

PRAYERCONNECT

Connecting to the Heart of Christ through Prayer

Becoming the Answer
to Your Prayers



FROM KNEES TO ACTION

A Child's Trust | Wedding Party Prayer
GOD'S INVADING PRESENCE IN SCHOOLS



LEADING *with* CONVICTION

*"...Our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction."
1 Thessalonians 1:5*

- FEATURED SPEAKERS -



Jim Cymbala



Vance Pitman



Jeff Schwarzentraub



Robbie Symons



Mark Vroegop



Mike Avery



Bill Elliff



Daniel Henderson



Troy Keaton



Al Toledo

WEST CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 26-28, 2017
DENVER, CO

EAST CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 24-26, 2017
CENTRAL VA

Sponsored by The 6:4 Fellowship || Pastors Committed to Prayer and the Ministry of the Word

REGISTER NOW AT
WWW.64FELLOWSHIP.COM

USE DISCOUNT CODE **64CONNECT** AND SAVE 15% ON REGISTRATION



PRAYERCONNECT

July - September 2017 Vol. 7, No. 3

32

Features

- 28 Battleground for Our Schools**
Powerful Results When God's People Pray
By Cheryl Sacks
- 32 6 Reasons God Waits to Answer Prayer**
Lessons from My Child's Trust
By Stacey Pardoe



20

Departments

- 5 Publisher's Note**
Which Size Church Has the Most Prayer Advantage?
- 6 News & Events**
 - 40 Days for Life Prayer Campaign
 - South Africa Hosts Million-plus Prayer Gathering
 - Witchcraft and Resistance Target Trump
 - Christians Make History in New Mexico
 - Graham Calls for Nationwide Prayer
 - Prayer Leaders Meet in Historic City of Herrnhut
 - Prayer Calendar

FROM KNEES TO ACTION

Becoming the Answer to Your Prayers p. 9

- 10 Kneel Down or Get Going**
The Tension between Prayer and Action
By Dana Olson
- 14 Fruit-bearing Prayer**
Connecting Intercession with a Willing Heart
By Kim Butts
- 20 Hey, I'm the Answer!**
When You Pray, God May Send You
By Carol Madison
- 25 Bible Study**
Becoming the Answer to Your Prayers
By Cynthia Hyle Bezek



- 36 Tips & Tools**
 - Campuses Saturated with Prayer
 - Become a Moth for a Day
 - Praying for Members of a Wedding Party
 - Will You Pray with Us?
- 38 Prayer Leader**
How to Grow a Vision for Revival
- 39 Classics**
An Humble Attempt

Start with a Complete Set

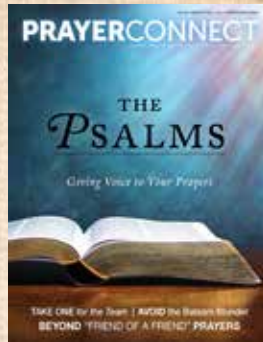
GET EVERY BACK ISSUE OF PRAYER CONNECT



Issue 24
LEADERS WHO PRAY
The Foundation to Building a Praying Church



Issue 25
THERE'S STILL HOPE
A Call for United Prayer for Our Elections



Issue 26
THE PSALMS
Giving Voice to Your Prayers



Issue 27
JOHN 17
Praying the Heart of Jesus



Issue 28
WATCH AND PRAY
Staying Alert in a Troubled World



Issue 29
DISCERNMENT
Gaining Insight into God's Truth and Ways

- Issue 1** Can Prayer Save America?
- Issue 2** Fresh Fire
- 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
- Issue 10** Living in the Upper Room
- Issue 12** Hope Undaunted
- Issue 13** Ask for the Nations

- Issue 14** Help!
- Issue 15** The Power of Praise
- Issue 16** God Speaks
- Issue 17** Roadblock Ahead
- Issue 18** Faith and Prayer
- Issue 19** Awakening on Campuses
- Issue 20** Rediscovering Fasting
- Issue 21** Beyond the Obvious
- Issue 22** Transforming Prayer
- Issue 23** Embracing Intimacy



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

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. 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 published four times per year, available in Print (\$24.99 per year) or Digital (\$19.99 per year) formats, and through the Church Prayer Leaders Network (CPLN) Membership (\$30 per year). 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 about 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
jong@harvestprayer.com | 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

People often fail to inquire of the Lord—and so their best efforts are no more than human decision-making. Believers need to take time to hear

God's voice, guard against deception, and discern the times. This requires intentional prayer and listening. The April–June 2017 issue on *Discernment: Gaining Insight into God's Truth and Ways* is available at prayershop.org.



Which Size Church Has the Most Prayer Advantage?



Over the past 22 years I have been watching churches of varying sizes “do prayer.” Through my informal research, I have reached a few conclusions about which size church has the easiest path to becoming a praying church.

The truth is that there are different advantages with each, and a church of any size can become a strong praying church if it has the determination—with the Lord’s help—to do so. But let me highlight at least one advantage for small, medium, and large churches.

Corporate prayer is probably the most important area that churches need to work on as they seek to become a praying church. Few churches in the U.S. can claim strong experiences of congregants praying together. I love a midweek prayer meeting if done effectively, but some churches have meaningful corporate prayer without a weekly dedicated night. In these churches, corporate prayer usually takes place in the Sunday morning worship service.

The church that has the most potential to grow in this area is a “one-worship-service church.” A small- or medium-size church with one service has an advantage. Why? Churches with multiple services are usually bound to the clock. Their services need to be tightly planned to get people in and out within a short amount of time.

However, restricting prayer to fit into a 2.5-minute timeframe is difficult. Churches that can allow Spirit-led spontaneity in prayer have the best potential to see corporate prayer thrive. Those not bound by an exact closing time can experiment more and offer varied prayer opportunities each week.

The megachurch’s advantage in growing prayer comes from the sheer numbers it can draw when rallying prayer for an initiative. When a megachurch pushes a special prayer event—with leadership support—it can draw a larger number of participants. Such churches likely have dedicated design and marketing teams that can promote the event with multiple, well-designed ads. Such promotion provides an advantage at a time in our society when everyone needs to see something eight times or so to respond. Consequently, they can host prayer events with a few hundred people.

Is there an advantage for the medium-size church? Yes. Discipleship. This size church likely has a better understanding and deeper relationship with their members than is possible for a megachurch. The medium-size church also has more funds for resources than a smaller church. The combination of relationships and funds greatly benefits the medium-size church. In a more personal way, they can better encourage, prod, and teach people to grow in various areas of prayer.

Whichever size church you are a part of, think about areas of strength that come with your church size. Focus on the aspects and methods of prayer that can thrive within those areas. Growing prayer in any size church can be done with determination and the empowerment and leading of the Holy Spirit.

–Jonathan Graf



40 Days for Life Prayer Campaign

From March 1 to April 9, as 40 Days for Life entered its tenth year, 344 communities around the world observed a 40-day campaign of prayer and fasting for an end to abortion. Christians prayed outside abortion centers, Planned Parenthood offices, and other public sites in its largest spring campaign thus far for this mission (40daysforlife.com).

The organization's president, Shawn Carney, notes that the prayer vigils occurred at a time when "Planned Parenthood's brand is at an all-time low, and 2017 is not shaping up to be a good year

for the abortion giant and its CEO, Cecile Richards."

Internationally, 40 Days for Life campaigns were conducted for the first time in four new countries: the Dominican Republic, Italy, Paraguay, and Zimbabwe. The campaign, conducted twice a year, consists of 40 days of prayer and fasting, peaceful vigil, and community outreach—such as education on campuses, in churches, and through the media.

The first 40 Days for Life vigil took place outside a Planned Parenthood



abortion center in Bryan, Texas. That facility closed in 2013, and the former Planned Parenthood building now serves as 40 Days for Life's international headquarters.

"The bottom line," says Carney, "is that it's time to pray—more fervently than ever—for an end to abortion."

South Africa Hosts Million-plus Prayer Gathering

The largest prayer gathering in South African history (called "It's Time") was held on April 22, 2017, on a farm just north of Bloemfontein, which is centrally located in South Africa.

Some 1.7 million people registered online to attend this historic occasion, and thousands more arrived on the day. The multi-racial crowd was spread over more than a kilometer with sound and video relayed onto multiple large screens.

Popular South African farmer/evangelist Angus Buchan (also the subject of the book and film *Faith Like Potatoes*) called for a nationwide prayer meeting in the light of the spiritual and socio-political decline evident in the nation.

"We are tired of people taking the law into their own hands. We are going to call upon the Lord to bring justice, peace, and hope to our beloved South Africa," he said.

Buchan led the crowd in prayer, stopping at various points while they shouted "Amen" or repeated parts of his prayer:



"I am praying that South Africa will become a country that takes the Word of God literally as it is written. We say no to immorality. We say no to sex before marriage. We say no to pornography and drug addiction in Jesus' name. We say no to racialism in this country. We say no to senseless murder and rape in this country. We ask you, Lord, to give our armed forces the power to bring stability back to this nation. . . . We ask, Lord, for restoration. . . . We say there is no other God save Jesus Christ and Him alone."

The prayer time was also duplicated in hundreds of towns and suburbs around

the nation. For those who couldn't get to Bloemfontein, prayer meetings were held in churches, rented halls, and homes around South Africa. No television broadcasts were allowed, but Christians around the country followed the event from the social media posts of their friends.

Despite the magnitude of the event, there was no television advertising and little news coverage beforehand. Farmers in the area opened their farms to hundreds of thousands of campers at no cost. Gridlock was reported for up to 40 kilometers (25 miles) away and the event was delayed for an hour and a half to allow more to arrive.

Several prominent politicians attended the gathering, but Buchan made it clear that the motivation for the event was clearly spiritual. "This is not a political change. This is a Jesus change, because we need a Christian government. Today we pray to Him, because He will heal South Africa," he said.

– Nico Bougas, special to ASSIST News Service (assistnews.net).

Witchcraft and Resistance Target Trump

A growing resistance movement is being orchestrated to hinder and, if possible, overthrow President Trump, Vice President Pence, and the rest of the new administration. George Soros, a billionaire activist, has set up many extreme liberal organizations that are Leftist-Marxist in ideology and that seek to divide the nation. The “resist Trump” effort has also gone

supernatural in a global call to invoke the demonic realm against him. Witches worldwide plan to cast spells each month according to the lunar cycle until Trump is taken out. The first ritual took place February 24 at midnight. Many of the practitioners intend to connect through livestream and social media.

The International Prayer Council, chaired by John Robb, is calling for

believers to recognize the spiritual warfare against the Trump administration and pray accordingly. “By the grace and mercy of God, may many of those who are involved in this witchcraft initiative be set free from spiritual blindness and slavery to the occult realm through coming to faith in Jesus as Savior and Deliverer!” writes Robb.

—Taken from *International Prayer Connections*.

Christians Make History in New Mexico

For the first time in the history of the New Mexico state capitol, Christians gathered for an historic worship service on March 5. Instead of attending their own churches, Christians came from Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and as far as Ruidoso to attend this special service organized by New Mexico Prays (newmexicoprays.org).

More than 250 Christians filled the rotunda's first level and part of its second level. Legislators, pastors, leaders, parents, and little children lifted their voices to worship Jesus and welcome the Holy

Spirit into the capitol. David Gallegos, a New Mexico state representative, said of the service, “This last Sunday, here at the New Mexico state capitol, we were blessed to be a part of the first-ever service. We had over 250 people come to the capitol for an awesome service. We made history, allowing God to have control of our capitol and our state.” The group also gathered to call upon God on behalf of the unborn.

Vince Torres, executive pastor at the Blaze Christian Fellowship, observed, “What happened Sunday was nothing short of historic. Watching Catholics and

Protestants come together in worship and prayer to our God was so powerful and unlike anything I have ever witnessed at our state capitol. The gathering served as proof that the gospel message of Jesus Christ has the power to transcend denominations and even politics. It was such an honor to be part of it. To God be all the glory.”

