

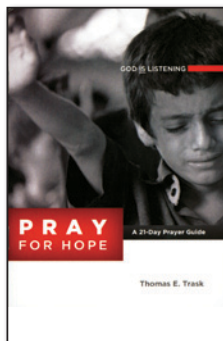
Additional Prayer Resources



Week of Prayer Poster



Week of Prayer Bookmark



Pray for Hope Booklet

Get Ready to Grow

Developed from the book *Grow in Prayer and Intercession*.
A resource of the Assemblies of God National Prayer Center.

Introduction

“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 saints”
—Ephesians 6:18

Missionary Willis Reed lay weak and helpless on the bank of the Ganges, his 12-year-old son by his side. With the nearest doctor 20 miles away, Reed’s fever raged out of control. A sad reality began to take shape: he was dying.

Hours earlier, Reed and his son were driving home to Dhanbad, India. The day was hot, and they stopped at a roadside stand for a cold Indian drink called a *lassi*. As Willis took a gulp, he felt shards of broken glass cutting into his throat. Immediately, he knew he needed medical attention. But despite their rush, they reached the Ganges River too late, missing the last ferry of the day.

So Willis spent the night beside the river—a night his deteriorating condition would not allow him to survive. Yet, to the amazement of Willis and his son, he awoke the next morning in perfect health. Only later would he discover why.

While preaching in Arizona on furlough 2 years later, Willis was approached by a lady he didn’t recognize. “I saw you in a vision,” she began. “You were lying on the bank of a river. I had never met you, but God spoke your name to me. He told me to pray for you. I prayed until I felt assurance your need had been met.”

Willis quizzed her on when this had occurred. It was the moment he lay dying beside the Ganges. God had spoken to an anonymous woman thousands of miles away, using her prayers to work a miracle in his life.

God intends for our prayer lives to be alive and vibrant. Far from a routine confined to meals and Sunday mornings, our communication with God can touch every aspect of life. When it does, we find ourselves involved in the ministry of prayer in ways we never imagined. Through prayer comes opportunity to bless strangers, help the needy, comfort those who are hurting, and do spiritual battle. A healthy prayer life can lead us down avenues of communion with God that empower and equip us for service far beyond what we now experience.

Alternate Introduction

There are many different ways people look at prayer today:

- Some see it as the “In Case of Fire, Pull Here” lever we see on fire alarms in public buildings. It’s largely ignored until an unexpected emergency leaves us scrambling for it.

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- Others view it as a bank account containing unlimited funds, into which we make deposits through our spiritual effort and morality, with hopes of being able to withdraw God’s favor when needed.
- Still others treat prayer as a sort of “magic lamp,” offering us unlimited wishes and allowing us to fill our lives with comfort and pleasure while avoiding the struggles and hard times.

And, indeed, prayer is our source of help in crises. It does allow us to experience the favor of God applied to our lives—although by His grace alone. And prayer will bring good things into our lives, even while it helps us endure the difficult.

Yet for Christians who long to move forward in faith and commitment to Christ, prayer must be so much more than this. Prayer is an ongoing conversation with God, communion with Him that envelopes every aspect of our lives. It’s alive and vibrant within us. God intends us to embrace prayer as our primary means of getting to know Him better, discovering His marvelous plans for our lives, and even ministering to one another. Simply put, each of us is intended to grow in prayer every day in our walk with Christ.

Sermon Body

1. Growing in Intercession

Intercession—the act of seeking God on behalf of another person or a critical situation—can seem intimidating. Most of us have known a “champion intercessor” through the years, and he or she is likely a great person of faith. It’s important to remember intercession doesn’t require a special gifting or status of spirituality. It simply means that we possess compassion for others and their needs, and we’re willing to respond by seeking the Lord. In that sense, we’re all called to the ministry of intercession.

- **Intercede for the Lost.** (God longs for the redemption of the lost, and He calls us to pray fervently for the spread of the gospel. In this sense, intercession is the highest calling of evangelism.)

- **Intercede for the Church.** (The ministry of prayer extends to one another. We all face a variety of crises, temptations, and situations leaving us in need of guidance. Devoting time to intercession is a powerful act of compassion.)
- **Intercede for Spiritual Growth.** (The apostle Paul prayed fervently for the spiritual maturing process of the Thessalonians. We need each other’s prayers as we become more and more like Christ as well. Why? It’s easy to get distracted in this sin-soaked world. Temptation, discouragement, success, and even the mundane routine of life all threaten to distract us from our focus on Christ.)

