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Connecting to the Heart of Christ through Prayer

PRAY FOR *All* THE SAINTS

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of God's
People

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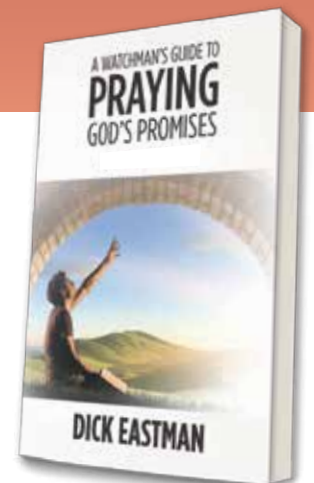
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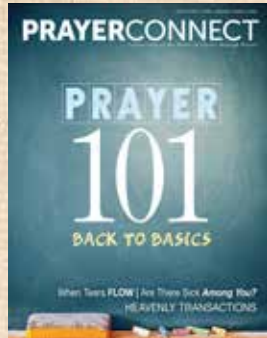


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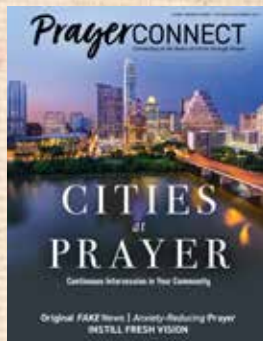
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We are looking for general articles, ideas, and news stories on what God is doing as a result of prayer. We are primarily looking for newly written pieces that have not appeared in other publications. Writer's guidelines are available by emailing Carol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

There are a number of gifted speakers associated with PRAYER CONNECT. Jonathan Graf regularly ministers in churches of varying sizes. Carol Madison is also available to minister in the area of prayer for revival and community transformation, and mentoring the next generation in prayer. The Church Prayer Leaders Network also has many speakers associated with its ministries. You can find contact information at the respective emails or websites.

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Prayer CONNECT

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The mission of **PRAYER CONNECT** is

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

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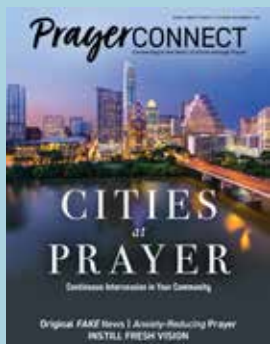
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Imagine a city filled with churches that each take a day a month to saturate the community with 24/7 prayer. This is a powerful reality in Austin, TX, and other cities. In *Cities at Prayer*, we share how this can happen in any community—and the amazing results from united prayer. This issue and other back issues are available at prayershop.org.

PUBLISHER'S note

Catching Prayer

My seven-year-old grandson can drive! Oh, don't worry, Jack doesn't take the car out on the highway. But he can drive our tractor/mower and our all-terrain vehicle on our rural property.

Again, don't worry. He can't do it without Grampy sitting with him. There is a safety mechanism that requires him to sit on the seat—or the engine turns off. And since Jack can't reach the gas while sitting, it will be a few years before he can mow without me!

I am amazed, however, at what he picks up simply by watching how his Grampy does it. He knows where the key goes and how the gear shift works. He can steer, although that still needs some improvement.

Jack did not learn his tractor skills from reading a manual. No, he watched and copied what he saw.

Prayer is caught, too.



Model It!

An important reason to fight for and improve corporate prayer in a church is that it provides an incubator where new believers can observe prayer—and then learn to do it. Churches that have no place for believers to pray together stymie the prayer growth of the new believers. It's not helpful for the "struggle-to-pray" people either.

Young or struggling believers have few models to follow when they do not see prayer being practiced or when they do not hear a variety of prayer styles incorporated into gatherings. There is nothing to catch.

As prayer leaders, we might bemoan our poorly attended prayer meetings, but do we work on making these prayer meetings dynamic and engaging? So many prayer meetings are dull and boring, with only seasoned believers who pray for several minutes, each covering everything on the list. That can deter novice pray-ers from even trying to pray aloud.

What about in our worship services? Is there any variety of prayer happening that can be a model for people? Or do we simply use opening and closing prayers, covering the same prayer topic every week?

As prayer leaders, have you thought of mentoring a new believer or younger believer in prayer? You could be a great role model for them. But make sure a significant part of your mentoring is letting the individual(s) hear you pray so they can catch it!

In addition to modeling, however, sometimes a "user manual" can be helpful to understand and pass on some of the finer points of prayer operations. PrayerShop Publishing recently released two books that can help you encourage prayer to be caught in your church. *Developing Dynamic Prayer in a Church* (an ebook) was written by me. And *Prayer That's Caught and Taught* (a print book) was written by Prayer Connect editor Carol Madison. Both are available through prayershop.org.

Help others "learn to drive" their prayer lives. Let prayer be caught!

—Jonathan Graf

Prayer Initiatives and Events for 2020

In response to the belief that a deep spiritual crisis is manifesting itself in the United States, several prayer and evangelistic ministries are strategically organizing urgent calls to prayer and action for the year 2020. The growing global focus seeks to engage intergenerational intercessors and messengers in all nations.

Dave Butts, chairman of America's National Prayer Committee, says, "The year 2020 is a clear picture of God's desire to accelerate a movement of prayer in the earth. Multiple prayer initiatives from around the globe have reached a crescendo point in 2020. What happens next happens because God is at work through the prayers of His people!"

Ministry leaders anticipate growth in prayer events that occur every year: National Day of Prayer, See You at the Pole, Collegiate Day of Prayer, Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church, and Tent America. In

addition, several new prayer gatherings and initiatives will take place in 2020:

- **January:** a month of prayer to launch the Year of the Bible. The vision is for two million people to pray for renewed Scripture engagement (yearofthebible.com).
- **May:** Go 2020 has a vision to mobilize ten million believers to reach 100 million Americans in one month with the gospel of Jesus Christ through a prayer, care, share lifestyle (go2020usa.com).
- **June 20:** Together 2020 is a youth-focused prayer and worship gathering in Washington, D.C., to unleash a generation to engage with Scripture and influence others with the gospel of Jesus Christ (togethergeneration.com).
- **July 3–5:** Claim Your Campus 2020

seeks to bring 100,000 middle and high school students from every state to a field in Kansas to learn how to develop student-led prayer groups on their campuses, share Christ, and serve their schools. The vision is to see these students reach one million for Jesus (claimyourcampus2020.com).

- **All.America:** A decade-long initiative to see every campus, home, and person in America prayed for by name, connected to the Bible, and engaged with the gospel multiple times. Includes an app with mapping technology to strategically pray for people in neighborhoods (allamerica.org).

These prayer-focused events need intercessors to come alongside and pray for spiritual awakening and revival in our nation.

Year of the Bible Launches in 2020

Several like-minded organizations are collaborating to launch The Year of the Bible in 2020, beginning with the goal of mobilizing two million people to fast and pray during the month of January.

The American Bible Society, Pulse, The Table Coalition, Museum of the Bible, and the International Bible Society are just a few of the organizations working together to see a generation engaged in Scripture. In addition, more than 500 leaders and organizations from 200 countries are endorsers of A.D. 2020 Global Year of the Bible.

Nick Hall, the founder of Pulse and the visionary behind the Together 2020 gathering of thousands of Christians on the National Mall on June 20, says he is

excited about the Year of the Bible initiative to reach out to a "biblically illiterate generation." He believes a "Bible revival" is unfolding. From 2016 until today, the number of people using digital platforms to engage God's Word has exploded from 200 million to more than 400 million people worldwide—and those numbers are growing.