New Mexico Prays is a movement of 70 churches in 22 cities covering New Mexico in 24/7 Jesus-centered prayer.

—Adapted from *Breaking Christian News*.

Graham Calls for Nationwide Prayer

Evangelist Franklin Graham says God has put a calling on his heart and he is following the Lord's leading as he prepares to hold more prayer rallies across the U.S. in 2017, following last year's successful 50-state Decision America Tour.

Starting in May, Graham kicked off this year's tour with four stops in Tennessee. The Decision America Tennessee Tour took the gospel to Chattanooga, Clarksville, Jackson, and Memphis. This fall, he plans to take the tour to Texas, stopping in seven cities. At each rally,

Graham will lead people in praying for America, and their state and local communities.

In 2016, Graham traveled to all 50 state capitals, encouraging people to pray, vote, and engage in the political process. As he shared the Good News of Jesus Christ at each prayer rally, Graham said he sensed God calling him to reach even more people throughout the United States.

“God has given me a burden to go



back, this time to preach in medium and smaller cities across states and regions,” he said. “What America ultimately needs is spiritual change—a transformation that starts in individual hearts.”

Graham says he hopes to return to every single state over the next several years.

It's his vision that each region of the U.S. will be saturated “with the hope of the gospel and a call to prayer and repentance.”



Prayer Leaders Meet in Historic City of Herrnhut

In May, the International Prayer Council (IPC) led a gathering of about 120 national and international prayer leaders in seeking God in united prayer, learning from one another, and planning strategies for the future of the international prayer movement.

They met at Herrnhut, Germany, the Moravian center for prayer and mission. This site saw the revival in the 1700s and the beginning of a 24/7 prayer chain that was used of God for 100 years to send out the first Protestant missionaries to the unreached peoples around the

world. Attenders also acknowledged the 500th anniversary of the Reformation—and the need for a New Reformation for Europe and the world.

John Robb, IPC chairman, expressed hope for a new expression of revival. “Could it be that in our day the Lord is getting ready to unleash another awesome revival through united prayer that will impact the world in social transformation and mission breakthrough like the one that flowed out of Herrnhut? New united prayer movements have arisen in recent years within Europe and globally, and I believe we are all asking God to do that very thing. The role of the children and youth will of course once again be crucial; therefore we need to support and empower them in every way we can so they can take their places in both the prayer and mission movements in every nation on earth.”

The prayer leaders spent time waiting on the Lord together with a prophetic sensitivity to what He is saying to the current-day prayer movement and how they move forward together with strategic prayer and mission.

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 four times 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 300 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. Mail to: **Prayer Connect, P.O. Box 10667, Terre Haute, IN 47801.**

PRAYERCONNECT | 1-(812) 238-5504 | prayerconnect.net

Prayer Calendar

Cry Out America
Monday, September 11
awakeningamerica.us

See You at the Pole
Wednesday, September 27
syatp.com

Day of Prayer for the Peace
of Jerusalem
Sunday, October 1
daytopray.com

Awaken the Dawn
October 6-9
awakenthedawn.org

BECOMING THE ANSWER TO YOUR PRAYERS

For several years my church cooperated with other churches in my community to bless the city with acts of kindness and service. We called it CityServe, and it developed a reputation with city officials as being a source of help with various projects. We picked up trash and debris from parks, freshened up school grounds, painted houses, and raked the lawns of disadvantaged people. We mobilized hundreds of volunteers at least once a year—and sometimes we did it quarterly.

Because of my role as director of prayer ministries in my church, I was assigned to lead the strategic intercession. I organized intercessors to prayerwalk in the community, stop at projects to pray on site, and, in general, provide prayer coverage for the endeavors.

A NEW APPROACH

After a couple of years, I said to one of the lead pastors, “Hey, I would like to rake a lawn or wash some windows once in a while!” I wondered out loud why we were separating the intercessors from the “workers.”

So we changed it up. Prior to going out on our assignments, we gathered everyone together for half an hour to worship and pray. We asked God to make us a blessing to others. We prayed for safety on projects and for opportunities to have spiritual conversations. We then asked God to use us to touch our community with the love of

Christ. We commissioned everyone to go out and “be the answers to the prayers they just prayed.”

I was excited to grab a rake and “do something” beyond my usual role of the designated pray-er! My first project was a large backyard covered with pine cones. Another man and I raked behind the house while two other men pulled weeds and cleaned up the front yard. When we were finished, an older woman came out to thank us. I told her we were from different churches and we were there to bless her in Jesus’ name. I asked her if she had any prayer requests, and she shared some heartbreaking struggles. With the three men gathered around us, I prayed for her.

When we finished, the men expressed how touched they were by the simplicity of engaging with her and offering prayer. They thanked me for demonstrating how to do that. It was a successful merger of prayer and action!

PRAY-ERS AND ACTIVISTS TOGETHER

In this issue, Dana Olson addresses the tension that sometimes rises between pray-ers and those who like to “get things done.” He uses Nehemiah as an example of one who was dedicated to both intense intercessory prayer and the hands-on work of an activist. Nehemiah did not separate fasting, prayer, waiting on God, and building the wall. Kim Butts writes about the connection between prayer and “bearing fruit” by listing seven ways we can be the answer to our prayers. This issue also includes stories from *Prayer Connect* readers in response to our invitation to submit their experiences of praying and then realizing God’s intention for them to act on their prayers.

I myself learned a lesson after a morning of exhausting raking: aching muscles and an intercessor’s heart go together well!

CAROL MADISON is editor of *Prayer Connect* magazine.

KNEEL DOWN OR

Sally felt hurt by Molly's comment, even though she knew her friend meant nothing by it. Sally had to miss their monthly time slot volunteering at the women's shelter because of a schedule conflict. She had committed to lead the women's morning of prayer at her church that weekend.

"Oh sure, you just sit there and pray. I'll be the one getting my hands dirty!" Molly had said. "We do-ers have to make up for you pray-ers."

Sally isn't the only one to face such stinging remarks. It seems that the tension between "do-ers" and "pray-ers" has been around a long time—at least since the time of Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38–42).

How can we reconcile the two?

A PRAY-ER AND A BUILDER

The news couldn't have been much worse. "The city is a shambles. You'd be shocked. All protections are destroyed, and access is wide open. The enemy is having a field day."

Nehemiah was disheartened to hear about his beloved city, Jerusalem. What to do? Intervention seemed an utter impossibility. There was nothing to do but fast and pray.

And what a prayer he prayed! It was an expansive prayer about God's astounding greatness and faithfulness to all His promises, confession of the sins of the people, the only hope being God's promises of renewal, and then, finally, a request for success "against all odds." (See Nehemiah 1:4–11.)

After fasting and prayer, what was next for Nehemiah? His to-do list might have looked something like this:

BY DANA OLSON

GET GOING



The Tension between
Prayer and Action

- ✓ Get a leave of absence from work.
- ✓ Ask the boss to pay for everything.
- ✓ Travel back home.
- ✓ Survey the job that needs to be done and make a plan.
- ✓ Inspire the “home folks” to overcome their fear and get working.
- ✓ Split everyone into teams to get the job done.
- ✓ Fend off doubters, skeptics, opponents, and detractors.
- ✓ Finish in record time.
- ✓ Celebrate.

And the miracle happened: every item on that list got done—in record time. A city was saved from its enemies.

Nehemiah’s story has moved generations of Christians to pray and work, work and pray.

So imagine Nehemiah, during his days of fasting and prayer—crying out to God on behalf of his people—yet being accused with, “All you do is pray. Get up off your face and *do something!*”

Or imagine Nehemiah checking the “wall work,” dealing with problems, and reassigning workers for greatest effect, then being confronted with, “Work, work, work. You should pray more. Why don’t you stop what you’re doing and call upon the Lord?”

THE MYTH OF A TENSION BETWEEN PRAYING AND DOING

Both Scripture and church history are filled with examples of Nehemiah-like, godly people who both pray and “work, for the night is coming.”¹ On occasion, those who love to pray are accused of being so heavenly minded that they are of no earthly good. But is that valid?

Here’s the truth: prayer and Kingdom-minded effort are both absolutely necessary and needed. Often the same people do both.

There are exceptions. I think of a grand “do-er”—or activist—named Dale, who was legendary in the movement of churches I grew up in. Dale and

his wife and children served the Lord in Asia, devoted to the Great Commission. Later, Dale became a leader in the headquarters of our mission. Far too young (to our way of reckoning), a medical diagnosis of ALS (commonly referred to as Lou Gehrig’s disease) brought a premature end to Dale’s days as a do-er. But Dale’s Kingdom-minded determination kicked in, and he became legendary for his prayer life. He interceded across America and around the world from the wheelchair to which he was confined.

Jim is another example. From the time I met him in seminary, I felt deeply for his predicament of living with a permanent, debilitating disability. Yet Jim, like Dale, welcomed prayer requests and devoted himself to what he could do—intercessory prayer. Hundreds of missionaries, pastors, and faithful workers benefited from Jim’s prayer life.

Disability is not the only exception. Some of God’s people sense a special urgency to pray. They love to pray. They consider intercession their unique calling. Often some special circumstance has led them into a life of earnest, effectual prayer. They may have a specific focus or passion—for lost loved ones, for missions (even a specific part of the world or people group), for those suffering from illness, or for revival and spiritual awakening. At times these intercessors feel misunderstood and underutilized by their church family.

ACTIVISTS, TOO, MEET WITH GOD

Few people have achieved such evident Kingdom success as Bill and Vonette Bright did. As founders of Campus Crusade for Christ (now CRU), their passion for a Los Angeles campus student ministry in the 1950s led to one of the largest Christian ministries throughout the world today. What was the key to this growth? Both Bill and Vonette attributed it to a mighty prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God. Before her death in 2015, Vonette wrote:

Bill and I recruited everyone we

could think of to serve as prayer partners. Dividing each day into 96 segments of 15 minutes each, we worked to fill every slot and have around-the-clock prayer. We wanted to know that someone, somewhere was uniting in prayer for this ministry.

We knew that Scripture said to pray without ceasing. We were depending on the Holy Spirit to guide every step we took and work in students’ lives, in response to prayer. Campus Crusade was born in prayer, and prayer will always be our lifeline.²

George Mueller founded orphanages and ran them “by prayer.” Hudson Taylor had a “spiritual secret”—prayer—and founded the China Inland Mission. The Korean Church rises early in the morning for daily prayer and has sent thousands of workers around the world to plant churches.

Prayer and Kingdom work go together, which is no surprise since the Bible is full of praying activists, including several apostles. Peter, John, and Paul come to mind. And Jesus Christ Himself was the ultimate praying activist. Jesus prayed through the night before choosing the twelve (Luke 6:12–13). And Jesus would heal multitudes and then withdraw to pray (Luke 5:15–16).

How do we manage this occasional tension between the do-ers and the pray-ers? By reminding ourselves of several biblical realities:

1. It is by God’s Spirit. God is the One who moves His people to pray by His Spirit. And He is the One who moves the hands and feet of gifted people to get His work accomplished. Sometimes the two are the same group: those who pray, also do something. (Nehemiah is a great example.)

But not always. The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 3:6, “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow.” Sometimes God uses prayer-watering saints to intercede

for a situation where they will never, and could never, be hands and feet. I have prayed for many years for gospel outreach to the Fulani people of Africa. Once I even had the privilege to visit the work there and pray for God's hand to move. But I do not live there and likely never will. I don't speak the Fulfulde language, but I do speak the language of prayer.

2. God, use me! When we pray for God to work in a specific situation, we certainly want to be open to His leading us to be an answer to our prayers. Neither Dale nor Jim were able, literally, to lend a hand due to severe limitations, so they became focused intercessors. Yet most of us have the capability to enter into the work in one way or another.

