



**MOVEMENT BIRMINGHAM CALL
TO REVIVAL PRAYER**

**MOVEMENT
BIRMINGHAM**

SPIRIT & UNITY

MARCH 2020

Birmingham, AL

Movement Birmingham Call to Revival Prayer

We are very encouraged by your willingness to commit yourself to pray with your group for one hour each day for the near future. May we cry out to God, asking Him to pour out His Spirit on our city at this time of great need. What follows are prayer resources which we are presenting to you, trusting that they will give you a little guidance in how to pray. We know that praying for an hour each day can be challenging so these are only meant to assist you in your prayer times. May God work powerfully through the prayers of His people in Birmingham.

Day One, Focusing on Adoration

We praise you, O God, for your:

Aseity- independence, not answerable to anyone or anything, Ps.115:1-9.

Unity- complete in Himself, John 15:26,27.

Sovereignty- He does as He pleases, Is.45:6,7.

Transcendence- He is beyond time and space, Rev.1:8.

Holiness- He is without the slightest evil, Is.6:1-6.

Omnipotence- He has all power, Heb.1:3.

Omnipresence- He is everywhere at once, Ps.139:5-12.

Omniscience- He knows all things, Ps.139:1-4.

Immensity- He fills up His creation with all His attributes, Ps.72:19.

Love- it is inexhaustible toward His people, Jere.31:3.

Immanence- He stoops to our weakness, frailty, Ps.103:12-14.

Patience- He is slow to anger, Ps.103:6-11.

Grace- He bestows His undeserved favor on His people, Eph.2:8,9.

Wisdom- He does all things well, correctly, the first time, every time, James 3:17.

We acknowledge You as:

Elohim- our Creator, Gen.1:1ff.

Yahweh- I am who I am, eternal God of the covenant, Ex.3:1-12.

Yahweh Jireh- the Lord our provider. Gen.22:14.

Yahweh Saddiq- the Lord our righteousness, Jere.23:6.

El Shaddai- the Almighty God, 1 Chron.29:11.

Yahweh Sabaoath- the Lord of hosts, Gen.17:1

Would You, therefore our Lord and God, be pleased to manifest to Your people in our city a greater sense of the fulness of Your glorious attributes so that our faith be greatly increased to ask You and to expect from You, great and mighty things, above and beyond anything we can ever ask or think.

Day Two, Focusing on Confession of Sin

After a few moments of adoration to God in prayer, spend five minutes individually asking the Holy Spirit to show you your sin through the following questions. You may want to spend more time privately on this at a later time. Individuals pray privately, asking and honestly answering the following questions.

Do you have a secret spirit of pride, particularly evident to you after you teach or perform some other Christian service?

Do you have an independent spirit, an unwillingness to accept rebuke from your spouse or an authority figure in your life?

Do you love human praise? One way to know is if you are disappointed when few or none thank you after serving publicly or privately.

Are you given to anger, impatience, being overly sensitive? Do you retaliate in speech addressing others harshly?

Are you stubborn, unteachable, harsh, sarcastic, demanding?

Are you a people pleaser? Do you fear man? Are you afraid to confront a brother or sister in sin? Are you afraid to speak to others about Christ?

Are you jealous of those with more gifts and money than you? Do you secretly devalue those with less than you?

Are you dishonest in business? Do you report all your taxes and do you pay them? Do you deliver your product well and on time? Do you do what you say you will do?

Are you given to unbelief, discouragement, depression, hopelessness?

Are you only formally going through your Christian disciplines?

Are you selfish with your time and money? Do you hoard them? Do you resent intrusions by others on your time?

Are you being faithful to God, obeying Him in the little, big things?

Are you willing to accept rebuke?

Are you exalting yourself, drawing undue attention to yourself? Do you boast about your children?

What are your secret sins, those things you hope your Pastor and Elders never discover?

Are you tithing to your church? Are you holding your possessions loosely?

Is your marriage and family time adequate? Do you make an idol of your family? Do you spend too much time with your family and not enough in assisting others?

Are you developing relationships with non-Christian people?

What are your idols- those people, places, or things which tend to rule your heart and affections?

Are you betraying the confidences of others? Do you gossip, spread rumors, give bad reports?

Is your theology alive, experiential? How do you know?

Are you a racist or a bigot? Are you prideful of your culture, your Biblical or theological knowledge? Are you Biblically compassionate toward the poor and suffering of our city and world?

