

On My Prayer List: *Me!*Couples Who PRAY TOGETHER
CALLING MEN—and Everyone Else

Sunday, November 6, 2016 is . . .

Prayer Force One STUNIDAY

The Sunday Before We Elect Our Next President



"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

II Chronicles 7:14

Then Participate!

"Prayer Force One Sunday is not an event, but a date. We are asking every individual Christian, every home, and every church, ministry and denomination to participate in their own way. To find out how you can become involved in your own community, please visit our website listed below."

> Senator Ed Moore, (OK-Ret.) President, Prayer Force One



www.PrayerForceOne.com



PRAYERCONNECT

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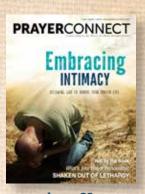
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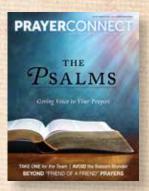
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We are looking for general articles, ideas, and news stories on what God is doing as a result of prayer. We are primarily looking for newly written pieces that have not appeared in other publications. Writer's guidelines are available by emailing Carol 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:

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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.

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The mission of **PRAYER**CONNECT is

- 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.

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Previously in Prayer Connect

The Psalms are known as "God's Prayer Book."
Jesus prayed the Psalms—and that's enough reason to incorporate them into our prayer



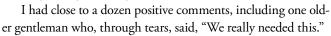
lives, as well! When we don't know how to pray, the Psalms give us perfect examples of how to grieve, plead, cry out, praise, and be brutally honest. This issue on *Giving Voice to Your Prayers* and other back issues are available at *prayershop.org*.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE



Hearers Only? Or Doers, Too

few months ago I spoke in a church on a Sunday morning, and my message, "Get into the Battle," seemed extremely well received. I talked about the role of prayer in pushing back the forces of darkness and in growing the Kingdom of Christ.





In my closing thoughts I offered a few practical action steps to get into the battle. I knew this church had a corporate prayer meeting on Wednesday nights—at least, it was supposed to be a corporate prayer meeting. But I also knew that usually only two to five people out of a congregation of 400 or so came out to pray. My last action step point was to challenge them to come out to that prayer meeting. I tried not to make them feel guilty, acknowledging that we are all busy. But I asked if they could commit to attend the prayer gathering one Wednesday night a month.

"In a church this size," I said, "if you hit different weeks when each of you came, that would mean 40–50 people would be here every week storming the gates of heaven for God's Kingdom purposes in this church!"

Alas, I have heard that thus far the size of the group has not increased. Now to be fair, I suspect it has a small group ministry where people regularly pray with each other—although it's likely they pray for each other's needs rather than a broader Kingdom expansion agenda normally covered in a corporate prayer meeting. Still, I had hoped for a few more to come out to the prayer gathering each week.

I believe one of the reasons people say they think prayer is important but don't really do it—in church after church—is related to what my colleague Dave Butts thinks is a big sin in the modern church. In reference to James 1:22, he says we may think that when we hear something preached from God's Word and agree with it, that's enough. We think we are automatically "doers of the Word."

How does that relate to prayer and my message? In most churches, people talk about prayer and sincerely believe it's important. But their actions do not support that belief. They are hearers, but not doers.

How can we combat that in a church? I believe we can do it in these two ways: First, we need to continue to put forward the need for true followers of Christ to be involved in praying with other believers. If you are a Kingdom believer, then you will want to see the Kingdom grow—and that involves praying together! Leaders need to challenge their people to participate in corporate prayer opportunities.

Second, we need to teach Western believers to value community over individualism. Americans are rugged individualists. This translates into, "I can pray alone at home." In virtually every other culture, believers typically pray together. The Church is designed to be a communal society, not a group of individuals who come together once a week.

Be encouraged pastor, prayer leader, and prayer warrior. Keep praying with others and encouraging others to join you. While I prefer bigger, I am reminded that Jesus says He honors as few as two who agree in prayer!

-Jonathan Graf

NEWS&EVENTS

God's Movement through Prayer

Tent Meetings Draw Thousands

t started as a week of meetings in the spring, launched on Mother's Day. C.T. Townsend, a 34-year-old evangelist with C.T. Townsend Ministries of Ashville, NC, was invited to preach a series of "revival" messages at New Hope Baptist Church in Burlington, NC. It quickly turned into packed nightly meetings. Organizers report that more than 700 people were saved. In early June, nearly 5,000 attended a youth night, and other evenings averaged 2,500 people.

The size of the crowds quickly outgrew the 600-seat capacity of the church, so a large "old-time gospel tent" that seats 3,500 was erected on property owned by Don Cox.

"It's been absolutely amazing," Cox said. "The last time I remember anything remotely similar to this happening



was in August of 1951 when I went to a tent meeting in Greensboro, NC, and a young evangelist by the name of Billy Graham was speaking."

Meetings continued nine weeks, well into July, with capacity crowds.

Townsend credits prayer as the source of this move of the Holy Spirit, citing the church's commitment to pray weekly for revival. According to Pastor Randy Hobbs, "It's just amazing to be a part

of this. . . . We had been meeting over 15 years, praying for revival to touch us locally and nationally."

A few weeks into the meetings, a team of intercessors showed up from hundreds of miles away to stay and pray every day for the meetings. There were also men who prayed underneath the platform every night.

The unity among churches has also grown steadily. "I have never seen such unity," says Townsend. More than 60 churches were involved, many from other denominations and backgrounds.

Townsend also emphasized that the draw was the preaching of the Word of God. He clearly preached repentance and the coming judgment of God. When the preaching began, he says, "the power of God [came] in that old-time gospel tent."

Together 2016 Brings Thousands to D.C.

espite extreme heat, heightened national racial tensions, and worldwide terrorist activities, hundreds of thousands of people gathered in Washington, D.C., on July 16, 2016, for a day of prayer, worship, and lifting up Jesus.

The event, called Together 2016 (reset2016.com), was billed as a "generation-defining moment" for the Next Generation. It was a call for younger generations to gather with older generations—across denominational and racial lines—to demonstrate the unity that Jesus prayed for in John 17. Led by nationally known artists and speakers, the crowd worshiped, spent multiple times in prayer, and even got on their knees, asking God for healing of divisions and a "reset" of the nation to Jesus.

The scheduled 12-hour event was cut short by five hours due to extreme heat, but the crowd remained enthusiastic as a new generation was commissioned and given a charge to go out from the National Mall to the nation and the world. According to organizer Nick Hall, "The event was never about going to the National Mall—it was always about

sending a generation out from the Mall to share Jesus."

Together 2016 had a significant presence on social media. During the event, the hashtag #JesusChangesEverything was trending nationally and globally. Potential impressions on Twitter were more than 70 million. The event was



also live streamed around the world. The narrative in national media was that Together 2016 focused on prayer, reconciliation, and unity during an extremely painful time in the U.S.

Susan Harris, director of communications for Together, notes the timely nature of the event—immediately following several shootings around the

NEWS&EVENTS



nation and terrorist killings in France and other places around the world. "In a time [when] people are divided, there's so much pain, there's so much hate and fear; we just see there's a need now more than ever to come together in unity to pray together for healing," she says.

Dave Butts, chairperson of America's National Prayer Committee, served in a

prayer tent backstage with other national prayer leaders, interceding for the event. He observes, "Only heaven will reveal the breadth of what occurred Saturday and how it will impact our nation. Now we all get to keep praying and watch and see what the Holy Spirit does with Together 2016."

Jason Hershey, director of the nearby

David's Tent (24/7 worship in D.C.), wrote about his gratitude to event organizers: "Thank you to the Pulse team and all that came to, quite sacrificially, lift up Jesus in D.C., for Together 2016. In spite of the early ending, I think all that attended would agree that it was a huge win for the Jesus Team and a catalytic day in our generation."

David's Tent to Continue Worship

ason Hershey, executive director of David's Tent D.C., has announced that the 24/7 prayer and worship that has filled the U.S. National Mall will be extended beyond its original ending date of election day 2016.

David's Tent has a permit that allows them to conduct 424 days of continuous worship along the National Mall in Washington, D.C., beginning September 11, 2015 and continuing until November 8, 2016. Since September, they have moved the tent to various sites, including the Washington Monument, Marshall Park, and Constitution Gardens. They have faced the added burden of taking down their large tent due to a blizzard and then Pope Francis's visit to D.C. (because of hazard and security issues). They have also endured complaints that forced them to shut off their amplification during designated hours. But through all the adjustments, they have continued the worship day and night.

On July 11, Hershey announced to the staff that the November 8 finish line "has been erased!" The plan is to continue "worshiping Jesus perpetually" with no known ending date.

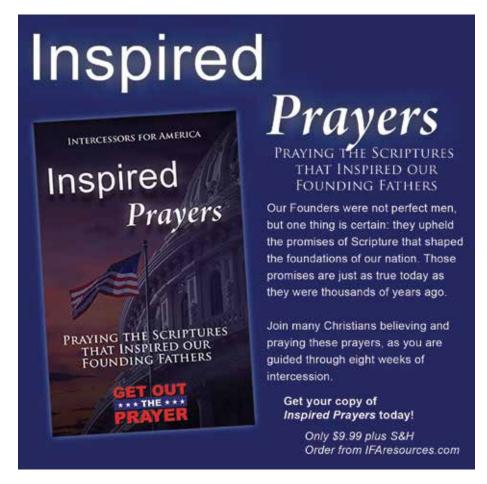
"The Lord willing," says Hershey, "our goal is that America will never again know a day, hour, or moment when worship and prayer is not rising as incense to the Lord Jesus from our nation's capital. As long as the opportunity is there, the grace of enough staff and finances are there, we are committed

to press forward on federal land, in public, in Washington, D.C."

Hershey figures there are 300,000 churches in America, and so if each church sends their worship team to D.C. for just one hour in constant vigil, the worship would last for 34 years.

Go to davidstentdc.org for more information.





NEWS**&EVENTS**

World Youth Prayer Assembly Convenes in Seoul

ne thousand youth and young adults (under age 35) from 37 nations convened at the World Youth Prayer Assembly, July 26–29, in Seoul, Korea, to pray and seek God in corporate worship. The gathering, called UPRISING (United Prayer Rising), targeted an emerging generation of young people who represent a digital, globally connected generation that is

radical about being catalysts for Christ's Kingdom.