Many are the missionaries and Christian workers who, growing in their hunger and thirst for God and desire to see God's Kingdom spread, began to pray in earnest "your kingdom come, your will be done" (Matt. 6:10), only to sense God's call on their lives to go and make disciples of the nations.

3. Proceed with caution. A caution is due here, however. In our desire to "be the answer to our own prayers," we can try to "fix things" and fool ourselves into disobedience. Remember Abram and Sarai? In Genesis 15:4, the Lord told Abram that his very own son would be his heir. But instead of waiting patiently for the hand of God, Sarai pressed her servant Hagar upon Abram, and he foolishly submitted. Ishmael was the result, but Isaac was still to come.

In our haste to "get God's will done for Him," we can commit grave errors of judgment. This combination of prayer and action requires discernment, patience, and a commitment to wait upon the Lord.

4. Pray before, during, and after. God's Kingdom work will not be accomplished apart from prayer. The hands-on activists who want their lives to count will do well to remember that *God's work done in God's way will always have a prayer component.*

The well-worn illustration of the

lumberjack who never bothered to stop and sharpen his axe is well worn for a reason—it hits home. Hard Kingdom work can result in little fruit when it's approached in a prayerless way.

Why not stop to pray first, then take a breather to pray during your work, and finally conclude the work with prayer as well? Why not recruit "those who love to pray" to cover your efforts before you even begin? This kind of dynamic teamwork between *gospel activists* and *gospel intercessors* yields tremendous fruit for the harvest.

Years ago I heard a quote that is attributed to the most aptly named missionary in all history, Jonathan Goforth (1859–1936). He said, concerning a time of harvest and revival in Asia, "When God came, he produced more fruit in half a day than we could have achieved in six months of hard labor."

TOGETHER—FOR HIS KINGDOM

So, activists, remember that whatever we do for God is God's work and must be done in God's way, by prayer. Respect, appreciate, and love the pray-ers in your life. Put them to effective use in the accomplishments of the Kingdom.

Intercessors, be thankful for the hardworking activists who love to stake out new territories and reach the lost. Commit to supporting them "by prayer" so that their labor is not in vain.

In other words, Sally and Molly, you need each other! Appreciate what each of you brings to the Kingdom banquet table. Celebrate your opportunity. Kneel down and get going! **PC**

¹In the words of the Annie L. Coghill hymn, based on John 9:4.

²From the article "Born in Prayer" by Vonette Bright, *pray2020.org*.



DANA OLSON is senior pastor of Faith Baptist Fellowship, Sioux Falls, SD, and a member of America's National Prayer Committee. He founded Prayer First of Converge Worldwide, and is chairman emeritus of the Denominational Prayer Leaders Network.

Become a Partner of PRAYERCONNECT

*Do you believe in the ministry of Prayer Connect?
We need a team of people to partner with us.*

We are slowly growing our subscriber base, but currently our subscription income only covers about 70% of our expenses. Advertising revenues cover another 15%. Beyond that income we still need to raise \$3,000 for each issue. We currently raise a little over \$1,000 from partners to help cover that shortfall. More partners would help us remain strong financially so we can continue producing *Prayer Connect*.

Would you consider a special gift or becoming a monthly donor?

Every gift of \$10, \$25, \$50 or more helps to assure that *Prayer Connect* will be published for many years to come.

To donate, go to

prayershop.org/donate.asp

and select *Prayer Connect* Magazine as the ministry you want to partner with.

You can choose to give a one-time gift or to give monthly.

Your gifts are tax deductible.

Or you can mail a check to:

**Prayer Connect,
P.O. Box 10667,
Terre Haute, IN 47801
prayershop.org/donate.asp**

FRUIT BEARING

Several years ago, my husband and I were taking shifts in our ministry's prayer room during the night hours of a ten-day season of 24/7 prayer. One night, about midnight, as we came into the prayer room, we saw an extraordinary and encouraging sight. Five young, male college students were seated on the floor in the middle of the room, praying earnestly for their generation.

Suddenly one of them said to the others, "I have a sense from God that we are to get up and go minister to all of the drunk and lost college students at the fraternity parties tonight."

The others heartily agreed, and before we knew it, they all jumped up and rushed out of the building.

We heard later that these young men offered a cup of cold water in Jesus' name to several people on fraternity row that night. They were the hands and feet of Jesus as they helped some get back to their dorms safely. They shared His love as they comforted, listened, and prayed with others. What a sweet testimony! Those who seek the Father obey what they hear!

R.A. Torrey said, "The chief purpose of prayer is that God may be glorified in the answer." As these college guys were praying for their peers, the Father lovingly gave them a deep burden and a strong sense of love and caring for the lost. God filled these young men with His love and showed them how to *be* the answer to the very prayers they were praying.

REMAINING IN CHRIST

Jesus gave us the key to being the answers to our own prayers. In John 15:1–8, we read:

BY KIM BUTTS

A group of men in white shirts are huddled together, their hands clasped in prayer. The focus is on the hands in the foreground, with the faces of the men blurred in the background. The word "PRAYER" is written in large, bold, brown letters on the left side of the image.

PRAYER

Connecting Intercession
with a Willing Heart

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. . . . I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my

words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”

When my husband teaches, he often asks the question, “What is the job of the branch?” Most people will quickly answer, “To bear fruit!”

Yet a careful reading of this passage shows that the job of the branch is to stay attached to the vine. If that doesn’t happen, no fruit will come forth. Jesus clearly says, “Apart from *me*, you can do *nothing*” (emphasis added). No fruit. None!

What does it mean to stay attached to (remain in) the Vine, and how does one effectively do so? Personally, I don’t know any other way to stay connected to the lifeline of Christ than through prayer. Prayer and intercession bear much fruit in the Kingdom of God only when we are effectively attached to (abiding in/remaining in) the Vine.

Many of us miss the opportunity to bear abundant fruit simply because we do not stay continually in the presence of God in order to hear from Him. And if we don’t listen, how can we respond to His voice? Many believers fail to multiply the effectiveness of prayer because they don’t submissively go *beyond* the act of prayer to obedient action!

The praying college guys were abiding in the Vine—Christ Jesus—the One who could create in them a desire to care for others. And fruit came as a result.

THE POWER SOURCE

As we learn to intercede on behalf of people and situations, the Holy Spirit will flow from the Vine into our hearts and create within us a desire to undertake and bring about the Kingdom purposes of God as He directs. If we detach ourselves from the Vine and attempt to do good works apart from Him, we will not be acting like a disciple, but more like the hypocrite Jesus spoke of in Luke 18:9–14. This man stood on the street corner loudly praying and proclaiming his own piety. But his works, deeds, and heart were actually bent on receiving his reward from the admiration of others.

We operate from the secret place of God when He speaks His plans and purposes into being through us! Our job is to stay attached. The Vine’s job is to produce the fruit in and through us by the power of the Holy Spirit. He alone

**America is in a downward spiral spiritually and morally.
A weakened Church seems to make little impact on society.**

IS THERE STILL HOPE FOR AMERICA?

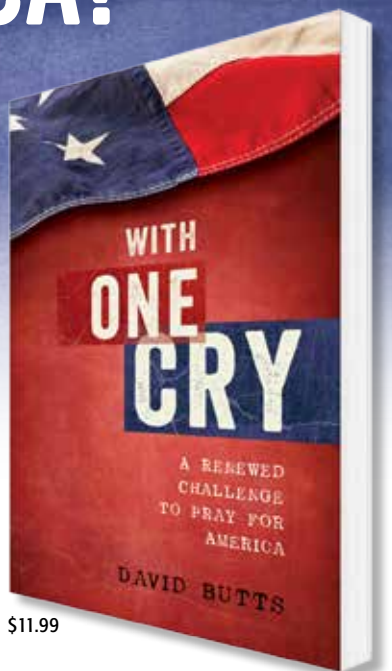
National Day of Prayer Task Force Chairman of the Board Dave Butts says “Yes!” . . . If believers will pray!



Dave’s new book, *With One Cry*, will inspire, challenge, and equip believers to pray more effectively and with more passion for our nation in this critical time.

“In this critical hour in America, Dave Butts is providing us a very helpful and practical book about how to pray for America. From a proven leader that has a burden for our nation, we are inspired to have hope in our generation. Now is the time for us to pray for America.”

—Dr. Ronnie Floyd, President, Southern Baptist Convention, Senior Pastor, Cross Church



\$11.99

Order from prayershop.org or through your local Christian bookstore. All e-book formats are available at your usual e-book source.



812-238-5504 | prayershop.org

can show us how to be the answer to the prayers we pray in ways that will glorify the Kingdom!

SEVEN WAYS TO *BE* THE ANSWER

God often chooses to work in and through those who are willing to respond to His heart's desires through prayer—and then follow through in obedient action. Nehemiah is a great example of someone intimately connected to the Lord through prayer. (He stayed attached to the Vine.) And God used *him* to be the answer to the prayers he prayed.

Nehemiah paid attention to what was going on around him. He knew how to pray what was on the heart of God. He was humble, always giving God the credit for the work he was given to do on behalf of the nation of Israel. And he did what God called him to do.

Twice, in the Book of Nehemiah, the prophet refers to what the Lord had put in his heart:

- “I set out during the night with a few others. I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem” (Neh. 2:12).
- “So my God put it into my heart to assemble the nobles, the officials and the common people for registration by families” (Neh. 7:5).

God works through His prepared servants who are willing to receive what He puts in their hearts. Here are some ways to learn how to yield to the Lord's plans and purposes as you pray—individually and corporately:

1. Pay attention to what is going on around you. Nehemiah's example clearly shows us this important key to prayer: God was pleased to put specific things on his heart. The sons of Issachar in 1 Chronicles 12:32 also paid attention. They understood the times in which they lived and “knew what Israel should do.” If we consistently develop awareness of what is going on around us physically and spiritually, we will be

more adept at praying according to the plans and purposes of God.

2. Learn how to pray God's heart.

Praying just for the sake of making a religious noise is not God's intent for prayer. Praying to get something from God is also not God's plan. Studying the Word and paying attention to the world around you is a key. See what God is doing and what He desires us to do as His people. Then as

we pray those things that are close to His heart, He is pleased to answer!

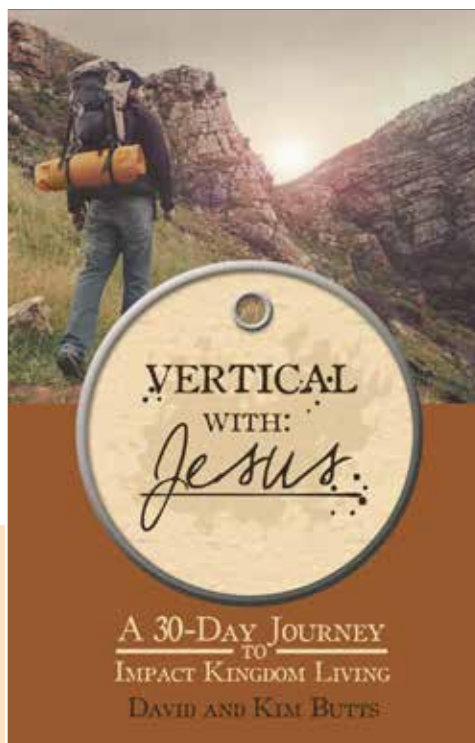
What do we know of His heart?

- We know He wants us to love Him with all our hearts, and to love others as we love ourselves.
- We know He wants us to pray for the lost.
- We know He wants His people to experience revival.

BECOME MORE KINGDOM-MINDED

Vertical with Jesus is a 30-day devotional that encourages a balance between connecting with Jesus through prayer and doing the work of the Kingdom. Each day you will be stimulated in your connection with God, and you will consider how to keep focused on Him as you live the life He has called you to.

A GREAT DEVOTIONAL PRAYER GUIDE FOR A CONGREGATION TO GO VERTICAL WITH JESUS TOGETHER.