Do you have a condescending attitude toward brethren with weak theologies?

Do you expect favored status in the church because of your money, position, or power in the world?

Are you filled with the Holy Spirit? Is your life characterized by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control?

Do you really believe in the sufficiency of Christ and the Bible?

Read and apply 1 John 1:5-10. Do you really believe this?

Confess your sins publicly in your group today and then apply 1 John 1:5-2:2.

Day Three, Focusing on Giving Thanks

After a few moments of adoration and confession of sin, take five minutes to list ten things for which you are genuinely thankful. Don't be afraid to list some of the hard lessons you are presently learning at this difficult time for all of us. Remember 1 Thess. 5:18 and Phil.4:4-7. Then go around your circle and thank God for all these wonderful blessings He has bestowed on you and thank Him for the blessings those in your group have mentioned.

Pray that you and those in your group would gain from the Holy Spirit an attitude of gratitude, to see truly that there is always hope in Jesus and the work of the Spirit in our lives and circumstances.

Day Four, Focusing on the Six Petitions of the Lord's Prayer
The First Petition—Hallowed be Thy Name

Jesus gave us the so called “Lord’s Prayer” as a model of how we ought to pray. Over the next six days we will focus on one of these petitions each day. These are rich in meaning and can add great depth to your prayer lives. Today, we focus on the petition, “HALLOWED BE THY NAME.”

As you pray, draw near to God. After all, He is your Father in heaven. Draw near to Him with:

- confidence in His fatherly goodness, Rom.8:15.
- reverence, Is.64:8.
- child-like faith, Luke 11:9-13.
- a heart for the glory of God, Ex.33:18.
- an appropriate understanding of His sovereign power, majesty, gracious condescension, Is.63:15-19.

And acknowledge your inability to honor God as you ought in your own strength, Rom. 7:18.

And ask God for His grace, that He will enable you and others to acknowledge and highly esteem God and His:

- titles, Ps.83:18.
- attributes (see Day One), Ps.86:11-17.
- ordinances (the preaching of His word, worship, and the sacraments), Ps. 145:1-7.
- Word (the Bible in your own study and your hearing the word preached and taught), 2 Tim.4:1-8.

Ask God to prevent and remove from our community and nation:

- atheism, Ps.67:1-4.
- ignorance of God and His ways, Eph.1:17,18.
- idolatry (the idols we all tend to worship in our hearts), Ps.97:7.
- profaneness (all manner of wickedness and perversion in our culture), Rom. 1:18-32.

Ask God by His overruling providence to direct and carry out all things for His own glory, 2 Chron.20:6-12.

Day Five, Focusing on the Six Petitions of the Lord's Prayer
The Second Petition—Thy Kingdom Come

In prayer acknowledge that all humanity is by nature under the dominion of sin and Satan, Eph.2:1-3.

Pray that

- the kingdom of sin and Satan will be destroyed, Rev.12:10.
- the gospel will be propagated throughout the world, 2 Thess.3:1.
- the Jews will be called, converted in large numbers, Rom.10:1
- the fullness of the Gentile nations will come, every tribe, tongue, people, nation, Rom.11:25, Rev.5:9,10.
- the church will have the church officers (preachers, elders, deacons, missionaries) she needs to accomplish her task, Mt.9:38.
- the church will be purged of her corruption- heresy, lukewarmness, licentiousness, Rev.2,3.
- the church will be free, unhindered by the government to carry out her task, 1 Tim.2:1.
- the church will purely dispense the ordinances of Christ (preaching, worship, sacraments, discipline), Eph.6:18,19.
- the preaching and teaching of God's word would convert the lost, and comfort and establish the believer, 2 Thess.1:11.
- Christ will rule in the hearts of His people, hastening His second coming, Rev. 22:20.
- God would be pleased to exercise the power of His kingdom in all the world to His own glory, Is.64:1.

Day Six, Focusing on the Six Petitions of the Lord's Prayer
The Third Petition—Thy Will Be Done

In prayer, acknowledge that all humanity is utterly unable and unwilling to know and do God's will, Rom.3:10-18 and therefore they are:

- prone to rebel against His word, Rom.8:7.
- to murmur against His kind and gracious providence, Ex.17:7.
- wholly inclined to do the will of the flesh and devil, Eph.2:2.

