

Kingdom Advancing Prayer: A Guide to Intercessory Prayer for Kingdom Advance

Intercessory prayer is a crucial aspect of making disciples and advancing the reign of King Jesus through his church. This Guide focuses on biblical teaching about intercession as well as actual prayers prayed in the Bible. It also provides questions for personal reflection and exercises to draw intercessors into the practice of praying biblically and faithfully. Jesus maintained intimacy with the Father, was filled with the Spirit, did the works the Father sent him to do, and no matter what he faced, he made time for prayer (Mk 1:35; Jn 17). How about you? If you long for kingdom breakthrough and the empowering work of the Spirit, you will be encouraged to prevail in prayer more faithfully through this brief Guide.

In his chapter on Prayer and Leadership, from the book *Spiritual Leadership*, Oswald Sanders quotes C.J. Vaughn on page 85, who said, "If I wished to humble anyone, I should question him about his prayers. I know nothing to compare with this topic for its sorrowful self-confessions." Sanders then writes, "Prayer is indeed the Christian's vital breath and native air. But, strange paradox, most of us find it hard to pray. We do not naturally delight in drawing near to God. We sometimes pay lip service to the delight and power of prayer. We call it indispensable, and we know the Scriptures call for it. Yet we often fail to pray."

One of the disciples of Jesus must have been feeling deficient in prayer because he asked Jesus to teach them to pray. We can also learn from this teaching by Jesus about prayer. After reading Luke 11:1-13, answer the questions that follow.

Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples."² And he said to them, "When you pray, say:

"Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

³Give us each day our daily bread

⁴and forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

And lead us not into temptation."

⁵And he said to them, "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, ⁶for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; ⁷and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything'? ⁸I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs. ⁹And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

¹¹What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹²or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?

¹³If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:1-13, ESV).

Questions to consider:

What are we to pray for, according to Jesus?

How did he say we should pray?

What encouragement does Jesus provide for us to persevere in prayer?

According to Jesus, what is the relationship between prayer and the empowering work of the Holy Spirit?

How was this relationship between prayer and the work of the Spirit exemplified in Acts 4:23-31 and Ephesians 3:14-19?

Any implications for you as a disciple-making leader seeking to advance God's kingdom?

Notes

Observe the prayer requests of disciple-making leaders in the biblical texts provided below.

(Col 4:3-4; Eph 6:19-20; 2 Thes 3:1-2; Rom 15:24-25, 30-33; Matt 9:35-38)

Note: Bible passages quoted from the ESV, bold added by this prayer guide author.

Underline or **highlight** specific prayer requests as you read through these biblical texts below.

³At the same time, **pray also for us**, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison — ⁴that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. (Col 4:3-4).

¹⁸**praying** at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, ¹⁹**and also for me**, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak. (Eph 6:19-20)

Finally, brothers, **pray for us**, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you, ²and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men. For not all have faith. (2 Thes 3:1-2).

²⁴I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while. ²⁵At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints ... ³⁰I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to **strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf**, ³¹that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, ³²so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company. ³³May the God of peace be with you all. Amen. (Rom 15:24-25, 30-33).

³⁵And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. ³⁶When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; ³⁸therefore **pray earnestly** to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." (Matt 9:35-38).

Observe the prayers for believers in the churches that disciple-making church leaders prayed in the biblical texts provided below.

(Eph 3:14-19; Phil 1:9-11; Col 1:9-13; 4:12-13).

Underline or **highlight** specific prayers prayed for believers in these churches as you read through the biblical texts below.

¹⁴For this reason **I bow my knees before the Father**, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. (Eph 3:14-19)

⁹And **it is my prayer** that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. (Phil 1:9-11)

⁹And so, from the day we heard, **we have not ceased to pray for you, asking** that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰so as to

walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. ¹³He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Col 1:9-14)

*¹²Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, **always struggling on your behalf in his prayers**, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. ¹³For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. (Col 4:12-13)*

List below, using a word or short phrase, the prayer requests of the disciple-making leaders?

List below, using a word or a phrase, what these disciple-making leaders interceded for the believers in these churches?

What implications do these biblical examples and teachings about prayer have for you as a disciple-maker or leader?

Notes to summarize:

Prayer requests:

Interceded for:

Implications for you:

Exercises:

1. **Pause to pray.** Pause now to practice praying kingdom advancing prayers. Weave in elements from these biblical texts on prayer into your prayers. Include prayers of thanksgiving for the promises and encouragement provided in these texts as well as interceding in alignment with the themes from these passages. Include insights you gleaned from Luke 11:1-13 as well.
2. **Plan to pray.** Plan to pray more regularly, faithfully, and biblically. When can you do so personally as part of your regular rhythms? Who are others you can invite to share in regular times of interceding biblically and faithfully? Let God's grace to you, spur you on to joyfully partner with King Jesus to advance his reign through intercessory prayer (Col 1:9-14).
3. **Grow in prayer.** See the Appendix for additional resources to help you grow in prayer.

Appendix

See these resources to help you with kingdom advancing prayer and related topics.

Articles:

- [Kingdom-Centered Prayer](#), Timothy Keller
- [Prayer in Evangelism](#), Lausanne
- [The Kingdom of God](#), Stephen Um
- [The Holy Spirit](#), Kevin DeYoung
- [Holy Spirit](#), Winfield Bevins

Talks:

- [A Prayer that Brought the Holy Spirit Down](#), John Piper
- [Various Messages on Prayer](#), The Gospel Coalition
- [Our Deepest Prayer-Hallowed Be Your Name](#), John Piper
- [Prayer, Meditation, and Fasting \(5 lectures\)](#), John Piper

Books:

- [Enjoy Your Prayer Life](#), Michael Reeves
- [Praying with Paul](#), D.A. Carson
- [Praying Together](#), Megan Hill
- [A Praying Life](#), Paul Miller
- [Prayer](#), Timothy Keller
- [Daring to Draw Near](#), John White
- [Handbook to Prayer](#), Ken Boa
- [Jesus Continued...Why the Spirit Inside You is Better than Jesus Beside You](#), J.D. Greear