Available through your local Christian book outlet or **prayershop.org** (Multiple Copy Discounts Available at PrayerShop)

prayershop.org | 800 217-5200



- We know He wants unity in the body of Christ.

You can probably add many other prayers that are dear to God's heart.

3. Be willing and humbly expect God to answer your prayers. If your heart never expects God to answer, there is no point in praying. James writes, "When you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord" (James 1:6-7).

When you pray in the name of Jesus, believing that He has heard and will answer, you will see Him do amazing things—sometimes in and through you! Always remember that God's ultimate goal in answering prayer is to bring Himself glory: "I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may

be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13).

It is also important to be willing to *be* the answer to your prayers if God is choosing you to do so. We can come to God with a humble posture like that of Isaiah—whom God commissioned—willing to respond: "I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'" (Isa. 6:8).

4. Be a good listener. It is important to spend time being quiet before the Lord. If we are doing all of the talking, we won't be able to hear Him speak. "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth" (Ps. 46:10).


I wonder how many instructions and promptings we miss because we don't take the time to learn to distinguish the voice of the Shepherd! Jesus said, "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27).

5. Confirm what you think you hear. Even when you have asked the Father for something that you know is upon His heart, what you hear may not always be what you expect. If you are not certain whether what you are hearing is biblical—or even if it is really from God—seek counsel from a pastor or other mature believers for confirmation before moving forward in obedience. As you are faithful in the small things, He will trust you with bigger issues.

6. Be obedient. When you sense that you have a word from the Lord and it agrees with the Bible, act on it. God will likely begin working with you slowly. Maybe He will impress upon your heart to write a note to someone or make an encouraging phone call. If you didn't actually hear directly from the Lord, you are still doing something that will reflect the character of Jesus living within you.

7. Encourage and mentor others to be willing to be the answer to the prayers they pray. Help your children, grandchildren, and others to learn how to stay attached to the Vine in order for God to use them. We all need to be stretched and challenged in new experiences of being the answer to our own prayers. Share your stories and teach others what you're learning.

LISTENING LIFESTYLE

If you determine to turn your prayer life into a lifestyle of listening to the Lord, He will use you to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the lives of others. You will experience blessing upon blessing, just as God did in using Abraham (see Genesis 12:1-3). As your prayer life grows, remember that Jesus, who lives in you, will show you how to be the answer to your prayers. 



KIM BUTTS is a speaker and author of several books. She and her husband Dave are the co-founders of Harvest Prayer Ministries (*harvest-prayer.com*). Her books are available at *prayershop.org*.



www.prayershop.org

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

Sponsored by





www.prayershop.org

prayer guides ad

HEY, I'M THE

My neighbor Jean and I shared a courtyard area between the front doors of our two townhomes. We each had our own sidewalk with several stairs leading up to our garages. We shared the daily newspaper—an arrangement she loved because I did all the recycling!

As Jean grew older, it became more difficult for her to climb the stairs. Minnesota winter was a treacherous time with the snowy, and sometimes icy, patches. I always made it a point to shovel and salt Jean's sidewalk when I shoveled mine—which was quite often because our townhome association's snow removal service was usually slow in getting it done.

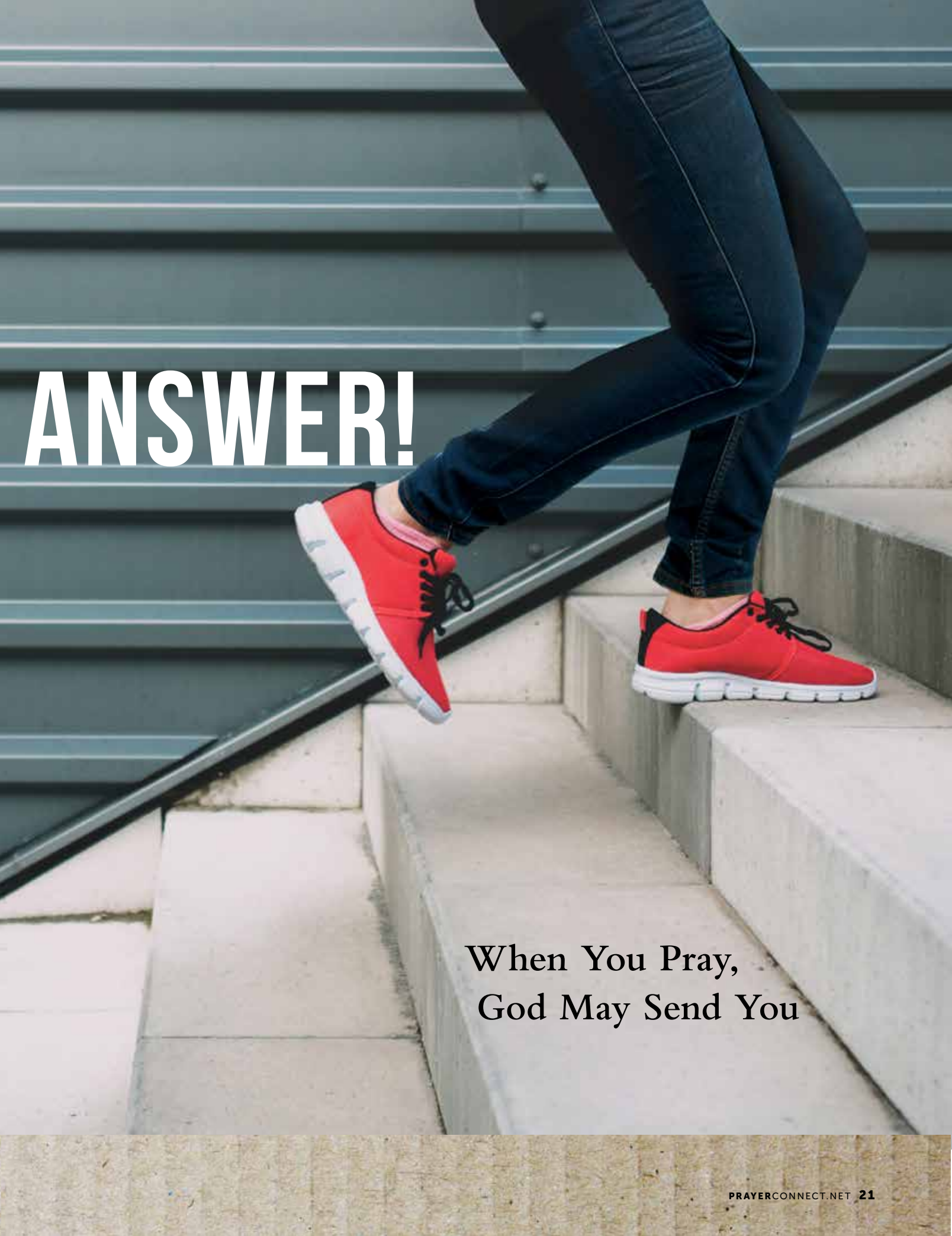
One day Jean commented on the great job our snow removal service was doing. "Really?" I said. "I guess I haven't been that impressed." I felt embarrassed that I had been so judgmental.

It wasn't until a couple of days later that I realized, *Hey, wait a minute. I'm her snow removal service! She has no idea that it's me.*

She also had no idea about the time one summer when I noticed a large snake sunning itself on Jean's stairs. I knew Jean was probably coming home soon—and she was deathly afraid of them. (I also hate snakes. But when you pray for someone, you may have no choice but to act!) So I grabbed a snow shovel and grappled with the snake to remove it, shuddering the whole time. Jean never knew about it, but she was my assignment from the Lord *in all circumstances.*

I may have been the only person in Jean's life who prayed for her. I prayed

BY CAROL MADISON



ANSWER!

When You Pray,
God May Send You

often for her salvation. I also stopped by to visit her regularly, took care of her cat when she was gone, and in general kept an eye on her. I frequently spoke of Jesus and prayed with her whenever she expressed a concern.

When I told her I was moving, she was disappointed. “Please pray that God sends someone just like you to buy your townhome,” she said.

HERE I AM

When we pray for people, we may be setting ourselves up to be the answer. As we pray, God softens our hearts, tunes our ears to the voice of His Spirit—and sometimes directs our course to include acts of obedience, risk, kindness, and compassion.

We asked our *Prayer Connect* readers to share stories of ways God made *them* the answers to their prayers. We thought some real-life examples might encourage

us all to be more attentive to God’s leading and more willing to take risks to get involved in people’s lives.

Isaiah was willing to be the answer to the Lord’s request by responding, “Here I am. Send me!” (Is. 6:8). Perhaps all our prayers should include, “Here I am. Let me be the answer!”

Here are some ways our readers found themselves as the answer to their own prayers:

Send a Teacher—Me!

In 2002 my wife and I led a missions trip from our local church to Bolivia, South America. Bolivia had been our home ten years prior as we served, short term, at an MK school in Cochabamba. Our Bolivian missions group was a blend of teenagers and adults assigned to lead a local church’s VBS ministry and help with construction projects at a Christian camp and the MK school in which my

wife and I had formerly taught. While working at the school, we learned of the need for a full-time Bible teacher. As we headed off to our next project in Bolivia, we told the school director we would specifically pray for a Bible teacher.

Fast-forward two years: We were back in Bolivia, this time with our whole family, teaching Bible classes at the school. God had used our prayers to touch our hearts to *be* that answer.

We are still missionaries with the same mission we served with in Bolivia. But now we are based in Charlotte, NC, leading the prayer ministry of SIM USA, helping to train and launch missionaries and supporting our missionaries by prayer. “By Prayer” is our mission’s motto.

– Charlie Thorsen is director of prayer and celebration for SIM (Serving In Mission) USA.

Now What, Lord?

Shortly after I was asked to become my church’s prayer team leader, I found myself joyfully pacing in my living room, praying and asking the Lord about what I should do next. What direction should I take to restart our prayer ministry?

He spoke to me: “Invite people in the congregation to pray before the service.”

I am not an outgoing person, so this was way outside of my box. I can be animated and comfortable around people I know, but not, by any means, the entire congregation! However, I stepped out in obedience at the first of our three services. Wow! God gave me emotional protection. We ended up with an average of 3–5 people per service for awhile—and now, less than a year later, we just set a record of 18–20 for each service! The people love it.

The obedience to take action—even though I was terrified—was part of the answered prayer!

– Johnette Shank is the prayer team leader, New Life Bible Fellowship, Tucson, AZ.

New Wine into New Wineskins

We had recently moved, and, as I

HOW DID THE APOSTLE PAUL DO IT?

God used Paul to change the Gentile world. Prayer was the key. What did he pray for those under his care? What did he ask friends to pray for him? Now you can learn to pray like Paul.

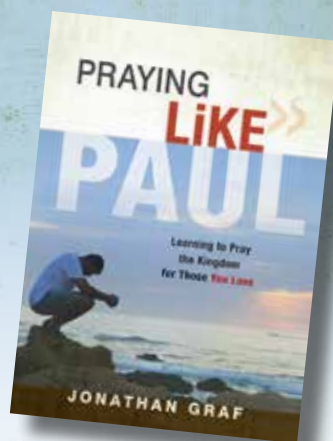
Written by the publisher of *Prayer Connect*, Jonathan Graf, *Praying Like Paul* can radically change the way you view prayer and how you pray for others.

LEARN TO:

Pray Scripture

Pray more than fix-it prayers

Pray the purposes of God into those you love



RETAIL PRICE: \$9.99

PRAYERSHOP PRICE: \$8.99

(Multiple Copy Discounts Available)
(Use code **PCPP514** for an additional \$1.00 off at prayershop.org)

 **PRAYERSHOP**
PUBLISHING
www.prayershop.org

prayed for my new neighbors, God spoke: “Neither do people pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved” (Matt. 9:17).

God showed me that He wanted to pour new wine (His Spirit) into me so I could pour something new (a Bible study) into our neighborhood. In His grace, He brought a woman into my life to mentor me through the process. Honestly, I felt like I was going to throw up! But at this point, it was a matter of obedience, and saying no was not an option.