Thus pray that God would take from us:

- all blindness, that we would see what we see, Eph.1:17.
- weakness, lack of faith, Eph.3:16.
- unwillingness to do or submit to His will, Mt.26:40,41.
- perverseness of heart, twisted thinking, affections, and actions, Jere.31:18,19.

And ask God to make us willing and able to know, do, and submit to His will with the same:

- humility, Ps.119:35.
- cheerfulness, Phil.3:1.
- faithfulness, Is.38:3.
- diligence, Ps.119:4,5.
- zeal, Rom.12:11.
- sincerity, Ps.119:80.
- and consistency as the angels in heaven do, Ps.119:12, Is.6:2.

Day Seven, Focusing on the Six Petitions of the Lord's Prayer
The Fourth Petition—Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread

In prayer acknowledge that through Adam's sin and our own sin, we:

- have forfeited the right to all outward blessings in this life, Rom.5:12.
- deserve to be wholly deprived by God of all outward blessings, Gen.2:17.
- deserve to have our use of them cursed to us, Rom.8:20.
- have no reason to believe these sustain or satisfy us, Is.59:1,2.
- do not merit them or by our own hard work procure them, Dt.8:17,18.
- are prone to desire, obtain, and use them selfishly, unlawfully, James 4:3.

Thus we pray that we and others, waiting on the providence of God:

- may enjoy a competent portion of outward blessings, Gen.43:12.
- may have a continued, holy, Biblical, and comfortable use of outward blessings, 1 Tim.4:3.
- may learn to be content in what outward blessings He gives us, 1 Tim.6:6.
- may be kept from anything which takes away from our temporal support and comfort, Prov.30:8.

Day Eight, Focusing on the Six Petitions of the Lord's Prayer
The Fifth Petition—Forgive Our Debts

Pray to God, acknowledging that we and all others are guilty of original sin (Rom.5:12) and actual sin, Rom.3:23,

and are thus, debtors to the justice of God, Ps.130:3

and that neither we nor any person can make the least satisfaction of that debt, Mt. 18:1-27

and that we owe God a debt we cannot pay, Ps.51:3,4.

Thus we pray that God:

- of His free grace would, Eph.2:8,9
- through the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, 2 Cor.5:21
- received by us and applied by faith, Rom.5:1
- acquit, declare us not guilty of both the guilt and punishment our sins deserve, Col.1:21-23
- accept us in His beloved Son, Jesus, Col.2:13,14
- that we may continue in His favor and grace to us, Rom.8:1-4
- that He would pardon our daily sins and failings, 1 Jn.1,8,9
- that He would daily fill us with His peace and joy, giving us more and more assurance of His love and forgiveness, Rom.8:31-39
- that we would be emboldened to ask for such, and expect to receive it, Heb. 4:14-16
- then, due to all that God has done in forgiving us, we would be able to forgive others who have sinned against us, Eph.4:32.

Who has wronged you, sinned against you? Who owes you a debt? Are you now able to release them, forgive them of this debt? Pray for God to work that in you and those in your prayer group.

Day Nine, Focusing on the Six Petitions of the Lord's Prayer
The Sixth Petition—Lead Us Not into Temptation

Spend a few minutes at the beginning of your hour of prayer, asking God privately to show you the specific sins with which you are regularly tempted. How well are you fighting against them?

Then together pray to God, acknowledging that our most wise, righteous, and gracious God, for varied and holy reasons, may order lives in such a way that we are:

- assaulted and for a time led captive by various temptations, James 1:13-15.
- that Satan, the world, and the flesh may ensnare us, 1 Jn.2:14-14
- and that we, because of our own sinful corruption, weakness, and negligence Gal.5:16, are:
 - subject to being tempted, 1 Cor.10:13
 - tend to expose ourselves to temptation, Eph.5:15
 - unable and unwilling to resist them in our own strength or to recover from them, or to learn principles from them, 1 Pet.5:8
 - worthy to be kept under the power and control of sin and temptation, Rom.7:23

We pray that God will so overrule the world, our flesh, and the devil and:

- give and bless to us all His ordinary means of grace (time alone with Him, worship, preaching and teaching, the sacraments), James 4:7-10
- and awaken and enliven us to watchfulness and diligence in using these means of grace, Rom.12:1,2
- that we, His people, may be kept from being tempted to sin, Ps.19:13
- or if tempted, may be strengthened and enabled to stand in the hour of temptation, Eph.3:14-17
- or if we fall into sin, may be raised from it again and recover from it, Ps.51:12
- that our sanctification and eternal salvation may be perfected, improved upon, 2 Cor.13:7
- that Satan would be trodden under our feet, Rom.16:20
- and we be fully freed from our sin, temptation, and all evil in the glory of heaven, 1 Thess.5:23.

