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*Timeless Truths in  
Approaching God*



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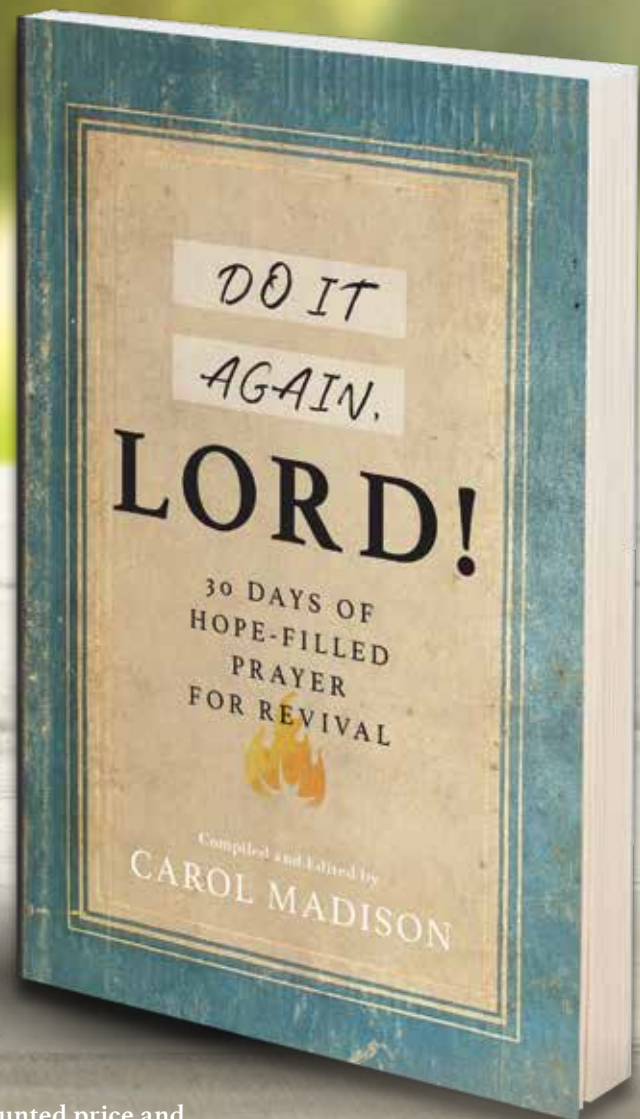
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# PrayerCONNECT

APRIL - JUNE 2023 VOL. 13, NO. 2

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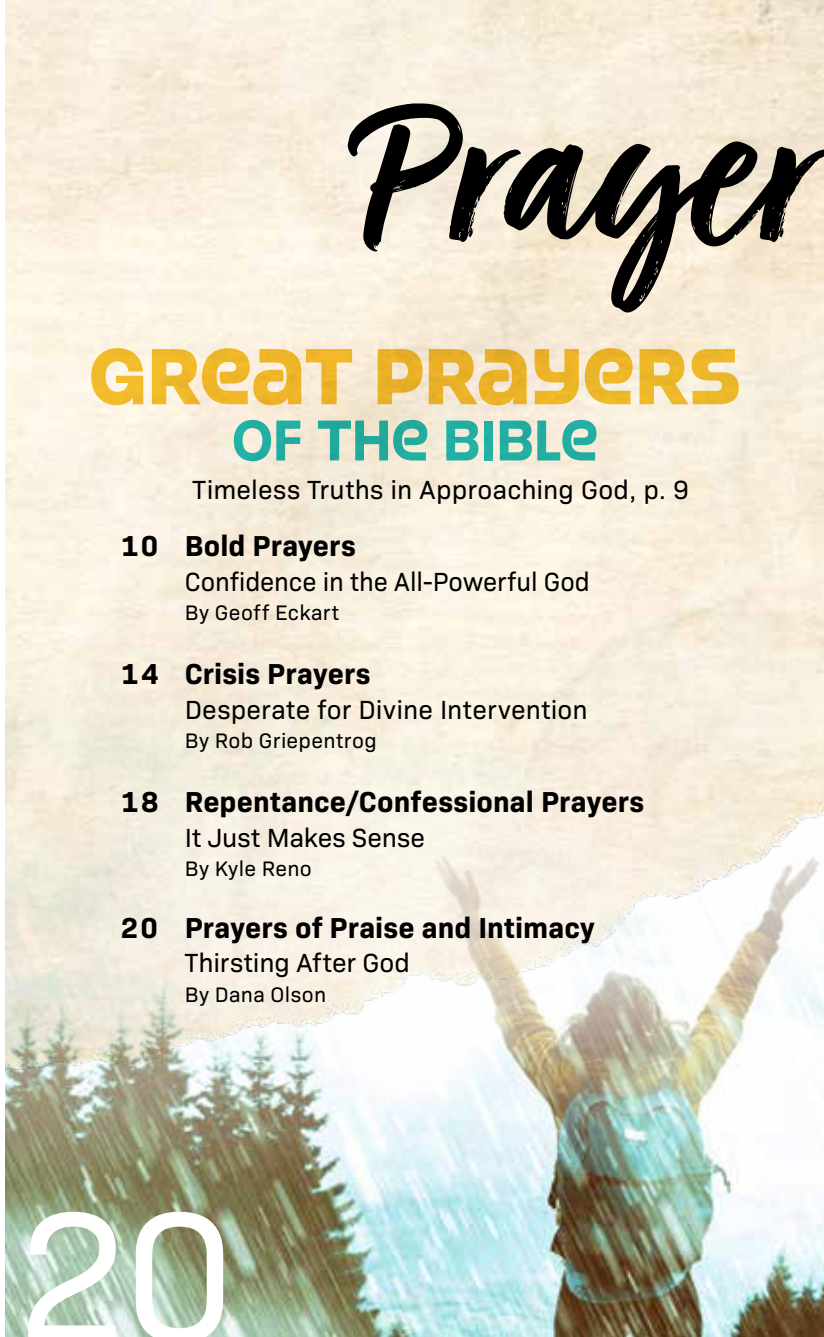
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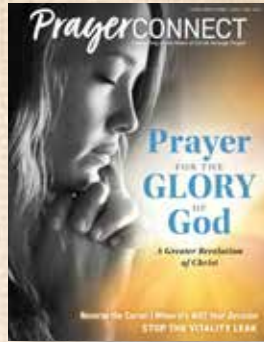
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2. To resource prayer leaders and pastors with tools to help them motivate, disciple, and mobilize believers in churches to be a part of an army that seeks to pray the purposes of God for churches, communities, and the nations.
3. To be a unifying force between prayer ministries, community transformation groups, and churches.

