

PRAYING TOGETHER

A 31-Day Family
Prayer Guide



CHERYL SACKS

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BRIDGEBUILDERS
INT'L LEADERSHIP NETWORK

Praying Together: A 31-Day Family Prayer Guide
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

- DAY 1 • Dedicating Your Home to the Lord 3
- DAY 2 • Your Prayer Journal 5
- DAY 3 • Praying for Each Person's Destiny 7
- DAY 4 • Praying Scripture 10
- DAY 5 • Praising God 12
- DAY 6 • Taking Time to Listen to God 14
- DAY 7 • Spiritual Gifts 16
- DAY 8 • Writing a Family Covenant 18
- DAY 9 • Cleansing Your Home 22
- DAY 10 • Celebrating Communion as a Family 24
- DAY 11 • What Is Your Story? 27
- DAY 12 • Praying Blessings 29
- DAY 13 • Thanksgiving 31
- DAY 14 • Laying On Hands in Prayer 33
- DAY 15 • Healing Prayers 35
- DAY 16 • Praying for Your Neighborhood 37
- DAY 17 • Praying for Spiritual Awakening in America 39
- DAY 18 • Decision Making 42
- DAY 19 • Praying for God's Protection 44

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- DAY 20 • Asking for Forgiveness 46**
 - DAY 21 • Praying for Friends to Know Jesus 48**
 - DAY 22 • Praying for Someone Who Is Hurting 50**
 - DAY 23 • Praying for Schools 52**
 - DAY 24 • Praying for Leaders in Community
and Government 54**
 - DAY 25 • Praying for Military Personnel 56**
 - DAY 26 • Scriptural Prayers for Success and Favor 58**
 - DAY 27 • Praying for Your Family's Finances 60**
 - DAY 28 • Praying about Life's Hurts and Disappointments 62**
 - DAY 29 • Praying for the Poor and Homeless 64**
 - DAY 30 • Changing the Spiritual Climate in Your Home 66**
 - DAY 31 • Your Family's Future and Calling 68**
-
- ABOUT THE AUTHOR 71**

Introduction

Establishing a Family Prayer Time

When families pray together, things change for eternity. Taking the time to pray alongside your family not only invites God's peace, joy, and presence into your home, but it creates powerful waves of change in the world around you! Establishing a family prayer time will set an example for your children—demonstrating to them that faith, family, and unity are cornerstones of life.

Whether you are choosing to pray daily at a set time with your family, or are simply looking for a casual guide to follow, these themes and action steps will get you praying with each other and for each other. Be creative! You don't have to be all sitting down together, face to face. You may be in the car on your way to soccer practice. One of you may be out of town and video calling to join the others. Praying together can happen so many different ways.

We have provided sample prayers for you to go with each day's prayer prompt, but these are only suggestions. Use your own words. Draw your prayers. Sing your prayers. Children may even

31-DAY FAMILY PRAYER GUIDE

want to dance along with their prayers (yes, they did that in the Bible sometimes!). Make your prayers uniquely your own.

Just begin this guide with expectant hearts, and see the spiritual climate in your home transform!

Day 1

Dedicating Your Home to the Lord

Scripture: *Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place. For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that my name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time* (2 Chronicles 7:15-16 ESV).

Location: All around your home, starting in one gathering spot (e.g., kitchen table, living room)

Materials Needed: Anointing oil

Background: Have you ever dedicated your house to the Lord? This practice has been common to God's people since Old Testament times. When we dedicate our home to the Lord, we are not only dedicating the house itself—the walls, doors, rooms, objects—we are dedicating all the activities within our house, and giving ourselves and our house to God for His purposes. Joshua said before God and the people of Israel: *“As for me and my house, we will serve*

the Lord” (Josh. 24:15). When we dedicate our household to God, we can make this same declaration.

Related Prayer Activity (optional): Some families like to dedicate their homes by anointing the doorframes with oil (“anointing oil” is available at Christian book stores, or use some oil from the kitchen, like olive oil). To “anoint” something means we wipe a small smudge of oil on it with our finger, in the name of the Lord. The oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit.

Instructions: Using the model prayer below, or your own words, start in one room and pray a general prayer of dedication for your home. Then, go through all the rooms of your house and pray an individual blessing in each room, using anointing oil if you like. Each child can choose a special scripture to pray over his or her own room and anoint the door frame with oil. You may choose particular scriptures to pray in certain rooms, like the kitchen, dining room, etc., based on the activities that generally take place there.

Model prayer: *God, we dedicate this house to You, for Your purposes. We dedicate all its rooms and property, and all the people and activities in it. We invite Your holy presence and power into every corner and every life here. We pray everything in this house will honor You, and that You will love to be here with us. We open the door and invite You in with all that You have for us. As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord! Amen.*

Day 2

Your Prayer Journal

Scripture: *The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy* (Psalm 126:3 NIV).

Location: Anywhere

Materials needed: Journal, or notebook and pen, or computer

Background: One of the best ways to build a spiritual heritage as a family is by recording your prayers and God's answers to those prayers. Whether you are just beginning your journey of praying together as a family or it's something you've been doing for a long time, this is an important practice.

Deuteronomy 6:7 tells how God instructed the Israelites to remember the things He had done for them and to share those things with their children. That's what a prayer journal can do for your family, as you look back and see how He answers your prayers. Then you can say with the Psalmist, "*The Lord has done great things for us, and WE are filled with joy!*"

Instructions: In the notebook or journal you've selected (or on your computer), create columns on the pages. Write across the top of each column: Date, Request, and Answer. In the Date column, you'll write the date on which you record your need. In the Request column, describe what you are asking of the Lord. In the Answer column, when your prayer request is answered, write the date and what you saw God do for you. If you dedicated your home as discussed in yesterday's prayer topic, your first entry could include the date of dedication and the description of the prayers. Ask your family members what other prayer requests they have, and add them to the prayer journal along with today's date. Then take time to pray together over each person's prayer requests.

Model prayer: *Lord, we ask You to help us make praying together as a family a lifelong tradition—one that our children can pass down to their children and them to their children. We desire that in our family, prayer will be our first response rather than a last resort. We hold before You this prayer journal. With it we begin a new adventure with You—one in which we will turn to You with all our needs and praise You daily for Your answers. Thank You for Your promise that if we ask, You will answer; if we seek, we will find You; if we knock You will open Heaven's door.*

Day 3

Praying for Each Person's Destiny

Scripture: *For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope* (Jeremiah 29:11 ESV).

Location: A gathering spot, such as around the table or in the living/family room

Materials needed: Pen and paper, computer, or phone/recording device

Background: Do you know how God has uniquely designed each member of your family? Have you looked for unique characteristics that give clues to what each person's design might be—personality traits, character qualities, talents, abilities, spiritual gifts, and life callings? Better yet, have you ever prayed and asked God to *show* you His design and destiny for each family member in your household?

Gary Smalley and John Trent, in their book, *The Blessing*, say, “Children are filled with the potential to be all God intended them to be.”¹ They provide some insightful questions your family can use to learn more about whom God designed each of you to be, and how He has uniquely wired each of you to accomplish His purposes for your lives.