Day 10, Learning to Pray with a Kingdom Focus

Any church ought to be built on the twin pillars of prayer and evangelism. Admittedly these are the most difficult practices to maintain in the church, but both are essential if a church is to fulfill the Great Commission. And we certainly desire to see this in Movement Birmingham.

I WHAT DO WE MEAN BY KINGDOM FOCUSED PRAYER?

A. Literally and simply it is prayer to the Triune God which focuses on building the rule and reign of Christ in our community and world. Matthew 6:33.

1. It is earnestly praying the content of the six petitions of the Lord's Prayer, Matthew 6:9-13. See lessons for days 4-9 for those details.

B. By Kingdom Focused Prayer we do not mean praying:

1. Organ recitals—Lord, please bless Aunt Matilda's bunion. . .help Uncle Steve to feel better from his cold. . .

2. Selfishly—Lord help me get a date to the big dance. . .Help me buy a new car, better house, get a better paying job. . .

3. Temporally—Help my team to win the big game on Saturday. . .Dear Lord help me find a parking space in the next five minutes. . .

C. By Kingdom Focused Prayer we do mean praying:

1. Boldly for Kingdom expansion. See Ephesians 6:19-20.

2. Expectantly for growth in grace, Colossians 1:9-12.

3. Humbly for the un-gripped, your family, your family members, church, and world.

D. Kingdom Focused Prayer looks like this:

1. If You, O Lord, get the greatest glory and if I am best sanctified by You healing me from cancer, then please do so, and I will give You sincere, heartfelt thanks.

2. Gracious and merciful Father, I ask that You would grant my daughter a date to the class dance so that her faith may increase, that she will know that You indeed hear the prayers of Your people. . .If, however, You can best sanctify her by her not having a date to the dance, then give her the grace to fully acquiesce to You in it and to thank You in all things.

II WHY IS THIS SO IMPORTANT?

A. God is glorified in the salvation of His people.

1. Psalm 2, 67, 96.

2. Ephesians 1:4ff.

B. We are learning to think and pray God's thoughts after Him.

1. Isaiah 61:1ff.

C. We can be sure God answers our kingdom focused prayers.

1. Matthew 21:22, 1 John 5:13ff.

2. He most certainly will accomplish His purpose, all His good pleasure, Isaiah 46:9-11, Philippians 1:9-11.

III WHAT DO WE HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH IN KINGDOM FOCUSED PRAYER?

A. The Godward dimension— that those for whom we pray will:

1. Seek a greater, experiential knowledge of God.
 - a) They will know God as their Father, Redeemer, Rock, Fortress, Stronghold, Deliverer.
2. Grow in zeal for the salvation and sanctification of the nations.
 - a) They will have a love for, burden for the salvation of all the great peoples of the world.
3. Learn to submit joyfully to God in every circumstance.
 - a) They will overcome the tendency to murmur and complain against things which happen to them in the course of life.

B. The manward dimension— that those for whom we pray will:

1. Make, save, and give away all the money they can for the expansion of the rule and reign of Christ.
 - a) That they would realize they do not deserve all they have, that it is from God.
2. Forgive those who have wronged them.
 - a) That they will put away revenge, hostility, bitterness.
3. Stand strong against temptation from the world, flesh, and devil.
 - a) That they learn to hate and forsake their sin, putting to death the deeds of the body, Romans 8:12, 13, 13:14, Colossians 3:5ff.

Now focus your prayer for our city with these things in mind. Make an effort to pray with a kingdom focus.

PRAYING FOR THE UN-GRIPPED

The degree of one's love for people can -be measured in his prayer for their salvation. Do you have ungripped people on your heart and are you praying that they will come to know the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord?

I WHAT DO WE MEAN BY UN-GRIPPED?

A. In today's world the term Christian has lost a great deal of its meaning.

1. To many the term Christian means:

a) An American. . .church-goer. . .political conservative. . .

2. Many whom we know are church-goers and they profess to be Christians.

a) Others are adherents to other religions and hence believe all is well with every person's soul and standing with God.