The movement aims to affirm and promote the value of the Bible for all people, and it calls for an end to Bible poverty at a time when more than 1,600 languages lack New and Old Testament translation. Wycliffe, a partner in the movement, predicts the completion of 99 percent of the translation in the New and Old Testament by 2033.

In the past there have been Year of



the Bible efforts, such as the national Year of the Bible declared by U.S. President Ronald Reagan in 1983. But there has never been a global-scale initiative, according to Mark Anderson, president of Call2All. Six goals of the A.D. 2020 Year of the Bible movement are these: pray, translate, publish, distribute, educate, and motivate people to engage with God's Word.

A prayer and fasting guide for the January launch can be downloaded at yearofthebible.com.

Welsh Minister Restores Old Chapels with Hope of Revival

A Welsh minister has purchased 12 abandoned chapels in a bid to restore them to their former glory. So far, Rev. Robert Stivey, a Congregationalist minister, has invested almost \$250,000 of his own money (primarily an inheritance from his mother) in the derelict buildings. Most of the church buildings are former Baptist chapels. Calling his venture an “act of faith,” Stivey says he feels a strong desire to bring the aging sanctuaries to life, filling them once again with the sounds of Christian worship.

Many years ago, while visiting the Welsh valleys, Stivey was appalled to see many chapels being closed down, turned

into flats, or demolished. “I felt I’ve been called to do something about this,” he told the BBC News. “These chapels must be saved and reopened and used again for their original purpose.”

Wales has a rich history of spiritual awakening. Evan Roberts, a young preacher, prayed for revival in Wales for 13 years, seeing few results. But in 1904–1905, a revival broke out that resulted in the salvation of 150,000 people across the nation and the spread of the gospel halfway around the globe.

So, can it happen again?

“I don’t think we’re in revival time yet to fill these chapels,” Stivey admits, “but there are people out there who are



willing to listen to the gospel. . . . I see no reason why we shouldn’t start small and build up over the years.”

Stivey knows that some people think he’s crazy to undertake such a daunting task. “I may not personally reopen them all, but at least they’ve been saved from demolition . . . and they’re ready for other Christian workers perhaps to come along and take over where I’ve finished,” he says.

—Adapted from BBC News (*bbc.com*) and Faithwire (*faithwire.com*).

Historic Collaboration to Prayerwalk for Revival on Every College Campus

National ministry leaders, spearheaded by InterVarsity and Cru, are working together in unprecedented ways to facilitate revival on college campuses across the country. Their strategy: prayer, “boots on the ground,” and data-sharing to give real-time information to ministry partners intent on bringing the gospel to local campuses. Their goal: prayerwalk all 4,948 campuses in the U.S. So far, they’ve reached more than half with walks on 1,779 campuses.

York Moore, the national evangelist and executive director of catalytic partnerships for InterVarsity, told CBN News their vision. The movement, known as EveryCampus, is rooted in a belief that revival is coming. “The whole intent is to pray for revival in America. We can’t force God’s hand,” says Moore, “but we can express our unity and express our faith in prayer.”



EveryCampus has rallied 150 partner organizations, including Navigators, the Foursquare Church, and the Luis Palau Association. Dan Allan, executive director of mission expansion at Cru, told CBN News that the growing coalition is breathing new life into campus ministry. “There’s this fresh wind that is blowing through long-time organizations,” he says.

Information on the prayerwalks is entered at *everycampus.com* so that anyone can see the real-time ministry status of every university and college in the U.S.

—Adapted from CBN News (*cbn.com*).

Prayer Calendar

Prayer for Year of the Bible
January 1–31, 2020
yearofthebible.com

Weekend of Prayer to End
 Slavery and Trafficking
January 10–12, 2020
facebook.com/weekendofprayer

Collegiate Day of Prayer
February 27, 2020
collegiatedayofprayer.org

Seek God for the City
February 26–April 5, 2020
waymakers.org

The Blessing and Prospering of God's People

PRAY FOR *All* THE SAINTS

Once a month I fight rush hour traffic into downtown Minneapolis to spend the day at an evangelistic ministry devoted to reaching the next generation. I begin the morning with a short prayer-related teaching time for the whole staff and then offer half-hour personal prayer appointments the rest of the day. The slots on the sign-up sheet are filled with those who want to spend 30 minutes expressing their personal and ministry-related concerns. They call it their “prayer counseling time,” but truthfully there is no actual counseling. I just bring their requests before Jesus. He is Healer, Deliverer, Redeemer, and Restorer of all things.

Over the years, I have prayed for a variety of needs that represent the hearts of this mostly millennial staff. Often tears flow as people express concerns and struggles. We ask God for breakthrough, healing, clarity, and restoration. Everything is confidential, so they feel safe in expressing a wide range of requests.

I've prayed with people regarding relationship issues in the office—and I've watched as God has resolved things or sovereignly moved people on to different work situations. I've prayed for comfort for people in times of tragedy or disappointing life circumstances. It's also been fun to journey with people in new dating relationships that move toward engagement, marriage—and then children! One staff member received spousal blessing to tell me about their pregnancy before the rest of their family, simply because we had been praying about it for so long. I'm sure

it's the only time I will be the third person to know such glorious news!

I learned early on not to try to “fix things” or intervene in situations. I simply entrust the person to God with the full confidence that He will sort things out. And He always does.

Prayer for GOD'S PEOPLE

I believe this is one of my more strategic prayer ministries because God uses it to encourage and enable this staff to move forward in God's calling for them—to see a generation transformed by the power of Jesus.

Our tendency may be to focus on praying for world situations or for those who need salvation. These are all good, right, and God-ordained prayers. But we must not neglect the prayer for God's

people in all life circumstances. When His followers experience the presence and power of Christ in their lives, the gospel always advances. There is a direct correlation between the prosperity of one's soul and the desire to share the hope of Jesus.

In this issue, Dave Butts highlights the prayers of Jesus and Paul to demonstrate the urgency of praying for fellow believers—the “saints.” This is how God's Kingdom advances with power! James Banks writes about strategic and forward-looking prayer that speaks into the destinies of future generations. Jesus prayed in advance for Peter's faith not to fail (Luke 22:24), and that perspective can also shape our prayers for all Christ-followers. Kathy Branzell urges us to have a “got your back” kind of warfare mindset in praying for family and friends, knowing that Satan targets God's people for discouragement and destruction.

I love praying a blessing for others that comes from 3 John 1:2: “Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers” (NASB). Imagine the impact a thriving Church will have on a dying world! **PC**

CAROL MADISON is editor of *Prayer Connect* and author of *Prayer That's Caught and Taught* (prayershop.org).



Seeking the Blessing of God's People

BY DAVE BUTTS

Prayer

Two years ago I faced a terrible physical challenge—stage 4 mantle cell lymphoma. As grateful as I am for the good medical care I received, I am even more grateful for the many thousands of prayers brought before the Lord on my behalf. I'm in remission today. I walk daily in gratitude to the Lord, who heard and answered so many prayers.

When we think of praying for our fellow believers—the “saints”—often this kind of prayer takes prominence. Praying for the sick is an important part of any prayer ministry. James commands us to pray with faith for healing: “Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective” (James 5:16).

But praying for one another is much more than physical healing. *Believers praying for believers* is a key part of Kingdom ministry.

FOR ONE
ANOTHER

THERE IS NO GREATER ACT OF GOODNESS THAN TO *pray for someone.*

We're FAMILY!

The apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians, “As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers” (Gal. 6:10). Note that Paul urges us to focus special attention on doing good things for each other within “the family,” our fellow believers.