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## Previously in



Sustained and strategic intercession is key to powerful prayer movements! God has moved throughout this world in response to those who have stayed faithful in prayer for the long haul. Get this issue and other back issues at [prayershop.org](http://prayershop.org).

### Freezing for Revival

When I walked into Hughes Auditorium at Asbury University in the lazy little college town of Wilmore, KY, I started crying. The peace of God was overwhelming. My wife and I and a friend spent four hours on that Sunday, February 12, praying and worshiping God. It was unlike anything I had ever experienced—and over the years I have had some good experiences in worship and prayer meetings. This was powerfully different.



When we got home late that night after the four-hour drive, we immediately mused that we needed to go back. We were hungry for more of the presence of God.

So, four days later, we drove back. We experienced Thursday evening in an overflow venue as the lines of people were simply too long to get into the main auditorium. It was still powerful participating in Estes Chapel.

The next morning, we were determined to get into Hughes. We planned to go very early to stand in line (the event opened to the public at 1:00 p.m.), but it was snowing and cold when we got up. So, we waited. We got to the auditorium at close to 11:00 a.m. The wind was blowing and it was 25 degrees. We walked to the back of the line (more than a quarter-mile long).

As I stood there freezing, I began to wonder what was happening that so many people—a lot with kids—would stand in that kind of weather to hopefully participate in what was happening inside.

During the four hours we waited, we talked with people from all over. All were joyful and kind to each other. No complaining. I looked down the road that led into town—and I could see cars lined up for about a mile and a half. There were almost no parking places anywhere in this little hamlet. What on earth drew them under these conditions? *Hunger!*

People were hungry for more of Jesus! They wanted to be in His presence and worship Him. Hunger caused thousands of people to travel thousands of miles (from as far away as Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, Canada, Mexico, and all 50 states). Yes, they could have worshiped Him at home. But they wanted more!

While they came from all generations, God was clearly doing this to revive Gen Zs (under 26). Revivals have different manifestations, but none of the common ones were at the forefront. The focus was the peace of God as we worshiped Him.

Why? This generation more than any other struggles with anxiety, depression, and identity. We heard from Gen Zers who praised God for healing from these things! God knew who He was reviving, and He bathed them in His love and peace.

We do not know the full significance of this outpouring. Will it be a revival and awakening that history will record as a Great Awakening across our nation? No idea.

We may not know for years as we watch for the fruit of the revived. As they go home, may their hunger and stories, their renewed vigor in worship, and their revived hearts for the lost rub off on others around them!

—Jonathan Graf

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## Historic Revival Outpouring on Asbury Campus

Asbury University was the site of continual worship and prayer on campus for weeks during February, which drew an estimated 100,000 people to experience a work of God that many have referred to as revival. It is reminiscent of the revival that Asbury experienced in 1970—a part of the Jesus movement in this nation.

What began as part of a scheduled chapel service on the morning of Feb. 8 in Hughes Auditorium at Asbury University in Wilmore, KY, transformed into a continuous impromptu gathering. The revival generated worldwide interest, resulting in people waiting hours in blocks-long queues to gain entry.

The university decided after 16 days and about 360 hours of overflow capacity to conclude the “public worship service of this recent outpouring.” The revival overwhelmed the infrastructure of both the campus and the community, which

determined the need to return the campus to normal operations. Public and student gatherings were moved to other venues off campus.

Bobby Singh, who owns a gas station across the street from the Asbury, was pleasantly surprised by an unexpected surge in his business. “I’ve never met such nice people, people are inside donating to us,” says Singh. “[It’s a] blessing in disguise, man, it came out of nowhere.”

“We recognize life for the students had to return to normal, they have to go to school, they have midterms,” says Abby Laub, Asbury’s communications director. “They know this is a gift, they have received it as a gift, so we are going to charge them with now you take this to your job, your family, your church.”

Christian and secular academic institutions across the nation also experienced similar gatherings of spontaneous worship



among students, as the momentum spread. In addition, the 200th anniversary of the Collegiate Day of Prayer was simulcast from Asbury on February 23, with students filling the auditorium and millions more viewing around the world.

A 2018 study from Barna Group found that Gen Z (college-age and under) is the least Christian generation in American history as just four percent hold a biblical worldview, with more teens identifying as agnostic, atheist or not religiously affiliated than any previous generation.

## UK Bans Prayers Near Abortion Clinics

A person caught praying outside an abortion clinic in England can now face up to six months in prison—even if he or she prays silently.



restricts freedom of speech and expression.

“There is no evidence of the scale of harassment related, indeed, some in this house have referred to today. Therefore, I would take this amendment is not necessary,” says MP Carla Lockhart.

The U.K. has already taken steps to implement censorship zones that prohibit someone from using a mic to audibly pray and recite Scripture outside of a clinic or kneel 500 feet outside a facility.

This new law could not only stop pro-

life advocates from gathering at a home or church located close to the clinic, but it would also jail people who silently pray outside an abortion facility.

“The wording could even catch those quietly praying,” explains MP Fiona Bruce. “But when did it become against the law in this country to pray? Well, unfortunately, five councils have now defined protests as including the word ‘prayer.’ Indeed, during the course of court proceedings, this has even been confirmed as including ‘silent prayer.’”

TALIA WISE, taken from CBN News ([cbnnews.com](http://cbnnews.com)).