I held the Bible study in my home and four women attended. I don’t know that it was remarkable, but I believe something was preserved in it. And that woman who mentored me? She is now one of my best friends. I tell her, “If I had any idea that you were on the other

side of my obedience to leading a Bible study, I would have done it years ago!”

– Joan Sherman is a freelance writer/editor from Plymouth, MN.

Give Them My Word!

I prayed often for John, who said he knew about God and hoped he was saved. I prayed that he would personally know Jesus as his Savior. On the other hand, Mary resisted any “religious” conversations at all, denying even the existence of God. I prayed for her heart to be stirred to ask questions and to be open to the truth. I also asked God to show her how much she is loved.

Many years passed. A couple of years ago at Christmas, the Lord told me to buy a Bible for John. I delayed in my obedience. I could not imagine a way I could give it to him. Shortly thereafter I discovered that he had nowhere to go on Christmas. So we invited him and he came! The

Bible was his gift under the tree. When he opened it, he made it a point to say, “Thank you, I don’t have one!”

Recently I was chatting with Mary about how we spend our time. She asked me what I meant by “serving in ministry.” Then she started asking one question after another. After our conversation, the Lord prompted me to mail her a new Bible. I had recently purchased it—and it was sitting on my shelf. I had bought it for myself but could never bring myself to rip open the packaging. Now I knew why!

In both these lives God brought the Word of love and truth—and He used me to help do it.

– Katie Blomquist lives in Chanhassen, MN.

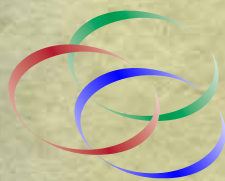
A New Thing

God gave me a love for children while I was still a child. I became a teacher and believed that my classroom was

DO YOU WANT TO SEE A GREATER PASSION FOR PRAYER IN YOUR CHURCH?

ARE YOU EQUIPPED TO BE A CATALYST FOR PRAYER IN YOUR CONGREGATION?

Then you need to be a member of the **CHURCH PRAYER LEADERS NETWORK!**



CHURCH PRAYER LEADERS NETWORK

The Church Prayer Leaders Network exists to encourage, challenge, inspire, and resource you as you seek to motivate and mobilize your church toward deeper levels of prayer.

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP:

- Annual subscription to *Prayer Connect* magazine
- Receive “Prayer Leader Online,” a bi-monthly email that includes suggestions, inspiration and resource ideas to help you in your ministry of developing prayer.
- Discounts on prayer resources at prayershop.org

GO TO prayerleader.com/membership OR CALL 812 238-5504 TO JOIN.

my mission field. I love music and was known as the singing teacher. I developed and directed three large children's choirs in my church.

After teaching for many years I had a sudden hearing loss in one ear. Working with music and a classroom of children were the two things that I could no longer do. When I sing I can only hear myself. I can't locate sound or hear low sounds. I cried for two weeks and then decided that God couldn't be through with me. I chose to be excited about discovering the new thing God wanted me to do. I started praying for God's guidance and told everyone that I was looking for a new direction.

My principal suggested that I go into computers and work in the county office because I knew what would be helpful for the teachers. At that time, computers were so new that I didn't even know what one was. I signed up for a class just

in time, as there was only one opening left. I eventually earned a master's degree in computer education and education research.

I am now retired and a widow. I have used my computer in so many ways with different organizations and church groups, helping in ways I never thought possible. God took my hearing loss and led me into computers—and I just love what I'm doing!

—Joan Holmes is from Thomasville, GA.

For the Sake of the Kids

When my husband was called to minister in a country church in Indiana, I soon became burdened for the growing number of children who needed to become lifelong followers of Jesus. God put it on my heart to pray for them.

Prior to this, we met Dave and Kim Butts and supported their work with Harvest Prayer Ministries (HPM).

Then one day I read an article by Jonathan Graf of HPM in *Prayer Connect* magazine about a prayer program in his church. He had chosen a young boy from his congregation to pray for on a regular basis. Jon mentioned that he still carries that young man's name in his Bible and continues to intercede for him.

The Holy Spirit convicted me: We need to reach out to our youth in this way! So I took the obedience step to develop the "Adopt-A-Kid for Prayer" initiative in my church. We had adults sponsor 56 youth that first year; our numbers have since grown to 74 young people bathed in prayer by caring adults.

Through this act of both prayer and obedience, we have seen relationships develop, prayers answered, love demonstrated, and much spiritual growth exhibited in both the youth and the pray-ers. I thank God for my prayer team who has helped in this powerful outreach.

—Becky Gommel lives in Vallonia, IN, where her husband Steve pastors Driftwood Christian Church.

PRAY FOR AMERICA'S LEADERS

A comprehensive tool
uniting the body of
Christ in shaping
history through prayer.

Go to:
PrayforAmericasLeaders.org



YOUR OWN STORIES

You have your own stories about how God has used you to bless others as His answer to the prayers of His people. Maybe you have prayed and prayed for God to send someone to share the truth of Christ with your loved one—but perhaps He is actually preparing *you* to be His voice. And when you see the broken-down neighborhoods in your community, chances are that God is calling you to both *pray and go!*

Prayer combined with action is a powerful testimony to the love of Jesus. The next time you pray about a situation that touches your heart, be sure also to ask the Lord if you might be the answer. **PC**



CAROL MADISON is editor of *Prayer Connect* magazine and director of prayer ministries at Hillside Church, Bloomington, MN.

Becoming the Answer to Your Prayers

BIBLE 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.

I attend a very “praying” church. And over the years we’ve seen some amazing answers to our prayers.

This year we’ve been praying especially fervently for the Holy Spirit to “break in and break through.” In other words, we’re praying for God to bring revival to us and to our community. However, we haven’t seen many signs of Him doing that so far.

Accordingly, the pastor recently launched a new series on “The Church.” His first message was about the early Church, as reported in Acts. He emphasized that the church is people, not a building, and that we’re Christ’s body. It’s our job to represent Him now that He’s returned to heaven. The message was good, although I didn’t learn much new from it.

It was his concluding comment, made almost off-handedly, that got me: “I wish I could pray a prayer and say some words and it would just happen,” he said. Then he pointed out the obvious: We can’t just pray these things—we have to get out there and tell people about Jesus. We need to share what He means to us. We need to love people in His name.

Now that was convicting! It’s not hard for me to

pray for revival—and I have been! But getting out there and actually “making disciples of all nations” (or even the people in my neighborhood) requires time and energy. It’s intimidating; it’s hard. It’s *work*. Honestly? I’d rather pray!

But I’m realizing that the idea that God calls some people to be “pray-ers” and others to be “do-ers” is not an idea that Scripture supports. So, whether you are naturally drawn to service and activism or to worship and intercession, it’s my hope that God will use this Bible study to inspire you to stretch in whatever ways you need to grow.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Dana Olson suggests that the “tension between ‘do-ers’ and ‘pray-ers’” has been around since the time of Mary and Martha. Read Luke 10:38–42 and summarize the issue in your own words.

BY CYNTHIA HYLE BEZEK

Imagine you are Martha. How can you use the following Scriptures to support your position on the importance of being a “do-er”? Proverbs 31:27; Ephesians 4:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:10–12; 1 Timothy 5:10.

Now imagine you are Mary. How can you use the following Scriptures to support your position on keeping the prayer focus? Psalm 27:4, 61:4, 84:10; Mark 6:31; John 6:27.

How does the exercise you just did demonstrate the value God places on both prayer and action?

In “Fruit-bearing Prayer,” Kim Butts writes about a group of college students who sought the Lord in order to obey what they heard. Read the following Old Testament stories and write what happened when people either prayed or failed to pray before acting. What do you learn in each instance?

Joshua 9:3–23:

1 Chronicles 14:8–12:

1 Chronicles 14:13–17:

2 Chronicles 20:13–23:

There are times when intercession or even worship are not the initial response God desires. Read the following Scriptures and record why action can sometimes be more appropriate than prayer.

Exodus 14:10–16:

Joshua 7:6–13:

Isaiah 58:

Matthew 5:23–24:

Kim Butts asserts, “Many of us miss the opportunity to bear abundant fruit simply because we do not stay continually in the presence of God in order to hear from Him.” What insight do the following verses from the Gospel of John provide concerning how Jesus balanced the tension between hearing and doing God’s will? John 5:16–20, 30; 6:38; 8:28; 9:4; 12:49–50.

ACTION STEPS

Do you typically identify more with contemplative Mary or activist Martha?

If you are someone who finds yourself so busy serving God that you hardly find time just to *be* with Him, set a date to sit at Jesus’ feet for a while. Take your journal, Bible, and some worship music and plan to just rest and enjoy His presence for at least a couple of hours. Ask Him to talk to you about your activities, priorities, and energy levels. Then ask Him for help to make any changes you need to make.

If you are a person who would rather be in your prayer closet than out among the needy and hurting crowds, ask God for His perspective. Lay out your prayer list before God. Spend some time meditating on Romans 12. Then ask the Lord to show you if there is one thing you can do, with His power, to be an answer to one of the items on your prayer list. **PC**

CYNTHIA HYLE BEZEK is editorial director for Community Bible Study (communitybiblestudy.org).

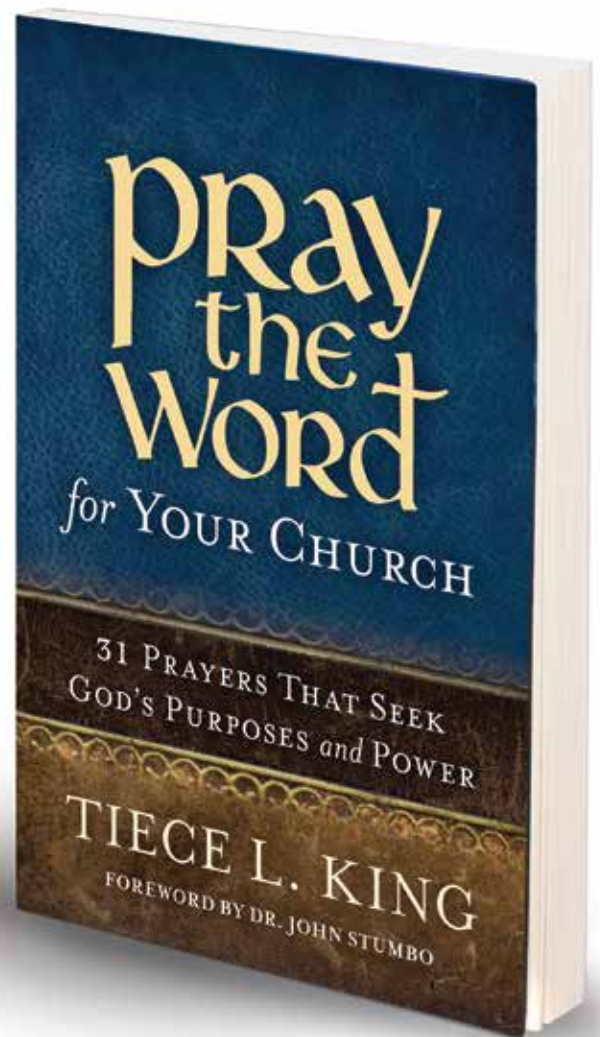
Imagine an Army of Prayer Warriors Who Pray for Your Church!

Pray the Word for Your Church will equip and motivate your congregation to pray as never before!

“Theologically rich, bursting with Scripture, thoughtfully written, worthy of reflection and faith-enlarging, this is a prayer tool that many sincere Jesus-followers will turn to again and again.”