There is no greater act of goodness than to pray for someone. All kinds of prayers are good and beneficial, but it is time for the Church to pray for the Church!

Both Jesus and Paul modeled this. Jesus’ High Priestly prayer in John 17 focused almost exclusively on His followers. It was not a prayer for physical health but for Kingdom health: love, sanctification, unity, and spiritual protection. Without a doubt, Jesus believed in, and modeled, praying for believers.

In many of Paul’s letters to the churches, he wrote much about praying for those who had come to faith in Jesus. In addition, he asked them to pray for his own needs as he traveled about the world, preaching the gospel. Paul believed it was crucial for Christians to pray for one another.

Revolutionary PRAYERS

Paul’s practical instructions for praying for one another would revolutionize the Church today—if we practiced them. Here are Scriptures that speak the strongest to me as I pray for my fellow believers. Please take hold of these Scriptures and begin to pray them:

- “This is my prayer: that your love may abound more and

more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God” (Phil. 1:9–11).

- “Ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God’s people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe” (Eph. 1:15–19).
- “I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God” (Eph. 3:14–19).
- “Since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to

fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light” (Col. 1:9–12).

- “May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones” (1 Thess. 3:12–13).

As you pray through these powerful prayers of Paul, consider the condition of the Church today. In so many places we find division, apathy, lack of spiritual knowledge, and spiritual immaturity. If a significant number of believers began to pray biblically for one another, we would see a healing of the sad condition of the body of Christ. It is as simple as asking the Lord!

Releasing GOD’S POWER

Let’s look at the way Jesus prayed for His followers in John 17. Though much shorter than Paul’s many prayers, Jesus’ prayer reflects the same Kingdom focus that can transform the Church. When we learn to pray, along with Jesus, for His followers, we join Him in releasing God’s power.

Pray these prayers of Jesus on behalf of others:

- “My prayer is not that you take them

out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one” (v. 15).

- “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth” (v. 17).
- “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (vv. 20–21).

Do you believe that Jesus prayed in the will of the Father? I certainly do! That means that when I agree with Jesus in prayer, I have assurance the Father is listening and will answer in His timing and His way.

Do your Christian friends need spiritual protection, holiness (sanctification), and unity? Ask—believing—and watch what God does with your prayers.

Advancing WITH POWER

Step back for a moment from your own prayers and envision what can happen if thousands or even millions of believers begin to pray for one another. The will of God will prosper in the lives of Christians all over the world. God’s purposes will be poured out in abundance in the body of Christ. The Kingdom of Christ will advance with power!

I will never forget the scene my wife and I witnessed as one church blessed their newest member. At the conclusion of the service, a young woman came to the front of the church to be baptized. After her baptism, most of the church remained to greet her. The elders brought out the elements of communion and served her. Hair still wet from her baptism, she partook of the Lord’s Supper and then sat quietly while the elders prayed a blessing over her. What a powerful demonstration of love and acceptance for a new member!

Similarly, we read in Acts 2:42 that

the early Church “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

The life of a believer in Jerusalem was marked by an intimate relationship with the Lord and with other followers of Christ. Prayer for one another was a living demonstration of the life and love of Jesus in their midst.

God is calling us back to that simple but powerful way of life! 📖



DAVE BUTTS is president of Harvest Prayer Ministries (harvestprayer.com) and the chairman of America’s National Prayer Committee. He is the author of several books available at prayershop.org.

Can Prayer Influence an Election?

YES!



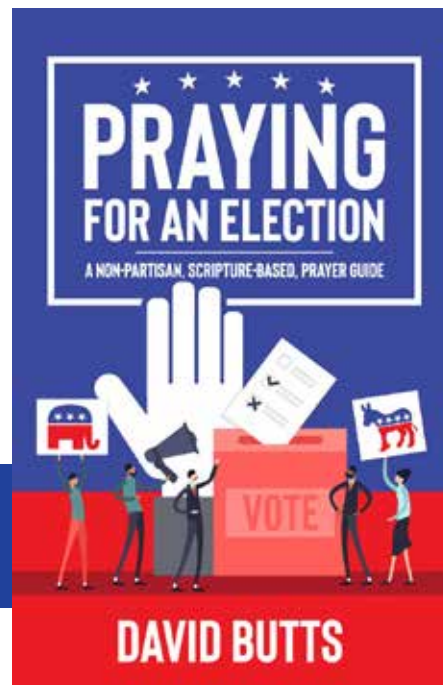
As we pray, we team up with the Creator of the universe to change situations!

Praying for an Election is a non-partisan prayer guide that provides Scriptures and prayer points to pray around 7 key topics. The guide also includes 8 “flash point topics” of current concern in our nation and an “Election Prayer Journal” with space to write down specific things the Lord gives you to pray over national, state, and local elections.

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A person stands in silhouette on a wooden pier extending into a body of water. The sky is filled with dramatic, layered clouds, with a bright light source (the sun) breaking through near the horizon, creating a golden glow. The water reflects the sky and the pier. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

Strategic Prayer for One's Destiny

BY JAMES BANKS

May Your
Faith

How much do we owe to the prayers of others? The tale will never be told this side of heaven—at least not in full. But we catch glimpses now and then.

Jesus gave us one example when He told Peter, “Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers” (Luke 22:31–32).

In a single moment Jesus captured the disciples’ desertion before His crucifixion, Peter’s denial, Peter’s restoration to leadership, and the role that prayer would play in all of it.

How humbling that must have been for Peter! Moments before, he was arguing with the disciples about which of them was “the greatest” (Luke 22:24). Suddenly he was face to face with Jesus and the tale of his impending failure, as well as a poignant lesson on the necessity to love others through prayer.

NOT FAIL

What would have happened if Jesus had not prayed for Peter? Jesus' own words make that clear: "I have prayed for you . . . *that your faith may not fail*" (italics added). Jesus' prayers saved Peter's faith from disaster, and His way of interceding for Peter's destiny sets an example for every believer to follow.

Warfare and DESTINIES

All of us have moments of failure and disappointment, but God always provides a path forward toward redemption through repentance and forgiveness. He wants us to intercede for each other strategically with the long view in mind. Paul gave us an example of what the long view looks like with his instructions to Timothy to "fight the good fight of faith" and "take hold of the eternal life" we have been called to (1 Tim. 6:12), overcoming every obstacle to live effectively for the Kingdom of God.

Jesus also prayed for us in this manner when He prayed, not only for his original disciples, but "also for those who *will believe*" (John 17:20, italics added).

Some months back, my wife and I received an email from one of my childhood friends, wanting our help in solving a longtime mystery. She wrote, "I used to pray for James [me] often in the past and wonder why. Found this in my old Bible. . . ."

Attached was a picture of her Bible with this note written in the margin:

"Pray for James. . . . Cover mind, thoughts, words. Never say anything is impossible for God."

She wanted to know what was happening in my life at that time and why she felt such a burden to pray for me.

The photo showed three-year designations beside the note in her Bible. As soon as I saw them, I understood the *why*—the significance. During those years I lived abroad as a foreign exchange student, which challenged my faith as never before. Those were also the years I was beginning college and running from God's calling on my life. But during that season I saw my faith renewed and deepened, my calling increasingly clarified.

As I studied the picture, I realized what a gift I was given. My friend had been obedient to the Holy Spirit's prompting even though we were only in touch briefly at the time. She prayed. My mother prayed. And an entire row of "blue-haired" elderly ladies at my home church prayed. As a result, by God's grace, I weathered a difficult season without shipwreck of my faith (see 1 Timothy 1:19) and emerged on course for His purpose for my life.