Following the World Prayer Assembly (WPA) in Jakarta, Indonesia, in 2012, the leaders of the International Prayer Council (IPC) believe that a new wave of prayer and missions movements will be launched by children and youth. UPRISING was organized to help this next generation fulfill their destiny.

In addition to sessions of worship and fervent intercession, the group prayed for six hours in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between the two armies of North and South Korea.

"God has always called and used young people to do exploits for Him in both Scripture and history," says John Robb of the International Prayer Council (*ipcprayer.org*).

Christians Choose Prayer Over Candidates

aught between the presidential candidacies of Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Hillary Clinton, a group of Christians is choosing a third way to react: prayer. Get Out the Prayer 2016 is mobilizing believers to influence the political process, not

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only with their votes, but through appeals to a higher authority.

Dave Kubal, president for Intercessors of America, which is spearheading the effort, says Christians are exasperated with the inability of the political process to halt America's moral decline. Intercessors for America is a nonprofit group founded after *Roe v. Wade* to turn around America's moral decline.

"We've taken over Congress from a Republican point of view, and not much has changed," he said. "The nation's morals continue to decline, we continue to spend more money than we take in, and it's just a nation in crisis."

The spiritual campaign has facilitated the creation of prayer groups and "Prayer at the Poll" events around the nation, encouraging Christians to pray regularly for America's elected leaders and those running for office.

"When leaders understand that they answer to a higher power, they make different decisions, so it's critical that we have leaders who have a fear and reverence toward God," Kubal says. "A democracy can only be upheld by a virtuous populous, and we need virtuous, God-fearing leaders. We have seen a slow moral degradation over the last 40 years with an extreme acceleration in the past seven. This unrighteous acceleration will have devastating

results for our nation and families and children for generations to come."

Polls suggest Christian voters aren't thrilled with either major political party's candidate for president. An NBC News poll in June found that only 31 percent of evangelicals have a favorable opinion of Trump, compared to 19 percent who view Clinton favorably.

The campaign features resources such as a media kit, adopt a street in prayer, election tools, and prayer alerts (*getouttheprayer.com*).

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



Theme Introduction

JOH

was hot. Unbearably hot. But it was glorious. I was in the midst of hundreds of thousands of people who traveled to the National Mall in Washington, D.C., on July 16 for Together 2016—an event designed for one purpose: to unite as believers and pray for a reset of our lives and nation to Jesus. The event was primarily organized by young people, eager to have a generation-defining moment to call their own.

I oversaw prayer tents that were stationed around the Washington Monument. There were seven of them, staffed by national prayer leaders and other ministries such as Moms In Prayer, Cry Out America, and National Day of Prayer. Intercessors gathered in those tents to pray for the event, as well as pray with people who were longing for a fresh touch of Jesus in their lives.

17

The event was scheduled to last 12 hours, but it was cut short by five hours upon recommendation of the National Park Service because hundreds of people were overcome by the extreme heat. Despite the disappointment for the Together staff and the crowd, I believe Together 2016 accomplished everything God intended.

It proved to be a Christ-honoring event in every way. David Bryant, a national prayer leader, estimates that the name of Jesus was proclaimed, declared, and exalted from the platform at least once every three minutes during the seven hours!

JESUS' PRAYER ANSWERED

It was also a "Next Generation" expression of John 17. I saw the fruit of Jesus' prayer in multiple ways.

It was a time when we felt protected as Homeland Security monitored our event, erected fences and security checkpoints, and helped ensure that no threat of harm could materialize against us. That was a major prayer concern, and God protected His people.

It was a time of sanctification, as people got on their knees in the heat and pleaded with God for a reset of their lives and our nation. Large prayer walls at each prayer tent were filled with handwritten prayers that said, "Jesus, will You reset my

_____?" It was this generation's way of asking for cleansing and purifying of their lives.

And it was the most beautiful display of unity among God's people that I've witnessed in my ministry experience. It was a very diverse crowd among denominations, generations, ethnicities, and genders. In Jesus' name, the crowd put aside differences and honored and preferred one another. Joy and love abounded throughout the crowd—just as Jesus prayed it would!

The theme of this issue of *Prayer Connect* is joining Jesus in His prayer recorded in John 17. Lisa Crump covers the topic of praying for protection from an enemy who is active and seeking to devour and divide us. Kevin Senapatiratne writes about the meaning of his name (yes, you'll want to know) and how it ties in with Jesus' prayer for us to be sanctified in the truth. Tom White highlights the portion of Jesus' prayer about unity, and he reminds us that believers must "rise and shine" together as a display of Christ's light in dark places in our communities.

After the Together 2016 event was halted early, another part of Jesus' prayer was fulfilled. As organizers said, it was never about coming to the Mall. It was always about going out from the Mall with the love of Jesus. People went from there to the Capitol, the Lincoln Memorial, on the Metro, and throughout Washington, D.C.—praying with people, forming impromptu worship moments, and proclaiming Jesus' love.

I want to keep joining Jesus in His prayer, because the answers are beautiful to behold.

—**CAROL MADISON** is editor of *Prayer Connect*.

Praying the Heart of Jesus



By Lisa Crump

TA FIER, PROTECT

AS FOLLOWERS OF JESUS CHRIST, do we really need spiritual protection? Since we have an enemy whose goals are nothing short of "to steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10), it is clear. Yes, absolutely all Christians need divine protection! I expect we all have a testimony to prove it.

Yet what is the foundation of our spiritual protection? In the prayer with His Father, recorded in John 17, Jesus gives us the answer:

"I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me" (v. 11, emphasis added).

Jesus continues in verse 13:
"I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so

THEM

that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that *you protect them from the evil one*" (emphasis added).

Jesus expressed in His prayer that the power of His Father's name (in turn given to Jesus) delivered the disciples from the enemy. Can His name alone carry such authority in the spiritual realm? *Yes!*

Last fall I was horseback riding with two young girls. In a flash one horse took off too fast. Its rider was being dragged beneath it, and I knew the young girl's life

Prayer for Spiritual Covering

was in danger. Horses are beautiful creations of God's hand. However, their power in motion is fearsome when they are out of control. Immediately I screamed, "God! God! God!"

Within moments the endangered girl's boot came off, releasing her from the binding of the stirrup. I ran as fast as I could to her. She had some scratches but was otherwise unharmed. Instant relief and joy flooded my senses. I knew the Holy Spirit had guided my "SOS prayer" with no other words than His name.

Many times, when under assault, I have quietly called Jesus, Jesus, Jesus in my spirit and released the battle to Him as 2 Chronicles 20 teaches. Jehoshaphat called upon God when surrounded by enemies—and God spared the Israelites by turning their enemies on each other. When Jehoshaphat did not know what to do, he cried out to God and stayed focused on Him. He knew God's very name has ultimate authority.

JESUS KNOWS WARFARE

We will go through spiritual warfare just as Jesus did. He personally experienced Satan at work when He "was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry" (Matt. 4: 1-2). Fasting draws one deeply into the Lord's presence and purposes. Certainly the enemy despised Jesus' victory and preparedness.

What an opportune time for warfare! Jesus was weary from the wilderness, hungry from a long fast. Satan's approach is always intentionally timed. But Jesus was victorious in walking in the Spirit with His Father.

All three of the recorded temptations in Matthew 4 point to ways Jesus would have brought division to the holy relationship of God the Father and God the Son (Himself) if He had given in to the devil. His response, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only" (v. 10), serves as a model for us.

PROTECTION FROM DIVISION

One of Satan's most effective strategies is to create mistrust, suspicion, and division. Let's look at two relationships where the enemy seeks to divide:

First, Satan wants to divide us from our Lord God Himself.

Again, we see Satan's attempt to get Jesus to worship him. The top need of my own personal prayer is based on Psalm 91:1-2: "Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

I believe the word *dwelling* implies inhabitation, not an occasional visitation. It is an intentional, daily, abiding time with our Lord God. It is the most satisfying relationship we can ever have.

Again Jesus is our best model: "Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed" (Luke 5:16). He knew the importance of meeting with His Father—often. This statement in Luke comes in the context of His extensive preaching and healing (v. 15). Jesus "rested" with the Almighty, in His presence.

As we hope to model Jesus' time with His Father, maybe your warfare arises like mine. There are so many things to do today that I must get right to it! I have come to dislike the four-letter word busy, simply an acronym for "being under Satan's yolk."

When I hear this word busy used so frequently by many Christians, I want to scream No! A precious sister in the Lord has reminded me three times in the past six months that our Lord is telling her, "My children are not spending enough time with Me."

Of course, the enemy helps us rationalize and thus keeps us under his yolk too busy to spend time alone sitting, listening, thanking our great IAM. How grieved the Lord must be as He waits for His children to simply be with Him.

Certainly Mary's investment of time

proved better than Martha's, as recorded in Luke 10:39: "[Mary] sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said."

In Martha's time of need, Jesus told her, "Few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her" (v. 42). The enemy cannot steal what we glean in our time with the Lord. It is priceless, a place of protection.

One of my favorite things to do is to spend time with my granddaughter. When I hear her call me "Nana," my heart leaps because I love her with all my heart. In a similar way, spending time with the Lord builds our love for Him too. Time is our most limited commodity. The more of it the Lord has, the less room for our foe.

Even though I still go through seasons of struggle with this dwelling time with my Lord, I have determined to keep growing in this sacred time. His grace is truly sufficient. He will not abandon or move away. He remains near.

Second, Satan wants to divide God's people and destroy our unity with one another.

When key relationships are in peril, it is all-consuming. We find it difficult to focus. And we can easily lose our effectiveness.

Working with diverse people can be the most rewarding part of ministry life for me. But working with people can also be the most humbling.

I remember the time I had to do an annual performance evaluation for one of my employees. For this particular review, supervisors had to choose pre-worded "categories" of performance. The word in the category that seemed to fit this employee best was one I would not have chosen. However I felt locked into the structure of the review, so I went with that word. Lesson learned: pray before you act!

The employee fixated on that one word and immediately exploded in anger, "I quit!" (Sometimes anger is the outward action when hurt is the underlying emotion.)

Satan loves to divide God's people.