## Unity in Prayer for Miracle on the Water

Convinced that “the only hope for America is another great spiritual awakening,” a vision for a mobilization of the Church and a meeting with God on the Causeway Cove Marina’s festival grounds in Fort Pierce, FL, was born in the hearts of three area leaders who joined forces in prayer and action.

David “Chap” Thompson, a chaplain for Port St. Lucie Sheriff’s Department; Frank Marciano, a retired corporate executive, and Trevor Banks, the senior pastor of Resurrection Church in Fort Pierce, were catalysts for organizing a week-long Gospel Awakening Crusade in November 2022.

More than 60 churches signed on, and the collaborators spent much of 2022 praying and planning. The vision for “Miracle on the Water” was the fruit of many of these pastors praying together since 2015.

Prior to the crusade, a parade of churches made their way through the downtown city center of Fort Pierce. Thousands of people came to the meetings for worship and the preaching of the gospel. Many salvations and healings were reported, and public baptisms performed.

Bob Bakke, a national prayer leader and member of OneCry’s executive leadership team, and his wife Sally moved to “The Treasure Coast” of Florida in July 2022. After 30 years of mobilizing prayer movements domestically and internationally, Bakke was encouraged to learn of intercessors and pastors who had been praying together for years.

“We discovered a surprising work of God with an even grander vision for the state of Florida,” says Bakke. The results have been so inspiring that plans to grow



this mobilization are already underway. The organizers are asking God to multiply this miracle throughout each of the counties of the state.

“Once more God reminded me of the two things that are always true: His Spirit is at work everywhere to the glory of His Son, and, like Pentecost, when His believers commit themselves to each other in prayer, dreams and visions are poured out—and revival and spiritual awakening are near,” explains Bakke.

## National Prayer Committee Transitions to New Leadership

During their January annual meeting, members of America’s National Prayer Committee (NPC) honored the leadership and life of the former chairman Dave Butts, who passed away in November 2022. Board members shared memories and tributes to Dave, who led NPC for 20 years and helped shape a vision for revival and spiritual awakening in the nation.

The NPC board then commissioned Geoff Eckart as new NPC chairman. Eckart is currently pastor of Daybreak Church in Grand Rapids, MI, and has served on the NPC executive board for several years. Eckart says, “I consider this to be one of the greatest honors of my life. . . . It’s NPC’s 40th anniversary. Biblically, it’s a generational number. It’s time for us to realize that we stand at this moment with



the future of our nation under our charge as those who faithfully pray for her.”

Eckart adds, “The NPC is a force, not a fellowship. . . . Be ready to pray and wrestle in battle like you never have. God help our country if we sink back to normalcy as leaders.”

Kathy Branzell, president of the National Day of Prayer Task Force, announced the theme for National Day of Prayer, May 4, 2023: “Pray Fervently in

Righteousness and Avail Much.” By law, the president is required to declare the first Thursday in May as a day to pray for our nation, says Branzell.



### Prayer Calendar

**30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World**  
**March 18–April 18**  
[30daysprayer.com](http://30daysprayer.com)

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**Global 4/14 Day of Prayer for Children**  
**Friday, April 14**  
[global414day.com](http://global414day.com)

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**National Day of Prayer**  
**Thursday, May 4**  
[nationaldayofprayer.org](http://nationaldayofprayer.org)

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**Weekend of Prayer for Children at Risk**  
**June 3–4**  
[viva.org/pray](http://viva.org/pray)



# GREAT PRAYERS OF THE BIBLE

*Timeless Truths in Approaching God*



“Oh, God . . . we don’t know what to do, but our eyes are on You.”

I gathered with several prayer leaders in the Twin Cities as we watched the attack on our nation on September 11, 2001. This prayer poured out from our paralyzed and grief-stricken hearts. No one in our nation knew what to do at that moment—and the most we could muster was a cry to God for help.

God soon revealed His strategy. He directed us to walk across the street to the downtown Minneapolis sports stadium, where we knelt on the sidewalk and asked God to give us the stadium to call our city to prayer. With no budget or social media at that time to promote, God drew 24,000 people to the stadium to pray.

Although several leaders shared a small stage to lead worship and prayer segments, not a single name was mentioned or flashed on a screen. All eyes were on the Lord alone as we sought Him in our time of great need.

It’s the same prayer that Jehoshaphat offered centuries earlier in 2 Chronicles 20:12 when Judah was surrounded by her enemies, poised to attack. As the king humbled himself before the

Lord, cried out in despair, and sought God alone for help, the Lord revealed a heaven-inspired strategy that left Judah’s enemies scattered and destroyed.

Jehoshaphat’s entire prayer is recorded in Scripture for our benefit. It’s a beautiful example of how to seek the Lord in crisis. The Bible is filled with great prayers prayed by ordinary people, royalty, prophets, and spiritual leaders—all in moments of recognizing one’s desperation for God.

## IN THIS ISSUE

We’ve grouped some of the great prayers of the Bible into four strategic responses: bold prayers, crisis prayers, repentant prayers, and prayers of praise. We asked our authors to reflect on scriptural prayers as examples for our day.

You might wonder why we did not choose the most obvious great prayers—The Lord’s Prayer or Jesus’ intercessory prayer in John 17. After all, those all-encompassing prayers supersede all other forms of intercession! Because we have devoted past issues to those prayers, we chose to highlight other practical prayers from ordinary people in need of their God.

Geoff Eckart kicks our issue off with the pattern he sees in bold prayers: a

desperate need, a regular person, and a bold request. Rob Griepentrog goes deeper into King Jehoshaphat and his crisis prayer on behalf of Judah. The king knew his own army could not resolve their desperate situation; their only hope was to cry out to God.


Kyle Reno reminds us that Jesus established repentance as the most critical prayer that will align us with our Father. King David employed some serious repentance in his heart-cry to God in Psalm 51. Finally, Dana Olson closes out our theme section by reflecting on prayers of praise and intimacy that come from a thirsty heart. In tumultuous times, the psalms record how David found strength in his praise of the living God.