2. Grow in God.

In 1967, Christian author Charles Hummel published a classic booklet titled *The Tyranny of the Urgent*. In it, he asserted that a tension will always exist between what is most urgent in our lives and what is most important. Too often, he concluded, the urgent wins. Hummel’s observation reveals a critical principle for the Christian life: Following Christ requires an ongoing evaluation of and commitment to godly priorities. If we fail to give our spiritual priorities proper importance, they will be overwhelmed by the daily urgencies that inevitably come our way.

- **Prioritize Your Focus.** (We often highlight the “all these things” aspect of Matthew 6:33. But the “seek ye first” phrase is foundational. Placing our focus first and foremost on the Lord is the starting point of spiritual growth, and it will have a powerful impact on our prayer lives.)
- **Cherish God.** (Mary and Martha had profoundly different reactions to the arrival of Christ. We can learn much from their example. It’s tempting to adopt a viewpoint similar to Martha’s. We ascribe value to our time and effort based on tangible, outward results. Yet God would rather that we focus first on Him. Cherishing and valuing His presence is primary. And one of the greatest ways we do so is through an ever-growing prayer life.)

- **Hear God's Voice.** (A growing prayer life extends beyond prayers that center on needs and concerns, as vital as these may be. God desires prayer to become a time when we learn to hear His voice above the loud, distracting noise of the world around us. In His voice we find peace, gain perspective on life and eternity, and maintain a strong spiritual compass in an increasingly secular society.)
- **Be Led by the Spirit.** (We are never alone in this world; the Spirit is with us, interacting in our lives. This is even true in our prayer lives. During the most difficult and confusing times, the Spirit helps us pray. As we open our hearts to the voice of the Spirit, we find wisdom, guidance, and peace. We can also be led to pray for others in critical situations—even when we have no idea what to pray in ourselves.)

3. Grow in Faith.

Perhaps the two biggest questions we have with regard to prayer are: “How will God respond to my prayer?” and “When will God respond to my prayer?” Both questions, ultimately, are rooted in trust. Sometimes it can be especially hard to wait for the answer, or even entertain thoughts of God answering in a way we don’t expect. This is especially true when we’re facing fierce battles that test our resolve, or when we find that the answer seems delayed in coming. That’s when trust enters the picture. Trust is what puts “legs” to our faith. God wants us to believe Him enough that we walk with Him no matter the struggles.

- **Faith for the Battle.** (We do battle with the enemy of our souls every day. There are a number of principles to enact and apply that will make us more “battle ready.”)

- * *Preparation (Ephesians 6:13–17)*
- * *Prayer (Ephesians 6:18)*
- * *Praise (2 Chronicles 20:22; Psalm 22:3)*
- * *The Name of Jesus (Mark 16:17; Luke 10:17)*
- * *Intercession (Daniel 10:1–14)*

- **Faith to Trust Him.** (It’s the question of the ages: “Why doesn’t God answer my prayer?” This can be especially difficult when we see God meet the needs of others around us, while our chronic crises seems to go unnoticed. It’s during those times that we must trust God’s sovereignty and love. He cannot be defeated by any circumstance; no need is too great. He also possesses unequalled concern for us and compassion for our cares. When we embrace these truths, we are ready to trust His answer, even when it is “wait” or “no.”)

- * *Trust God’s Power and Wisdom (Psalm 139:3,6; Romans 11:33,34)*
- * *Trust and Obey (James 1:22; 2:14–17)*

- **Faith to Persevere.** (God is a loving Father, intimately concerned about our needs. He wants us to seek Him without fail. We’re wise to keep several principles in mind.)

- * *We Can Pray with Boldness (Hebrews 4:16)*
- * *We Must Pray in Line with His Will (1 John 5:14,15)*
- * *We Are Called to Remain Faithful (Romans 12:1,2)*
- * *Prayer Demands a High Level of Commitment (Colossians 4:2)*
- * *An Ongoing Attitude of Prayer Is Evidence of a Consistent Prayer Life (1 Thessalonians 5:17)*

Prepared by the Assemblies of God National Prayer Center
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