There we can isolate ourselves and let our imaginations run away from God. A multitude of negative reactions and emotions are poised, often by the enemy's nagging prompts, to flood our minds: anger, assumptions, resentment, jealousy, comparison, insecurity, fear, envy, and more.

But what is God's plan? "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity, . . ." David wrote. "For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore" (Ps. 133:1–3).

David wrote this song as one who experienced the personal pain and national price of disunity. King Saul pursued him out of jealousy and insecurity, intending to kill him. David knew the stark contrast of disunity against the place where the Lord designed blessing leading to life. Absalom, David's own son, targeted his father's kingship later on. The deepest divide in David's kingdom existed within his own household.

The "I quit" day launched Psalm 46:10 as my life verse. These powerful, yet simple words flooded my mind that morning: "Be still, and know that I am God."

Initially, I didn't know what to do to redeem the employee situation. With emphasis, the Lord brought this short passage to mind. There were no words I could say that the person would hear at the moment. The emotion was too high. God was speaking clearly in my spirit, Still yourself, be silent, let Me be Who I am and trust Me to work now. As calmly as I could, I resumed my work and kept still.

Within a few hours, the employee came to me, and we talked it all through. God redeemed the situation. Serving with others before the Lord provides ample opportunities to trust God and ask Him for wisdom and grace to love more like He does.

TETHERED TO JESUS

Not all ministry relationship trials are repaired this well. I continue to pray over a few. Many times, contrary to the enemy's intent, the trial actually deepens the connection of His people when, with respect and honor, we mutually apply the principles

of humility, confession, accepting responsibility, and serving under authority.

A sudden, explosive situation can feel like a "sucker punch" coming out of nowhere, as our National Day of Prayer Texas State coordinator, Rex Tonkins, describes it. Yet, that attack can be traced back to the enemy's schemes. He wants wounded victims, isolated and alone without reinforcements from trusted others. Then we easily listen to thoughts and words of deceit and accusation, "for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44). If Satan can keep our primary relationships broken, this is a direct assault on Jesus' prayer for us to be "one" (John 17:11).

When spiritual warfare is rising, health and financial battles on the front line (or to those nearby) often seem to increase. Yet we can face all battles victoriously when we're tethered to Jesus and connected to one another in brotherly love and mutual intercession.

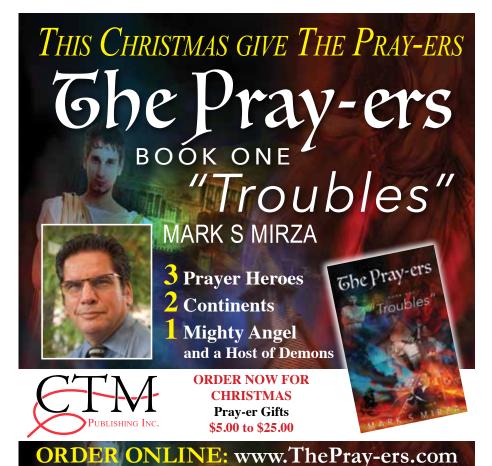
Let's make this our daily prayer:

Lord God, in the name of Jesus the Christ, we praise You. We are blessed by Your Word and by the indwelling of Your Holy Spirit. We are awed by Your everlasting love and protective care for us. Foremost, firmly establish our time with You. Keep us from fruitless activity. Keep us about Your business. Govern our key relationships with unity—a oneness that commands Your blessing. Grow us in love for You and one another every day. In Your name, amen.



LISA CRUMP is chief operations officer for the National Day of Prayer Task Force in Colorado Springs, CO (nationaldayofprayer.org). She helps coordinate thousands of

volunteers across America, calling the nation to prayer. She is also a member of America's National Prayer Committee.





By Kevin Senapatiratne

FATER, SAN

BECAUSE I WAS BORN with the last name Senapatiratne, I get into some interesting conversations. Most of the time people start by laughing at the unusual pronunciation. Then we talk about the origin. After I explain that it is Sri Lankan—and that Sri Lanka is an island country off of India—we sometimes get into discussion about the meaning of my name.

I was born and raised in the United States because my dad came here to go to Bible college. That's where he met my mom. If you visit Sri Lanka today, you will not find many people with the name Senapatiratne. Apparently my great-great grandfather had a very common name in Sri Lanka, much like Smith or Jones in the U.S. He thought it was boring, so he took two Sinhalese words (one of the languages of Sri Lanka) and put them together to get Senapatiratne.

The first part of the name means "captain of the army." It can be found in the Bible where Joshua meets the captain (or

THEM

commander) of the Lord's army just before facing Jericho (Josh. 5:14). The commander tells Joshua, "Take off your sandals, for the place you are standing is holy." The second part means "a jewel or precious stone." When I explain the meaning behind my name, people often say, "That's pretty cool."

THE MEANING OF JESUS' PRAYER

Words mean something. And understanding what a word means gives it power.
Unfortunately, sometimes we run across words in the Bible that we don't use in everyday life. If you don't know what a word means, like Senapatiratne, you can miss the richness of something for your life.

Prayer for Walking in Truth

JESUS' PRAYER TO JOIN HIM

esus' prayer is a great gift to each of us. It shows us His heart and guides us in our own personal prayer lives. Jesus knew how much this prayer would encourage us. So, in the hearing of the disciples, He expressed the importance of this audible petition: "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy" (John 17:13).

The disciples had heard Him pray many times. Imagine the joy welling up inside of them as they heard Him pray for them. This was no wish list from a prayer beginner.

Can you imagine how the disciples felt as they heard their Lord pray for their protection from the evil one, for their sanctification, and for their unity—that they would be one?

JESUS WANTS US WITH HIM FOREVER

The last thing Jesus prayed can really excite and encourage us: "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world" (John 17:24). He basically said to His Father, "I'd like for all of My family to be with Me here in heaven for all eternity."

We're sure glad He prayed that way! Jesus had promised in John 14 that He was preparing a place for us and would come back and bring us home to be with Him.

When our sons were small, they would often invite their friends

over and then ask us if it was OK. Similarly, Jesus said, "Oh, by the way, Father, I invited a bunch of My friends over to Our house. I hope it's OK with You. As a matter of fact, I'd like them to move in with Us and stav forever. I was sure You wouldn't mind."

We take an important step in spiritual maturity when we begin to unite our prayers with those of Jesus concerning our heavenly home. Praying about joining Jesus in His house will help us hold the things of this world loosely. It puts matters in proper perspective. We could pray something like this: "O, Lord, how I long to be where You are. Everything around me and in me changes so fast. I long for a place of permanence with You. Like David, I want to gaze upon Your beauty and seek You in Your temple (Ps. 27:4). Thank You for preparing a place for me."

Two thousand years after Jesus prayed this prayer for us, His words come alive for us and fill us with joy. Jesus, who "always lives to intercede for [us]" (Heb. 7:25), prayed in accordance with the will of His Father for our lives today, tomorrow, and into eternity.

How encouraging to know that through the power of the Holy Spirit we can join with Jesus the King in the ministry of prayer!

DAVE and KIM BUTTS are the co-founders of Harvest Prayer Ministries. Dave is the chair of America's National Prayer Committee. This excerpt is from their book Pray Like the King (prayershop.org).

Jesus uses the word sanctify in His prayer—and this word gives us a glimpse into powerful avenues for us to pray. Let's eavesdrop on part of Jesus' prayer for us to walk in truth:

I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified (John 17:13-19, emphasis added).

We can read this prayer of Jesus' many times and still miss the powerful connotation of the word sanctify. Jesus is issuing an invitation to a journey—a process—of becoming sanctified in the truths of God. This was really a prayer to bring us along on a course-changing, heart-pounding, adventure with Him. Let's explore what it means.

THE ADVENTURE OF SANCTIFICATION

The concept of being sanctified is first introduced in the Old Testament. One way to understand sanctification is to imagine yourself a priest in the days of the tabernacle. Perhaps you were a lesser rank, so you were assigned clean-up duty. In order to keep the tabernacle grounds spotless, you would need a bucket or pail of some kind. But you couldn't just go down to the local convenience store and buy one.

A bucket used in the tabernacle could not be an ordinary pail. You would need something that had been made holy.

No matter where you got it, you would need to go through a process of turning an ordinary bucket into one dedicated for the Lord's use. And then that bucket must be used exclusively in the Lord's tabernacle—never again for ordinary purposes. It was now holy. This was the process of sanctification.

The same was true of the priests who served in the tabernacle. They were sanctified for service to Him. That meant the tabernacle priests were set apart, wholly (completely) and holy to God.

Sanctify is a weighty word. It carries the seriousness of holiness, consecration, purity, freedom from sin, and right living with God. There is also power in the word—which is why Jesus prayed it for us!

THE MISSION OF SANCTIFICATION

As Jesus prayed this prayer, He was inviting

His followers to join Him in His adventure—set apart wholly to the Lord. Jesus was about to lay down His life for the mission, and He prayed that His followers would do the same.

This sanctification process frees us from the weight of past sin. We are now in a new season of being used by God. Sanctification also clarifies our priorities. *Jesus'* priorities are now *our* priorities. And His model of sacrifice directs us as we make future decisions. Sanctified people act that way!

Listen to Jesus' heart as He prays: I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from

you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them (vv. 6-10, emphasis added).

Remember the illustration of the bucket that needed to go through a ceremony in order to be sanctified for tabernacle use? Jesus' prayer shows us the way His disciples can be set apart or sanctified—by the word of truth (John 17:17). Paul perhaps hints of this ceremony for the Church when he says, "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless"

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JONATHAN GRAF



DR. DAVE **BUTTS**

Are you daring enough to pray, "Sanctify me"?

(Eph. 5:25-27). Immersing ourselves in Scripture—and obeying its truths helps set us apart for the mission God intends for His followers.

Joshua and the people of Israel experienced a sanctification (or consecration) process that resulted in adventure, battles, victories, and the fulfillment of God's promises in the taking of the land. Before they even crossed over the Jordan River into the new land, Joshua told them to prepare: "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you" (Josh. 3:5).

What adventures might God have in store for us if we are willing to join Jesus in His prayer and invite God to prepare us—to sanctify us and make us holy? Imagine the possibilities of service, mission, and Kingdom advances!