When we cried out to God on that surreal September day in 2001, I had no idea that kneeling on a hard sidewalk in front of a major stadium would result in one of the largest prayer gatherings in our city’s history. We need once again to come before the Lord with bold prayers that recognize the crisis our nation is in—while at the same time humbling ourselves in repentance and praise. **PC**

**CAROL MADISON** is editor of *Prayer Connect* and author of *Prayer That’s Caught and Taught: Mentoring the Next Generation* ([prayershop.org](http://prayershop.org)).




*Confidence in the All-Powerful God*



# BOLD PRAYERS



BY GEOFF ECKART



Just three months after becoming lead pastor at Daybreak, something disheartening happened. I wasn't prepared for it. I stood in our atrium on a stormy Sunday morning, witnessing a sight that a pastor doesn't want to see—more than ten buckets positioned in an attempt to catch all the rain pouring through our leaky roof.

We needed a solution—and fast!

Just four days before I led one of what I was calling our “secret” prayer meetings. These are unannounced, word-of-mouth, invite gatherings. About 50 of us were there, and someone felt prompted to pray for our building. We actually prayed for a new roof because ours was 30 years old. This prayer request was a several hundred-thousand-dollar request. And we prayed for a several hundred-thousand-dollar answer.

And then four days later it looked like our roof was going to collapse!

Little did we know how God would radically answer this bold prayer for a new roof. Unbeknownst to us, at the same time someone in our congregation (who had no idea what we were praying for) dropped in our offering the largest check in our church's 30-plus-year history—the week after “flood Sunday.”

God had provided for our roof!

## ANOTHER BOLD PRAYER

Listen to Elijah's prayer in 1 Kings 18:36–37:

At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: “Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.”

When you see the great need, you will feel the desperation.

Time and time again, I've seen God answer bold prayers. And I bet you have too. There are no formulas for how and when God chooses to answer our big, bold prayers. But I've noticed a few common threads:

- A desperate need
- A "regular" person
- A bold request

Let's look more closely at each thread.

### A DESPERATE NEED

When the need is obvious and the solution is not, that seems to be a scenario ripe for God to move. Elijah understood what hung in the balance. The fate of Israel was up for grabs at this pivotal moment in time. And although most people didn't see that, Elijah did. And this desperation drove him to step into a very precarious position.

In your life, when the need might seem obvious,

keep in mind that it might appear so only to you. As an intercessor, God will give you a vision for the great need that only you can see. That can feel overwhelming. When you see the great need, you will feel the desperation. And sometimes seeing this need can tempt you to feel crushed beneath the weight of it.

But allow this need to drive you to intercede beyond yourself into a belief that God is "able to do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine" (Eph. 3:20).

### A REGULAR PERSON

In James 5:17–18 we read, "Elijah was a human being, *even as we are*. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops" (emphasis mine).

James points out that Elijah was a regular human being, just as you are. In other words, he was no different. It's truly outlandish to allow ourselves to think that we could be on the same spiritual plane as Elijah. On the surface, it's an outrageous thing to consider. How could we be in the same "spiritual league" as the mighty Elijah?

But over and over in Scripture—and in my life experience—another common denominator to seeing God answer big, bold prayers is the involvement of what I call "regular" people. These are people with flaws, issues, and faults that you might think disqualify them from drought-inducing or drought-ending powerhouse prayers.

But it is these same regular folk who are fully aware that, despite their shortcomings, God is still God. And despite their weaknesses, they know God can provide the miracle.

One of the greatest privileges of my

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life was to meet Jeannine Brabon, the person I consider as the intercessory catalyst for the Asbury Revival of 1970. I spent several days with her in January of 2020, 50 years after this outbreak of prayer that shook the nation and a generation of young people. Jeannine was soft-spoken, gentle, and a surprisingly pleasant yet “normal” person. Seeing this side of her gave me more respect for her. It reminds me that God uses ordinary people for extraordinary purposes.

### A BOLD REQUEST

The combination of the need Elijah saw, along with him being a normal, flawed person, along with the addition of a bold ask of God, made for a moment that is one of the most vivid in all of Scripture. Elijah prayed and put God on full display. So much so that there could be no mistake from the believer or the skeptic—God was the One in control.

Ask big. Ask bold. And stand back in awe and wonder!

In 2010, I started our national ministry called Claim Your Campus. We were desperate for resources to meet the need of the vision of student-led prayer at middle and high schools across America. Three other couples helped me and my wife Arianna as we prayed and planned a 5K-race that would fundraise for the ministry.

At our first planning meeting I asked, “How many people do you think we could naturally get to come to our event?” The consensus was around 500.

Then we prayed and asked God to give each of us an attendance number to pray for, believing that if that number were to happen, it could be only God’s favor. Each wrote a number down, without knowing what anyone else was thinking. We all sensed the same number: 1,000!


We had a desperate need: schools needing prayer!

We were “regular” people; we had no experience and no resources to humanly pull in 1,000 people for our event. We had a bold request: “God, bring 1,000 runners to our race!”

On August 28, 2010, we held our event. And 2,200 runners registered and showed up for our race. Only God! Remember these keys to bold prayer:

- Don’t be afraid when you see the great need.
- Don’t be afraid when you don’t feel qualified.

- Don’t be afraid to ask God big, bold prayers.

He is waiting. 



**GEOFF ECKART** is lead pastor of Daybreak Church in Hudsonville, MI. He is also the new chairman of America’s National Prayer Committee.

THE NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER  
THURSDAY, MAY 4, 2023

PRAY FERVENTLY  
IN RIGHTEOUSNESS

AND AVAIL MUCH  
JAMES 5:16B



Join our President, Kathy Branzell and 2023 NDP Co-Host, Reverend Samuel Rodriguez for the 72nd Annual Observance. Scan the QR code or visit our website for more information!