—Dr. John Stumbo, President,
The Christian & Missionary Alliance

Pray the Word for Your Church includes 31 powerful Scripture-based prayers that focus on praying the purposes of Jesus Christ for His Bride, the Church. Not meant to be prayed as rote prayers, *Pray the Word for Your Church* will stimulate the user to go deeper into prayer—beyond the actual prayers in the book—to pray God’s heart for their own community of faith. Includes a 21-page “Praying for My Church Community Journal” for personal reflection and development of your own Scripture-based prayers.



Available from your normal Christian book outlets or from prayershop.org. Receive multiple copy discounts at PrayerShop. Also available in e-book format.

www.prayershop.org | 800-217-5200



BATTLEGROUND

for Our Schools

I still remember the first time I heard about what was really happening in our Arizona schools. I didn't know that teachers used their own money to buy students essential clothing like underwear, or that schools didn't have the resources to maintain buildings. I had no idea that teachers gave out canned goods on Fridays so that kids could eat over the weekend.

I didn't know about the number of students who were homeless, struggling academically, overdosing on drugs, or attempting to take their own lives. Even the churches right next door to these schools knew nothing about what was going on inside those walls!

So when four young men—Mike, Matt, Jon, and Keith—showed up at our ministry offices to ask if we would help them with an initiative to pray inside the schools of Arizona, I knew it was a God assignment!

We all heard the Lord say the same thing: *Invite My transforming presence into the schools.*

A Strategy of Hope

We began meeting with the principals of targeted schools. One of the first things we did when meeting with principals was to ask forgiveness for not taking time to find out the needs of their school. We said we were sorry for not praying and doing what we could to meet their school's tangible needs. Then we asked them how we could pray for their schools. I remember sitting in the office of one principal and asking him, "What is the biggest problem your school faces?"

He broke down in tears. "That's an easy question to answer," he said. "There's no hope here!"

We knew God wanted to change this!

So we rented school auditoriums and prayed and

worshiped in 26-hour prayer vigils in schools all across the state. I'll be the first to admit, this was a stretch. We struggled to step out in faith to raise the money to rent the auditoriums—and then labor all night in intercession every weekend that fall!

With broken hearts we cried out to God for food for the students, more teachers, money for repairs of the buildings, new sports equipment, and better test scores. In the midnight hours we worshiped and contended together against suicide, depression, and despair.

And then the reports came rolling in:

- *At Mingus High*, about one to three students a month were overdosing on Oxytocin. The school, ranked in the bottom 25 percent academically, was on probation from the Arizona Department of Education.

Just following our 26 hours of on-site prayer, the police came to the school and conducted a routine drug search. For the first time in anyone's memory, they found nothing! Three months later after another search, still no drugs. And we're so grateful to the Lord that in the four years since that time, there have been no more overdoses.

Mingus High no longer ranks toward the bottom academically. Within one year, they moved to the *top 25* percent (in 2012), and they also received an *A-plus* ranking from the Arizona Department of Education in 2014 and 2015.

The principal, who had not been enthusiastic about our prayer event on campus, afterwards told our

By Cheryl Sacks

A young man with brown hair, wearing a red polo shirt and dark jeans, is kneeling on a wooden floor. He has his head bowed and his hands clasped in prayer. He is surrounded by other people whose hands are also clasped in prayer, suggesting a group prayer session. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the man in the foreground. The overall atmosphere is one of devotion and community.

FOUND

Powerful Results When God's People Pray

team, “I still don’t believe in prayer. But I know results when I see them. I’d write a letter to any principal in Arizona recommending this event take place in their school.”

- **At Peoria High School** the academic scores improved so much after we held a prayer vigil that the vice principal called us back to ask if we would host 40 days of prayer and fasting before students took their AIMS aptitude tests. We did, and Peoria has continued to improve in their academic rankings. In fact, the following year in 2012 *U.S. News and World Report* listed Peoria High School among the top schools nationally and internationally—and they have received that ranking each year since!

We also solicited donations directly for Peoria High School, and we took the vice principal shopping to buy sweatshirts, underwear, and socks for the students. Nearby churches supplied school supplies and toiletries. Then we presented these gifts to the school on the opening night of the prayer vigil.

- **At Manzo Elementary School** we prayed for 12 hours during the spring of the school year. At the time Manzo was ranked an *F* school, graded according to students’ test scores. The school board had talked about shutting down the school and firing the principal. We prayed specifically about students improving in their academic scores.

By the end of that academic year, the school had improved to a *C-plus* ranking. When the Tucson Unified School District statistician called the principal, he asked, “How did you do this? No school moves up 22 points in one semester. It’s statistically impossible!”

As you might guess, Manzo Elementary School remained open, and the principal was not fired. In fact, he was given a promotion.

- **At Central High School** facilities were run down, the sports fields and landscaping badly needed refurbishing, and the school couldn’t afford to hire an adequate number of teachers. The general atmosphere in the school was depressive. Fights broke out daily among students.

Shortly after we started praying specifically for these needs, the Arizona Cardinals NFL team got wind of the desperate needs of the school. They donated cleats, jerseys, pads, and other gear they could no longer use.

NBA Cares Foundation heard about the school’s plight and provided \$150,000 worth of furnishings, extensive landscaping, and general maintenance, including refurbishing the school’s sports fields. Phoenix Suns Charities came to fix up the campus and gave the principal a check for \$200,000 to hire additional teachers.

That fall Central reported no fights on campus. One teacher posted on Facebook, “The entire atmosphere of our school has changed!”

Most Desperate Need

The problems we discovered are not unique to Arizona. Most schools face similar issues.

Beyond the physical and financial needs—and they are great—our schools desperately need the healing power of Jesus. No wonder it seems hopeless. Secular institutions can’t solve a spiritual and moral crisis or give kids what they need most: an encounter with the Lord.

The good news is, we’ve seen what God can do. Miracles happen when we invite His transforming presence into our schools!

We know of teens who, after coming to our prayer gathering at their school, changed their minds about killing themselves. At least two of them had planned to take their own lives at school that very night. Instead they heard the worship,

came inside, and ended up giving their lives to the Lord.

When stories of what God was doing in schools got out, things began to change. The eyes of the community were opened. The Holy Spirit awakened the Church.

Now families and churches are getting involved in adopting schools for prayer and practical service everywhere across the state. They are providing backpacks, food, tutors, and mentors. In one school, at the request of the principal, we created a *Serve, Watch, and Pray* program. About 80 members of a nearby church signed up to serve as volunteers on campus, and we trained them how to “watch and pray” on the job.

Ways to Connect

There are so many ways to connect with a school in your community. Here are a few ideas:

Adopt a school: Build intentional relationships with your neighborhood schools. Ask, “How may we serve you?” Then take their answers to your church body or family for prayer and action. The power of united, fervent, focused prayer aimed at our local schools, along with building long-term relationships with school officials, will open doors to meet tangible needs that can result in powerful transformation.

Host a prayer vigil: Meet with the school principal and discuss how you can rent the school auditorium to host a prayer vigil. Ask him or her to tell you the school’s specific needs and promise to pray for these during the event. Discuss the length of time you will need access to the building and ask about any restrictions. We schedule 12 to 26 hours because we’ve found that the spiritual atmosphere changes when we stay long enough to saturate the school in worship and allow our hearts to be broken over the needs there. We always invite principals, and often they are willing to let students and faculty know about the event.

Mobilize a prayerwalk: You may

want to do something like we do in Arizona by mobilizing a 21-day back-to-school prayerwalk. Individuals, families, and church groups prayerwalk schools in their neighborhood or the school they or their children attend. During this time, some churches invite teachers and administrators in their community to a weekend service where the church honors and prays over the educators before the new school year begins.

We always see powerful results from our back-to-school prayer. One year right after our school prayerwalk, a woman was walking near the school her church had adopted in prayer when she noticed that two strange cars in the parking lot were crammed with people, the car doors flung open. Sensing something was terribly wrong, she ran into the school and alerted the principal. He locked down the building just seconds before angry men stormed the front door.

Every Prayer Counts

You may not be a church leader or have the time or connections to launch a major prayer initiative. What can *you* do? Grab a prayer partner and go for a prayerwalk around a school. If you have school-age children or grandchildren, pray with them about their school during a mealtime or before bed. When you are dropping off or picking up your child at school, arrive early and pray over the students and teachers you see—and anything else God puts on your heart.


Here are some vital issues for which every school needs prayer:

- **Protection from evil:** Pray Psalm 91 over the school and ask the Lord to station His angels all around. Ask God for protection not only from shootings and violence but also from bullying, drugs, gangs, and evil spirits that come to steal, kill, and destroy (see John 10:10).
- **Overcoming hopelessness:** Declare, in Jesus' name, that all thoughts of suicide, depression,

hopelessness, and despair are broken off (see Jer. 29:11). Pray with expectation and confidence that students will experience salvation and the joy that comes from knowing Him.

- **Prospering in school:** Ask the Lord to place each student with the teachers and classrooms where that particular student will prosper. Ask Him to send godly influences to the young people to encourage them in their studies and their walk with Jesus Christ.
- **Contending for purpose and destiny:** Ask God to raise up young people with godly purpose and destiny to contend for righteousness and justice at their schools (Amos 5:24) because our schools are gates of cultural influence in our nation. Ask Him to raise up those who, like David, will fulfill the purpose of God in their generation.

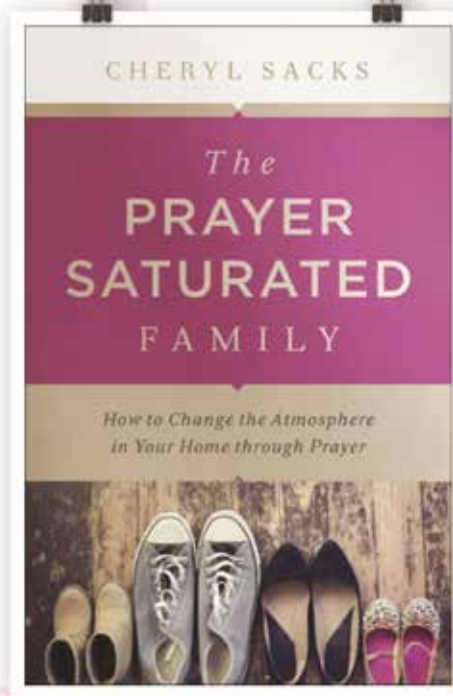
There may be principals, teachers, and students in your community who feel there is no hope. But we know the answer that can result when the Church comes together and seeks God for His blessing and transformation in our schools. We just need to take the initiative.

For free school prayer guides and more information about mobilizing school prayer in your community go to bridgebuilders.net/resources/free-materials.



CHERYL SACKS is co-founder of BridgeBuilders International, a ministry that mobilizes God's people in transformational prayer. She is a national speaker and best-selling author

of the Prayer Saturated book series: *The Prayer Saturated Church*, *Prayer Saturated Kids* (co-authored with Arlyn Lawrence), and her newest book, *The Prayer Saturated Family: How to Change the Atmosphere in Your Home through Prayer* (available at prayershop.org).



CHANGE YOUR FAMILY... through Prayer!

The Prayer Saturated Family will show you how.

With a fresh, flexible, real-world approach, author Cheryl Sacks shows how you can integrate prayer into the daily life of a modern, busy family.

Includes a 31-day Family Prayer Guide

Available at prayershop.org. 812 238-5504



Lessons from My Child's Trust

6

GOD WAITS

Little Bekah was two years old when a severe medical condition radically changed our lives. What started as a single outbreak of ulcers on her lips, tongue, and inner cheeks developed into a condition that recurred every four weeks, leaving our precious child unable to speak or eat for two weeks out of every month. For an entire year, we vacillated between relatively normal life for two weeks at a time and medical crisis mode for two weeks at a time.

We planned vacations and family outings around her

ulcer outbreak schedule. We even scheduled the C-section birth of our second child around a week when she wouldn't be in the midst of a severe outbreak. The pain of watching our child fight to swallow water and the struggle of learning to communicate without words were heartbreaking.

