

A Guide to Praying for Your Community

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“Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”
Acts 2:46-47 (NIV)

PRAYER MATTERS

Our church is embarking on a spiritual growth campaign called *40 Days of Community*. During this time, we will answer an important question, "What on earth are we here for?" This is an opportunity we don't want anyone to miss.

In preparation for this *40 Days of Community* emphasis, it is important to remember that God's power is unleashed through our prayers. It is prayer that ultimately brings the power of God into this process, transforming lives and bringing lasting change to our church and community. When prayer touches the fuse of God's power, amazing things can happen!

"Whenever God determines to do a great work, he first sets his people to pray."
C. H. Spurgeon

Prayer is the simplest form of communication that we have with God. It is during times of reflection and quietness that we hear him speaking to our hearts and renewing us in his presence. Although prayer is a special time of praising God, confessing our sins, and expressing our own needs to him, it is also a time for each of us to ask him to be working in our family, marriage, church, small group, neighborhood, workplace, community, and world.

Ask God to give us eyes to see our church and community as we never have before. Ask him to break our hearts for those who are hurting, lonely, confused, discouraged, exhausted, fearful, angry, ill, homeless, spiritually or physically

hungry, etc. Pray that God will send a wave of spiritual growth across America and around the world. Your prayers matter during this incredible time.

HOW CAN I BEST PRAY FOR THE *40 DAYS OF COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN* TO POSITIVELY IMPACT BRIDGES CHURCH AND MY COMMUNITY?

Consider prayerwalking or prayerdriving!

Perhaps the activities of prayerwalking and prayerdriving are new to you. Both activities can be defined as "praying on-site with insight." On-site praying is simply praying in the very places where you expect your prayers to be answered. It is a deliberate and planned time of focused prayer. Be prepared to join God in the phenomenal way he is working around you before, during, and after the emphasis on *40 Days of Community!* Ask God to "open your eyes spiritually" to let you see his plans through His eyes.

Prayerdriving will allow you to prayerfully cover a larger area of your community. So, if you prefer to drive rather than walk, prayerdriving is the answer for you! Whichever activity you select, walking or driving (or even skating or biking!), your call to pray for your community will likely result in a new awareness and sensitivity to the people around you.

Prayerwalking and prayerdriving are simple activities that do not require you to approach your neighbors or co-workers or to even know their specific needs. In fact, prayerwalkers and prayerdrivers are those who are "on the scene without making one." Through God's inspiration, you will discern certain areas that need your concentrated prayer. You will see new potential in your friends, family members, neighbors, fellow church members, and co-workers. Your on-site prayers will prepare resistant hearts to be open to spiritual growth and participation in the *40 Days of Community Campaign*.

Through the intentional activity of your prayerwalk or prayerdrive, God's will and His work will be revealed around you.

HOW DO I GET STARTED?

To prepare for your prayerwalk or prayerdrive, take these two easy steps:

- Choose one, two, or three friends to share this adventure with you. If that is not possible, don't let it stop you from enjoying your own time of praying for your community while walking or driving.
- Decide on a block of time that you will "hit the streets" during the week before the start of the campaign, during the campaign, and/or even after it as well!

WHERE SHOULD I PRAY?

Invite God to show you where He wants you to pray, and be willing to visit those places He reveals. Although you will want to allow for some flexibility in your walking or driving route, plan to stop in specific, predetermined areas to target your prayers. You may want to consider pausing at the following locations for a focused time of prayer:

- Individual homes
- Streets
- Schools
- Churches
- Hospitals
- Businesses
- Shopping centers
- Beaches
- Parks
- Any populated areas or strategic viewpoints!

HOW CAN I PRAY AND DRIVE AT THE SAME TIME?