When we pray strategically for other believers' spiritual destinies, we move beyond "bless and be with" prayers into effective spiritual warfare. My friend had covered my mind and thoughts and words years before I would ever preach a sermon or write a book. God *gave* her that prayer. She stayed in His presence

long enough to listen, to receive His wisdom, and to intercede accordingly.

This kind of praying is deeply personal, and its results can have a significant impact because we're not simply praying our own thoughts or desires. We're receiving the divine direction of the Holy Spirit.

Forward-looking PRAYERS

During the years when my son was wrestling with substance abuse, my wife Cari frequently told me, "I really believe God is going to use Geoffrey in ministry some day."

I would nod my head and manage a smile, but I couldn't see it at the time. Today, years later, Geoff is a youth pastor at a large church in the same city where he once abused and sold heroin. How was Cari able to see what God would eventually do in Geoff's life? It was a special gift and depth of insight that God provided "just for her" as she waited before Him.

Believing parents are especially equipped to pray for their children's spiritual destinies simply because they know their children so well. When directed by the Spirit of God, this familiarity and depth of knowledge may lead to insights that take years to unfold.

- Awareness of your children's weaknesses may help you pray strategically against future temptations, providing a strong defense for decades to come.
- Covering your children's unique gifting with prayer can open doors of vital effectiveness for their service in the Kingdom of God. Your intimate knowledge of them may help you anticipate potential challenges, which you can lift before Him.

Paul demonstrated this same kind of in-depth, forward-looking praying when he wrote this to the Christians

GOD WANTS US
TO INTERCEDE FOR EACH
OTHER WITH THE
long view in mind.

in Colosse: “We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light” (Col. 1:9–12).

This prayer, along with others, such as Ephesians 3:14–21 and Philippians 1:9–11, are powerful pleas we can lift up strategically for those we love, letting God’s Word and His Spirit lead us as we pray.

Last year I recorded the audio version of my book *Prayers for Prodigals* (written ten years ago while my son was struggling with addiction). The recording

could have taken a day’s time, but it took twice that long. I had to keep stopping because my voice broke down, overcome with emotion. When I paused, the sound technician would ask, “Another answered prayer?”

All I could do was nod silently. At the time the book was written, every prayer in it was unanswered. Now, by God’s grace, I have seen His kindness in answered prayer again and again.

Eternal ANSWERS

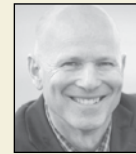
No request grows old before God, even long after our lives on this earth are past. God keeps our faith-filled prayers ever before Him (Rev. 5:8) and will respond with His own perfect wisdom and timing.

Reflecting on this, Scottish theologian P.T. Forsyth poetically sums up the

outcome: “God has old prayers of yours long maturing by Him. What wine you will drink with Him in His kingdom! Faith is sure that God refuses with a smile; that He says No in the spirit of Yes, and He gives or refuses always in Christ, our Great Amen.”¹

From family members to people we haven’t had much contact with for years, we have an unparalleled opportunity to touch hearts and lives and generations through the privilege of strategic, believing prayer! 🙏

¹P.T. Forsyth, *The Soul of Prayer* (Beloved Publishing, 2017), p. 46.



DR. JAMES BANKS, a pastor and church planter, is the author of multiple books on prayer and a writer for *Our Daily Bread*. His website is jamesbanks.org. He and his wife Cari make their home in Durham, NC.

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Warfare Prayer for Believers

BY KATHY BRANZELL

A Clash

Family can evoke strong emotions. I am very protective of my younger brother Keifer. We never fought while growing up. And if anyone messed with him, I was there to protect him in a heartbeat. Even as adults we still have each other's backs.

Most of our families have some disagreements or squabbles among ourselves, but when an outsider comes after one of us, all the family members take their battle stations, coming to that person's defense. Taking aim at one member of our family is a declaration of *war* on us all!

The apostle Paul reminds us of the nature of war, especially in the spiritual sense, in 2 Corinthians 10:3–5:

Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up

OF
KINGDOMS

Paul's Prayer Themes

FOR BELIEVERS

The apostle Paul's rich prayer life focused on the spiritual growth and maturity of fellow believers in Jesus Christ. Use these themes to intercede for others:

- **Romans 10:1:** That Israel will be saved
- **Romans 15:5-6:** That we will glorify God through unity
- **Romans 15:13:** That God will fill us with His joy and peace
- **2 Corinthians 13:7-10:** That we will do what is right
- **Ephesians 1:17-18:** That God will give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to know Him better
- **Ephesians 3:16-21:** That we will be strengthened with His power
- **Philippians 1:9-11:** That our love will abound
- **Colossians 1:3-4:** That we will thank God for the faith of our fellow believers
- **Colossians 1:9-14:** That God will teach us the knowledge of His will
- **Colossians 4:12:** That we will know and stand firm in the will of God
- **1 Thessalonians 1:2-3:** That we will thank God for love and faithfulness of our fellow believers
- **1 Thessalonians 3:12-13:** That our love will increase and overflow to others
- **1 Thessalonians 5:23:** That the God of peace will sanctify us thoroughly
- **2 Thessalonians 1:11-12:** That we will fulfill every good purpose of God
- **2 Thessalonians 2:16-17:** That God will encourage and strengthen our hearts
- **2 Thessalonians 3:5:** That God will direct our hearts into His love and Christ's perseverance
- **1 Timothy 1:17:** That we will praise, honor, and glorify God in prayer
- **Philemon 6:** That we will deepen our understanding and actively share our faith

Adapted from *Praying Like Paul*, © 2008 Jonathan Graf. Available from prayershop.org.

against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (NASB).

Who are the people in your family? I pray you see yourself belonging to *God's* family. We are brothers and sisters in Christ, a bond even stronger than siblings by blood or marriage.

God's family members pray all types of prayers for each other: protection and provision, direction and desires, jobs and joy, fruitfulness and finances. We even pray over weddings and the weather. We intercede for those who do not know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. We pray over our own needs and the needs of others around us.

But as family members in the eternal sense, each of us is also at war with other-worldly spiritual forces, and we need to take our battle stations to fight for each other.

Developing a WARFARE MINDSET

Do you consider yourself a "go-to-war" type of family member? It's a good question for all of us. When Satan starts pursuing or pressuring our brothers or sisters in Christ, do we rush into God's throne room in fervent prayer on their behalf? In deep suffering and adversity, do we press in and pray scriptural promises with tears, tenacity, and faith?

When a mother fights for the life of her unborn baby that she is in danger of losing, are we likely to casually lift up a request? Or do we fall before God and plead with Him to glorify Himself in this life and situation?

How do we pray regarding a neighbor's cancer diagnosis? How about that pregnant teen at church whose life is about to change drastically? Can you and I be counted on to do battle in prayer when someone in our small group is "let go" at work? Do we have the courage to prayerfully approach a brother or sister who is being tempted or tormented?

When a fellow believer is wrestling against powers of darkness, God calls us to watch each other's backs. Think about your response when you hear of turmoil and distress. Are your prayers yielded to the Holy Spirit and filled with faith so that they produce divinely powerful responses from the Almighty Hands that formed the universe and keeps it in motion?

John Piper says, "We cannot know what prayer is for until we know that life is war."¹ In every breath, decision, and activity, Satan and his fallen army are fighting to fill their kingdom of eternal torment. After all, misery loves company. They do not care about people; there is no affection in them, no desire to see people fulfilled or happy. Their intent is to tempt, trick, and torture any soul into an eternal separation from God. Their goal is to hurt God by stealing His children away from Him. It is *war!*

Fighting the RIGHT WAY

We do not fight this war with gossip or judgment—or by leaving people alone to make their own bad choices. When we fail to press in and persevere in prayer, we're abandoning our posts. We're surrendering territory and family to the plundering of our enemy.