Instructions: Ask each person in your family to answer any or all of these questions:

1. What do you most often dream/daydream about?
2. When you think of being an adult (if addressed to a child/teen), what would you really enjoy doing?
3. Of all the people you have studied in the Bible, who is the person you would most desire to be like, and why?
4. What is one thing you believe God may want you to do for the world?

Then spend some time praying for each family member, that he or she would fulfill God’s special design and destiny for his or her life. If any special words of encouragement come to mind as you’re praying, write them down and share them with the person you’re praying for. You may even want to write them in your family prayer journal.

Model prayer: *Lord, we thank You that You have created _____ special and unique, and for a very valuable purpose. Though we may not fully understand what that is right now, we ask*

1. Smalley, Gary and Trent, John, *The Blessing*, Thomas Nelson Inc., Nashville, Tennessee: 2004, p. 109.

PRAYING FOR EACH PERSON'S DESTINY

that You would prepare him/her for the future You have planned. We also pray Your everyday purpose for _____, that every day he/she will be sensitive to what You are calling him/her to do, so he/she can be used in the lives and situations around him/her and make a difference in this world. Amen.

Day 4

Praying Scripture

Scripture: *Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up* (Deuteronomy 6:5-7 NIV).

Location: Anywhere

Materials needed: Your Bible

Background: Sometimes it's hard to know what to pray. Maybe the situation seems too big or our own words too small. The good news is God has given us His words in the form of the Bible, not only to read, but also to use as our very prayers. The more we let God's Word guide our prayers, the more we can be certain that we are praying God's will over our lives.

The Bible is full of prayers we can use, such as the Lord's Prayer, which we can use as our model to pray. In fact, the whole book of Psalms is prayer! However, every part of the Bible that we

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

read and have memorized can be used as prayer. As we read our Bibles, the Holy Spirit can help us identify passages that relate to our lives and situations. This is because the Word of God *“is living and active”* (Heb. 4:12) and *“full of the Spirit and Life”* (John 6:63).

Instructions: Ask family members to find a scripture they would like to use to craft a prayer for themselves or for someone in the family. Then take turns praying the scriptures. You may also want to look at the requests in your prayer journal and find a scripture promise you can pray back to God for each one. Close by praying the model prayer below from Deuteronomy 6:5-7 as a family.

Model prayer: *(Based on Deuteronomy 6:5-7) Lord, we love You with all our hearts and with all our souls and with all our strength. Please help us keep the commandments You have given us in Your Word; write them on our hearts today. Give us an excitement to talk about them whether we're hanging out at home or on a hike or driving around in our car, when we lie down at night and when we get up in the morning. Amen.*

Day 5

Praising God

Scripture: *Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!* (Psalm 95:1-2 ESV)

Location: A beautiful place (park, beach, your back yard, etc.)

Materials Needed: Praise and worship music (optional)

Background: The Lord deserves our praise because He is the Creator of all things. Oftentimes, we get too caught up in the busyness of life, and we forget that God is worthy of our honor and praise. For many of us, it takes noticing the majesty of creation to remember how awesome He really is. Whether it's a cotton candy sunset, magnificent snow-capped mountains, or lush tropical gardens, the beauty of nature can serve as a distinct reminder that our creative, sovereign God deserves our praise. Praising God is part of our original design as humans—the Scriptures say that we were

created to worship Him. *“The people whom I formed for Myself will declare my praise”* (Isaiah 43:21 NASB).

Instructions: Take your family to a place that reminds you of God’s creative majesty. Sit together (on a park bench, in the grass, under a tree, the beach, or somewhere with a view, or in your own back yard). If your family is active and sports-minded, take a hike in the woods or to your favorite mountaintop. Take turns sharing words or attributes that come to mind when you look around at God’s creation. Discuss those words—welcome any conversation about praising God during this time! Then, consider playing some worship music (even just Pandora on your smartphone) and sit together quietly as you take in the beauty around you and meditate on the words of the music.

Model prayer: *Father God, You are worthy of our praise and worship. You made this beautiful earth, the mountains and the seas and the incredible variety of animals and plants. Even the rich colors that are all around us—those are Your design. You are our Provider, our Defender, and our Redeemer. You are all-knowing, unending, and You love us infinitely. You deserve the highest glory and honor and we give You our whole hearts. Thank You for loving us like You do, and giving us the gift of Your creation, which reminds us of Your supreme power and worth. We praise Your name and all that You are. Amen.*

Day 6

Taking Time to Listen to God

Scripture: *Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know* (Jeremiah 33:3 NIV).

Location: A quiet, comfortable, and distraction-free area of your home

Materials Needed: Pen and paper or computer

Background: God promises that when we call on Him, He will answer. In our prayer lives, we may be good at *calling upon* God, but it takes intentional times of silence and stillness to practice *listening to* God. In our world of noise and busy schedules, it can be easy to speak prayers to God throughout the day, and then forget to stop and listen for His answer. But, when we do take the time to listen, God speaks to us in powerful ways.

Instructions: If your family has young children or this is your first attempt at listening prayer, choose a shorter amount of time (two to five minutes). If you have older children, challenge your family

TAKING TIME TO LISTEN TO GOD

to be silent for 10 to 15 minutes. Using the model prayer below, or your own words, follow these four steps:

1. Be silent and still with God. Invite Him to be with you and speak to you by His Spirit.
2. If any sins come to your mind that you have not repented of, do that now with Him. Unconfessed sin clutters our heart and makes it hard to be sensitive to what He is saying to us.
3. Write down or draw a picture of what comes to your mind. It might be a word, a scripture, an image, an idea, encouragement, or guidance for a certain situation.
4. Tell others what you have heard/sensed. Does it line up with Scripture, and with God's character? Some things you heard you may even want to write down in your prayer journal.
5. Remember that if you don't receive something specific, that is okay! This was a beautiful practice of your family simply being still and making your hearts available to hear the voice of God.

Model prayer: *Father, we come now to listen to Your voice. We ask You to remove all distracting thoughts from our minds and feelings of unrest from our bodies. Thank You for Your promise to answer when we call upon You. Lord, as we sit in silence, please speak to us by Your Holy Spirit. Give us wisdom and guidance in such a way that we know that it is You, for we are listening. Amen.*

And afterwards: *Thank You, Father, for Your presence and peace, and for allowing us to know in a deeper way that You are God. Help us to hear Your voice throughout the remainder of this day. Amen.*

Day 7

Spiritual Gifts

Scripture: *A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have* (1 Corinthians 12:7,11 NLT).

Location: Anywhere

Materials needed: None

Background: One of the many ways we are designed uniquely is in our offering of spiritual gifts. God equipped each of us who know and love Him with different spiritual gifts, or “graces,” that help believers encourage others, build up the Church, and advance God’s Kingdom. Spiritual gifts are meant to glorify God and they are all reflections of His divine nature.

Some spiritual gifts are more geared towards ministry, such as the gifts of evangelism or teaching. Other spiritual gifts are more supernatural in nature, such as the gifts of prophecy, discernment, and healing. Those gifted with prophecy have a special

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

ability to hear God's voice—through which He may reveal plans for the future—and share it to strengthen, comfort, encourage, and exhort other believers. Lastly, there are spiritual gifts that are motivational. These gifts can be carried out in a practical manner, such as leadership, encouragement, and administration.