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# *Desperate for Divine Intervention*



# CRISIS PRAYERS



BY ROB GRIEPENTROG



It was 5:00 a.m. when Ruth woke me up, complaining of a sharp pain in her lower-right side. My first thought was, *Oh no, her appendix! Of all the times for this to happen!*

It was December 23. She had given birth to our fourth child, Selah Grace, just 17 days prior. My elderly dad was visiting, and additional family members were on their way from out of state to celebrate Christmas and Selah's birth later that day.

Already exhausted from the disjointed sleep that marks the early days of having a newborn, I took Ruth to the hospital for testing. To our surprise, tests showed that she had developed a blood clot in her right ovarian vein (next to her appendix). She was admitted for observation and was administered blood thinners to dissolve the clot.

Later that day, Ruth developed a persistent fever. Doctors weren't sure why she had a fever, but they continued to observe her health and treat the clot.

On Christmas Eve, her fever worsened. Overwhelmed with her condition, with extended family in for Christmas and Ruth's inability to nurture and snuggle our newest baby at home, I became numb. I was overwhelmed beyond anything I had ever experienced. I kept asking myself, *What do I do?* in a vain attempt to help and be productive in my exhausted and overwhelmed state.

That night, Ruth's pain suddenly dropped, and she began to feel a whole lot better. Some hope began to emerge, but it didn't last for more than a couple of hours. The pain rapidly returned, and with even greater intensity.

Christmas Day was a slow day at the hospital. As Ruth's fever and pain relentlessly wore her down, we asked doctors if her appendix could be involved in any way. Already having a clear diagnosis that she had a clot (which can be quite painful), that question of the appendix was dismissed. We were told they would continue to concentrate on treating the clot. But things continued to worsen.

# There was only One who could save and deliver them from impossible circumstances!

Two more days passed as Ruth's health worsened. As our friends joined us in prayer, doctors refused to budge from their initial diagnosis. We received word that the hospital was considering discharging Ruth to send her home (still with a raging fever). Bewildered, beyond confused and exhausted, and more than frustrated, we pleaded once more for another scan of her lower-right side. Doctors finally agreed.

Following the scan, Ruth's doctor entered the room with her head hanging low.

"I have some news. The scan revealed that your appendix is ruptured, and the infection is throughout all your abdominal cavity. Usually, we would take you back in for emergency surgery. But you have so many affected organs that would need to be removed and cleaned, it would be as though a bomb went off in your body, and you would have a 50/50 chance of even coming back out of the OR. However, because you are on blood thinners for the clot, we can't do that surgery today, even if we wanted to do so. We will need to take you off the blood thinners for 24 hours and then reevaluate the situation. I'm so very, very sorry."

## JEHOSHAPHAT'S CRY FOR HELP

In 2 Chronicles 20, King Jehoshaphat, facing an impossible, overwhelming situation, called on the people of Judah to fast and pray. As they gathered and prayed, Jehoshaphat worshiped the Lord and reminded Him (as well as the people of Judah) of how He had promised and led the people of Judah to that land. He also recounted how the Lord had

prevented their enemies from attacking them, but that they were now seeking again to destroy Judah.

Then in verse 12, Jehoshaphat humbly sums up their need and only solution:

"Our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you."

I hear many people say, "I'll do my best, and then let God do the rest."

No. That wasn't Jehoshaphat's understanding. He wasn't about to try to do his or his army's best, and then call upon God! There was only One who could save and deliver them from impossible circumstances!

Jehoshaphat humbled himself, asked others to do so as well, and prayed.

## GOD INTERVENES

I prayed similarly to King Jehoshaphat, and the answer I received was James 5:14:

"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."

That's exactly what we did. A group from our church came to the hospital and prayed over Ruth that evening. After praying, Ruth shared with the group that earlier in the day she declined fever-reducing medications and asked if she could monitor her own temperature every 30 minutes. Several hours before the prayer group came, the fever seemed to be slowly, but steadily, coming down. By morning, the fever was completely gone.

As the doctors tried to determine their next course of action the following day, a repeat scan revealed the Lord had pooled most of the infection into one place. A tube was inserted to drain away the remaining infection, and 48 hours later, Ruth was discharged and returned home to our family, including our newborn!

## REPEAT PRAYER

We have prayed Jehoshaphat's prayer often since that time. God healed the ovary, the vein, the clot, and the appendix, allowing us to conceive again.

Nineteen months later, we learned that our preborn daughter Mireille had a heart defect and other anomalies. Through a challenging pregnancy and birth, numerous surgeries, months in the hospital, difficult decisions, and overwhelming situations, the Lord opened ways where there appeared to be none when we humbled ourselves and prayerfully admitted: *We do not know what to do, but we look to You.*

Jehoshaphat's prayer is an incredibly powerful and life-changing model for prayer. The next time you find yourself in a place where you're overwhelmed and struggling to know what to do or where to go—or your circumstances lead you toward despair—remember Jehoshaphat's humble plea.

You may not know what to do, but the Lord does! 🙏



**ROB GRIEPENTROG** is a prayer leader in Central Indiana. He and his wife Ruth lead OnSite International, Inc., a parachurch prayer ministry ([prayonsite.org](http://prayonsite.org)) that encourages Christians to "carry prayer everywhere."



# PRAY FOR YOUR COMMUNITY!

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## RAISE UP OTHERS TO PRAY WITH YOU!

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***Praying God's Word Over Your City*** will make you and your congregation more effective in praying for your community. It is a prayer guide that can be used either for a 40-day period of time or as an ongoing prayer guide to pray for your city.

This guide follows the America Prays "7 topics for prayer" model. Each topic covers 5 or 6 days, and each day includes a Scripture, prayer points and a powerful prayer.