B. By un-gripped we mean:

1. Those who may claim to be Christians, who are church-goers, or who follow some religion, but who give no indication that they see their sin, who have not experienced the grace of God, who do not see the necessity of Christ's cross and atoning death, who see no need for repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ, who fail to glory in the cross of Christ, who fail to see Christ's death and resurrection as their greatest joy and need.

2. Those who seldom, if ever, speak of Christ's passion (suffering), death, resurrection, those who fail to see this as vital to their existence now and for eternity.

C. A person gripped with the gospel cannot stop speaking what he has seen and heard, Acts 4:20. Peter is told by the Sanhedrin to stop preaching Jesus and he says that he cannot stop speaking what he has seen and heard about Jesus. He is gripped with the gospel.

1. This affects one's speech, life, actions, and attitudes.

II HOW DO WE PRAY FOR THE UN-GRIPPED?

A. Pray, asking the Holy Spirit to make known to the person the seven I Am statements Jesus makes in the gospel of John.

1. I am the bread of life, John 6:35. . .I am the light of the world, John 8:12. . .I am the door of the sheep, John 10:7. . .I am the door, John 10:9. . .I am the resurrection and the life, John 11:25. . .I am the way, the truth, and the life, John 14:6. . .I am the vine, John 15:5.

2. We can pray—Father, for my friend who is hungry for meaning in life, would you reveal by your Holy Spirit Jesus to be the bread of life, the One who alone can sustain his hunger. . .Gracious God, for my friend who is living in darkness, would you reveal by your Spirit Jesus to be the light of the world. . .Merciful Lord, for my friend who has lost his way, who is believing the lies of the world and devil, would you by your Spirit reveal Jesus as the way and the truth. . .

B. Make a list of:

1. Family members. . .work associates. . .neighbors. . .who are ungripped. List them below:

2. Then pray. . .pray. . .pray. . .believe God will convert them.

III WHAT RESULTS FROM PRAYING FOR THE UN-GRIPPED?

A. Some are regenerated (born again) and converted, turning from their sin and believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, Mark 1:15, Ezekiel 37:1ff.

1. Consider the wonderful promises, Daniel 12:2-3.
 - a) They become a savor of life unto life, 2 Corinthians 2:16.

B. Some remain dead in their sins and are on the road to destruction.

1. Matthew 7:13-14, Ephesians 2:1-3, 4:18ff, 2 Corinthians 2:14-16, Hebrews 12:24ff.

Assignment: Make a list of un-gripped friends, etc., using the list above and begin praying specifically for their salvation, using the I am statements of Jesus as a model.

PRAYING FOR YOUR FAMILY

We want to learn to pray with a kingdom focus in all areas of life, including our own family. Our tendency may be to pray for:

- our children's popularity or athletic success.
- our daughter to marry a well-educated, prosperous young man.
- our son to marry a beautiful young lady.
- our children to be spared hardship and trial in life.

These however are fleeting and shallow requests which lack the eternal and sanctifying nature of true God controlled living.

I HOW THEN SHOULD WE PRAY FOR OUR FAMILY WITH A KINGDOM FOCUS?

A. Keep in mind that prayer according to God's word, if other conditions are met, is insured of His favor, that He will in fact answer it. See 1 John 5:14ff.

B. So we should pray scripture, which addresses godly character, back to God. Since such is according to God's will, we ought to expect the answer from Him.

C. Pray:

- Matthew 5:3ff the beatitudes.
- Romans 5:1ff.
- 2 Peter 1:4ff.
- Proverbs. .consider praying one chapter of proverbs each day—for your children and others. “Do not speak in the hearing of a fool, for he will despise the wisdom of your words, Proverbs 23:9. You could pray, “Father I ask that you so work in the hearts and minds of my children that they give strong evidence of Biblical wisdom. I ask that you not allow them to fall into folly, that they give no evidence of being what the Bible calls a fool.”
- wife, pray for your husband to love you as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that he will be a loving and cherishing provider for his family.
- husband, pray for your wife to submit humbly to your loving, covenantal leadership, that she will be a Biblical helper to you in your role to lead your family.

II WHY SHOULD WE PRAY FOR OUR FAMILY, USING A KINGDOM FOCUS?

It restricts-

1. Shallowness. .temporalness. .

Illus: Esau in Genesis 25:27ff.

It enhances.

One's holiness. .living with heaven in full view.

Illus: Proverbs 3-4.

III HOW TO CONDUCT FAMILY WORSHIP.

We recommend Terry Johnson's book Leading in Family Worship as an excellent and practical guide.