Instructions: First, sit down with your family and have a discussion about what things seem to come naturally to each of you. Is one of you exceptionally good at (and passionate about) organization and administration? Is one of you a talented musician or singer who loves to worship God through music? Does one of you enjoy sitting in silence and listening for God's voice, eager to share His words with others?

Then, take some time to pray as a family and ask God to reveal His plan and design for each of you, including your spiritual gifts. Ask Him to show you—whether it's by placing a gentle impression in your hearts or by opening doors of opportunity—how He has uniquely made you and given you skills to encourage and edify the Church and those around you.

Model prayer: *Thank you, Lord, for the unique design You have for each one of us, the spiritual gifts You give us by Your Spirit to build Your Church. Help us to see and know our gifts, and to use them wisely for Your Kingdom. Amen.*

Day 8

Writing a Family Covenant

Scripture: *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him (Colossians 3:12-17 ESV).*

Location: In your family room or at the kitchen table

Materials needed: Copies of the scripture Colossians 3:12-17, pen and paper, large construction paper, other art supplies if desired, sample family covenant (see below).

Background: A family covenant is written by parents, and children if they are old enough, and then signed voluntarily by everyone. It should be posted somewhere in the home as a reminder and point of reference. The covenant appeals to the conscience (knowledge of right and wrong) and is a guiding document of how the family will live and relate to one another. The covenant appeals to the heart rather than following the letter of the law. *“For the letter kills, but the spirit gives life”* (2 Cor. 3:6 ESV).

Instructions: Read Colossians 3:12-17 aloud, which beautifully lays out family values. Discuss with your family the values they would like to see exhibited in your family. Begin with those in the Colossians passage. Then everyone can add to the conversation other values they feel are important. To help with this, you may want to read Matthew 22:34-40: *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind . . . You shall love your neighbor as yourself”* (Matt. 22:37,39 NASB); or Micah 6:8 (ESV): *“to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.”*

It may help to ask a couple questions: What values would you like to be known for as a family? What do you want your friends and neighbors to say about you? Write these phrases and character qualities down.

Here is a sample family covenant to inspire your thoughts, but feel free to create your own unique version:

Our family holds these values dear: kindness, patience, forgiving each other, laughing together, time together, helping others, and

praying for each other. All this we do because we love God and thank God for creating us and loving us so much, because we love one another and God's whole creation, and because we want to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

Ask each family member to share or write down their most important family values. If you have children too young to write, mom or dad or an older brother or sister can write down their thoughts for them.

On the large piece of construction paper, combine everyone's values into one document to create your family covenant. Talk about these traits and how your family can make them more a part of your family's lifestyle. Your family covenant can declare your family's intent to mark their lives by these traits. When you have finished writing your family covenant, everyone signs it. If you have time, decorate the covenant.

Have each person in the family choose one item to pray about. Go around the circle in your prayer time and ask God to help your family live in such a way that this statement is what others would say about your family.

Decide where you will display the family covenant in your home. You may choose to frame and hang it in a visible location. Some families like to review their covenant once a week, others once a month or several times a year, and then recommit to its values.

Model prayer: *God, we know You have put each one of us into this family for a purpose. We not only have individual destinies, but we have a destiny and calling as a family. When others look at us, we want them to say, "This is a family that knows God—whom we can*

WRITING A FAMILY COVENANT

trust, that reaches out to help others, that (you fill in the blank).” Help us to write a family covenant that will transform our lives and the way we relate to one another. Help us rebuild our trust in one another and bless our family time together. Empower us to live in such a way that people see there is something extraordinary about our family, and that our special-ness comes from You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 9

Cleansing Your Home

Scripture: *“Come out from them and be separate,” says the Lord. “Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you”* (2 Corinthians 6:17 NIV).

But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy” (1Peter 1:15-16 NIV).

Location: Anywhere

Materials needed: None

Background: After you’ve dedicated your home to the Lord, you may start to be more aware of those things in it that might be displeasing to Him. Are there any belongings there that you know would grieve His Holy Spirit, or that might create an open invitation to any evil forces? Think about the books and movies on your shelves, music in your stereo or on your iPods/phones, computers, etc. How about objects, pictures, and collectibles? Games and video games?

CLEANSING YOUR HOME

This can be a sensitive topic and one in which you will want to let the Holy Spirit guide you and your family members. Older children, and teenagers especially, should be encouraged to seek the Lord personally about their belongings and what is on their phones and computers.

Instructions: Go through your house individually or as a family, taking time to closely observe the things that fill it. Picture that the Lord is right there with you as you ask Him to show you, by His Holy Spirit prompting your heart, if there is anything there that would be dishonoring of Him. Also, ask Him to point out to you if there are any activities and conversations that are displeasing to Him. Talk about what things you may want to remove from your home and activities that the Lord would want you to discontinue.

Model prayer: *God, we ask You to show us if there is anything in our home that is displeasing to You, dishonors or misrepresents You, or opens the door to the evil one. We repent, Lord, for any way we allowed into our home any object, activity, or speech that is unholy in Your eyes. We remove it, and we close the door to the evil one and any influence he may have had here because of it. This home is dedicated to You, Lord. We receive You here and thank You for Your presence, love, and protection. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Day 10

Celebrating Communion as a Family

Scripture: . . . *the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me”* (1 Corinthians 11:23-25 NKJV).

Location: Around the dinner table

Materials needed: Wine/juice and bread or crackers

Background: When we gather to pray as a family, we enter into the very presence of God. Even though God is a great and holy King, we can talk to Him freely as a friend and a Father. This is all because of Jesus, who died and rose again “*to make us right with God*” (Rom. 4:25 NLT).

CELEBRATING COMMUNION AS A FAMILY

Communion is a time of remembrance and thanksgiving for all Jesus did for us on the cross. The bread represents how Christ's body was broken so we could be whole. When we eat the bread, we declare Jesus' life that now lives within us. The drink represents the blood that was shed for the forgiveness of our sins. When we drink, we declare that we are forgiven and washed clean. We are now pure before God and can go boldly into His presence! We did not deserve this love, but in communion we can honor God through our remembrance and thanksgiving.

Instructions: Gather as a family around the dinner table with wine or juice and bread nearby. Begin with a time of confession and asking God for forgiveness. This can be done individually or spoken together as a family: *“Merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.”*

Then, individually or as a family, ask God for His forgiveness: *“Dear God, have mercy on us and forgive us, that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways, for Your glory. Amen.”*

Before you take communion, ask someone to read 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 over the bread and wine/juice. Then, as you eat the bread, repeat, *“This is Christ's body broken for you”* and as you drink the wine/juice, *“This is Christ's blood shed for you.”*

Model prayer: *Lord Jesus, it is a privilege for our family to come into Your presence and take communion in remembrance of Your sacrifice.*

31-DAY FAMILY PRAYER GUIDE

Thank You for dying for us on the cross and paying the price for our sins so that we may be forgiven and receive Your life. Help us to always remember Your love and to walk in thanksgiving. Amen.

Day 11

What Is Your Story?