THE PRAYER OF THE **MISSION**

Jesus' prayer also shows us how to pray for ourselves. We can pray that we keep moving forward in the direction God has for our lives. Andy Stanley, in his book The Principle of the Path, writes about the road of life we get on that takes us to destinations we didn't think we were heading. This is why David talks about how God "guides me along the right paths for his name's sake" (Ps. 23:3).

This is how I pray for my daughter. One of my mentors encourages people to pray Luke 2:52 for their children: "Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people" (NLT). I use this guide as I pray over four paths my daughter walks: relational, intellectual, physical, and spiritual. I am praying for the Word of truth to impact her in these areas so she can partner with Jesus in the mission He has for them to do together.

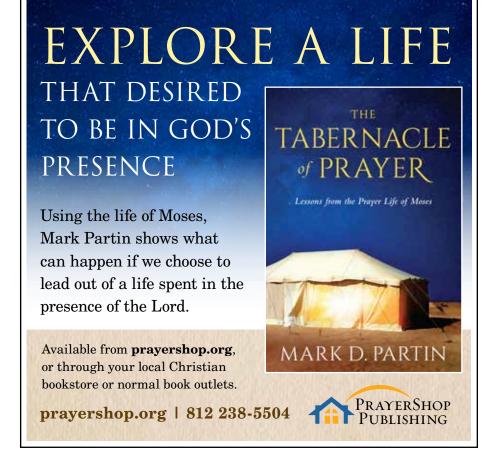
As I travel the country speaking at churches, I often find a lot of Christians going through the motions. They believe in Jesus, but their faith is rather boring. If we begin praying Jesus' John 17 prayer for our lives, we will find ourselves in a stronger faith relationship with Him. Jesus prayed to His Father, "As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world" (v. 18). That means there is an awe-inspiring, life-changing, heartpounding adventure in store for each of us who is willing to be sanctified in the

Are you daring enough to pray along with Jesus, "Sanctify me"?

THE DESTINY OF THE **SANCTIFIED**

I knew from an early age that my last name means "captain of the army." This put leadership in my sights as I was growing up. And knowing that the last part of my name means "a jewel or precious stone" always reminds me of my value to God. Understanding the meaning of my name empowers me and encourages me to live up to the destiny God has for me.

In a similar way, understanding the full meaning of sanctification in the truth invites all of Jesus' followers to experience the power of His prayer for us. When we allow the true definition of sanctification to transform our lives, we will enjoy embracing the adventure of following Jesus. PC





KEVIN SENAPATIRATNE

is the executive director of Christ Connection, a ministry that seeks to encourage pastors, bring hope to smaller churches, and raise up a move-

ment of prayer (christconnection.cc).

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FATER, MAY

IN INDIA THERE IS AN annual Hindu festival, Puja, marked by the worship of ancestral spirits and assorted deities. But in one city in Northeast India, pastors and leaders used this opportu-

nity to pray together and demonstrate their unity and love to their community. As the Puja Committee watched a united, praying church touch their city, they told the pastors, "Puja does our city no good. People get drunk and disorderly. We've decided to cancel the annual Puja event and disband our committee."

Clearly, the unbelieving world saw the transforming power of the Messiah through His followers walking and working together. This is the core of Jesus' Priestly prayer (John 17)—that His followers would be one.

What could you and I and other Kingdom-minded colleagues do to catalyze a change in the spiritual atmosphere

BE ONE

of your city? Today our global mix of cultures, cities, and nation-states is more desperate than ever to witness a socio-spiritual community where people of diverse ethnic, economic, and generational profiles live and work together in some measure of harmony.

At present, religious extremism, ideological polarization, and overt violence are at troubling levels. A prophetic word from Isaiah captures this scenario and offers a challenge to the Body of Christ: "See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light" (Isa. 60:2–3).

Obeying Jesus' Prayer for Unity

Extreme calamities bring opportunities for God's everyday redeemed people to "rise and shine" and demonstrate Christ's redemptive presence in their hearts. Worldwide, the Holy Spirit is stirring Jesus' followers to greater unity, agreement in prayer, and engagement in good deeds—opening doors for the light of the good news.

JESUS' HIGHEST COMMAND

So, how might we "rise and shine"? Following the upper room meal with His disciples, Jesus poured out His heart to His Father. This John 17 prayer is often quoted yet seldom demonstrated.

But in any local community, saints can choose to take Jesus' highest command seriously, allowing the Holy Spirit to bond their hearts and lives together with fellow sojourners. Typically, this takes leadership-men and women of conviction and courage—committed to three sustainable cultures: honor, regular prayer with and for one another, and collaboration.

Such leaders heed Paul's admonition to "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). The health and unity of Jesus' Body in any given place is not an option but a biblical imperative.

Christians from differing traditions will never concur on all doctrinal points. But embracing unity in Christ's Body involves agreement on the core tenets of historic, biblical Christianity: the miraculous birth and deity of Jesus Christ, the authority of God's Word, and salvation by faith in the atoning work of Christ. Secondary points of theology and ecclesiology call for tolerance.

START WITH HONOR

What does a biblical "culture of honor" look like? We empty ourselves of selfinterest and invest in the personal and spiritual interest of others. We follow Jesus' model and bring our self-life to the cross. "In humility value others above yourselves" (Phil. 2:3).

This is easier said than done—dying

to personal ambition and recognition, embracing "hiddenness" so that others might shine. But more and more, city after city, this is happening: Berlin, Germany; Oslo, Norway; Manchester, U.K.; Bellingham, WA.

What does this look like? In American culture, this is an Anglo pastor from a suburban white church asking an urban African-American pastor to share his story, unpacking the pain and then building an enduring friendship. This is a "dyed-in-the wool" evangelical stretching to appreciate the fervent prayer life of a Pentecostal brother or sister. This is about a "boomer" Kingdom leader helping an emerging millennial find his place serving Christ's Kingdom.

As David observed, it is beautiful when brothers and sisters choose to do life together (Ps. 133). When His kids get along, Abba Father is glad, and He commands blessing, favor, and fullness for them. Walls of suspicion, criticism, and judgment come down. Bridges of trust, heart to heart, are built.

DIE DAILY ON PURPOSE

To experience this takes a supernatural renovation of the heart. The Spirit works, as, soul by soul, we choose daily to relinquish control, content serving in the background. I suspect this is what Paul meant by "I die daily" (1 Cor. 15:31, кJV).

The integrity of our spiritual union with others is purposeful. Who we are and how we relate—our humility, forbearance, patience, sacrificial caring—reflect the character of our triune God, and show a watching world that Jesus is indeed Son of God and Messiah: "one . . . so that the world may believe" (John 17:21). In contrast, unbelievers' skepticism often stems from the fragmentation of Christ's Body.

The content and focus of Jesus' prayer is anchored in His upper room discourse (John 13-16). The Master uses an agricultural analogy in John 15:1-17 to depict progress in bearing spiritual fruit: pruning (allowing "more fruit"), learning to listen and ask in prayer (resulting in

"much fruit"), and finally, "fruit that will last"—a lasting spiritual legacy: people coming into the Kingdom, broken lives healed, and believers walking in discipleship. John 15:9-17 includes three components that result in lasting fruit:

- taking Jesus seriously by loving our fellow believers, even being willing to die for them
- ministering, not in our best efforts but in the power of Christ
- seeing our prayers tangibly answered by the Father, who "will give you whatever you ask" in Jesus' name (16:23).

Clearly, living in unity with fellow Christ followers, abiding daily in Jesus' presence, listening for His words and will, and partnering with the Father in prayer—all bear lasting Kingdom fruit.

LIVING IN THE REAL WORLD

This can all sound so abstract, so mystical. Where and how does this happen in the real world?

In 2005 I led a Prayer Summit in Siliguri, a nexus of cultures in Northeast India. From a tall building, you can see Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and the foothills of the Himalaya range. You will find Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, animists, and a smattering of Jesus followers all nearby.

When the Christians of Siliguri decided to "dwell together in unity," there was an extraordinary manifestation of the Lord's presence. In the final session, the key leaders asked, "Where do we go from here?"

I shared some typical, practical steps and then urged them to give priority to three things:

- Engage in regular intercession for your city and region.
- Devote yourselves to fervent love for one another, praying blessing on other congregations and Kingdom organizations.
- Keep asking this question, "What must we do together that we cannot

do through our own congregations and organizations?"

Immediately, a core of leaders, young and old, began praying every Saturday morning. In time, a consensus emerged as the Holy Spirit urged them to organize an appreciation banquet for the city's government leaders, mostly Hindus.

Churches and nonprofits dove in, providing such things as food, furniture, and servers. The "three amigos" of this new movement of unity and prayer—Joshua, Enos, and Daniel—spoke at the banquet, voicing appreciation for these officials, and praying blessing on their endeavors. The mayor's response, "Who *are* you, and why are you doing this?" gave Joshua an opening to bring a gospel message.

A few years later, on another Saturday morning, a fresh word came from the Holy Spirit: "It's time to have an open-air meeting and share the gospel." Initially, city officials were cautious, requiring church leaders to obtain costly permits and security guards. Then officials backed off and allowed the meeting, and tens of thousands participated over three nights.

Scores of West Bengali and Bihari Indians, historically resistant to Christianity, made decisions to follow Jesus. The worship was awesome, the Word of God powerful, and the crowds orderly. Following this event, the city officials asked the three amigos to organize a Christian worship celebration in the central business district—with singing, preaching, and dancing! The city provided stage, sound system, and lights, and they requested this as an annual event.

IT'S HOW GOD WORKS

Our sovereign, surprising God used this small expression of John 17 community to expose and weaken a stronghold of religious bondage. And believers chose to obey Jesus' command to walk in love, to pray weekly, and to follow the direction of the Holy Spirit. Saints in every city have a similar opportunity to be a Godhonoring answer to Jesus' priestly prayer.

What can everyday believers and leaders do to inspire and ignite prayer that increases John 17 unity and "fruit that remains"? First, for individuals:

- Ask the Spirit to convict you of any attitude that hinders unity in the Body (criticism, envy, jealousy, theological pride). Confess and receive cleansing.
- Identify a "sandpaper person" in your world, a fellow believer who "rubs you wrong" in some way (irritation, annoyance, or anger). Confess your reactive response, and ask the Holy Spirit to increase your love for this person.
- Learn the practice of praying blessing on others. Use Numbers 6:24–26

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as a pattern of priestly blessing. Memorize and pray some of Paul's apostolic prayers for fellow saints (e.g., 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17, 3:16; Romans 15:5, 13). Taking initiative to bless others deepens and strengthens relational unity.