We must armor up, so to speak, and stand firm on the front lines (Eph. 6:10–17). We fight first on our knees in travailing prayer. We give ourselves to agonizing intercession that expresses our grief and God's sorrow as He sees His child becoming a target of Satan's battle-plan to kill, steal, and destroy.

- *Family battlegrounds.* If you are a parent, you may know the pain of one of your children being drawn away from the spiritual and physical safety of your household rules.

You've determined family guardrails for protection and success, but your children rebel, thinking you're withholding happiness from them.

Parents, overcome Satan's tricks with truth! Wield the sword of God's Word over them in prayer (Eph. 6:17).

- *Community battlegrounds.* Millions of Christ-followers enter the marketplace every day. They take their places in schools, the military, law enforcement, business, and retail. They assume roles as government officials, judges, first-responders, and teachers. As influencers in our society, these believers may experience some of the most intense warfare.

Become an intercessor for one or more of them.

- *Cultural battlegrounds.* It's easy to complain about the eroding

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of biblical values in our culture, to post our frustrations on social media, or to rally in protest. Posting and protesting may make us feel better, but do not change things.

Fight in a more effective way. Try pressing in and praying for God's servants to be bold and courageous in making the right decisions and acting in righteousness.

James 5:16 tells us that the fervent prayers of the righteous are powerful and effective. Prayers tear down the devil's defenses and destroy his schemes. When we, as prayer warriors, fall to our knees, anything set up against or above God will tumble. The haughty are silenced in the humble prayers of God's servants. Even children can overcome fear and join in warfare prayer for others when they pray in the strength and authority of Jesus.

Finding a Higher PERSPECTIVE

Growing up, all I dreamed of doing was joining the Air Force and becoming a SR-71 pilot. Known as a spy plane, the SR-71 was the fastest manned plane used for strategic reconnaissance. I wanted to serve my country, protect it from harm, and defeat its enemies.

I planned and worked for this my whole life. But, because of one eye exam, my dreams came crashing down—or so I thought. I was night blind.

A few years ago I told this story to my small group. A friend who knew me well leaned forward, looked intently at me, and said, "Wow, so God put those desires in your heart. But His plans were to use you in His Kingdom, not a country—to fight every person's enemy, not just America's. God is allowing you to fly above the earth's atmosphere and into

the spiritual realm in warring prayers. God's thoughts and ways are higher than ours, but thankfully you have volunteered in the 'Kingdom Air Force.'"

Years of questions and pain faded as I realized God had deployed me to thousands of prayer battles. He gave me incredible squadrons of fellow prayer warriors who had my back, prayed me through, and taught me truths about prayer.

In warfare never fly alone. We all need prayer partners to defeat a deceiving enemy. Lock your shield with the shields of other warriors who pray with you and for you. Paul reminds us in a passage about spiritual warfare: "Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people" (Eph. 6:18).

The war between God's Kingdom and the kingdom of darkness is raging. Our family (the family of God) is under attack. It's time to mobilize heaven's army on our family's behalf with passionate and persevering prayer. **PC**

¹John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010) 65.



KATHY BRANZELL is the president of the National Day of Prayer Task Force and national coordinator of LOVE2020. She is the author of *An Invitation to Prayer*.

How Did the Apostle Paul Pray for All the Saints?

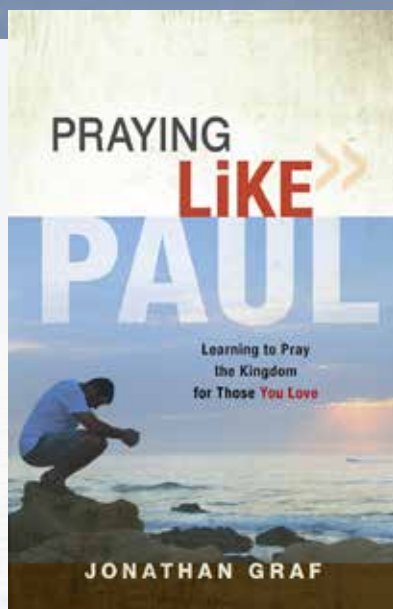
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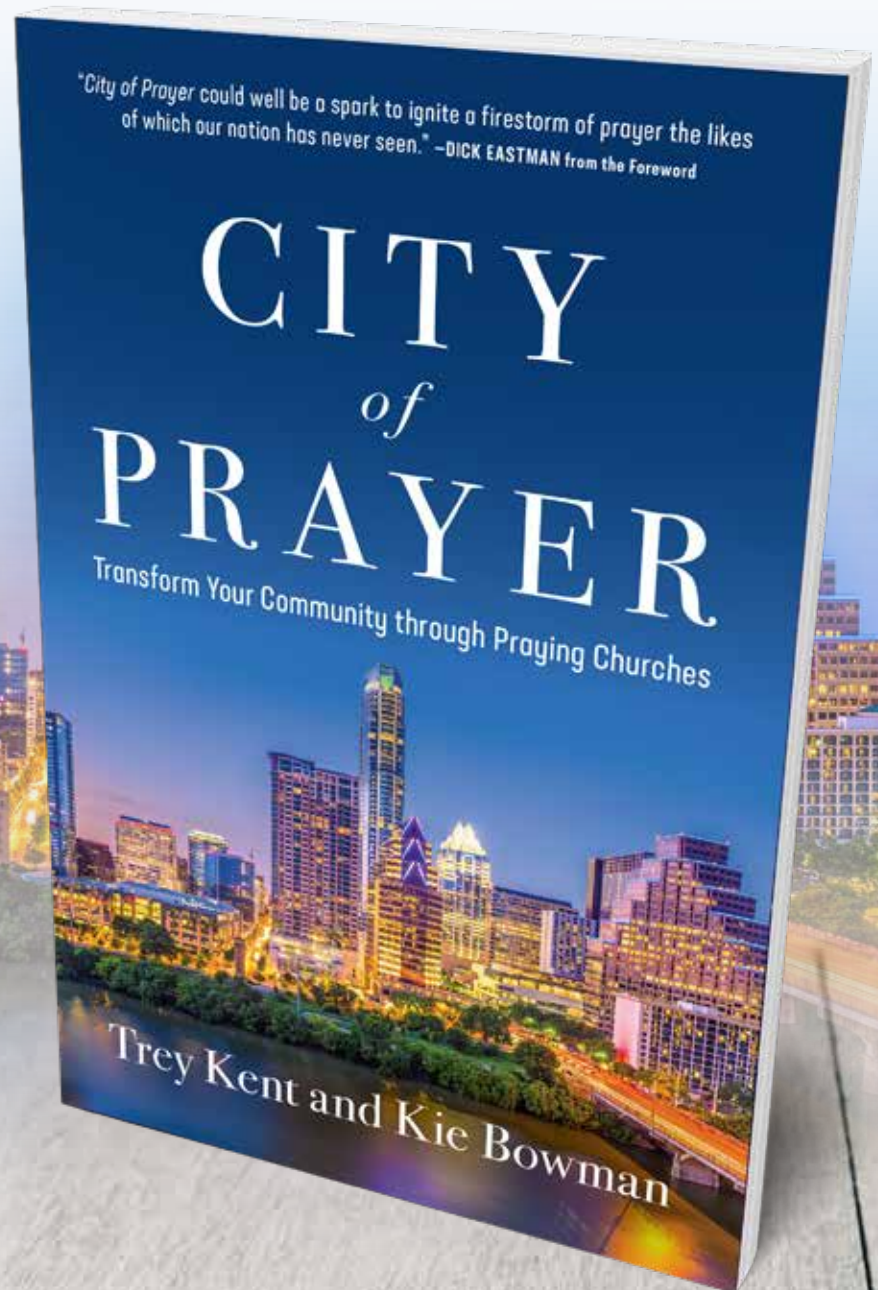
Check out some additional articles on blogs and websites related to "Pray for All the Saints" at prayerleader.com/issue-39-extras.