Scripture: *We will not hide these truths from our children; we will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the Lord, about his power and his mighty wonders . . . so the next generation might know them—even the children not yet born—and they in turn will teach their own children. So each generation should set its hope anew on God, not forgetting his glorious miracles and obeying his commands* (Psalm 78:4-7 NLT, condensed).

Location: Anywhere

Materials needed: Journal or notebook and pen, or computer

Background: Do you have God-stories that you have never told your children? Consider sharing with your kids the ways that God has been good to you, how He showed up when you needed a miracle, how He saved you, provided for you, protected you.

At the dinner table or during family prayer, you can share stories of the miracles and answers to prayer that God did in the past. When we do this, it keeps our focus on the goodness and

greatness of God. It creates an atmosphere of faith, encouragement, hope, and expectation. It inspires us to pray, to listen to His voice, and to expect that every day He is going to do something amazing.

This is exactly God's plan for passing on the torch of faith from one generation to the next. Oftentimes, these kinds of conversations don't simply "happen." In most busy families, if we wait for the subject to just come up, it might never!

Instructions: Mom or Dad tells a story of a miracle or answer to prayer he or she has experienced. Let the kids ask questions and make comments. Then ask the kids to share the biggest miracle or answer to prayer they've ever experienced. When even young children hear these stories, it plants seeds of faith and expectation that will bear fruit in years to come.

Model prayer: *Lord, thank You that You are a prayer-answering God and that You still do miracles today. Our hearts are stirred with faith when we remember all the great and mighty things You have done for us in the past. We ask You now to give us many more amazing stories to tell. And also God, we ask You to give our children many awesome God-stories that they can pass on to their children and their children's children. Amen.*

Day 12

Praying Blessings

Scripture: *One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could lay his hands on them and pray for them . . . Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me. Don’t stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children.” And he placed his hands on their heads and blessed them (Matthew 19:13-15 NLT).*

Location: Anywhere in your house

Materials needed: None

Background: The idea of speaking or praying blessings is seen throughout Scripture. In the Old Testament, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob prayed blessings over their children. In the New Testament, the disciples pronounced blessings over the churches, and Jesus even commanded us to bless our enemies (see Luke 6:28).

So what does it mean to bless someone? A blessing is a prayer or spoken words of affirmation, encouragement, favor, and hope for the future. While you might do this when your child or spouse is not in your presence, it’s especially meaningful when you can

look that one in the eyes, put your arm around them, or lay your hand on their head or shoulder.

A blessing is not linked to a child's achievement. Don't confuse the word "bless" with the word "praise," because those who need blessing the most are often the ones who deserve it the least.

Since God is the source of all blessing, when we bless someone, we come into alignment with His character; we come into partnership with God and His power, ". . . we become a channel through which God's power can flow."²

Instructions: One parent goes first, praying the model prayer below or a blessing from the heart, over another family member. As each person receives the blessing, the rest of the family may gather around and lay hands on them as a sign of agreement.

Model prayer: *Heavenly Father, we bless _____ today with the knowledge that he/she is deeply loved by You and by us. We bless him/her with favor, strength, health, wisdom, courage, and direction. We know that You have a special plan and destiny for _____. Thank You that You empower him/her to succeed in all his/her assignments and in his/her future callings. In the powerful name of Jesus Christ, Amen.*

2. Riches, Mike, *Living Set Free Course Manual*, The Sycamore Commission, Tacoma, Washington: 2007.

Day 13

Thanksgiving

Scriptures: *Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart* (Colossians 4:2 NLT).

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God (Philippians 4:6 NIV).

Location: Anywhere in your home

Materials needed: Paper and pencil/pen, crayons/paint (optional), or computer

Background: We are called to give thanks to God, thanking Him for all He has done for us and inviting Him to be a daily part of our lives. We are to give thanks in all that we do—even during times of trouble or suffering! Let's remember to take time every day to thank God for who He is and how He has provided for us. We also can help our kids understand the importance of thanksgiving and we can encourage them to think of things God has done for them and to give Him thanks.

Praising and thanking God attracts His presence into our lives and homes. The Psalmist said, “*But you are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel*” (Psalm 22:3 NKJV). That’s like one of us today saying, “Hey God, You love to hang out with people who are thankful to You!”

Related Prayer Activity (optional): Families with young children may want to add some color to their prayers. Have each person draw or color things that they are thankful for. This is a great way to engage children that can’t write—older children and adults may enjoy this too.

Instructions: Spend some time with your family creating a list of the things for which you are thankful. Sit together in a circle (or around a table) and take turns sharing the things that each of you is grateful for, and write them down (possibly in your prayer journal, if you’ve started one). Then, take some time to pray as a family and thank God for the things on the list.

Model prayer: *Dear Lord, we praise You for who You are. Thank You for being a God who is loving, gracious, and merciful. Thank You for Your faithfulness to us. Thank You for providing us with food, a warm place to sleep, and a roof over our heads. Your Word says that You will provide for all of our needs, and we are so grateful for that promise. We also thank You for. . . . (pray through your family’s list). Amen.*

Day 14

Laying On Hands in Prayer

Scripture: *At sunset, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them* (Luke 4:40 NIV).

Location: Anywhere

Materials Needed: None

Background: Laying hands on someone when we pray for them is something that Jesus modeled for us. So did the apostles and the early church. We might lay hands on someone when we are praying for his/her physical, emotional, or spiritual needs. This can include prayer for healing (as in Matt. 8:3), commissioning for ministry (as in Acts 13:2-3), imparting a fresh work of the Holy Spirit (as in Acts 8:17), or releasing a spiritual gift (as in 2 Tim. 1:6). Laying hands on someone is more than merely symbolic—it is a wonderful opportunity to impart (pass on) the power of the Holy Spirit, and to offer the love and personal touch of Jesus to the person for whom we're praying.

Instructions: It's always a good idea to ask permission before laying hands on someone, especially if he or she is not a member of your own family. A light touch on the head, shoulder, or arm is adequate. Who in your family circle needs fresh empowerment from the Lord right now—whether for a physical healing, an emotional need, or extra boost of strength or courage from the Holy Spirit? Gather around that person in a show of love and concern. Gently laying your hand on his or her forehead or shoulder, take turns praying for God to meet the need, whatever it is.

Model prayer: *God, we lift up _____ to you, believing what You say in Your Word, that something powerful happens when we lay hands on others and impart Your life and power to them. In Jesus' name, we pray for (identify person and need) and ask You to (heal, comfort, encourage, strengthen, empower, etc.) him/her by Your Holy Spirit. We pray You meet every need and overcome every obstacle that stands in his/her way, and that Your will be perfectly done in his/her life. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Day 15

Healing Prayers

Scripture: *Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore 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 5:14-16 NIV).*

Location: Anywhere

Materials needed: None

Background: When Jesus walked the earth, He traveled from place to place healing the sick and forgiving sinners. In those days, they did not have doctors, medicine, and hospitals like we do now. People came to Jesus needing physical healing and the forgiveness of sins because they had no other choice; Jesus was the only option for both.