For those praying corporately, if your John 17 community is to be sustainable and bring maximum glory to God, a regular rhythm of corporate spiritual disciplines is imperative. 1 Establish a regular time for pastors, nonprofits, marketplace leaders, and prayer warriors to pray for your community—intentional, informed intercession (Isa. 62:6-7; Jer. 29:7; 1 Tim. 2:1-8).

In these gatherings, pray for leaders of congregations and organizations that do not seem to have interest in unity. Ask the Lord to bless them and prosper their ministries. In addition:

- Create an "entry ramp" for personal and corporate praying. Host a half-day "prayer encounter" for local Kingdom leaders. Structure a variety of prayer experiences, such as corporate thanksgiving for God's goodness, small group sharing and bearing of personal burdens, offering the "prayer chair" to individuals with specific requests, 30 minutes of silence and meditation on Scripture, and corporate praying of Scriptures over your community.
- · Consider an annual worship gathering for the citywide Body of Christ: mostly worship, no preaching, and a little Jeremiah 29:7 praying. Choose a theme. In my hometown of Corvallis, OR, it's "Adoration." In Abilene, TX, it's "Exalt!" In Washington, D.C., it's "UNITE." Gatherings like this put Jesus' Body on visible display.

SHINING IN THICK **DARKNESS**

Here's a final observation about Jesus' priestly prayer. Twice, He asks the Father to "protect" those who choose to follow Him, those who embrace this Kingdom culture of oneness. When saints in any city or region of our world decide to "rise and shine" in the love and light of Messiah, their witness of oneness validates and radiates Jesus to a watching world: "God's Kingdom works!"

The devil and his hordes dread this and will do all manner of insidious things to contain, diminish, or disrupt it. It is what Paul describes in Ephesians 3:10: "Now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God [which is unity of all believers through the cross] should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms" (bracketed material added).

Contemplate the priority and power of Jesus' priestly prayer for your community. Keep obeying Jesus' commands and join in His prayer. Signs of His kingly reign will increase over your city. Your endeavors, blessed by the Father, can bring change to the spiritual atmosphere.

Yes, we see evidence of Isaiah's word about "thick darkness" that covers our world. But God is bringing together cities of refuge—places of light where His people embrace biblical unity, are "rising and shining," are partnering in prayer, and are engaging in good deeds that open doors for the good news.

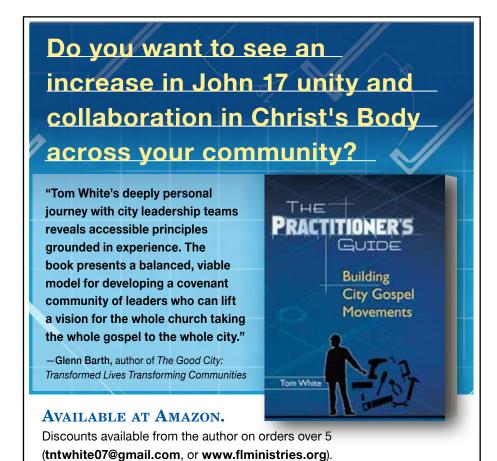
Be encouraged! An authentic move of God's Spirit is afoot in city after city across the globe.

¹There are additional suggestions for corporate prayer in the appendix of my book, The Practitioner's Guide: Building City Gospel Movements.



TOM WHITE is founder and president of Frontline Ministries and a recognized innovator and practitioner in city transformation. He is the author of four books and a

member of America's National Prayer Committee. He gives leadership to the Church of the Valley (Corvallis, OR), a movement of John 17 unity, prayer, and Kingdom collaboration.



By Sandra Higley

BIBLESTUDY

Note: This Bible study is formatted for small group 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.

Recently, I prayed for someone along the lines of John 17:15–21: for protection from the schemes of the evil one, for sanctification, and for "accountable unity" with other believers. I've been praying for this person since the early '90s, and together we have seen God's hand move in powerful, miraculous ways. You can understand, then, how surprised I was when—for the first time in more than two decades—my intercession was rejected. When I asked what this person would like me to pray for instead, the suggestion was money to pay the mortgage.

That got me thinking. How often do I refuse godly intercession with a preference for earthlier or more tangible requests? I can't recall having refused spiritually focused prayers outright, but what about subconsciously? In our Lord's most desperate, final hours, He could have prayed for anything—health, funds for further ministry, or the removal of serious negative situations for His disciples. But He didn't.

Instead, He interceded for His followers with a specific Kingdom mindset.

I might not refuse such intercession outright, but when I ask for requests of a more temporal nature, am I not, in effect, rejecting the things He thought important?

It stands to reason that studying Jesus' prayer for us is crucial—a first step to employing intercessory prayer as God intended.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lisa Crump uses Christ's personal battle with the enemy as an example of why He included protection from the enemy among His intercessory requests for us. What enemy activity or tactics do you see in the following Scriptures that may explain why Jesus took this so seriously? 1 Chronicles 21:1–7; Daniel 10:1–14; Zechariah 3:1–2; Luke 22:31–32; John 10:10; 2 Corinthians 2:10–11; 11:14; Ephesians 6:10–18; Revelation 12:10.

Crump cites two of the enemy's most effective strategies to create mistrust, suspicion, and division: First, Satan wants to divide us from God Himself. Then he wants to divide God's people and destroy our unity with one another. Read the following Scriptures and discuss why Satan may focus on those two areas specifically: Genesis 2:17, 3:4–5; Psalm 133:1–3; Matthew 16:21–23; 2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 2:25–26; James 3:14–16.

Jesus' Prayer for Us

Kevin Senapatiratne directs our attention to Jesus' prayer for our sanctification. He defines sanctification as being "set apart, wholly (completely) and holy to God." Sanctification isn't a word we

use very often. What are some synonyms

for sanctify that we might be more famil-

iar with? (Hint: if you get stuck, use an

online thesaurus for ideas.)

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Explain more about the sanctification process from the following verses (remember, these verses may use synonyms rather than the word *sanctify* itself): Joshua 3:5; 2 Corinthians 7:1-3; Ephesians 5:25-27; 1 Thessalonians 5:22-24; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:19-26; James 4:8; 2 Peter 3:10-12; 1 John 1:9.

In his look at Jesus' prayer for unity among believers, Tom White emphasizes the connection between unity and world evangelization. As a group, read John 17:20-23 aloud in unison. Then, based on what the following verses teach about unity, discuss some ways unity can become an evangelistic tool: Matthew 24:10-14; Romans 15:5-13; 1 Corinthians 12:11-13; Ephesians 1:9-12, 4:3, 12-13; Philippians 2:3; Colossians 3:13-15.

ACTION STEPS

Kevin Senapatiratne says that he finds "a lot of Christians going through the motions. They believe in Jesus, but their faith is rather boring. If we begin praying Jesus' John 17 prayer for our lives, we will find ourselves in a stronger faith relationship with Him. Jesus prayed

to His Father, 'As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world' (v. 18). That means there is an aweinspiring, life-changing, heart-pounding adventure in store for each of us who is willing to be sanctified in the truth! Are you daring enough to pray along with Jesus, 'Sanctify me'?"

Spend some time with God, meditating on that statement. Are you "going through the motions"? Does your faith seem boring?

The sanctification process may begin with Tom White's three steps toward increasing John 17 unity:

- Ask the Spirit to convict you of any attitude that hinders unity in the Body (criticism, envy, jealousy, theological pride). Confess them and receive cleansing.
- Identify a "sandpaper person" in your world, a fellow believer who "rubs you wrong" in some way (irritation, annoyance, or anger). Confess your negative response, and ask the Holy Spirit to increase your love for this person.
- Learn the practice of blessing others. Use Numbers 6:24-26 as a pattern of priestly blessing. Memorize and pray some of Paul's apostolic prayers for fellow saints (Rom. 15:5, 13; 2 Thess. 2:16-17; 3:16).

Using this three-point process as a starting point, write a letter to God asking Him to sanctify you, or, alternatively, write to Him about what is holding you back:

PС

SANDRA HIGLEY lives in Colorado Springs, CO, and is part of the editorial team at David C Cook, a multi-faceted ministry group designed to equip and encourage believers.

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Set a reminder alarm to pray daily at 20:20 (8:20 p.m.) Pray the words of Matthew 9:37-38, and pray, "Lord, MOLD our hearts to be one with Your heart. MULTIPLY our lives through others. MOBILIZE laborers through prayer and ministry efforts."



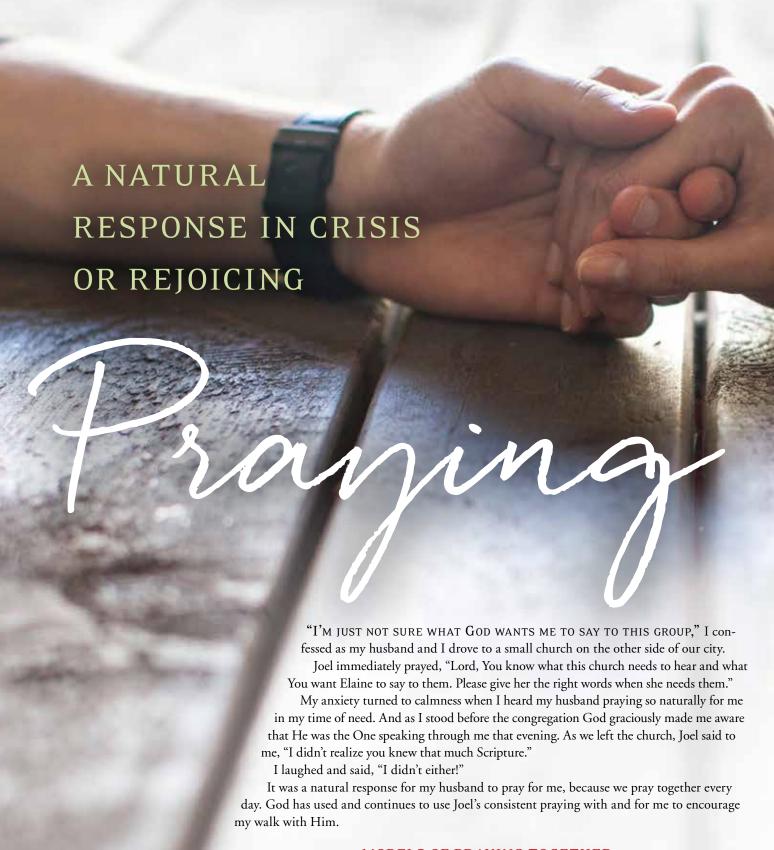
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Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.'" — Matthew 9:37-38



MODELS OF PRAYING TOGETHER

When I was a teenager, during a Sunday evening church service, a family I knew well was invited to come up on the platform to demonstrate how they did their family devotions. It was a dad, mom, a daughter about seven, and a son about five. The dad took the lead as they sat in little chairs around a



child-size table. He began by telling a Bible story that included a child character, then he read a verse or two from the Bible. He asked questions of his children, and they and their mom all gave answers. Little Tommy was a wiggler, so they did not make the devotion time long. The father then completed the demonstration by modeling prayer.