- "7 Staggering Things God Does When We Pray for One Another," by Mark Altrogge
- "Pray for One Another," by Donald Whitney
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Entrusting Intercession Results to God

to

by Sandy Mayle



From a Trickle

Downstream

Flow

The Allegheny River ran through my childhood world.

As I splashed about in it, camped beside it, and kayaked on it, I didn't know that the Allegheny starts as a small spring in a farmer's field in northern Pennsylvania. A trickle widens until fishermen pull muskies from the depths, speedboats skim the surface, loaded barges inch along, and people are even baptized in its waters.

The Allegheny flows into the Monongahela, Ohio, and Mississippi Rivers before emptying into the Gulf of Mexico.

I wonder. Does that northern Pennsylvania field have any idea what is happening downstream?

Starting with a Trickle

In Ezekiel 47, God shows the prophet a vision of the temple in Jerusalem. He follows a trickle of water coming from under the temple wall, which grows ankle-deep, then knee-deep, then waist-deep, until that trickle has become an uncrossable river. Although it flows through desert land, the river nurtures many trees along its shores, including all kinds of fruit trees bearing nourishing fruit and healing leaves. It eventually flows into the salty Dead Sea, turning the waters fresh so that they become filled with many kinds of fish, for "where the river flows everything will live" (v. 9).

Jesus Christ's death and resurrection became a spring of Living Water that flowed first as a trickle at Pentecost in Jerusalem, then knee-deep through Judea, waist-deep through Samaria, finally widening to cover the whole earth (Acts 1:8).

This same Jesus said, “Whoever believes in me . . . rivers of living water will flow from within them. By this he meant the Spirit” (John 7:38–39).

Every true believer in Jesus Christ becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16). And in that temple we are urged to pray, to join with the powerful yearnings of the Spirit, the pleadings of the Savior, and the intercessions of the Church, so that a river of life flows into our families, our neighborhoods, our nation, and on into the Dead Sea of our world.

This is the outflow of “prayer in the Spirit,” or prayer that joins with Him. Paul wrote, “Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests” (Eph. 6:18). This is not prayer that lobbies for what seems right, what seems obvious, or what seems the best conceivable path forward. It is prayer that seeks God’s purposes.

Praying in the Spirit

How can we pray in the Spirit?

1. **Wait on Him**, setting personal agendas aside. Ask and allow the Spirit to attune our hearts with the Father’s. As much as possible, we let Him birth His prayers in us.

2. **Offer prayer**, then, for what we understand to be in line with these biblical criteria:

- *the plan of the Father*: “If we ask anything according to His will, [that is, consistent with His plan and purpose] He hears us” (1 John 5:14, AMP).
- *the interests of the Son*: “Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us” (Rom. 8:34).
- *the yearning of God’s Spirit*: “The Spirit Himself goes to meet our supplication and pleads on our

behalf with unspeakable yearnings and groanings too deep for utterance” (Rom. 8:26, AMPC).

3. **Remain a farmer’s field**. A plot of earth. A piece of clay. It’s mind-blowing to be a place where God has brought water out of dry ground. But often we covet more. More involvement, more credit, more assurance of our prayers’ effectiveness. We want to factor significantly in the outcomes.

However, if our prayer wasn’t our own effort and initiative, if He birthed it and breathed it, then all that happens as a result is all Him. It’s not our river; it’s totally God’s. *He* flows out; *He* swells and surges; *He* brings the dead to life and makes the living to bear fruit and causes that fruit to nourish and sustain others.

All the glory belongs to Him. All our self-effort to figure prominently in the answer, to peer downstream for results, or to understand God’s processes will muddy and pollute the waters with churning angst.

Struggling to See Downstream

The truth is, when we pray, we seldom find out what happens “downstream.” Oswald Chambers wrote in *My Utmost for His Highest*:

A river reaches places which its source never knows. And Jesus said that, if we have received His fullness, “rivers of living water” will flow out of us, reaching in blessing even “to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8) regardless of how small the visible effects of our lives may appear to be. We have nothing to do with the outflow—“This is the work of God, that you *believe*. . .” (John 6:29). God rarely allows a person to see how great a blessing he is to others.¹

This truth can create a significant struggle for pray-ers who have a strong faith in God and a committed prayer life, those who pray year after year but don’t

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see the results they're looking for. I often want to jump in a powerboat and check out what's happening—or not—downstream. How are things looking? Can I give a hand in any way? Pray longer? Harder? What more do I need to do?

When divorce ripped through our family and took with it a dear daughter-in-law, I had a hard time letting go. I struggled against the current for a long time, until I finally did what the Spirit had been nudging me to do. In my heart I put our daughter-in-law in a basket as if she were my little baby Moses, and committed her to the Lord's keeping. Committed her to the flow. She is riding downstream, and I have no doubt the Lord is with her. Someday I know I will see how He's been answering prayer.

Until then, however much I long to see the stream of my prayers mingle with those of the Trinity and the body of Christ—and watch that basket ride the current and navigate the rocks—this truth remains: I'm a farmer's field. That's my place. And that's where I'm finding peace in intercession.

Riding the Current of His Purposes


None of us—pastor, prayer leader, or any praying believer—knows how our Spirit-birthing prayers will merge with His own powerful pleadings and Christ's intercession to affect the Father's far-reaching plans. We don't know where the Spirit will bear our requests or how He will work far out of our sight and well beyond our reach.

It's not our business to know; it's His. Our task is to focus on being His temple, praying in the Spirit. It is enough to know that our prayer's "labor in the Lord is not in vain" (1 Cor. 15:58, emphasis mine), so "Let us not become weary in doing good" (Gal. 6:9).

One day we will see all that God has done downstream. In the meantime, the life-giving Spirit flows out of us, sweeping our prayers into the strong current

of His purposes, soaking into dried land, filling abandoned hearts, buoying stranded hopes, spawning joy and life.

And we didn't—we *couldn't*—do anything to make it happen. We just welcomed the Holy Spirit of God and joined Him in prayer. Then, like a spring in a farmer's field, out He flowed.

Downstream, on and on. 

¹Oswald Chambers and James Reimann, *My Utmost for His Highest: Updated Language* (Grand Rapids: Discovery House, 2017), September 6 entry.



SANDY MAYLE is a freelance writer who has written for numerous publications, including past issues of *Prayer Connect*. She and her husband Dave are from Erie, PA.



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Four Ways to Use Your Eyes in Prayer

When I was a young mom with four kids under the age of six, I felt guilty that my prayer life didn't measure up to what I thought it should look like.

Looking back now, I realize God just wanted *me*. He wanted to be with me. He wanted me to call out to Him—to need Him, to enjoy Him, to talk with Him, to share my heart with Him, to have a relationship with Him.