We know Jesus is our only option for the forgiveness of our sins. Yet we usually turn to doctors and medicine when we need physical healing. However, the Bible promises God is the one *who forgives all our sins, and who heals all our diseases* (see Psalm 103:2-3). We can go to God for every disease, cold, fever, and injury, and He promises to heal. This does not mean we shouldn't use doctors, because God can heal through doctors (and does all the time!). "The point is to pray first and see a doctor whenever necessary."³

Instructions: If someone in your family is sick, injured, or has an ongoing ailment, invite the family to gather around and lay hands on him or her. As you are praying for healing, be as specific as possible about what You want the Lord to do, praying with confidence and thanksgiving in the name of Jesus Christ.

Model prayer: *Lord, we pray healing and wholeness over _____ right now. We decree, in Jesus' name, that sickness and pain will have no place in his/her body. We ask You to raise up a barrier against any diseases trying to come into his/her body. Wherever there is weakness, injury, or malfunction in his/her body, we pray that You would touch him/her with Your healing power and restore him/her to total health. We pray this in the power of Jesus Christ. Amen.*⁴

3. Omartian, Stormie. *The Power of a Praying Parent*, Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, Oregon: 1995.

4. *Ibid*, Chapter 12.

Day 16

Praying for Your Neighborhood

Scripture: *Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God (2 Corinthians 4:4 NLT).*

Location: Your home and/or around your neighborhood

Materials needed: Paper and pencil/pen, or computer

Background: Imagine a community where unbelievers have not only the opportunity, but the desire to be saved—an environment where unsaved people become aware of God's existence, power, and love, and want to know Him. This is a community where Christians talk to God about their neighbors before talking to their neighbors about God. They ask the Holy Spirit to cultivate a readiness to receive the Gospel, covering and supporting every household with His power and love through prayer. We can call this “prayer evangelism.”

Instructions: Draw a sketch of your neighborhood (or print one from the Internet). Mark house numbers and the names of any neighbors you know. Pray for each household, that their eyes would be opened to the existence and power of God.

To take it a step further, consider going out for “prayer walks” in your neighborhood. As you pass each house, ask the Holy Spirit to impress on your heart any needs in that household for which you can be praying. You may see clues. Are there children in the home? Is it well cared for or neglected? Are the people at home often or rarely? Observe with your physical sight as well as with spiritual insight. Use what you see and receive to fuel your family’s prayers for your neighbors to know Jesus, and to experience God’s love, presence, and provision in their lives.

Model prayer: *Dear Lord, we lift up our neighbors to You. Let them feel Your love and presence. If they don’t know You, give them faith to see You and reach out to You. We pray for their protection from the evil one, and ask You to remove the spiritual blindness that keeps them from seeing You. Give our family opportunities to show them Your love and tell them the Good News about Jesus. We pray they respond with faith to become a part of Your family and Your Kingdom! Amen.*

Day 17

Praying for Spiritual Awakening in America

Scripture: *If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land* (2 Chronicles 7:14 NIV).

Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you (Psalm 85:6 NIV)?

Materials: Prayer journal

Location: Anywhere

Background: As we pray for our beloved nation, let's never forget that America was birthed through prayer, with great struggle and against all odds . . . When King George III received the colonies' *Declaration of Independence*, he called it a "Delusion." He fully intended to crush the fledgling rebellion, execute their leaders, and quickly return the colonists to British rule.

When war broke out, the Americans had no national government, no professional army, no navy, no financial system, and no international allies. Thirteen colonies with a lightly armed, untrained militia were facing the greatest military power of their day. The war that followed was vicious. Supplies were short. George Washington's army was plagued with disease and malnutrition. Wounded men froze to death in the harsh winters. Only one in three still had shoes after the long marches and their torn feet left bloody footprints in the snow. They endured five years of almost constant defeats, and yet they fought on . . .

Against this backdrop, George Washington commissioned a special flag to fly over American naval vessels and battlefields as a symbol of hope: an evergreen tree under the words, *An Appeal to Heaven*.

If America was to emerge as a free nation, Washington knew the colonies needed God's intervention—their only hope was to call on God. Thus, America was born under the first great Appeal to Heaven prayer movement! Nearly 250 years later, our nation is once again at a point of crisis.

What must God's people do? Imagine what might happen if families all across this nation began to pray, repent of their sins, and cry out that our nation would see their desperate need for God. We might once again see another Great Awakening in our land.

Instructions: When you gather as a family, begin by asking the Lord for forgiveness for any ways you and/or your family has been lukewarm in your love for Him. Ask forgiveness for the sins of your neighborhood, city, state, and nation. To help get a handle on this big prayer request, imagine your prayers as a dartboard.

PRAYING FOR SPIRITUAL AWAKENING IN AMERICA

Begin by praying for God to bring spiritual renewal to your family. Then broaden your prayer circle to include awakening for your neighbors, your entire neighborhood, your community, etc. End by praying for spiritual awakening in America, or in your nation if you live outside America.

Model prayer: *Lord, hear our prayer for our country. Bring a deep conviction of sin and help the people of this land see how far we have fallen from You. We pray that each person and family in our own community and state would come to know You and Your love. Ignite an awakening and let it spread like a fire throughout this nation, from the poorest family to the highest government leader. We know that You are a big God and You can lead nations back into Your will. In the power of Your Holy Spirit, we cry out for spiritual awakening in America. In the name of the Lord Almighty, for whom nothing is impossible! Amen.*

Day 18

Decision Making

Scripture: *If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you* (James 1:5 NIV).

Materials: Prayer journal

Location: Anywhere

Background: We make decisions all day long, all life long. Some are easy to make, like choosing between toast or cereal. Some may seem overwhelming, like choosing which college or university to go to or if you should take that new job offer and move to another city. But no matter the decision, God is there every step of the way to guide you. His plan is never for worry or anxiety, but rather for peace and trust.

As you pray for wisdom in a decision, remember that God's answer can come in a variety of ways. It might come through God's Word, a thought, a parent's instruction, a pastor's sermon, a worship song, or a friend. A good indicator of the right decision is

DECISION MAKING

peace. If you feel any anxiety or confusion, keep praying. Finally, *“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and He will make your paths straight”* (Prov. 3:5-6 NIV).

Instructions: Ask each member of the family to share anything for which they need God’s help in making a decision. Write the requests down in your family prayer journal. Then using the prayer below or one of your own, pray together for each family member to hear God and receive the direction they need to make the best decision. Be sure to record the answers when they come. This can serve as a reminder of God’s faithfulness to guide us.

Model prayer (pray for each person/request individually): *Dear Lord, thank You for Your promise that if any of us lack wisdom, we just need to ask and You will give generously. And that’s just what _____ needs right now. Help _____ to listen for Your voice and faithfully look for Your answer. Help him/her to trust in You and be free from worry and anxiety. Flood _____’s heart with peace as he/she steps through the door that You have opened, so he/she can clearly know he/she is walking in Your perfect will. Amen.*

Day 19

Praying for God's Protection

Scripture: *He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall remain stable and fixed under the shadow of the almighty [Whose power no foe can withstand]. I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my fortress, my God, on Him I lean and rely, and in Him I (confidently) trust! (Psalm 91:1-2 AMP)*

Location: Anywhere

Materials needed: None

Background: Remember the story of the disciples in the boat during a big storm? God protected them from harm and brought His divine peace onto the vessel, calming not only the wind and the waves, but also the disciples' fear and disbelief.

