them to reenlist.

- How will you keep your group committed? People need to be shown appreciation. Be intentional about affirming them on a regular basis with hand-written notes or emails. Pray for each one by name.

Encourage praying for the pastor throughout your church membership. Offer regular invitations for new people to join your group.

- Visit small groups. Enlist the help of your primary prayer group to visit classes and Bible studies to encourage people to add your pastor to their group prayer lists and personal prayer times.
- Use the Sunday worship guide or church bulletin. Ask if you can include a weekly Scripture verse to pray for your pastor and other church leaders.

As prayer leaders in our churches, we can't motivate people to pray for our pastor. Only God can. Our role is to provide opportunity, resources, and encouragement for those whose hearts He touches. ☞



KAYE JOHNS and her husband Jim founded PrayerPower Ministries in 1994. Their website (prayerpowerministries.com) offers prayer training and other practical materials.



The Revival We Need | By Armin R. Gesswein

Shall we see revival again in our land?

Many were asking this question when I returned from my first ministry in Norway's revivals in 1937–38. The apostasy doctrine had taken over in many minds, the thinking that we were in the “last days,” that the great falling away from the faith that was predicted had come and that few would be saved, as in Noah’s day.

But, fresh from the fires of revival, my response was quick. “Yes, I *do* expect revivals, even in these ‘last days,’ God says, ‘It shall come to pass in the last days, . . . I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh’” (Acts 2:17, KJV). New movements have come—the massive Billy Graham Crusades, for example—and as people started to see multitudes (not just a handful) come to Christ, the thinking changed. *Revival* again became an acceptable word. It even became popular.

But another question kept getting louder: Can we expect to see revivals in our *churches* again? My answer is, “Yes; where else?” We live in exciting times and the most exciting thing is to see God at work in many congregations. Many are coming alive in new ways now. Wonderful!

Passing and Permanent

The big question is, *What is the revival we need?* The revival we need is a return to normal New Testament Christianity as it was experienced in the Jerusalem congregation. That church presents to us God’s normal pattern of church life—ongoing, not something pumped up or pepped up or stepped up by promotion. Rather, it gives us the normal, the standard for the church—not something special.

At Pentecost both the passing and the permanent were displayed. The passing was not the normal: the rushing

mighty wind, the tongues of fire. What continued was the normal: a church membership filled with the Spirit, on fire for Christ, every member strong in prayer and in the prayer meetings, a power-filled, witnessing church. A congregation to which “the Lord added . . . daily those who were being saved” [Acts 2:47, AMP], one that “continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine . . . and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” [v. 42, KJV]. And one where the reverential awe of God rested over the assembly.

Normal, Not Special

This is the day of the special and the specialist. We are all geared to this thinking, even in the church. We have “special meetings,” and add on an “extra-special,” a “super” and finally a “super-duper.” But the problem is that most all of our specials put together leave us below the New Testament norm; our “supers” still leave us superficial.

The Jerusalem congregation did not need the many “special” meetings we have. I am not against them; I am involved in them myself. But the Jerusalem church had a normal which was higher than our special. People were converted and “added to them” all the time.

They did not hold a series of special evangelistic meetings or depend on a special evangelist. Apart from Philip, one does not even read of evangelists.

This is not to say they did not have them. But their evangelism was not *evangelist*-evangelism. It was *church*-evangelism, the strongest and deepest kind. It produced and reproduced converts “after its kind,” so that the thousands added to it were all “of one accord.” The power of the Holy Spirit and the bringing forth of spiritual children took place within the congregation, the burdened, praying assembly.

We do not read of special revival meetings in the Jerusalem church. Their normal was better than that. Even when their preachers were in jail, the work continued as powerfully as ever. Why? Because the power was not only in the preacher or the pulpit, but also in the pew. Because of this there was tremendous dimension of power in the pulpit as well.

Don’t Settle

In the New Testament it is the *church*—especially the local congregation—and not some kind of revival that is the major unit of the action of the Holy Spirit.

A good assembly—like a good jet engine—is meant for great altitude and for a strong, normal cruising speed. Many of our churches have “engine” problems. They lack power. The prayer life is so low that they do not even have enough prayer-thrust to get airborne!