It wasn't about the doing—but the being. He cared more about my heart than my words, time, or acts of service. He affirmed this in 1 Samuel 16:7 when He spoke to Samuel: “The Lord does not

look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

I love the way the Bible refers to our heart having eyes. (See Ephesians 1:18.) It helps me understand prayer when I think of using my eyes to look at God, myself, circumstances, and God's ability to do the impossible. Here are four practical ways we can use our eyes in prayer:

- Look up. Look at God. Praise Him for who He is. Look at His attributes and His character. When we start with a focus on God, He becomes greater and our circumstances become much smaller. Praise defeats the enemy.



- Look within. Look at my sin and confess it. The only way to be filled with the Spirit is to empty myself of me. There is something powerful about confessing our sins out loud.
- Look around. Look at all the things around you to be thankful for (past, present, future). We can't be anxious and thankful at the same time. Look back at the specific things you prayed for and thank God for answering in His perfect way.
- Look out. Look at Jesus standing before you, saying, “What's on your heart today? Who are you worried or concerned about? Where do you need My help?” He wants us to ask Him. Use Scripture. Put your name, or the name of someone in need, right into the verse below. Be specific. Believe Him. Your faith is what pleases God and moves Him to action.

Join the apostle Paul in this prayer for the eyes of your heart to be fully engaged: “I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that *the eyes of your heart* may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you” (Eph. 1:17–18, emphasis mine).

NANCY LINDGREN is the founder and president of MORE Mentoring (morementoring.org). She is passionate about keeping mentoring simple—walking alongside others and pointing them to Jesus.

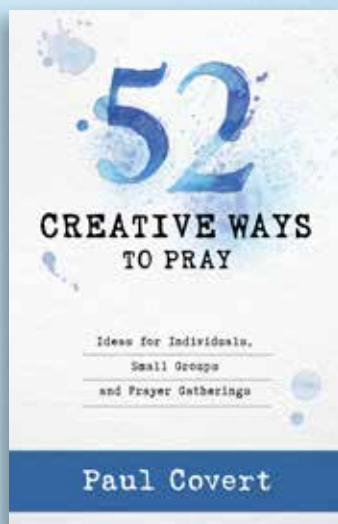
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Healthcare Prayer Strategies

Healthcare organizations always hope for better patient care, improved employee relations, and exceptional financial status. At our small hospital in the northwest corner of the continental United States, those specific items have been on the prayer list of some staff, managers, and executives—and, by God’s grace, answers have come!

In 2015, these people who wanted to participate in prayer began meeting regularly, and throughout the next three years the gathering expanded to the evening shift, the long-term care facility, and even a school in town. It continues today as chaplains from various denominations gather for breakfast at the hospital café every Monday and Thursday morning and lead prayer for about 15 minutes.

This brief investment of time has brought the visible presence of God to our hospital, with unexpected outcomes:

- Better patient care through specific clinical initiatives like striving for “Baby Friendly” status and implementing an antimicrobial stewardship program. These were not only achieved; they expanded our expertise via telemedicine and won statewide awards that offer best practices in our patient care.
- Labor relations improved, compared to the past two negotiations. Staff disunity and work attitudes are changing for the better. And the employee survey this year was nearly flawless with almost 90 percent participation.
- Although finances were not specifically cited in our requests to God, we are now in the best financial position ever.

Very talented people were instrumental in bringing about these successes. But that also has been a huge challenge.

Recruiting and retaining professionals is truly a miracle for a tiny town in a remote area, especially with 120 inches of rain each year.

One of the pastors explains that this program came about because of the desire to gain a greater sense of God’s healing presence. Patients have mentioned this after the prayers offered on their behalf. He says that the nurses “truly look like angels with their caring manner.” Staff note that prayer enables them to approach patients with enhanced compassion.

For those interested in starting a prayer group in a hospital, here are some suggestions:

- Have pastors work with a hospital insider to get an invitation to have prayer there.
- Keep sessions focused and brief, about 15 minutes, in a convenient location. In this instance, pastors receive prayer requests and then take turns praying for each topic with the group. Afterwards, some attendees stay a short while to talk.
- Be open to adjusting the time and location. Listen for outcomes that applaud a hospital with better patient care, employee engagement, and financial success.
- Seek other opportunities with adjacent departments or organizations. One department leader heard about our prayer initiative and requested that the pastors conduct a session with her staff.

There are many miracles in this healing place thanks to prayer and what it brings, as a result, to all who love Him.

JANET SCHADE, MS, RPh, is a pharmacist who resides in the northwestern corner of the United States. She does freelance writing on scientific and spiritual topics. Her company is The Word T.E.A.M (Truly Expecting Amazing Miracles).

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Practical Prayers for Your Pastor | By Dan Reiland

Nothing shapes the outcomes of your church more than prayer. The longer I lead, the more I understand and appreciate the prayers of faithful intercessors.

Your pastors (and church staff) are prime targets for spiritual attack. The enemy uses a lot of schemes to ensure everything from temptation to discouragement. If he can get to your pastors and church leaders—and even take them out—he can hurt the whole church.

Your prayers can and will make a difference.

Develop Prayer Rhythms

You can pray for your pastors daily, once a week, or every time the Holy Spirit prompts you. All prayer rhythms are good. Here is a practical plan:

1. Pray for God's favor. God has given your pastors gifts, abilities, energy, and passion to accomplish the work of ministry. However, without God's power there are no eternal results.

- Ministry has always been a divine partnership. Your pastors do their part, and God does His part. Pray for that partnership.
- Ask God for an anointing on them. Pray for favor, the power of the Holy Spirit, and specifically for the salvation of many people!

2. Pray for spiritual vitality. Your pastors are not superhuman. They need to tend to their spiritual growth on a consistent basis. Imagine a good campfire: no matter how big the fire blazes, in time it will go out. The same is true within leaders' souls. They need a rekindling of the fire.

- Pray that their love of God and relationship with Jesus will remain

close, real, and fresh.

- Pray that they will have a white-hot heart for lost people. Ask God to give them timely biblical insights.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit will stir within them a passion for prayer and that they will hear God's voice.

3. Pray for leadership. Great pastors love their people and are good shepherds of their congregations. They also need to be great leaders to sustain a growing and healthy church. I believe that—next to the favor of God—everything rises and falls on leadership.

- Pray that your pastors are not only open to growing as leaders but committed to that growth.
- Ask God to give them strength of character, wisdom in decision-making, and passion in preaching.
- Pray that God will grant your pastors clear and inspiring vision, along with the direction and strategy to achieve that vision.

4. Pray for their families. I've learned that when things are not going well at home, it's very difficult to lead at church. If Patti and I argue, I can barely think straight until we resolve it and are in good relationship again. We've been married 37 years and have learned much through experience and maturity, but the commitment required to maintain a good home life is still significant.

- Pray for the spouse and children of each pastor. Ask God to help them experience a deep and abiding love for each other. Pray for peace at home and protection from spiritual attack.
- Pray that the fruit of the Spirit will permeate their homes: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness,

faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

- Pray that their homes are filled with laughter.

5. Pray for physical health. Poor health can limit the life and leadership of your pastors. I'm not a fitness nut, but I do care about the physical well-being of spiritual leaders. Your pastors may think they don't have time to exercise or practice preventative medicine. I do understand. But you can pray about this for them! God can intervene, and the Holy Spirit can speak to them about taking care of their physical health.

- Ask God to give your pastors stamina, energy, clear thinking, and strength.
- Pray for God's physical protection over them.
- As you pray for your pastors, pray in faith according to Jesus' words in John 14:12–14: ". . . whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."

Your prayers for your pastors will help prosper your church. **PC**



DAN REILAND is the executive pastor at 12Stone Church in Lawrenceville, GA. He previously partnered with John Maxwell for 20 years, first as executive pastor at Skyline Wesleyan Church in San Diego, CA, then as vice president of Leadership and Church Development at INJOY.