In the midst of our trial, we spent hours on our knees in prayer. We claimed promises, rebuked spirits, repented of sin in our own lives, praised God in the storm, and begged for relief for our child. Despite our desperation, the

A close-up photograph of a child's hand reaching out on a sandy beach. The child is wearing a white dress with a yellow pattern and a purple polka-dot wristband. The sand is decorated with colorful chalk drawings in shades of purple, pink, and blue. The background is a bright, sunny beach scene.

BY STACEY PARDOE

Reasons TO ANSWER PRAYER

ulcers continued to return at the first of each month. The finest doctors had no answers, and the agony of watching her suffer was indescribable.

Throughout our journey, we were regularly reminded that God's ways are not our ways (Is. 55:8). There were days when it seemed like God was absent. There were hard nights of angrily crying out to God.

Despite the pain of the journey, we were reminded of several reasons why God sometimes asks His children to

wait for visible answers to our prayers. We wrestled with the following six statements for years. In the end, we emerged believing in the goodness of God.

In our journey, here are six reasons we discovered about how God sometimes waits to answer our prayers:

- 1. He is teaching us to trust in His goodness.** I'll never forget the winter morning, curled up with Bekah on the couch, when we realized the ulcers were

returning for the tenth time. She sipped chocolate milk from a straw and looked at me with faithful eyes, and said, “I don’t know why these ulcers are coming back, but I’m going to show God I still trust Him.”

My eyes filled with tears. From the mouth of a three-year-old, I was reminded that trials are opportunities to trust that God is good, even when circumstances are anything but good. Regardless of the trial, God promises that He is always good (Ps. 145:9). He also promises that there will be trouble in this life (John 16:33). We shouldn’t be surprised when trouble comes, but we should cling to the One who will carry us through it.

2. He is drawing us deeper into relationship.

Walking through trials with my husband has brought us to a closer place of emotional intimacy because we’ve learned to

rely on one another when life becomes difficult. In the same way, we often learn greater dependence on God when we draw near to Him in hard circumstances.

This doesn’t mean God orchestrates loss in our lives for the simple purpose of bringing us closer to His heart. It simply means God uses everything He permits. He calls us to deeper places of love and dependence through seasons of unanswered prayer.

I spent more sleepless nights crying out to God in the midst of Bekah’s condition than I do when life is relatively comfortable. I searched the Bible ravenously for truth to hold onto during the season of ulcers. I needed Him desperately, and I knew it. God used the season to teach me a deeper level of dependence.

3. He is building our faith.

Faith is hoping for and believing in what is unseen (Heb. 11:1). When

we don’t see an answer to our prayers, it’s tempting to give up. Some people become offended at God, shaking their fists and turning from Him. Others quit praying, believing prayer doesn’t “work.”

Prayer is not simply a way of getting what we want; prayer is designed to lead us into deeper places with God by developing our relationship with Him.

Long stretches of unanswered prayer are like cinder blocks that build a strong foundation in our lives of faith. When we persist in prayer, refusing to give up despite external circumstances, we continue to add blocks to the foundation of our faith. Bekah’s comment about trusting God, despite the ulcers, was an indication of the faith He built in her through the hard experience. When we don’t turn our backs on God in seasons of unanswered prayer, our faith grows.

4. Our motives are wrong.

Our motives weren’t wrong when we prayed for our child’s healing. God is good, and He wants His children to live abundantly. However, sometimes our prayers go unanswered when our motives *are* wrong. Praying for a bigger house, better job, or nicer car could be for the glory of God—or it could be out of sinful covetousness. We should always consider our motives for praying the way we do.

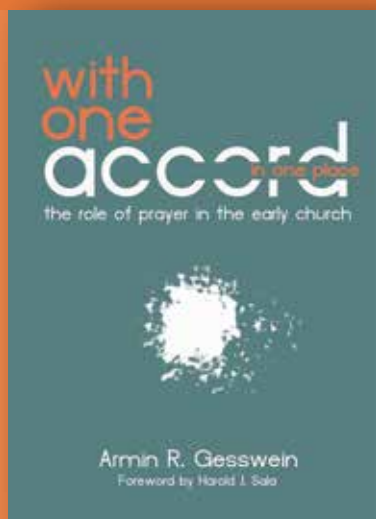
After six months of ulcers, I finally shifted my focus. While I continued to pray for my child’s healing, I also began praying for the work God was doing in her life. She was claiming promises from Scripture, telling others that God was still good. She was allowing the Lord to transform her mind. As the fruit began to come forth, I was encouraged to keep pressing forward.

5. God’s timing is not our timing.

My husband and I longed to see our child thriving healthily and playing in the park with other children. We wanted these things immediately, and waiting for Bekah’s healing felt like a form of

Should Prayer Be Important?

With One Accord in One Place looks at the role of prayer in the early church and how through prayer and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, this praying church changed the world forever. This modern classic will challenge and inspire you to work toward prayer’s rightful place in your own church.



Order through your local Christian bookstore or from prayershop.org. E-book versions also available.

812 238-5504



punishment. God wasn't punishing us, but it felt like it.

What we couldn't see was the work God was doing in Bekah's heart as the months of suffering turned to years. He was teaching her to stand on the truth of His Word. He was giving a four-year-old a theology of suffering most people don't acquire until well into adulthood. He was prompting her to ask hard questions and trust Him.

His timing in the healing wasn't the same as ours. He allowed her to suffer so He could build character He would use to steer the course of her life. His ways simply are not our ways.

6. We don't always know why God waits to answer.

Ultimately, I believe God could have taught Bekah to trust Him through less painful measures. I still grieve over the family holidays we missed, the zoo trips

we cancelled, and the difficulty of months on a liquid diet. We don't entirely know why God waited so long to heal our child. We only know the waiting was painful.

We don't know why God doesn't change the hearts of our loved ones who still haven't softened to Him. We don't know why terminal illness takes lives or why wayward spouses don't repent. We don't know why children turn from the Lord or why hardship threatens to destroy lives. We simply refuse to be offended, refuse to turn from God, and refuse to forsake our faith. We claim little Bekah's faithful heart and commit to trust God, even when He doesn't seem to answer.

Persist and Press In

Shortly after her fifth birthday, Bekah's ulcer condition drastically improved. She still deals with a few ulcers every six months. But if we'd never walked through our trial, we might not even notice the

occasional ulcers she now gets. God has healed her. For this, we are deeply grateful.

We have friends who continue to pray for their healing, their miracles, and their breakthroughs. We know healing doesn't always come in this lifetime. Wherever you're seeking God's answers in your life today, it is my prayer that you will persist in prayer. May you not grow bitter or take offense. His love for you is tender and filled with compassion.

He is working, even where you cannot see Him. You can trust Him. Keep pressing into His heart. **PC**



STACEY PARDOE is a mentor, Bible study leader, and the prayer coordinator at Grove City, PA, Alliance Church. She is also a former special education teacher with a master's degree in curriculum and instruction in education.



Is our nation

in trouble?

CAN PRAYER

CHANGE A NATION?

IF IT IS NOT TOO DIFFICULT, WILL YOU HELP?

Commit to 3 minutes a day, and coffee once a month, to be part of raising up 5 million new prayer warriors in the USA.

Order the free materials and see why this huge goal is attainable.

To receive a **FREE SPI-5Y80/PrayerCords** envelope of materials call **708.673.5998** or email spi@harvestprayer.com There's a weekly conference call available (to answer questions) Thursdays at 8:30pm Central Time 641.715.3580 Access Code 478951.



Campuses Saturated with Prayer

Claim Your Campus (CYC) is a movement to raise up one million students to pray daily on the 67,000 middle school and high school campuses in the U.S. The goal is simply stated as “student-led prayer on every campus every day.” In just the first five years since the launch of the movement, there are already 40-plus states and tens of thousands of students involved.

The free CYC app (available on the App Store or Google Play) makes it easy for students to sign up and find other Christian students on their campus who are willing to pray.

Jeff Eckart, CYC Founder and CEO, says, “Mobile app technology is redefining the way we live. What if it was possible that this technology could unite a generation in a way that’s never happened before in history? Simply stated, [the CYC app] will revolutionize the student prayer movement! This platform

will unite, connect, sustain, and train hundreds of thousands of students while simultaneously teaching each individual student how to pray intimately.”

The individual commitment is for a student to pray one day a week for his or her campus. The overall goal is to organize one student group (of at least three students each) per day. The campus can be covered for an entire school week with just 15 students. It is also recommended that one adult sponsor be invited for encouragement and sustainability.

By using the app, students can designate the day, time, and place to gather, such as outside the school gym or in the cafeteria. As other Christian friends discover the app, they can join one of the five groups to pray. It is more important to have all five days covered than to have large numbers of students praying.



The app includes a daily lesson and prayer points to help guide the students’ prayer time. They can also identify the top issues affecting their schools, such as bullying, depression, gossip, pornography, and prejudice. The app provides rotating prayer strategies around the themes of grace, peace, justice, and mercy. It should take only 10–15 minutes for students to read the Scripture and pray as a group.

For more information about “claiming your campus” for Jesus, check out neverthesame.org.

Become a Moth for a Day

Very unlike the deadly fate of a moth drawn to the warmth and beauty of a candle flame, the closer we get to our Radiant Redeemer the greater our joys, the more energized our labors, the more enticing our prospects in Him, and the more *alive* we will feel!

Paul urges us in Romans 12:11: “Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.” That echoes Proverbs 23:17–18: “Always be zealous for the fear of the Lord. There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off.”

So why not act like a moth by daring for one day to draw closer to the flame (Jesus)? Try this approach: Carry a 3 x 5

index card with you during the day, and jot down reasons (words or phrases) you believe you personally should be more passionate about our Savior. For example, you might think about:

- who He is as a person that you find meaningful
- where He is headed as He leads us into God’s purposes
- what He is doing to fulfill God’s promises in you, or in others, or in the world
- reasons why He deserves to be exalted, both now and later.



At the close of the day, before you sleep, take five minutes to turn each reason into a brief prayer of

thanks to the Father for who His Son is and for what He means to you. You’ll sleep much better!

For more free interactive ministry ideas and multimedia resources on the supremacy of Christ (including artwork, books, videos, music, and quotes), go to christnow.com.

DAVID BRYANT is president of PROCLAIM HOPE! Excerpted from his just-released book *Christ Is NOW!*

Praying for Members of a Wedding Party

A newly engaged couple and their parents soon find themselves facing shifting family dynamics, planning and financial challenges, and unexpected issues to troubleshoot. As they approach their big day, what better gift could we give than the gift of prayer? Not only will prayers for them be helpful, but praying for the rest of the wedding party will benefit everyone as well.

Here are some specific ways to pray for members of the wedding party:

- **The Bride:** Pray God will guide her and the groom in the many choices before them. Ask Him to help her value relationships and people over perfect wedding plans. Ask God to bless her with the support system she needs during this busy and life-changing time. Pray she will love God above all and love her groom the way God intends.
- **The Groom:** Ask God to show him how he can help with the wedding plans and also aid communication between the families. Pray God will give him wisdom as he learns to be the protector and leader of his new family. Pray he will love God above all and his bride the way God intends.
- **Mother of the Bride:** Pray she will follow the bride's lead and assist in every way possible. Pray that her demeanor will set a tone of love, grace, and cooperation for all involved. Ask God for strength and ability for her tasks and boldness when called to step out of her comfort zone. Pray for the emotional challenges she's facing as her family changes.
- **Father of the Bride:** Pray he will provide faithful prayer support, a listening ear, and a positive attitude. Pray he will build a good relationship with the groom and have wisdom when family members seek his advice. Pray for comfort and grace in letting his little girl go.
- **Parents of the Groom:** Pray they join in their son's joy and offer support in whatever ways needed. Pray for wisdom in whether they should offer more financial assistance than tradition might dictate. Pray as they navigate the changes in their family.
- **Maid of Honor:** Pray she will faithfully carry out her duties and truly shine in creating memories and making the bride feel special. Ask God to bless her with the finances she needs in fulfilling her role.