Having said this, keep in mind:

the Father's responsibility as covenant head. See Ephesians 5:23, 6:4, Proverbs 4-5.

the battle for consistency.

The tendency to forget variety. .to drift toward dead formalism. .to neglect gearing the time toward the age of your children.

Conclusion: If you are a husband, are you meeting regularly with your children and wife? If you do not have a plan, why not get one right now? Begin to pray for your spouse and children with these things in mind.

PRAYING FOR THE CHURCH

You probably know from experience that most prayer meetings turn into organ recitals (“Lord, please help Jim overcome his cold.”) We are not saying God is not interested in our health or other temporal issues, for surely He is. However we are saying He wants to do far more than simply heal people of disease. How then are we to pray for the people in our church?

I WHAT DO WE MEAN BY PRAYING FOR OUR CHURCH WITH A KINGDOM FOCUS?

We do not simply mean praying for:

physical woes. .numerical growth. .the church budget to be met. .bigger programs.

We do mean prayer which focuses on building Christ’s kingdom in the church.

Individual growth in grace, Romans 5:1-5.

Familial growth in grace, Ephesians 5:22, 25, 6:1-4.

Congregational growth in grace, Romans 12:1-2.

II WHY PRAY FOR KINGDOM GROWTH IN THE CHURCH?

It glorifies God, 1 Cor.10:31.

It edifies believers, Ephesians 1:18ff.

It testifies to unbelievers, Matthew 5:14.

III HOW ARE WE TO PRAY FOR KINGDOM GROWTH IN THE CHURCH?

Use prayers in Scripture as a model for your own prayers.

Ephesians 1:18-19, Ephesians 3:13-20, Philippians 1:9-11, Colossians 1:9-12.

For example, using Colossians 1:9-12, you may wish to paraphrase and pray, "Father, indeed you are merciful and slow to anger, abounding in loving kindness and truth.

Therefore I ask that you grant our the people of our church grace to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to bring forth fruit in every good work, to please God in every respect, to increase in the knowledge of God, to persevere in difficult circumstances, to forbear with difficult people, to always be giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to share the inheritance with the saints in light."

Ask God to build in your fellow believers the qualities found in Matthew 5:33ff (the beatitudes), Romans 5:3ff, Galatians 5:22-23, 2 Peter 1:5ff.

Ask God to build in fellow believers obedience to the commands found in: Romans 6:12-13, Romans 8:13, Ephesians 4-6, Colossians 3.

Ask God to build in fellow believers greater trust in the truths based on: Romans 8, 1 Corinthians 13, 2 Corinthians 4:14-18.

Ask God to build in fellow believers greater awareness of heaven from: 1 Corinthians 15:51-58, Revelation 1,4-5,19-21.

Ask God to build in fellow believers greater trust in the ministry of the Holy Spirit, to:

– not grieve the Spirit, Ephesians 5:30. This is like hurting deeply one whom you love.

not quench the Spirit, 1 Thessalonians 5:19. This is like pouring water on a campfire. When the Holy Spirit moves you to pray for someone, and you choose not to do it, then you are quenching the Spirit.

not resist the Spirit, Acts 7:51. Like when the Spirit convicts you of a particular sin and you refuse to repent of it.

to be filled with the Spirit, Ephesians 5:18. Like one who is drunk with wine (his speech, walk, thinking are all effected by the alcohol), so one filled with the Holy Spirit finds his speech, way of living, and his thinking all positively effected, acting more like Jesus.

We pray this way so that we may be bold in faith, life, and witness, Acts 4:31.

IV HOW AND WHY SHOULD WE PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH OFFICERS?

Satan preys on church leaders. See Luke 22:31ff.

He knows that to bring down into grievous sin a pastor, elder, or deacon greatly hinders the work of Christ's kingdom. It lends credence to the notion that Christianity is filled with hypocrites.

But Jesus promises to pray for us and He wants us to intercede as well for our church leaders. Luke 22:32, Hebrews 7:25. Paul asks for prayer, Ephesians 6:18-19, Colossians 4:3.

How should we pray for church officers?

Perhaps a good way to remember to pray for them is to pray at every meal for your pastor as well as one elder and deacon.

And for what should you pray?

For them to be devoted to prayer, Colossians 4:2.

For them to be focused on the Great Commission, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8.

For them to shepherd the flock of God faithfully, 1 Peter 5:1-4.