Good question! You can designate a passenger to read from the "Suggested Prayers" and "Suggested Scriptures" as you drive. Or you can do your reading when you pull to the side of the road at different locations.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

- **Be alert as you walk or drive. Remember: Safety first!**
- Feel free to pray either silently or aloud. And, don't let moments of silence make you or your prayer partner(s) feel uncomfortable.
- Be aware of how the Holy Spirit may be leading. He may, for example, prompt you to speak to someone along the way in order to invite him or her to church. If he does, enjoy the opportunity to be his gentle voice of encouragement. You might be the only smile that person gets all day!
- Make this a family event! Talk about it in advance and plan a short, easy route for small children. Encourage your older children to pray while they ride their bike, roller blade, or skateboard around the neighborhood.
- You may choose to listen to instrumental music while walking or driving, but be careful that it does not overpower or interrupt the prayer insight that God wants to give you.

- Don't forget to bring a pen, just in case you want to make a personal notation in the back of this booklet.
- Be ready to share your experience with others. Not only will your own faith be strengthened, but you will also be a source of encouragement to others.
- Don't stop after just one walk or drive! Watch God continue his work around you as you make praying for your community a regular and consistent part of your life. The blessings will be yours!
- If you are homebound and are, therefore, unable to walk or drive the streets of your community, please, please accept the challenge to pray diligently for those for whom prayerwalking/prayerdriving is a new and difficult concept. Your intercession on their behalf will change their lives forever! May God bless you abundantly for your generosity of prayer.

SUGGESTED PRAYERS

Feel free to use the following ideas as prayer starters:

- **GOD'S PERFECT PLAN** that all people in our church and community would live in harmony, respect, and appreciation for each other, loving one another as much as God loves us.
- **GOD'S PURPOSES** – to be joyously lived out for his glory
 - **Mission** - Reaching out to others to share our faith
 - **Fellowship** - Belonging to one another with love
 - **Discipleship** - Growing together spiritually
 - **Ministry** - Serving others humbly and sacrificially
 - **Worship** - Glorifying God with one another
- **GOD'S PREPARATION** of each man, woman, teen, and child's heart for what He desires to do in each life during the *40 Days of Community Campaign*, especially for those in our community that he wants to reach.
- **GOD'S PROTECTION** from distractions, worries, problems, and concerns for each individual who will be participating in the campaign or working tirelessly behind the scenes as a volunteer
- **GOD'S PRESENCE** in each person's life as He personally challenges him or her to take the next baby step or giant leap in living a life in community with others

- **GOD'S PROVISIONS** of energy, time, and resources for each individual who has stepped out in faith to serve unselfishly as a Host Home leader or co-leader
- **GOD'S GRACE** to be released in the life of each person involved in the campaign, sending a wave of spiritual growth through our communities - including our churches, neighborhoods, schools, and businesses
- **GOD'S SALVATION** for each person who has not yet taken the step of committing his or her life to Jesus Christ; that the Good News will be communicated clearly and powerfully to each person
- **GOD'S BLESSINGS** poured out on individuals and families who are a godly influence in their homes, churches, and community
- **GOD'S WISDOM** to be given to each parent and educator, as well as each church, business, and community leader who is in a position to boldly impact lives for Christ during this 40 Days emphasis
- **GOD'S CONVICTION OF SIN** in each person's life, along with a willingness to repent; give and receive forgiveness; and be reconciled to God and others
- **GOD'S HEALING TOUCH** to all who suffer from physical, emotional, or psychological concerns that could prevent them from fully participating in the campaign
- **GOD'S POWER** to touch each person's heart to respond to him with honor, thanksgiving, and praise

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURES

Don't forget to use Scripture to guide your prayers. You can be confident of praying the will of God when you pray the Word of God. Here are some verses that will help you pray, beginning with a Psalm of personal commitment and confession. If you want to use other passages, just bring a small Bible along.

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 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 9:35 – 38 (NIV)

When he [Jesus] had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. John 13:12 – 17 (NIV)

You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:14 - 16 (NIV)

Show me your ways, O LORD, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. Remember, O LORD, your great mercy and love, for they are from of old. Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you are good, O LORD. Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways. He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way. All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful for those who keep the demands of his covenant. For the sake of your name, O LORD, forgive my iniquity, though it is great. Psalm 25:4-11 (NIV)

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may 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 joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:9-14 (NIV)

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone - for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men - the testimony given in its proper time. 1 Timothy 2:1-6 (NIV)

***Pray with trust and
eager anticipation,
expecting God to
answer your
prayers!***