We should not settle for anything less than normal New Testament churches.

Is not this the revival we need? God’s Word calls us to our knees for it, and gives us faith to expect it. ☞

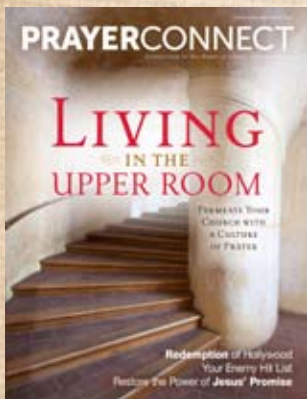
ARMIN R. GESSWEIN (1908–2001) was the founder and director of Revival Prayer Fellowships, Inc., and Ministers’ Prayer Fellowship. He was also a leading intercessor for Billy Graham’s crusade ministry. This excerpt is taken from *With One Accord in One Place*, which is being rereleased by PrayerShop Publishing in September 2014.



3525 S. 3rd Place
Terre Haute, IN 47802

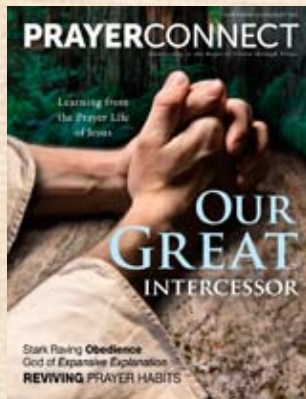
Start with a Complete Set

GET EVERY BACK ISSUE OF PRAYER CONNECT



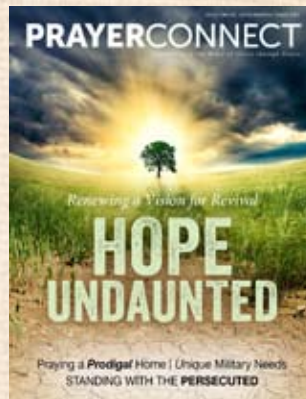
Issue 10

LIVING IN THE UPPER ROOM:
Permeate Your Church with a Culture of Prayer



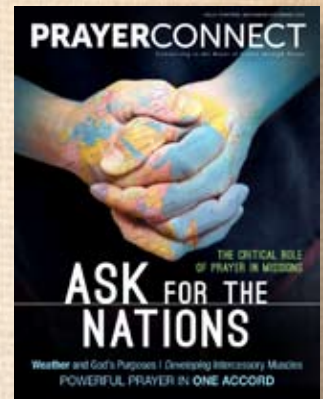
Issue 11

OUR GREAT INTERCESSOR:
Learning from the Prayer Life of Jesus



Issue 12

HOPE UNDAUNTED:
Renewing a Vision for Revival



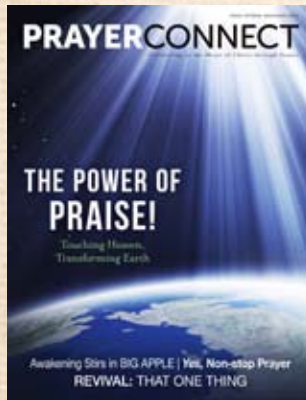
Issue 13

ASK FOR THE NATIONS
The Critical Role of Prayer in Missions



Issue 14

HELP!
The Heart Cry of Desperate Prayer



Issue 15

THE POWER OF PRAISE
Touching Heaven, Transforming Earth



Issue 16

GOD SPEAKS
Can You Hear Him?

- Issue 1** Can Prayer Save America?
- Issue 2** Fresh Fire
- Issue 3** Solid Foundation
- Issue 4** As the Waters Cover the Sea
- Issue 5** The Place Was Shaken
- Issue 6** Stand Firm & Strong
- Issue 7** Open Hearts, Open Doors
- Issue 8** The Lord is Near
- Issue 9** Releasing Children to Pray

MULTIPLE COPY DISCOUNTS available!

COVER PRICE: \$6.00 | PRAYERSHOP PRICE: \$5.00

www.prayershop.org | Click on "Prayer Connect Magazine" "Back Issues" | 812-238-5504

Prayer Connect and PrayerShop Publishing are ministries of Harvest Prayer Ministries