- **Best Man:** Pray he will be alert to ways he can assist the groom and also look for opportunities to draw him out in conversation regarding the changes happening in his life.
- **All the Attendants:** Pray the presence and participation of each one will add to the joy of the wedding. Pray for safe travels and adequate finances for all their expenses.

As the soon-to-be Mr. and Mrs. make their way to the altar, take joy in smoothing the way with your prayers. Give a priceless gift indeed!

CHERYL BARKER is the author of *Mother of the Bride: Refreshment and Wisdom for the Mother of the Bride* (BroadStreet Publishing 2016).

Will You Pray with Us?

- Please pray for Dave and Kim Butts as Dave receives cancer treatments during a sabbatical from Harvest Prayer Ministries. Pray for Kim as she assists in his care and keeps up with her work load. You can follow Dave's CaringBridge site at caringbridge.org/visit/davebutts.
- Pray for the influence of *Prayer Connect* to continue to expand to pastors, church prayer leaders, and intercessors. Pray that God will use the magazine to increase fervency in the prayer movement at this critical time in our nation and world.
- Pray that the staff of *Prayer Connect* will "discern the times" as they publish timely themes and articles.

**TRY
PRAYERCONNECT
FOR YOUR
SMALL
GROUPS**

Issues 2-19 and 26-30 all have short Bible studies based upon the theme.

**PERFECT FOR A
PRAYER FOCUS
EVERY FEW MONTHS**

prayershop.org

How to Grow a Vision for Revival | By Bob Bakke

My friend, Byron Paulus of Life Action Ministries, describes revival this way: “When God comes in revival, He accomplishes in a brief time what would normally take many years. Revival is the intensifying, accelerating, multiplying, and magnifying work of God.”

I like this. Given the social, political, and ethical chaos today, combined with the weakness of the Church, many believers are hungry for such an intense season of unrestrained grace against which the human heart and society is defenseless.

Confidence in the efficacy of revival assumes a confidence in God to accomplish what He wills—in the power of His Spirit, for the glory of His Son, in answer to the prayers of His people. But the hope of revival also assumes that God is *willing* to send revival in answer to our cries.

Revival Hindrances

How do we grow this vision within the local church? First, we acknowledge that we're prone to believe these myths:

- that our problems are unique
- that the Church and the world have never faced problems like ours
- that God is either disinterested or too disgusted to help.

We also forget that such weary seasons in the Church and troubled times in culture have appeared time and time again since Adam. When we face the need for revival, our forgetfulness can lead to panic, hysterics, paralysis, or despair—as if our problems have left us alone and adrift in unknown waters without a compass.

We need to repent of this forgetfulness. It is a product of pride. When it comes to growing a vision for revival,

the remedies don't change, even though our historical context evolves. The remedies are essentially consistent and quite simple. They aren't *easy*, just simple.

Revival Forerunners

A case in point is Arnold Dallimore's remarkable biography of George Whitefield and the history of The Great Awakening in the 1730s and '40s. Whitefield was characterized by his contemporaries as a comet across the sky of history. Countless people were transformed in his wake. But God began laying the foundations for this so-called “Great Awakening” some 60 years before.

Dallimore records the story of Dr. Anthony Horneck of London who was a leader in the Church of England. In 1673, Horneck was alarmed at the listless and sinful church in London. So, he “preached a number of what he called ‘awakening sermons.’ As a result, several young men began to meet together weekly in order to build up one another in the Christian faith. They gathered in small groups at certain fixed locations and their places of meeting became known as Society rooms. In these gatherings they read the Bible . . . and prayed; they also went out among the poor to relieve want at their own expense and to show kindness to all. . . . The work grew so that by 1730 nearly one hundred of these [Prayer] Societies existed in London, and others—perhaps another hundred—were to be found in cities and towns throughout England. The Societies movement became, in many senses, the cradle of the Revival.”¹

Does the pattern ring a bell?

1. Someone with the conviction and power of God's Spirit urgently reminds the people of God about the primacy of God, His Word, and

His Savior, Jesus Christ.

2. Small groups respond with united and ongoing prayer and intentionally disperse into the streets of the city.
3. The Lord adds to the number of those who are saved.
4. Ultimately, history is transformed.

Simple Remedies

We know from the Bible and Church history the fundamental ingredients to grow a vision for revival in your congregation:

- Pray for a spirit of prayer to fall upon your church. Pray especially that your senior pastor will be known as the leader of such praying.
- Remind people of the Bible stories of the Spirit's transforming work in the history of Israel and the Church. You can find these stories on sites such as onecry.com and revivalstories.org.
- Tell current stories of ways the Spirit is reviving and awakening today. You can find these accounts at cbn.com, for example.
- Start small groups for prayer, praying specifically for revival.

Remember, it may take 60 years before the flood comes. But be encouraged and confident in two things: God will answer, and you are the first part of His answer. ☐

¹George Whitefield. *The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth-Century Revival*. Vol. 2. (Westchester, IL: Cornerstone Books, 1979), 29.



BOB BAKKE is senior teaching pastor of Hillside Church of Bloomington, MN. He is also on the executive leadership team of OneCry and a member of America's National Prayer Committee.



An Humble Attempt | By Jonathan Edwards

An humble attempt to promote the agreement and union of God's people throughout the world in extraordinary prayer for a revival of religion and the advancement of God's kingdom on earth, according to scriptural promises and prophecies of the last time

The Future Glorious State

Thus saith the LORD of hosts; "It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, 'Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also.' Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD" (Zech. 8:20–22, KJV).

Zechariah prophesies of the future, glorious advancement of the Church. In these verses Zechariah speaks of "many people and strong nations seeking the true God." Nothing ever happened, from the time of Zechariah to the coming of Christ, to fulfill this prophecy. It is most likely that the Spirit of God speaks here of the greatest revival and the most glorious advancement of the Church on earth.

In Zechariah 8:20–22 we have an account of how this future advancement of the Church should occur. It would come to fruition as multitudes from different towns resolve to unite in extraordinary prayer, seeking God until He manifests Himself and grants the fruits of His presence. We may observe several things in particular:

The necessity of prayer. This can be understood as a prophecy of great revival of religion with true worship of God among His people, repentance from idolatry, and growth of the Church. This prophecy parallels many other prophecies

that speak of an extraordinary spirit of prayer preceding that glorious day of revival and advancement of the Church's peace and prosperity.

The good which shall be brought by prayer: God Himself. Scripture says, "They shall go to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts." *Seeking the Lord* is commonly used to mean something far more than seeking something *from* God. Surely it implies that *God Himself* is what is desired and sought after. We must understand that God who had withdrawn Himself (or hid Himself) would return to His Church, granting the fruits of His presence and communion with His people, which He so often promised.

It seems reasonable to understand the phrase, "seeking the LORD of hosts" means not merely praying to God, but seeking the promised restoration of the Church of God, and God's granting this promised revival and restoration.

We may observe who it is that will be united in seeking the Lord. Many people from all over the world will unite to seek the Lord. From the prophecy, it seems reasonable to assume that this will be fulfilled in the following manner:

First, God's people will be given a spirit of prayer, inspiring them to come together and pray in an extraordinary manner, that He would help His Church, show mercy to mankind in general, pour out His Spirit, revive His work, and advance His kingdom in the world as He promised.

Moreover, such prayer would gradually spread and increase more and more, ushering in a revival of religion. This would be characterized by greater worship and service of God among believers. Others will be awakened to their need for God, motivating them to earnestly cry out to

God for mercy. They will be led to join with God's people in that extraordinary seeking and serving of God. In this way the revival will grow until the awakening reaches whole nations.

We may also observe the manner of their unity in prayer. It is a visible and voluntary union that was first proposed by some of God's people with others readily joining in over time. Those who live in one city will declare to those of another city, "Let us go," etc. Many of those who hear their declaration will not only join with them but will make the call for the unity in prayer known to still others. As a result, the movement will grow, prevail and spread among God's people.

We can observe the manner in which they agree to pray. "Let us go speedily to pray," or *let us go continually*. Literally translated this means, "let us go in going." The Hebrew language often doubles words for emphasis (e.g., the holy of holies signifies that which is most holy). Such doubling of words also denotes the certainty of an event coming to pass.

Finally, this prophecy gives us a picture of this union in prayer being an inviting and happy thing. From the whole of this prophecy we may infer that it is well pleasing to God for many people, in different parts of the world, to voluntarily come into a visible union to pray in an extraordinary way for those great outpourings of the Holy Spirit which shall advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ that God has so often promised shall be in the latter ages of the world. ☐

JONATHAN EDWARDS (1703–1758) is considered one of the greatest theologians in American history. As a prolific preacher and writer during the First Great Awakening, he was known for his commitment to doctrinal purity. This article is condensed from one of his most famous works.


HARVEST PRAYER
MINISTRIES
3525 S. 3rd Place
Terre Haute, IN 47802

NEW POWER SERIES Reveals the Why and How of Being a Praying Church

A ROADMAP TO GROW PRAYER IN YOUR CHURCH

INTRODUCING NEW RELEASE

Restored Power: Becoming a Praying Church One Tweak at a Time

Harvest Prayer Ministries has recently released the sequel to its landmark book *Forgotten Power: A Simple Theology for a Praying Church* by Dave Butts, *Restored Power* by Jonathan Graf.

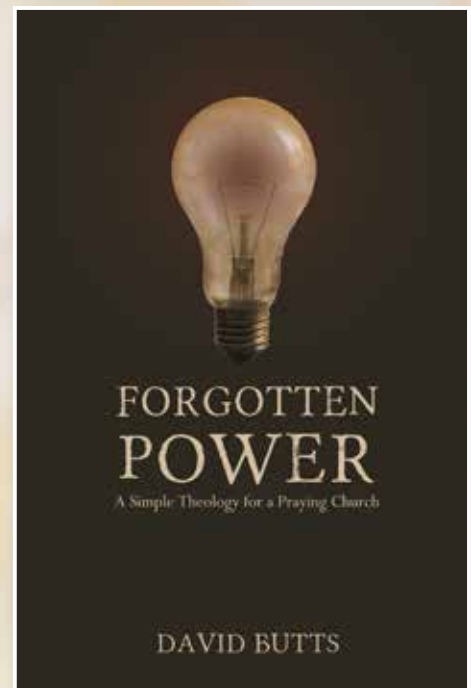
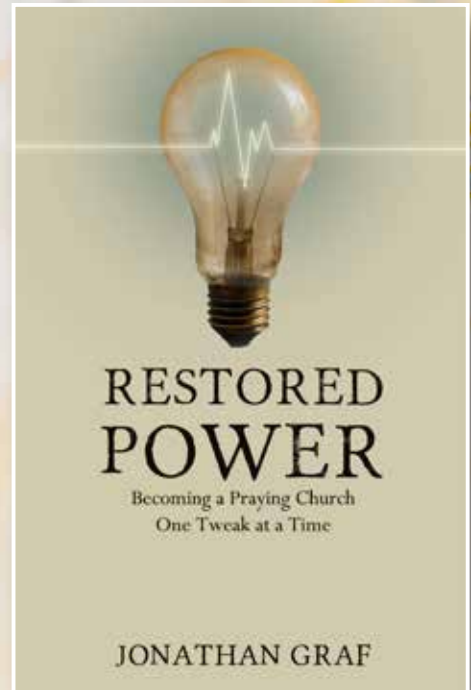
Forgotten Power reveals the theology; *Restored Power* is the how to.

Both books are must reads for pastors, elders/deacons, and prayer leaders.

Available at prayershop.org (multiple copy discounts available there). Or through Christian bookstores, your normal Christian book outlets, and in e-book formats.



www.prayershop.org | 812 238-5504



Let Harvest Prayer Ministries Help You Develop a Roadmap to Grow Prayer in Your Church | harvestprayer.com