That made an impact on me then because I was dreaming of being married one day with children of my own. Seeing a family devotion and prayer time modeled helped many young couples in our church begin that new practice. And I believe many men today will step out with confidence to lead their families if they see it modeled or hear it proposed in a positive light.

One of my favorite memories of my parents reading the Bible together was when I would come in from a date and sit on the end of their bed to tell them about my evening. I would find them both propped up with pillows behind their backs with their

By Elaine Helms

Bibles in their laps. They greeted me with interest.

My story would trigger memories of their dating days, and they would tell funny stories that often helped me keep my own situation in perspective. In many ways I enjoyed the debriefings as much as the dates themselves because I loved laughing with my parents and hearing about their lives when they were growing up. I could relate to them and felt they understood all the new emotions I was facing.

They were modeling Deuteronomy 6:7 for me: "Impress [my commandments] on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." I saw how a married couple kept God a part of the conversation in every aspect of daily life—and that included reading God's Word and praying together.

BENEFITS OF PRAYING **TOGETHER**

One benefit of praying together as a habit includes the ease of going immediately to prayer when an emergency occurs. It is a natural first response for a couple or family that normally prays together, to join hands and pray when the crisis happens. Trust develops between those who pray together. In the same way, we can talk to our Father in intimate terms because we truly know Him and trust Him.

Jesus promised that "in this world you will have trouble" (John 16:33), and as a couple we have had our share. But because Joel and I are comfortable praying together, we can turn to each other and cry out to God in one accord. Only God knows what we will face each day, and only God can give us the grace and strength we need for perilous times. What God said to Paul, He says to us, "My grace is sufficient for you" (2 Cor. 12:9).

Another benefit of praying together regularly is that, in times of celebration, we more readily join hands and give God the glory for the great things He has done. "Enter his gates with thanksgiving and

his courts with praise;" the psalmist says, "give thanks to him and praise his name. For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations" (Ps. 100:4-5).

Whether it is a normal day, a happy occasion, or a solemn situation, we need God to welcome us into His presence. And He will! His Word says, "Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings. . . . for he who promised is faithful" (Heb. 10:22-23).

SEEKING GOD'S GUIDANCE **TOGETHER**

Most Christians will agree that having a quiet time alone with God is vital to our spiritual growth and discipleship. It is equally important to establish a time to read the Bible and pray with one's spouse.

We know that God established marriage and wants it to succeed. Jesus said, "What God has joined together, let no one separate" (Matt. 19:6). While it is not always easy to blend two lives into one, God knows what is right for us and is willing to share that wisdom with us.

He says, "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know" (Jer. 33:3). We can ask God for wisdom and know that He will direct our steps. There is anticipation in seeking God together for decisions to be made as a couple—even in establishing a regular time to talk with Him.

PRIORITIZING PRAYER **TOGETHER**

Have you thought, We don't have time to pray together? In reality, we have all the time we need to do the things that are important and that God has assigned to us—our life purpose. How we spend our time reveals what we think is important.

I heard a Christian college student, jolted by the accidental death of a Christian friend, ask, "How could I not make time for the Maker of time?"

God says in Ephesians 5:15-16, "Be

very careful, then, how you live-not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil." Spouses who pray together have built-in accountability to stay on track with living out God's purposes for them.

Ask God to help you determine when and how often it is reasonable to expect that you both will faithfully come together, without stress, to just be together with Him in prayer. Make a list of all activities currently on your schedule or in your habit pattern. How does each of them enable or impede your life purpose?

There are many factors to consider, including work schedules and children's needs. When are you the most alert-in the morning or early evening? Newly married couples may seem to have more leeway in establishing a regular time to pray, but it can be done at any stage of life if the desire to do it is there. When will you pray together? Will it tie in with a meal?

Joel and I have been reading the Bible together and praying every morning before or after breakfast for as long as we can remember. It is a blessing and foundational for our relationship. I think we chose breakfast time because we are not likely to forget to eat! We both like breakfast, and praying together sets the tone for each day. Consider the personalities of each of you and find your best time to meet together with your Lord.

DECIDING ON YOUR **FOCUS TOGETHER**

What will be the focus of your prayer time together? In our prayer times together, Joel and I read a short passage of Scripture and then ask a few questions to draw each other into discussion. Some examples of questions you might ask include these:

- What is God saying in this passage?
- What sins does this passage encourage you to confess and forsake?
- How did reading this passage help you with accountability to each other?
- How can we pray together according to the principles in this passage?

Investigate available resources and then choose a focus to begin reading the Bible and praying together. God will help you find your rhythm as you spend time together as a couple with Him. The following prayer prompts are a springboard for other ways you can pray for your spouse.

HOW TO PRAY FOR YOUR WIFE

- Thank God for your wife and ask Him to help you be the husband she needs (Prov. 18:22).
- Pray for your wife to be all that God calls her to be (Prov. 31:10–31).
- Pray for your wife to be content with her calling as your wife and the mother of your children if you have children (Phil. 4:10–13).
- Pray for your wife to know how very special she is to God and how much you love her (Jer. 31:3; Eph. 5:25–30).
- Pray for your wife to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him and bear eternal fruit (Col. 1:9–12).

HOW TO PRAY FOR YOUR HUSBAND

- Pray for your husband to "fight the good fight" for Christ and to be strong against any opposition (2 Tim. 4:7–8).
- Pray that his words will be acceptable in God's sight. Ask God to give your husband the right words today as he encounters each task of his day (Ps. 19:14).
- Thank God for a husband who trusts in God. Pray for him to rest in God's omnipotent hands, knowing God is in control (Heb. 11:1–3, 6).
- Pray for your husband to be all that God calls him to be and that God will be glorified in every aspect of his life (2 Thess. 1:11–12).
- Ask God to help you be the wife your husband needs and help you to respect him (Eph. 5:22–24, 33).

Imagine what God will do when more and more Christian families draw near to Him, listen to Him, and obey in unity. If we, as couples, begin to model prayer and the love of God's Word together, we will see the difference in our children—and in turn, in our churches and communities.

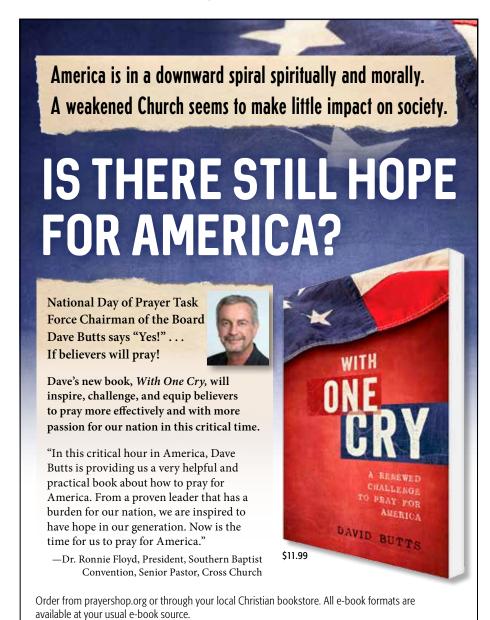
We might just become, as Paul put it, "the sweet aroma of the knowledge

of [Christ] in every place" (2 Cor. 2:14, NASB).



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it OK to pray for your-self? Yes, absolutely yes!
In fact, not only is it OK, the Bible commands it. I do not mean that we are to ask for anything and everything we want with the expectation that God will deliver on cue. Nor am I suggesting that we focus our asking on creature comforts, material prosperity, or earthly pleasures.

Scripture urges us to ask for the things that God wants for us—the spiritual riches that will enhance, strengthen, and beautify our lives

in Christ. And in asking, we are praying the best things possible for ourselves!

Life-changing Discovery

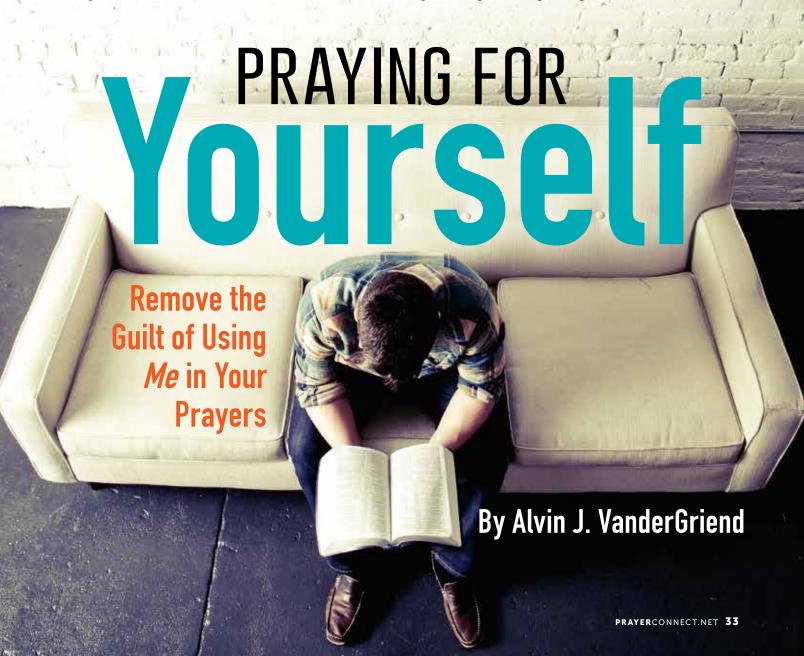
My life was forever changed the day I discovered this simple yet profound truth. It happened as I prepared to preach a sermon on 1 John 5:14–15. The first line reads, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to [in accord with] his will, he hears us" (bracketed material added).