Psalm 91 is a classic portion of Scripture devoted to praying for God's protection. This Psalm is especially close to the heart of those who serve in the military, police officers, and fire fighters as well. In it, the Psalmist encourages us, *"Surely he will save you . . . he will cover you with His feathers, and under his wings you will*

PRAYING FOR GOD'S PROTECTION

find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield . . . you will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday” (Ps. 91:3-6 NIV).

There is nothing that can separate us from the love of God (see Rom. 8:28). We are safer in His care than we could ever be in the strongest fortress or with the most powerful bodyguard in the world! When we see this through the eyes of faith, we can live securely, confidently, and without fear.

Instructions: Spend some time in discussion with your family talking about the different ways God has protected each of you (or your family as a whole). Has He healed one of you from an illness or injury? Has He removed an opportunity (to your dismay), only to prove that He was actually protecting you from a harmful circumstance? Don't forget the ways He has protected You spiritually, too.

Model prayer: *Dear God, thank you for being our protector. You are our rock, our shield, our fortress, and our strength. Through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior, You have removed us from the grip of the evil one and brought us into Your holy protection and embrace. Thank you that we can dwell safely under the wings of the Almighty—whose power no enemy can withstand. Amen.*

Day 20

Asking for Forgiveness

Scripture: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness* (1 John 1:9 NIV).

Location: Anywhere

Materials needed: None

Background: Everyone falls out with a family member from time to time. However, sometimes disagreements turn into long-term grudges with feelings of animosity, which can threaten to destroy the peace and well-being of our family and even break bonds of love and commitment.

No matter the reason the problem began, it's important that family members forgive one another, sooner rather than later. When we forgive, we open the way to be forgiven. We preserve the relationships we care about the most.

Early in our marriage, my husband, Hal, and I discovered a model for asking and receiving forgiveness. After a time of

conflict, Hal would express that he was sorry for his hurtful words and ask my forgiveness. Then with my permission, he would lay his hand on my heart and pray: “Lord, I’m so sorry I’ve hurt my wife with my thoughtlessness (or angry words); now I ask You to heal her heart from the pain that I’ve brought to her and restore our love and unity.”

This often worked the other way, when I was the one asking forgiveness. Either way, the time always ended with one of us putting our hand over the other one’s heart and praying that God would heal the hurt and bring our family close together again.

Instructions: Are there any unresolved issues between you and another family member? Consider your words, thoughts, and actions (or lack of action). If this is the case, you may want to use the model Hal and I found so effective.

Model prayer: (With permission) Place your hand on the person’s heart, back, or shoulder and pray this prayer or one of your own: *Father, I confess that I have hurt _____ with my words and actions (be as specific as possible). I’m truly sorry. Thank You that _____ has forgiven me. I ask that You would forgive me too. I now ask that You would heal the hurt that I’ve brought to _____. Please restore our love and unity and bring us close together again. I thank You and praise You for Your mercy, forgiveness, and cleansing, which heals, restores, and makes all things new. Amen.*

Day 21

Praying for Friends to Know Jesus

Scripture: *So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better* (Colossians 1:9-10 NLT).

Location: Anywhere

Materials needed: Paper and pencil/pen, or computer. Photos of the people to pray for, some of which can be printed from social media sites on the computer. (Optional)

Background: When he was growing up, my friend Kim's young son always wanted to be an FBI agent. He was intrigued with the posters he would see in the post office and other places around town of "most wanted" criminals. He wanted to catch criminals and bring them to justice, to crack codes and follow hidden clues.

Have you ever wondered what God’s “most wanted posters” might look like? God’s posters have billions of pictures because He “wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4 NASB). People are more likely to come to Christ when someone has been praying for them. The prayers of God’s people prepare the way for Him to work in the lives of others. Your family can be part of God bringing your friends and loved ones to a saving knowledge of Himself!

Instructions: As a family, ask the Lord to point out to you the people in your lives for whom He would want you to pray, that they would come to know Him. To help you remember, make a list of “Our Family’s 10 Most Wanted” (friends to know Jesus, that is!) on a special page in your prayer journal.

Model prayer: *Lord, we lift up _____ to You, and ask You to please open their heart and thinking to You. Show them that You are real and alive, and that You love and care about them. Speak to them every place they go—through their friends, Your creation, circumstances, and in a still, small voice in their own hearts. When they face trouble, help them run TO You and not away from You. Help them to know that You are their friend, their guide, their protector, their provider, and most importantly, their Savior. Give them the faith to believe in You and make You Lord of their lives. And Lord, help me to be the answer to my own prayers by being ready and willing to share Your love and Your message of salvation with these or anyone You bring across my pathway. Amen.*

Day 22

Praying for Someone Who Is Hurting

Scripture: *I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people* (1 Timothy 2:1 NIV).

Location: Anywhere

Materials needed: Prayer journal

Background: A few years ago, the daughter of our friends, who were missionaries in India, got into a bad accident. Samantha, who was eight at the time, had been playing when she fell down a flight of stairs and hit her head. As she was being rushed to the hospital, an amazing thing happened. All the way on the other side of the world, another girl was praying. Across the ocean she had felt a strong urge to pray, and so she gathered her family and began to pray for Sam. There was no way they could have known about the accident, but God had led her and her family to pray at just the right time. Miraculously, Sam recovered quickly and was back home with no injuries in just a few days.

PRAYING FOR SOMEONE WHO IS HURTING

One of the worst feelings in the world is feeling unable to help someone we love. Sometimes it feels like there is nothing we can do. It might be that they are far away or their home situation is out of our control. But we can do something; in fact, we have one of the most powerful weapons! Prayer! God calls us to intercede for all people. Intercession means to lift up the needs of others to God. God kept Sam safe during her accident because someone prayed and asked God to intervene. Prayer can, and does, change lives! When you see friends hurting, know that you can ask the big God who moves mountains and melts hearts to help on their behalf.

Instructions: Have each member of the family think of a hurting friend they would like to pray for. Write these names in your prayer journal. If you don't think of anyone at first, stop and take a moment to ask the Lord to bring to mind someone who is hurting and needs your prayers.

Model prayer: *Dear Lord, today we lift up _____ in prayer. We know that he/she is hurting (lift up the specific situation) and You are the ultimate answer to all his/her problems. We pray that You would keep him/her safe and comfort his/her heart. Help him/her to feel Your love right now and in the days to come. We know that You care for the hurting and heal the brokenhearted. Thank You that at this very moment You are touching _____ in a real and tangible way and bringing him/her the help, healing, and deliverance he/she needs. Amen.*

Day 23

Praying for Schools

Scripture: *Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matthew 19:14 NIV).*

Location: At home or at school

Materials needed: None

Background: Schools are areas of high influence affecting students, teachers, and communities. The hallways of a school can be filled with laughter and friendship, the fields full of cheering parents, and the auditorium full of community participation. However, schools can also be places of stress, bullying, pressure, and loneliness. A positive school environment can change someone’s life. For many, the encouragement they receive at school is their only support. Praying over a school not only changes the atmosphere, but it changes, and even saves, lives. A healthy school impacts an entire community.