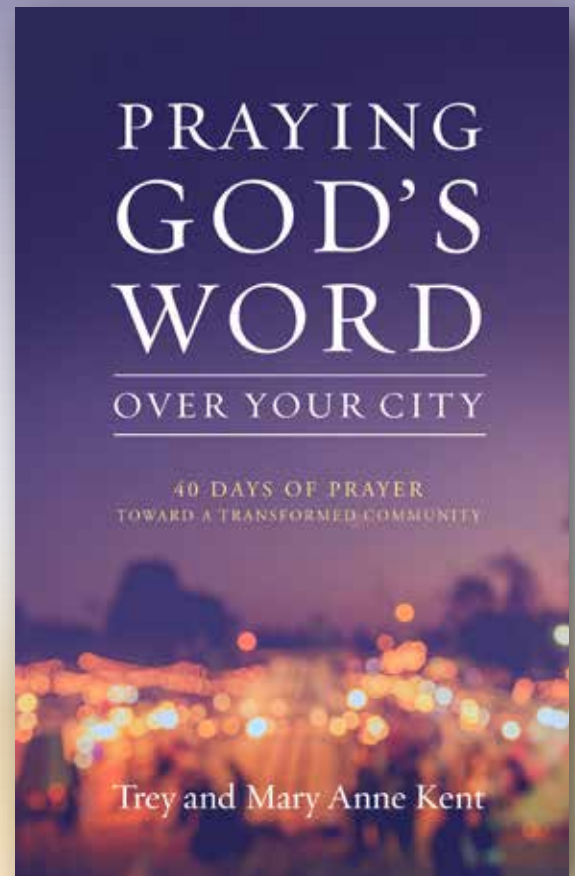
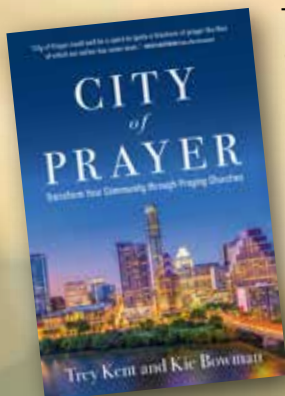
Use it to pray for your community and you will both come to understand God's heart for your city and learn to pray His Word over it!

*Praying God's Word Over Your City* is written by Trey and Mary Anne Kent, who are leaders in a movement of more than 100 praying churches in Austin, Texas.

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*Praying God's Word Over Your City* is a sequel to *City of Prayer* by Trey Kent and Kie Bowman. *City of Prayer* tells the story of how God raised up 100 churches to pray together for Austin,

Texas, and it shows you how to do the same in your community. *Praying God's Word Over Your City*, provides the "what to pray."



Both are available wherever you buy Christian books. You can get discounted prices at [prayershop.org](http://prayershop.org).



# REPENTANCE/ CONFESSIO<sup>NAL</sup> PRAYERS



BY KYLE RENO



The word repentance rightly carries a lot of weight. But religion, as it often does, robs us of its true meaning and creates bondage around something that is meant to offer life.

True repentance is a wonderful gift. It births freedom, gives fresh starts, and glorifies God.

Across the whole of Scripture, we see many beautiful accounts of men and women in our faith line who came face to face with their own brokenness and made the right move. They turned away from their sin, made a prayerful confession, and moved toward the God who is rich in mercy.

And do you know what each of them experienced? Transformation.

## JESUS' SURPRISING FIRST MESSAGE

Many have written, preached, and modeled repentance, but for a moment let's look to Jesus and maybe gain a fresh understanding of repentance. In Matthew 4:12–17 (ESV), it says:

Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum

by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,  
the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,  
Galilee of the Gentiles—  
the people dwelling in darkness  
have seen a great light,  
and for those dwelling in the region  
and shadow of death,  
on them a light has dawned.”

From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

After overcoming temptation in the wilderness, Jesus steps out in the fullness of the Spirit to start His earthly ministry and fulfills a very specific prophecy. Everything was aligning as God had foretold.

John fulfilled his part in preparing the way for the coming Messiah by preaching a message of repentance. And his preaching landed him in prison. John's time was ending, and Jesus' was just beginning.

What would the Son of God, filled with the



## It Just Makes Sense

Spirit of God, preach first?

Now, you have to imagine that Jesus has had all of eternity past to put together His first message. If anyone could have wowed humanity with words, it was Him.

He could have preached about Creation as One who was there. He could have preached on the prophecies in Scripture as One who understood and would fulfill them. If anyone could have apologetically preached in such a way to move the heart of the skeptic, it was Jesus.

Instead, Jesus came with a simple yet profound message: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Think about that. The One who knows how we come to have eternal and abundant life gives a foundational message of our faith. Unlike any other who had ever shared it before, He was also the fulfillment of it. He was telling those who would listen a simple truth: It’s time to turn, because I’m here!

I believe this gives us a fuller understanding of repentance. Repentance just makes sense when you find yourself in the presence of God.

### FACE TO FACE

In this moment of Scripture, the audience is face to face with the King who

is establishing His Kingdom on earth. Jesus is calling them to turn from whatever they are living for and follow the One who can give them life.

Can you imagine someone hearing this message from the lips of God in flesh and carrying on as normal? You should—because we all have.

When God says to stop pursuing a life that will never satisfy you and turn to the One who has all that you long for, it’s time to listen. It’s the greatest invitation humanity could ever accept.


We know this was a special moment in Jesus’ earthly ministry because it was the beginning of something. It’s a message that must be responded to right now. Repentance is something we as broken people keep finding the need for in ever deeper ways.

David knew the depths of true repentance when he cried out for forgiveness after his affair with Bathsheba. Psalm 51—a great passage to pray through—expresses the agony of his heart. Oh, that we would repent with prayers that mirror David’s desperation for God (vs. 1–2):

Have mercy on me, O God,

according to your unfailing love;  
according to your great compassion  
blot out my transgressions.  
Wash away all my iniquity  
and cleanse me from my sin.

Let’s hear the voice of the Lord again. Let’s stop, listen to His simple message, and respond in repentant prayer. Take time today to repent of wherever the world, the flesh, or the devil has been moving you toward a lesser life. Be honest. God already knows.

As you turn, see the face of the King welcoming you again into the work of the Kingdom. Follow Him into a future that promises great purpose and the joy of His presence. 



**KYLE RENO** is senior pastor at Crossgates Baptist Church in Brandon, MS. He is also part of the team at BetterMan ([betterman.com](http://betterman.com)).