As I worked through the original

Greek of this text I discovered three important things.

- First, the Greek verb for ask means "continue to ask."
- Second, that same verb means "ask [for ourselves]."*
- Third, the word *hear* means "agree to grant."

So, in the original language, that verse literally says, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we *continue to* ask *for ourselves*, anything in accord with his will, he *agrees to grant it*" (italics added).



Wow! What a promise!

Having discovered that incredible promise, my next question was, "Lord, how can I know what is in accord with Your will?"

The answer was not long in coming. The Spirit led me to Romans 8:29, reminding me that it is God's will for me to be conformed to the likeness of His Son.

So I did a simple thing. I prayed daily for the Father to conform me to the likeness of Christ. What happened in the following months was both wonderful and painful—wonderful because of God's gifts of grace, painful because I had some not-so-Christlike flaws I had to deal with. Nevertheless, His answers fully confirmed His promise.

God's answers were so real and confirming that I soon began adding other requests that were "in accord with God's will." My first short list included three basic requests:

- Lord, make me a man of prayer.
- Lord, make me a man of the Word.
- Lord, help me to share my faith.

After praying those prayers for years, I found that prayer, Bible study, and evangelism had become the main themes of my life and ministry. Way to go, God!

Jesus Makes It about You

In the years that followed that life-changing discovery, other Scriptures came to light that confirmed His amazing promise. In the middle of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus unabashedly commands us to pray for ourselves: "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Matt. 7:7, emphasis added).

In verse 11 Jesus tops off that command with a promise. Comparing His Father's generosity with the giving patterns of earthly parents, He says, "How much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!" The "good gifts" the Father gives to "askers" are most certainly spiritual riches "in accord with his will."

To my surprise I found that Jesus used the same verb with the same meaning in His final comments to His disciples before He went to the cross. He said: "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask [for yourselves]* whatever you wish, and it will be done for you" (John 15:7). Why is that promise here?

The disciples had just heard Him say, "apart from me you can do nothing" (v. 5). That being true, their only hope for doing anything for Christ in the days ahead was to ask for and receive His help. That is also the only way that you or I will be able to do anything worthwhile for Christ. "Whether we like it or not," said Charles H. Spurgeon, "asking is the rule of the kingdom."

Three Results

At least three things happen when we ask and receive God's blessings for ourselves.

First, asking cultivates gratitude. You don't say thank you to a vending machine. You do say thank you to a generous person. Asking makes us aware of the giving Father and His generosity, and it makes us grateful to Him. If the Father simply vended His spiritual riches to us without our having to ask, I doubt that we would return thanks to Him very often.

Second, asking and receiving fosters humility. If we could live our Christian lives without God's help, we would have reason for pride. Of course we cannot, so we have to ask. Asking and receiving spiritual riches puts us in the debt of our generous Father and moves us to give Him the credit for our spiritual wellbeing. Giving God the credit that He deserves is the very essence of humility.

Third, asking for spiritual riches is key to the abundant life. If we can ask for spiritual riches with absolute assurance that God will "agree to grant" those riches, there is nothing to stop us from going for the max—asking for faith, hope, love, joy, peace, grace, goodness, kindness, self-control, holiness, godliness, righteousness, faithfulness, fruitfulness, wisdom, knowledge, purity, humility,

and more. The more spiritual fruit we ask for, the more we will receive. The more we receive, the more we will experience the abundant life.

But what if we don't ask? Isn't it possible that God will give us His riches even if we don't ask? There is no doubt that God is gracious and, in His grace, He gives and gives and gives-sometimes even when we don't ask. However, James, writing to impoverished believers, underscores the seriousness of not asking: "You do not have because you do not ask God" (James 4:2). Failing to ask is a grave oversight that leads inevitably to spiritual poverty.

It's Conditional

To fully understand this remarkable promise, we also need to know that the Bible attaches at least three conditions to the promise.

1. The first condition is to ask in accord with God's will.

When our youngest son was learning to read he came into my study one day and said, "Dad, can I have a Bible?"

"Why do you want a Bible, Son?" I asked.

"Because we are reading Bible stories in school and learning Bible verses in our Sunday school class," he answered, "and I want to be able to read and mark things in my own Bible."

I was, of course, delighted that he asked. He had his Bible within 24 hours. His request was "in accord with my will." God delights in our asking because we are His children. His Father-heart leaps for joy when we come asking.

2. The second condition is faith. James tells us that if we ask for wisdom we will receive it (James 1:5). But then he adds, "when you ask, you must believe and not doubt." The person who doubts, he says, "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). In other words, when we ask for wisdom, or any other spiritual gift for that matter, we must believe that God hears our requests

and will always keep His promise.

3. The third condition is a commitment to obedience. John underscores the need to obey when he says, "If our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him" (1 John 3:21-22).

If we are not obeying His commands or doing what pleases Him, we should not expect God to grant our request. If, for example, I pray, "Lord, make me a man of the Word," but then leave my Bible unused on the shelf, I have no reason to expect God to grant that request.

He'll Have It His Way

There is one more thing to keep in mind as we think about God's way of answering prayer. He always answers in His own time and way. He may answer within minutes or over years. If you ask

for patience, He may give you trials that teach you patience. He may give you just what you ask—or more than you ask. Solomon asked for wisdom and God answered his prayer, but then God added things Solomon had not asked for: wealth, riches, and honor (2 Chron. 1:12). God's ways in answering our prayers may not always be our ways, but they are always the best ways.

The spiritual riches that God offers are of inestimable value. The Father in heaven is the richest being in the universe. He has it all. And He wants you and me to share in His "wealth." He is eager to bless, eager to give, and eager to strengthen. He is listening for our prayers and watching for opportunities to give. Second Chronicles 16:9 says, "The eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him." Ask-ers are among the richest persons in the world!

God has made this incredible promise to us so that we may have all we need to be all He intends us to be. If we do not ask, He will be disappointed, and we will be the losers. Teresa of Avila once declared, "You pay God a great compliment by asking great things of him."

What are you going to ask for? I hope you will go for the max.

*When a verb in the Greek is in the middle voice, as this verb is, it means that the subject is acting for himself or herself. The authors were saying that the pray-ers were "asking for themselves."

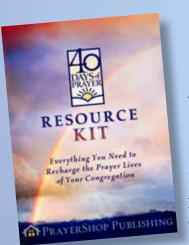


ALVIN J. VANDERGRIEND is the prayer-evangelism associate for Harvest Prayer

Ministries. He also co-leads the Denominational Prayer Leaders Network. Alvin is the

author of multiple books on prayer including Praying God's Heart and the best-selling Love to Pray (both available at prayershop.org).

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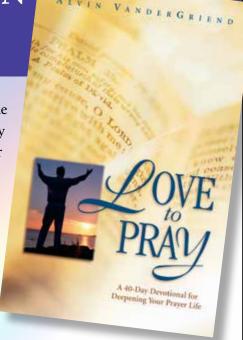


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Follow the Cones to Free Prayer

alerie Beck was new to the leadership of the prayer ministry at Trinity Evangelical Free Church, Lakeville, MN. As she thought ahead to the National Day of Prayer, she prayed about how her church was to participate.

At the same time, she read an article in the newspaper about a church in Minneapolis that hosts drive-through prayer during every Lenten season. Karen Walhof of Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd stands out in the bitter cold on a busy street at 7:00 a.m. every Wednesday during Lent, to offer prayer to anyone who drives by.

Beck loved the drive-through idea but thought she would rather wait until a warmer day in Minnesota! The National Day of Prayer in May seemed the perfect time to launch Trinity's own drivethrough prayer.

Volunteers set up traffic cones in the church's parking lot from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. They also had a tent that people could drive under, hoping the tent would create even more interest from the street view. But when the wind knocked the tent over—and cars just pulled up between the cones—they knew the tent wasn't necessary.

They created simple signs that said "Free Prayer" and stationed people along the roadside to hold the signs, smile,

and wave at drivers. They also placed smaller signs along the roadway ahead of time with the date of upcoming prayer.

"Our signs were cost-effective and they got the attention of drivers," says Beck. "And when we waved at them, they often turned around and came back. Sometimes they were just curious, but we always asked if we could pray for them."

The volunteers were careful to make it only about prayer, and did not promote the church unless asked about it. Beck says they discovered people preferred to stay in their cars. The barrier of the car door seemed to make drivers feel more comfortable in receiving prayer.

"We found the drive-through prayer created a safe place for people to ask for prayer from strangers and share prayer requests they wouldn't have shared with anyone else," observes Beck. "People just stopping for prayer can be a big step [for them]. Maybe they have never asked for prayer before. It's a way of humbling themselves and acknowledging their need."

The first year the drive-through prayer team prayed for 40 people. The second year, volunteers were eager to do it again, but they shortened the hours from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.



Most of the people who stopped were from the community, and many of them were in moments of great need. One woman had just left her attorney's office after hearing her husband was filing for divorce. Another driver was just diagnosed with cancer. Still another woman was grieving for her husband who died of a heart attack just a week earlier.

One driver, who was a repeat customer, said, "I was waiting for this day for someone to pray with me!"

Beck would like to see other churches adopt the same concept and signage for drive-through prayer at their churches so that drivers will begin to recognize a prayer movement in their city. A template and printing source for the banner and signs are available by contacting vbeck@trinityefc.net.

Sorry, Mom Is Praying

y daughter's feet clomped heavily against the wooden floor. She dutifully stood nearby without saying a word. As I silently congratulated myself on the effectiveness of my "Mom's rules for uninterrupted prayer time with God," I heard the distinctive snip of a scissors applied to my daughter's long hair.

"Grace, put down the scissors! The timer hasn't gone off yet; Mom will be out soon."