Optional Prayer Activity: *Organized Prayer Walk:* As a family, gather at your local school. You may want to invite other parents, families, and teachers to join you. If it's during school hours, it's a good idea to let the school office know you want to walk around the perimeter of the school.

Informal Prayer Walk: If you are a student, teacher, volunteer, or otherwise have permission to enter the school building, pray silently as you walk down the hallways and enter classrooms. Pray that the Lord's presence, protection, and favor would flood the campus. Additionally, families can pray as they arrive at the school each morning, or parents as they sit waiting to pick up their children. Simply saturate the school with prayer!

Instructions: Begin by praying for students, teachers, and staff members, praying by name for those you know. Finish by praying over the building and all the families and community members the school represents. Pray to restrain evil that would try to infiltrate the school, such as drugs, suicide, abuse, and bullying. Invite the tangible presence and power of God to fill every classroom and every life.

Model prayer: *God, we dedicate this school to You, for Your purposes, every classroom and hallway, and all the people and activities in it. We invite Your holy presence and power into every corner and every life here. We lift up every student, teacher, and staff member and ask You to keep them safe. May every family and community member represented by this school come to know, love, and honor You. Amen.*

Day 24

Praying for Leaders in Community and Government

Scripture: *I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness* (1 Timothy 2:1-2 NIV).

Read 2 Chronicles 33:1-20 (The story of King Manasseh)

Location: At home or a government building

Materials needed: None

Background: Throughout Scripture we are called to respect, honor, and pray for those in authority. The leaders of our community and government have enormous responsibility and influence placed on their shoulders; they have the power to steer the future of our nation. Even the most godly of leaders need to be covered in prayer for God's wisdom.

But what about the persons whose character and political actions we don't agree with? Be encouraged by the story of Manasseh. Manasseh was an awful king who led the people of Israel away from God. He built temples to other gods, sacrificed children, and practiced witchcraft. "He did much evil in the eyes of the LORD, arousing His anger" (see 2 Chron. 33:6). However, when Manasseh cried out to God and humbled himself, God listened. It was a 180-degree turnaround! Manasseh tore down all that was evil in the land and rebuilt the temple. Through the change in his heart, Manasseh restored the nation to God. Pray earnestly for a similar transformation in the hearts of those in authority who are working against God. Also pray God would accomplish His purpose through them regardless of their willingness to be used by Him.

Instructions: As you gather at home or on-site at a government building, begin by praying for any government officials you know. Then pray for your local government officials and the buildings where they work. End by praying for leaders on a national level.

Model prayer: *Lord, we lift up our local, state, and national government officials to You. Give them wisdom and discernment to govern diligently and righteously. May they not hinder Your work, but advance Your will and Your kingdom in our communities and nation. We pray also for our leaders, that they may come to know You personally and intimately. May they honor You in all their ways, for "when the godly are in authority, the people rejoice" (Proverbs 29:2 NLT). Amen.*

Day 25

Praying for Military Personnel

Scripture: *God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble* (Psalm 46:1 NIV).

Location: Anywhere

Materials needed: None

Background: While God is the God of peace, we live in a fallen world full of evil and war. As we wait for the day of peace to come, we need to give thanks for the brave men and women who serve their country. Let us not forget that our safety is a result of their sacrifice and bravery. Soldiers, both at home and overseas, sacrifice their freedom, safety, and time so that we can live in peace and safety.

As we seek to give the military honor and respect, we also need to lift up every person in the armed forces in prayer. Perhaps more than anyone else, military personnel need God's wisdom and discernment as they navigate their way through the confusing boundaries of war. Soldiers in every branch of the military need

PRAYING FOR MILITARY PERSONNEL

God's physical, emotional, and spiritual protection. We can pray that God not only helps them through the physical hardships, but also through the emotional processing of all they experience. Don't forget those who have already served and are now adjusting to life as civilians.

Instructions: Begin by praying for any soldiers or veterans you know personally. Then pray over each branch of the military: Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard. Finish by praying their efforts will further the cause of peace throughout the world.

Model prayer: *Almighty God, we pray for the men and women in the armed forces and our military leaders. May they know You as their refuge and strength. We pray over all those currently deployed; please give them strength, wisdom, and comfort. Take away fear from their hearts and protect them from hatred of others. Be with their families and loved ones here at home. We pray over every military personnel; help them to further the cause of peace through their actions. We pray for peace, justice, truth, and mercy to rule in America and throughout the world. Amen.*

Day 26

Scriptural Prayers for Success and Favor

Scripture: *Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man* (Nehemiah 1:11 NIV).

He holds success in store for the upright (Proverbs 2:7 NIV).

Location: Anywhere

Materials needed: None

Background: We can learn to pray for God's favor through following the example of Nehemiah. The Israelites had just returned to Israel after their long exile in Babylon. However, when they returned they found the wall of Jerusalem destroyed and in ruins. When Nehemiah heard that the city of God was unprotected, his heart broke and he wanted to help rebuild the wall. Nehemiah still lived in Persia; in fact, he was cupbearer to the King. In order

SCRIPTURAL PRAYERS FOR SUCCESS AND FAVOR

to help rebuild the wall, he had to approach the king and ask for time off. He was terrified, but he asked the Lord for favor.

Do you know what happened? He not only got time off, but he received protection and supplies to repair the wall, build the gates, and make a home! Nehemiah was not afraid to ask God for great success and favor, and God gave generously!

Instructions: James declares God as one who gives generously (see James 1:5). Pray God's favor and success over each family member. You may want to pray favor for specific circumstances or simply favor in general. End by thanking God for listening and granting favor.

Model prayer: *Lord, let Your ear be attentive to our prayer as we delight in worshiping Your name. Today we pray Your favor over _____. Give him/her success in all he/she does. May his/her life be one led by the Holy Spirit, walking in the paths You have set up for his/her success. May he/she be known as one who delights in You and may all that his/her hands touch prosper. We ask You to pour Your blessing of favor over him/her. Amen.*

Day 27

Praying for Your Family's Finances

Scripture: *“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it”* (Malachi 3:10 NIV).

And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19 NIV).

Location: Anywhere

Materials Needed: A copy of your family budget

Background: Money, money, money. Is there anything else that can bring us as much stress, discontentment, or worry? It's an all-encompassing issue, especially if you have children in your home, as finances tend to affect almost every area of your life. But have you ever made money a part of your spiritual life? Know this: no

matter what your financial situation is, God cares and He wants to be a part of it.

Instructions: Point out to your children how different amounts of money (income) are allotted to different items (expenses) on your family budget. One way God provides for us is through our income, to buy the things we need. One way we give back to God is through tithing, which is giving a portion (usually ten percent) of our income back to him. Another is through caring for the poor. Evaluate your budget: what are ways you can see God's provision? How well does your budget reflect giving? Dedicate your finances to the Lord. Ask Him to help you spend, save, and give wisely. Then lay before Him your specific daily needs.