A person with long hair, wearing a yellow jacket and a blue backpack, stands in a field with their arms raised in a gesture of praise or joy. The scene is captured in a slow-motion, blurred style, with rain falling heavily around them. The background shows a line of evergreen trees under a bright, overcast sky. The overall mood is one of spiritual fulfillment and connection with nature.

# *Thirsting After God*



# PRAYERS OF PRAISE AND INTIMACY



BY DANA OLSON



*Thirst trap photo.* It's a new phrase—at least to me—popping up on social media.

It's defined as "a photo used to entice a response, usually in the form of praise, compliments, or more explicit expressions of ardent desire."<sup>1</sup> People are so thirsty for the approval of others that they will post enticing photos of themselves in a desperate quest for "likes" and "retweets" and compliments and money.

We are thirsty people. Daily, we thirst for water. But we are thirsty in more ways as well: there is the thirst for significance, the thirst for accomplishment, the thirst for approval. It's the thirst for meaning—the longing for hope and joy and satisfaction and a life of impact.

## THE CRY OF THE HEART

It is the heart cry of the soul to know and love God and be loved by the Creator. David expressed this thirst in Psalm 63:1 (ESV) from the wilderness:

O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you;  
my soul thirsts for you;  
my flesh faints for you,  
as in a dry and weary land where there is  
no water.

The present circumstances find us in a wilderness, do they not? All humanity is searching for soul-water and finding only dry desert in a weary land. The desperate offer their thirst traps: sex, food, success, money, and fame. But they find only empty cisterns. There is no refreshment there. No joy for the soul.

Did David find any water in the dry land and wilderness? Oh, yes. He found it in the presence of God.

So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,  
beholding your power and glory.  
Because your steadfast love is better than life,  
my lips will praise you.  
So I will bless you as long as I live;

# Praise. Adoration. Exaltation. God has designed us to be worshipers.

in your name I will lift up my hands (vs. 2–4).

Yes, he found what he needed in the God of glory, in the steadfast love of his Creator. He found a love better than life! And he found it in a wilderness cave. Blessed by God's presence, he lifted his hands in heartfelt worship and pledged his fealty for life.

In the dry wilderness he found abundance in God, rich soul-food:

My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food,  
and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips,  
when I remember you upon my bed,  
and meditate on you in the watches of the night;

for you have been my help,  
and in the shadow of your wings  
I will sing for joy.  
My soul clings to you;  
your right hand upholds me (vs. 5–8).

Soul satisfaction. Quenching the thirst of the heart and mind. A feast of the richness of "O God, you are *my* God!" A flood of grace in the desert wilderness of pain and sorrow, disappointment and disillusion, sickness and death.

It's the feeling of God's powerful right hand underneath you as your enemies pursue you, shouting outside the cave. Still, your hands are lifted in worship, your lungs expelling shouts of praise and joy.

## DESIGNED AS WORSHIPERS

Like David, we live in a tumultuous time. Signs of the latter days seem a daily occurrence. Rancor, division, crime, brokenness, natural disasters, wars and rumors of wars, abortion, immorality, and a rising tide of anti-Christian opposition might cause us to ask, "Where are you, God?"

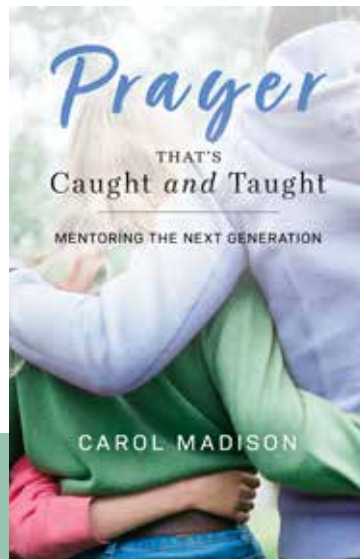
But we know very well that God is on the throne of the universe, reigning with Christ at His right hand, preparing a place for His people—new heavens and a new earth. We lift high the cross, proclaim the love of Christ, and keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:2).

But how do we keep our eyes focused on Jesus in a world churning and seemingly on the verge of exploding? Where do we renew our hope when the headlines are screaming of daily destruction?

Praise. Adoration. Exaltation. God has designed us to be worshipers. When

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we find the treasure of His glory in Scripture in passages like Psalm 63, and we turn them into worship prayer, our hearts connect with the Living God, our Creator.

In adoration prayer, praying Scripture, we declare to God—and remind ourselves—that His greatness and mercy and love will see us through the present maze, that His beauty will sustain us, that His power will overcome the enemy.

That's what I have personally found with praise prayer: that the reality of God's reign resumes its rightful place in my own heart and mind, that King Jesus is in control, and that His divine purposes cannot fail. I need that reminder!

Like David, we yearn for the living God and we find the grand gold of His glory. He reveals His attributes, and we respond with songs, "Holy, Holy, Holy" and "Hallelujah! What a Savior" and "Joy to the World."

We feast on the fat and rich food of His marvelous works, looking to the Christ of the cross and the Christ of the resurrection and the Christ of the ascension. When it seems that the world is going to hell, we turn to the final Revelation and read,

"Hallelujah!

For the Lord our God  
the Almighty reigns.

Let us rejoice and exult  
and give him the glory,  
for the marriage of the Lamb has come,

and his Bride has made herself  
ready;


it was granted her to clothe herself  
with fine linen, bright and pure"  
(Rev. 19:6–8, ESV).

Be still and know your God. Quiet your fluttering heart and embrace the Prince of Peace. Ask your Heavenly

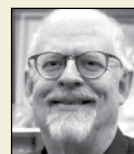
Father to fill you with His Spirit.

Worship.