Grace got my attention, but I did not leave my prayer time. Our children are

excellent rule testers—and our challenge is to persevere in guarding our time with the Lord.

Strategic Mom Rules

If you want to establish a consistent prayer time in the midst of the hectic

TIPS&TOOLS

responsibilities as a mom, you need to set some rules with your children. My children know, "when Mom is in her prayer position and the timer hasn't gone off yet, please don't talk to her." That's our basic Mom Rule.

I also use four consistent strategies with my prayer sessions: time parameters, specific location, physical position, and use of tools.

I set a consistent, non-frantic time that works for my family. Before my children rise or after they go to bed are great moments to reduce any cute and needy distractions.

I choose a location outside of busy life. In this space I keep handy a journal, pens, and my Bible. You may want to use something to block out distractions, such as a fan, music, or a white-noise machine.

What is your prayer posture? Mine is a "full surrender" position, kneeling with my head to the floor. When my children see this posture, it reminds them to stop. If they stumble upon me when I am

praying this way, there is no question that interruption is not an option.

The most useful tool I have found is a timer. I had to ignore interruptions for a period of time before my children figured out the need for compliance. But now they know they cannot intrude until they hear the timer go off.

The timer strategy created two surprise benefits. First, it changed the way I view time. I now compare other ways I spend my time to the length of time I give God. And I see time wasters as encroachers on my prayer life. Second, the timer helps me stay focused and unworried that I might go overtime and neglect other responsibilities.

Our vivacious children deserve a gentle, patient mother filled with God's wisdom. We need uninterrupted time with God to best fulfill our wonderful calling of motherhood.

HEATHER ROBERTS is from Somonauk, IL. She is an ordained minister, a leader on the children's ministry team in her church, and the mother of four energetic children.

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We value you as a subscriber and consider you a member of our intercessory prayer team. We are grateful for your prayers as we seek to encourage Kingdombuilding prayer.

- We asked you to pray for Carol Madison as she led the prayer efforts for Together 2016 on July 16 in Washington, D.C. The event was attended by hundreds of thousands of people—and Jesus was honored. Even though the event ended early because of extreme heat, God granted the physical endurance and spiritual protection for the Together staff. Dave and Kim Butts and Jonathan Graf served as prayer leaders in a backstage prayer tent—and the Lord sustained them as well.
- Please keep praying for a "reset" of lives to Jesus, especially with the Next Generation. Pray for the Prayer Connect team of Dave, Kim, Jonathan, and Carol as they continue to write and speak about the desperate need for revival and spiritual awakening in our nation. Pray that God will open doors for them to share the message.
- Pray for writers for Prayer Connect who have both theological understanding of prayer and practical experiences to offer our readers.
- Pray for continued financial stability and subscription growth for the magazine.

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PRAYERLEADER

Encouragement for Prayer Mobilizers

Where Are the Praying Men? | By Mark Price

They came every Thursday night. They prayed facedown, stretched out before the altar, sometimes for an hour or two. This small group of men called out to God for personal and corporate needs.

This was my first pastorate, and I was convinced of the importance of praying men. Of course, having women engaged in prayer is just as important. In fact, they are often the faithful intercessors in any church. But I was particularly burdened to mobilize the men.

So each week, five or six men gathered and prayed. I was not discouraged at the attendance because I remembered the story of Jeremiah Lanphier. In 1857, in response to his invitation to the first official New York City noonday prayer meeting, only six businessmen showed up. However, those few eventually grew into groups of tens of thousands meeting daily to pray.

In that first pastorate, my prayer was, "Do it again, Lord. Do it again!"

Our Thursday night prayer meeting continued for two years with the same five or six men showing up and crying out to God.

After a ministry move to another church, I continued to press the need for praying men. I asked them to join me on Thursday nights to pray—and this time just two came. Again, the story of Lanphier and the revival of 1857 helped deflect my potential discouragement. We changed our prayer time to Sunday mornings before our service. Our participants then ranged from two to six

But throughout this time I kept wondering, Where are the praying men? I have preached and taught numerous Bible studies on prayer. So where are the men

who have caught the vision, passion, and burden for prayer?

E.M. Bounds, in his classic work, Prayer and Praying Men, writes, "Old Testament history is filled with accounts of praying saints. The leaders of Israel in those early days were noted for their praying habits. Prayer is the one thing which stands out prominently in their lives."1

Change in Perspective

The more I wondered, the more I fought discouragement. As I expressed this to the Lord, He showed me things I had forgotten. He reminded me to stay focused on what was happening in the church, instead of just looking at what I thought wasn't happening to my satisfaction.

So I began to take inventory of the prayer life of our church. The Lord reminded me of the small group of women who meet frequently on Saturday mornings to pray. The four men who pray on Wednesday mornings. The women who gather at the church to pray for the public schools in our city—and those who partner with each other to pray for marriages. Then there are the women's prayer team, the deacons, and the staff who are available for personal prayer after the service.

In my discouragement I had also discounted the importance of our church prayer coordinator who sends emails daily with a devotional thought that encourages members to pray. She also organizes prayer events such as the National Day of Prayer. The church maintains a prayer group database that sends prayer requests to the membership as requests come into the church office.

And to top it off—the church has invested money to establish a prayer room readily accessible from the worship center.

Change in Heart

I realized that although I have not seen large numbers of men committed to prayer, an atmosphere of prayer is present in our church. We've even heard people from outside our church comment, "I hear you are a praying church. I have a request."

So instead of focusing on my seemingly failed expectations, I will commit to leading my church toward developing an even greater atmosphere of prayer in these ways:

- As pastor, I will continue to model and teach the importance and activity of prayer.
- We will always have a prayer coordinator to demonstrate that prayer is our priority.
- We will provide numerous opportunities to engage people in prayer.
- We will take time to give reports of answered prayer.

Yes, I will always remember that group of men praying facedown, stretched out before the altar, and certainly, I want more men to join me in prayer today as well. But I am thankful for a church with a few men and a few women who are obedient to Jesus' desire for His Church to be a house of prayer. God responds when His people pray and it isn't about the numbers.

¹E.M. Bounds, *Prayer and Praying Men* in The Complete Works of E.M. Bounds on Prayer (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), 497.



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CLASSICS

Time-tested Truths



Preparing the Heart For Revival | By Charles G. Finney

reak up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till He come and rain righteousness upon you" (Hosea 10:12, KJV).

What is it to break up the fallow ground? It is to soften the hard and dry heart until it is mellowed and is fit to receive the Word of God.

Because the Jews were a nation of farmers, Scripture often refers to their occupation to illustrate its points. The prophet Hosea employed this strategy to tell the Jews they were becoming a nation of backsliders. He reproved them for their idolatry and threatened them with the judgments of God.

Softening Your Heart

If you want to break up the fallow ground of your heart, you must begin by looking at yourself. Examine your individual sins one by one. Go over them as carefully as a merchant goes over his books. General confessions of sin will never do. Your sins were committed one by one.

Ingratitude. Write down all the times you can remember where you have received favors from God for which you have never thanked Him. Do not forget the numerous mercies you have received.

Lack of love for God. Think how grieved and alarmed you would be if you discovered any lessening of affection for you in your wife, husband, or children.

Neglecting your Bible reading. Note the cases when for perhaps weeks or longer, reading God's Word was not a pleasure. Some people read whole chapters so carelessly that they cannot remember what they have been reading.

Instances of unbelief. Recall the times when you have virtually charged the God of truth with lying by your unbelief in His express promises and declarations.

Neglect of prayer. Think of the times when you have neglected secret prayer, family prayer, and prayer meetings.

A lack of love for the souls of your fellowmen. Look at your friends and relatives and remember how little compassion you have felt for them. How many days have there been where you failed to pray about their sinful condition or show any ardent desire for their salvation?

Watchful of your own life. How often have you entirely neglected to watch your conduct, and, having been off your guard, sinned before the world, the church, and God?

Worldly mindedness. What has been the state of your heart in regard to your worldly possessions? Have you looked at them as really yours—as if you had a right to dispose of them as your own, according to your own will?

Pride. Remember all the instances when you have found yourself acting or thinking with pride.

Envy. Look at the times when you were envious of those whom you thought were above you in any way.

A critical spirit. Remember the times you have had a bitter spirit and spoken of Christians in a manner that did not show charity or love; the times you have spoken unnecessarily about the faults, real or imagined, of members of the church or others behind their back.

Lack of seriousness. How often have you been lighthearted before God as you would not have dared in the presence of an earthly sovereign? Perhaps you have had less respect for Him and His presence than you would show toward an earthly judge.

Lying. It is any kind of designed deception. If you decide to make an impression contrary to the naked truth, you lie.

Cheating. Remember all the cases in which you have dealt with an individual and done to him that which you would not like to have done to you.

Hypocrisy. How many times have you confessed sins that you did not mean to stop committing?

Robbing God. Think of the times you have misspent your time, squandering the hours God gave you to serve Him and save souls. Where have you squandered money on your lusts, or spent it for things you did not need, and which did not contribute to your health, comfort, or usefulness?

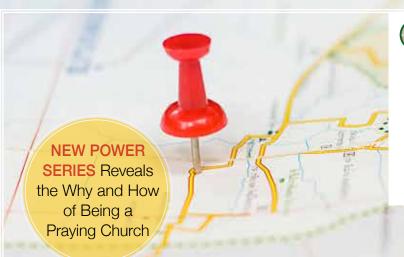
Fruitful a Hundredfold

Break up all the ground and turn it over. Go deep and turn the ground up so that it will all be mellow and soft. Then it will be ready to receive the seed and bear fruit a hundredfold.

As you go over the catalog of your sins, make a resolution to reform your ways now. Wherever you find anything wrong, resolve at once, in the strength of God, to sin no more in that way.

Do not expect God to miraculously break up your fallow ground for you. Those who profess to be Christians should never be so self-satisfied that they expect to start a revival by suddenly jumping out of their slumbers, blustering about and talking to sinners. Unless you are right with God and filled with the Spirit, your work will be mechanical and fruitless. PC

CHARLES G. FINNEY (1792-1875) was an evangelist who played a key role in the Second Great Awakening. He was involved with the abolitionist movement and frequently denounced slavery from the pulpit. This article is excerpted from How to Experience Revival.







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