Model Prayer: *Heavenly Father, thank You for providing for us—a place to live, clothes, and food to eat. We acknowledge that everything we have comes from You. We ask that You would guide us in how we spend our money. Forgive us for any ways we've been frivolous with our money. (If you've gotten into debt through unexpected expenses or even carelessness, ask His forgiveness and to help you move this mountain and be debt free.) But right now we have a big need _____ (share specifically what it is) and we ask You, Lord, to provide for us. Thank You for Your promise that You will meet all of our needs according Your riches in glory. Amen.*

Day 28

Praying about Life's Hurts and Disappointments

Scripture: *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God (2 Corinthians 1:3-4 NIV).*

So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded (Hebrews 10:35 NIV).

Location: Anywhere

Materials needed: None

Background: We all experience disappointment: loss of friends or jobs, poor test scores or job evaluations, the death of loved ones, change of plans, or declining health. Disappointment can lead to times of confusion and seasons of hurt. However, God's Word promises us that He will bring good even out of loss and pain. *"We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love*

him” (Rom. 8:28 NIV). When we experience hurt, confusion, and loss, we can let it bring us closer to the One who truly satisfies and comforts our hearts.

Instructions: As a family, discuss any current hurts or disappointments you may be experiencing. This may be a time of honesty and vulnerability. If any family member needs special prayers for comfort, confidence, or encouragement, take some time to pray specifically for those things. When someone is hurting, it is usually not the best time to try to correct or counsel. Wrap your arms around that one and ask the God of all comfort to come and wipe away the tears.

Model prayer: *Father, we stand together as a family and ask You to come and minister Your love to _____. We know how difficult pain, loss, and disappointment can be. This world is broken and we feel this brokenness on a deep personal level. We ask You to fill _____’s heart with contentment and comfort so he/she can experience You as his/her all-satisfying Father. Thank You that You have come to heal the brokenhearted and to make straight every crooked place. We know You have a good plan for _____ and ask You to encourage him/her that there will be a brighter tomorrow. We declare our trust is in You, Lord. Thank You for Your promise that after midnight, comes morning. “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning” (Ps. 30:5 NKJV). Amen.*

Day 29

Praying for the Poor and Homeless

Scripture: *Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God* (Proverbs 14:31 NIV).

Location: Anywhere

Materials needed: None

Background: Some of us may live in areas where we don't normally see poor and homeless people. For others, homelessness and poverty might be part of everyday life. Regardless of our circumstances, God calls us to help the poor and homeless.

One of the most difficult things about helping the poor and needy is knowing the best way to serve them. People who live in cities will often ask tourists not to give money to homeless people. While this may seem crazy, there is wisdom behind it. Instead of giving money, which can be used to further negative habits, some residents will often buy meals for the homeless or help them call or get to a homeless shelter. We may not always know *how* or even

whom to serve, but we know that prayer is a powerful means of serving those in need.

Instructions: Begin by asking God to specifically bring to mind people you can serve. Are there any people you pass in your car or any organizations that come to mind? If not, pray for the poor and homeless in your area. Ask God to watch over them and impress upon people, maybe even your own family, to help them.

Model prayer: *God of compassion, You love the poor and the homeless so much that You came to earth as a poor child and lived as a homeless man. We pray for all the poor and homeless in our community; open our eyes to ways we can serve. We ask You to draw near to the needy and comfort them, and bless them with work, shelter, food, and friendship. Most of all, Lord, we pray that they would come to know You as Lord and Savior, to see You as the source of everything, and that they would receive Your love, friendship, and help in their lives. Amen.*

Day 30

Changing the Spiritual Climate in Your Home

Scripture: *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms* (Ephesians 6:12 NIV).

Location: A central location in your house

Materials needed: None

Background: As people who love God, we want our homes to reflect His glory and be places that are filled with His presence. In Day 9, we talked about “Cleansing Your Home” of the things (either spiritual or natural) that do not honor Him. Now you’ll want to fill it with the things that attract His presence, things like worship, praise, unity, love, compassion, and forgiveness. This is the environment in which the Spirit of God loves to dwell.

Instructions: Spend time with your family talking about how you can make your home more inviting to the Lord. Ask, “What are some things that attract God’s presence?” Even young children can participate in this conversation.

Then, together as a family, spend time in prayer. Ask God what you can do to fill your home with more of His presence, creating a positive, uplifting spiritual atmosphere. Make a list of ways your family can honor God and each other more intentionally. Talk about any outside influences affecting the spiritual climate in your home. Ask the Lord to help you make changes as a family. Remember that God loves your family. He wants to be invited in so that you can experience more of His abundant life and joy.

Model Prayer: *Dear Lord, we want this home and our lives to glorify You. We desire that this place be filled with Your tangible peace, love, and joy that can only be brought by Your power and presence. We commit to be guardians over Your presence in this home. Remind us to honor You and one another with our words and actions. We ask that You would prompt our hearts about anything that may be inhibiting Your Spirit from moving freely within this place. Impress upon our spirits any ways we can change the atmosphere of this home to be more inviting to You. Come now and fill this place with Your glorious transforming presence. Amen.*

Day 31

Your Family's Future and Calling

Scripture: *For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep . . . (Acts 13:36 ESV).*

Location: Anywhere

Materials needed: Pen and paper

Background: We all have a general calling to glorify God and be transformed into His likeness. The Lord has already shown us that we are called to “*act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God*” (see Mic. 6:8). In addition, each of us, and each family, also has a specific calling and at times specific assignments to fulfill.

We are God's handiwork and He has prepared in advance good works for us to do (see Eph. 2:10). You are not in your family, your house, or your neighborhood by accident; God has plans to use you! God joined your family together for a special purpose; for example, no other family can serve, encourage, meet needs, teach, or show hospitality the same way you do! Asking God to

YOUR FAMILY'S FUTURE AND CALLING

reveal your family's calling may open up new doors of opportunity and new people to serve.

Instructions: As a family, discuss things you sense God may be calling you to do:

- Ask why God may have placed you and your family in the particular house, neighborhood, school, workplace, city, and nation that He has. What people or needs around you might He be calling you to meet?
- What situations in society break your heart (in your school, government, neighborhood, or nation)?
- Ask God to show your family your specific calling and future direction. Take some time to listen as a family. If any special words or ideas come to mind as you're praying, write them down and share them with each other.

Model prayer: *Lord, we thank You for our family; we are unique and created for a special purpose. Though we may not fully understand what that is right now, we ask that You would prepare us for the future You have planned. We also pray for every family member individually, that he/she would know what You are calling him/her to do. Both as individuals and as a family, use us to bring Christ into the lives and situations around us. Amen.*

About the Author

CHERYL SACKS is a best-selling author, national conference speaker, prayer mobilizer, and church prayer consultant. Her most recent book, *Fire on the Family Altar*, was released in 2023, and her “Prayer-Saturated” book series—including *The Prayer-Saturated Church*, *Prayer-Saturated Kids*, and *The Prayer-Saturated Family*—has blessed and mentored tens of thousands of individuals and families to go deeper into prayer. She has written multiple prayer guides, including the annually updated *Reclaim a Generation: 21 Days of Prayer for Schools*, available at prayershop.org.

Cheryl is a former high school teacher and school administrator. She and her husband, Hal, are founders and leaders of BridgeBuilders International Leadership Network, a transformational prayer ministry located on the Arizona Christian University campus in the Phoenix, Arizona, area.

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