Empowering Christian Educators | By David Schmus

As the faculty adviser to my high school's Christian club years ago, I received a call from a parent who wanted to meet to pray. Like many Christian teachers in public schools, I felt isolated and alone, trying to shine my light the best I could. So I immediately agreed.

That simple after-school prayer time birthed an intercession team and a friendship that still bears fruit today.

Major Battleground

I believe the key battleground in the spiritual war for our nation is our schools. Given the extent to which our current cultural and spiritual confusion is echoed in these schools, we are seeing significant fallout:

- According to a report published in *Education Week*, between the years of 2005 and 2017, the percentage of 12- to 17-year-olds reporting a "major depressive episode" in the past year has increased from 8.7 to 13.2 percent. However, adults' rates have remained constant.¹
- Of youth ages 12–14, three times as many girls and twice as many boys committed suicide in 2015, compared with only eight years earlier.²
- At least 15 states are enabling gender confusion by allowing students to use whatever bathroom or locker room they identify with, generally without parental knowledge.

Are we losing a generation of youth to depression, suicide, and myriad other spiritual and emotional brokenness? Christian educators in our schools can be a powerful force in God's hands. However, so many educators, especially in our public schools, are fearful and isolated.

Wake Them Up

After 15 years as a public high school educator, I moved from the classroom into leadership of Christian Educators Association International. When I did so, I sensed the Lord whisper to my spirit, "My army is already in the schools. Your job is to wake them up."

But how do we help often fearful, isolated, and overworked educators to step out in faith to partner with God in bringing transformation to their classrooms and schools? You already know the answer: prayer.

As a prayer leader, you can mobilize your church to join the battle and pray in these ways:

1. Intercede for educators.
 - Your local school likely has a list of faculty members on their website. Pray through the list. Send an email or note to each educator as you pray.
 - Go to everyschool.com and sign up to pray for a specific school. Make sure your church adopts every school in your area.
 - Encourage your congregation to join Moms in Prayer groups at their local schools (momsinprayer.org).
 - Call your local schools and ask if they have a Christian club that meets there. Ask for the name of the faculty adviser. Pray for and reach out to that person.
 - Don't be afraid to visit your local school, meet the principal, and ask how you can pray.

Regardless of how you target your prayers, pray that Christians in our schools will have eyes to see what God is doing on their campuses and how to partner with Him. Pray that they will not be captive to fear, but will be bold in their

faith. For those in public schools, pray that they will understand what they can do legally to live out their faith. (CEAI can help with this: ceai.org/whatwecando.)

2. Christian educators themselves need to pray. Administrators and teachers have a greater degree of authority to pray over their classrooms and schools. One high school principal faithfully prayerwalked his campus every morning. But when a fight broke out at his school one day, he later realized that was the only day all semester he had failed to prayerwalk.

I also know of a Christian teacher who faithfully prayed over his classroom. One of his students had been aware of a darkness that constantly followed her around at school. When she finally told this teacher and described the darkness to him, he asked, "Where is it now?"

"Oh, it's outside," she replied. "It can't come in your room."

Most Strategic

If you know Christian educators in public schools, encourage them to connect with our organization. We can protect them legally should they face opposition as they carry out their calling in their schools.

As prayer leaders, embrace these Christian educators for who they really are: possibly the most strategic missionaries in our nation. **PC**

¹Footnotes available on request from editor.



DAVID SCHMUS is the executive director of Christian Educators Association International (ceai.org), which seeks to encourage, equip, and empower Christian educators to transform our public, charter, and private schools with God's love and truth.

Pray great things. Hope great things.

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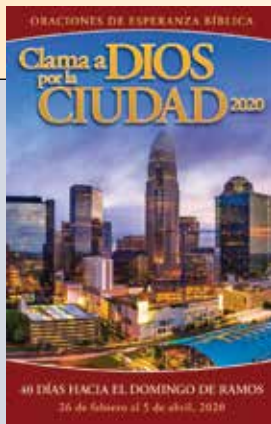
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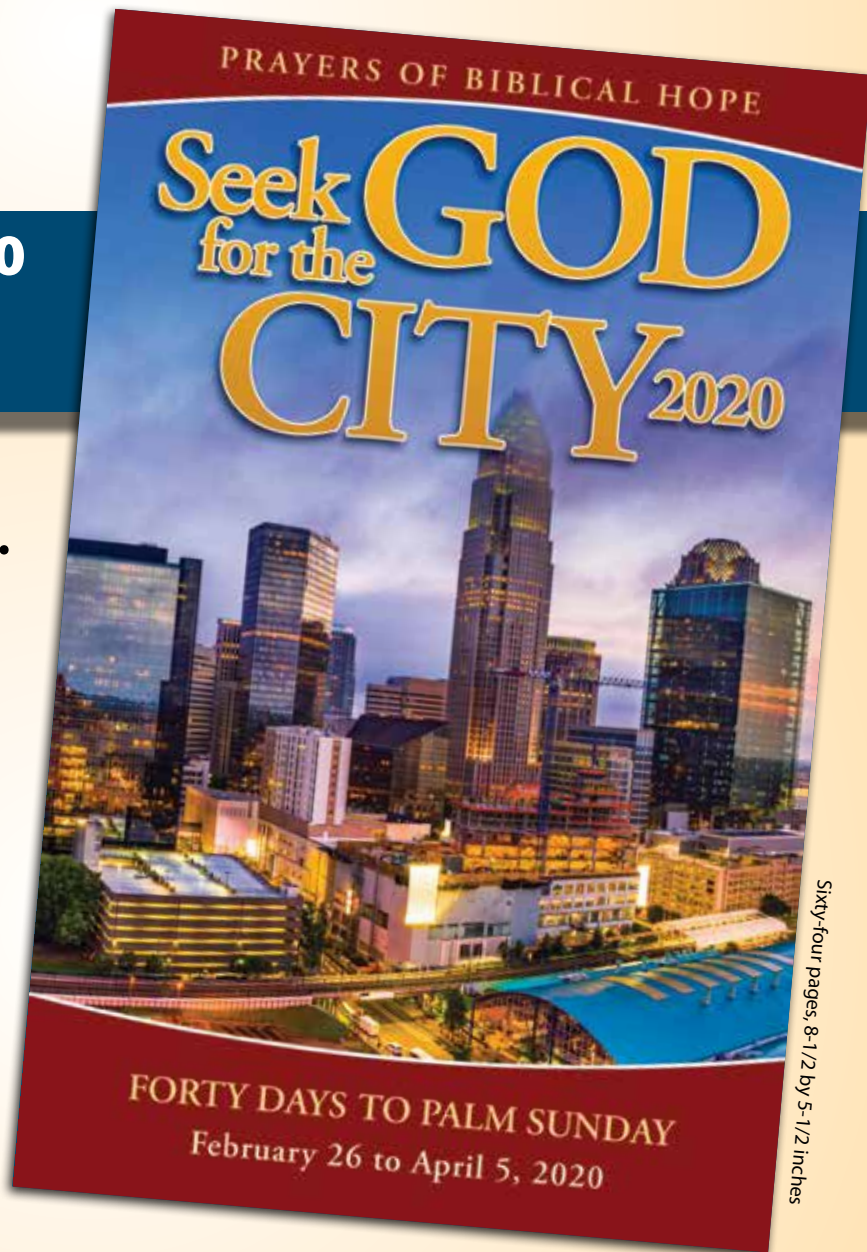
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