For them to grow in Biblical holiness, humility, love, and faithfulness, 1 Corinthians 13:4ff, Galatians 5:22-23.

For your pastor to preach and teach the word of God accurately, boldly, faithfully, 2 Timothy 2:15ff, 4:1-5.

Conclusion: How is your present prayer life? Are you praying for your church with a kingdom focus? Are you praying through Scripture? How do you think you may quench or grieve the Holy Spirit?

PRAYING FOR THE NATIONS

While certainly we ought to pray for the un-gripped, our family, and our church God also calls us to pray for the world, that the gospel will be propagated all over the world so that every people group may hear the good news of Jesus Christ in their own language and in their own cultural context. May God so work in us that we become world Christians. Not worldly Christians but those who have a heart for spreading the gospel to all the world, those who take an interest in salvation of all the great peoples of the world.

I WHAT DO WE MEAN BY PRAYING FOR THE NATIONS?

A. By this we do not mean:

Political activism.

Merely reading about other cultures.

Merely visiting other cultures.

B. By this we do mean:

Developing a heart for world evangelization.

Asking God to put on your heart particular nations, people groups, missionaries, indigenous workers for whom you can pray.

C. Consider Biblical evidence calling us to gain God's heart for all the nations.

Genesis 12:1-3, Psalm 59:13, Psalm 96, Isaiah 2:2-4, Isaiah 52:7ff, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, Revelation 5:9-10.

II WHY ARE WE TO PRAY FOR THE NATIONS?

Since God ordains the ends (the salvation of His people), He also ordains the means to the end (prayer and evangelism).

Ephesians 1:3-4, Romans 9:1ff, Romans 10:13-17.

Because man is dead in his sins, he cannot and will not believe unless the Holy Spirit draws him and regenerates him and this comes only through the prayers of God's people. See Romans 8:26-27.

III HOW ARE WE TO PRAY FOR THE NATIONS?

Pray for the Holy Spirit to open doors for the gospel in hostile, unevangelized regions.

Ephesians 6:18ff. Especially among the Japanese Shintoists. .Hindus. .
Buddhists. .Muslims. .animists in South America and Africa.

Pray for the Holy Spirit to promote unity, humility, and trust between missionary team members, organizations, and national workers. John 17:18-26.

Pray for the Holy Spirit to strengthen His suffering and persecuted people and for Him to expand His church in the midst of that persecution. Matthew 5:10-12, Colossians 1:11.

Pray for the Holy Spirit to bring conversion to the lost and to establish churches in areas where the church is weak or non-existent.

Assignment: Pick out two or three missionaries you know or feel especially close to, and begin praying daily for them as noted above.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PRAY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?

1 Corinthians 14:15, “. . . I shall pray with the spirit and I shall pray with the mind also; I shall sing with the spirit and I shall sing with the mind also.”

John Bunyan defines praying in the Holy Spirit as:

The sincere, sensible, affectionate pouring out of the heart or soul to God, through Christ, in strength and assistance of the Holy Spirit, for such things as God promised, or according to His word, for the good of the church, with submission in faith to the will of God.

a sincere pouring out of the soul to God, Psalm 66:17-18, 16:1-4, Jeremiah 29:12-13.

a sensible or intelligent, Biblically well-informed pouring out of the soul to God. . an awareness of need for mercy because of our sin, Psalm 38:8-10. .an awareness of mercy received which yields comfort, strength, encouragement, Psalm 103:1-4. .an awareness of mercy to be received in the future, Genesis 32:10-11, Daniel 9:3-4.

an affectionate, opening of the heart or soul to God, perhaps even in groans, weeping, sighs, Psalm 38:9, 42:2-4, Deuteronomy 4:29.

through Christ. Christ is our mediator, the One who makes access to the Father possible, Daniel 9:17, Psalm 25:11, John 14:6.

by the strength and help or assistance of the Holy Spirit. Only such petitions can be according to the will of God, Romans 8:26-27, Matthew 21:22.

for such things God has promised us in His word, Psalm 119:25-28, Daniel 9:2-3, 1 John 5:14-15.

for the good of the church, the glory of God. .advancement of Christ's kingdom. .benefit of God's people. .John 17, Jesus' High Priestly prayer.

in submission to the will of God, Matthew 6:10, 1 Corinthians 2:11. The Larger Catechism of the Westminster Confession of Faith says that we are to learn to submit to God's will in everything with humility, cheerfulness, faithfulness, diligence, zeal, sincerity, and consistency.

To pray in the Holy Spirit means:

- He gives us the words to pray, Colossians 3:16.

He gives us earnestness in prayer, Romans 8:26-27.

He takes our prayer to the Father who acts on our behalf, Numbers 14:11-21. Israel sins. .Moses intercedes. .God answers, choosing not to destroy His people.

Conclusion: How does "praying in the Spirit" differ from most praying we hear in Reformed churches today? How will praying in the Spirit affect the way you pray?

PRAYING PREVAILING PRAYER, James 5:16

Introduction: Surely the low state of Christianity in the U.S. ought to move us to learn to pray prevailing prayer. What is it? How do we engage in it?

WHAT IS PREVAILING PRAYER? - it is not merely having a desire to pray or actually to engage in the activity of prayer.

- it is prayer that works, that God answers, James 4:2,3.
- it is prayer for specific, kingdom focused requests, Mt.6:9ff.
- it is prayer according to God's revealed will in His word, 1 John 5:14-15.
- it is prayer that submits to the will of God, 2 Samuel 12:15-23.
- it is prayer that is earnest because the need is so great, Gen.32:26.
- it is prayer offered with the right motives- the glory of God and the good of mankind, Ps.119:53, 136.
- it is prayer born of and bathed in the Holy Spirit, Rom.8:26-27.
- it is prayer which perseveres, is consistent, never gives up, Luke 22:44.
- it is prayer where one stays at it, praying often, Luke 11:5ff.
- it is prayer offered in the name of Jesus, standing on all He is, has done, is doing, and will do, John 14:14.
- it is prayer where one denounces, hates, turns from his many sins, Is.59:2.

- it is prayer offered in faith, Mt.21:22.

Application: List three characteristics of prayer most deficient in your own quest for prevailing prayer.

Application: List three specific requests for which you will purpose to pray prevailingly.

II HOW DO WE ENGAGE IN PREVAILING PRAYER?

A. God must break up the fallow ground of our hearts, Hos.10:12.

- to ransack our hearts in order to reveal our sin, Ps.139:23-24.
- to drive us to grief, confession, repentance, restitution, Joel 2:13.

B. How do we do this?

1. See and feel our sins of commission. These are:

- loving, desiring the world and its comforts more than God or Jesus.
- living with pride, thinking we are better than others, being harsh or judgmental, racist or bigoted.
- being envious, jealous of someone and his possessions, accomplishments.
- speaking harshly, judgmentally of other believers.
- receiving, believing, passing on what you've heard about another when you are not in a position to do anything about it.
- lying by misrepresenting, hiding, or shading the truth in any circumstance..
- cheating others like your employer, clients by over charging or under working.
- living hypocritically, giving fellow Christians the impression you are more godly than you really are.
- robbing God by not tithing
- robbing the government by not paying all your taxes. .taking more benefits than you are justly due.
- robbing your spouse and children by spending money and time foolishly.
- sinful anger in your speech and actions with anyone.
- overlording your wife, children, subordinates with harsh, cruel, micro- managing.

Application: List three major sins of commission. . how do you need to repent?

2. See and feel our sins of omission.

- ingratitude to God for all He is, has done.
- lack of love for all God is, has done for you and yours.
- lack of hunger for, study of God's word.
- lack of faith or trust in the promises of God and His word.
- failure to pursue the means of grace personally, familiarly, and personally.
- pursuing worship casually, with lukewarmness.
- lack of burden for the lost in your family, neighborhood, nation.
- lack of guarding your heart against idolatry, whoring after false gods.
- lack of concern, spiritual maturity, welfare of other Christians.
- failure to practice Biblical self-denial.

Application: List three sins of omission. . .How do you need to repent?

III HOW DO WE PRAY IN FAITH? Mark 11:24

A. We are broadly to believe two things.

1. That God is . . .He rewards those who diligently seek His face, Heb.11:6.

2. That we will receive.

Illus: Countless examples from the Dani tribe of Irian Jaya. .

We specifically are to know and plead the promises of God.

- Is.59:19
- Is.65:24
- Ps.103:17-18
- Is.43:1-3
- Deut.4:29
- 1 Kings 8:33

C. We confidently are to believe we will receive.

- Mt.7:7-11.
- Heb.5:7
- John 11:42
- 2 Cor.12:7-9.

Application: Where are you falling short? Pick three promises. .plead them before the throne of grace.