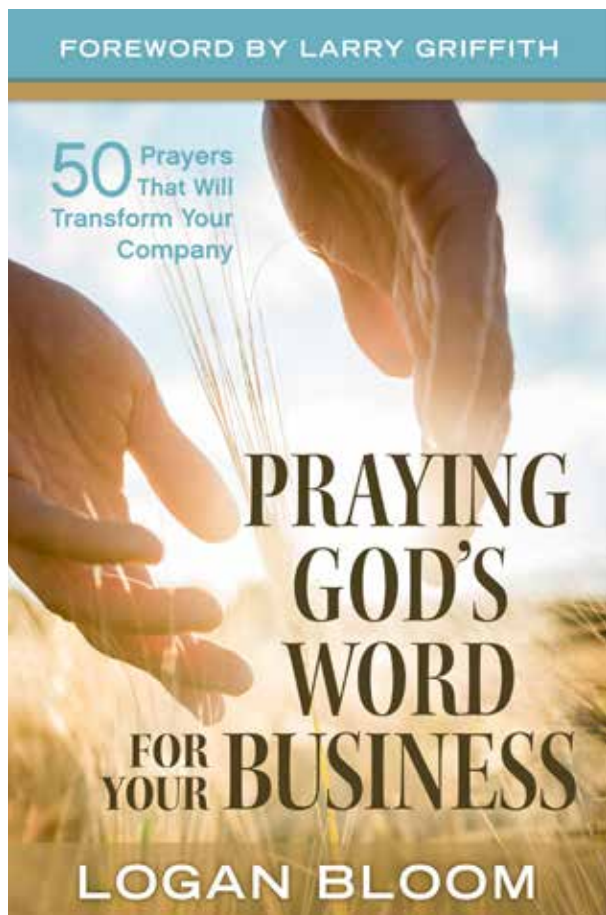
Worship the living God with prayers of praise. Exalt Him with your own heartfelt songs in the night. Memorize His many attributes and draw upon their promises in the face of hardship. Then, like the apostle Paul in his letter to young Timothy (1 Tim. 1:17), you will cry out:

To the King of the  
ages, immortal, invisible, the  
only God, be honor and glory  
forever and ever. Amen. 

<sup>1</sup> Merriam-Webster.com



**DANA OLSON** is senior pastor of Faith Baptist Fellowship, Sioux Falls, SD. He previously served as director of Prayer First (affiliated with the Converge movement of churches) and is a chairman emeritus of the Denominational Prayer Leaders Network.



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The Family can

S



*One  
Household  
at a Time*



# ave the Nation

I will never forget the transformative moment when the Holy Spirit suddenly spoke to me in a resounding, almost audible voice. The impression rang out in my spirit with a shocking force and urgency: “Revival will come to America when the FAMILY ALTAR is restored!”

At that moment, I saw a vision of the nation covered in deep, impenetrable darkness. A few homes began to light up, glowing like stars across the dark night sky. The fireplaces in these homes were burning brightly where families were sitting together praying and praising the Lord.

Then, all at once, homes everywhere across the nation exploded with light as the families inside were worshipping and praying. This spread until the whole nation was ablaze with the power and presence of God.

I could only stand in awe—what I saw took my breath away!

“Lord,” I cried out, “could it really be? Is the *family* the very key to unlocking the revival we’ve been praying for?”

I felt in my spirit that the answer was *yes*.

## How God Uses Families in Times of Crisis

Our world is in crisis. Violent crime is increasing in major cities across America. We are seeing massive protests, riots, and revolutions. Widespread drought, floods, volcanoes, and fires. Hyperinflation is skyrocketing as undisciplined governments drive up their national debt. The threat of nuclear war looms. Perhaps even more troubling, we are seeing the rapid loss of personal freedoms and retaliation against those who would confront evil in our day.

In the Bible, when the nation was on the brink of destruction and even annihilation, God had a simple, humble solution. In the darkest, most desperate times He used righteous families to bring deliverance and salvation to the nation.

During the most depraved time in human history—during the days of Noah—God used one family to resist the evil of their day and build the ark. Think also of the stories of Miriam, Aaron, and Moses, Esther and Mordecai, and Joseph, Mary, and Jesus. In these times of national crisis, God used families to bring deliverance.

We’ve also seen families in more modern times—

**By Cheryl Sacks**

# In times of crisis, **God's fire** from our family prayers will overflow from our homes into the surrounding community.

seeking God as a family in their place of prayer and worship—take a dramatic role in their uncertain times.

In the 1800s, slave families in the American South would gather at night to pray together, often using the black kettles they kept for cooking and washing clothes to muffle the sound of their voices. Their cruel masters had forbidden them to gather and pray, fearing prayer would give them hope and inspire them to run away.

But these enslaved people persevered and would not let threats of punishment and even death deter them from their family altars. They did not presume to pray for their own freedom; they had no hope that it would ever happen. Instead, they risked their own lives to pray for the freedom of the next generation—their children and grandchildren.

During the same time period, Quaker families in the United States played a huge role in forming the Underground Railroad to help slaves escape to freedom.

During World War II in the Netherlands, the ten Boom family's faith prompted them to transform their home into a hiding place. Motivated by intense prayer and a strong faith in God, they not only sheltered Jewish people from the Nazis, but encouraged other Christians to open their homes as well. Besides their immediate impact on the people they saved, the ten Boom family's faith and legacy have inspired millions worldwide through Corrie's now-famous book, *The Hiding Place*, and a movie by the same name.

None of the families mentioned above likely had any idea that God would use them to save their nation, much less the world. They simply sought God together, heard from Him, and faithfully and courageously served Him in their sphere of influence. Together, they prayed, listened for God's voice, discerned His plan, and stepped out in faith and courage to follow the assignment He gave them.

## Is Your Family Prepared to Be Used?

**W**hat might this look like for 21st-century Christian families? Is setting aside time as a family to seek the face of God together even a reality in our fast-paced, chaotic world? Can we “be still” long enough to wait in His presence, to hear His wisdom for the decisions and crises we face? Are we positioned to be used by Him when He calls us?

Wherever a “family altar” is burning—where family members set their hearts to pray, worship, and seek God together—a home radiates with light that quenches the darkest of cultural depravity or scarcity. “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it” (John 1:5, NLT). In times of crisis, God's fire from our family prayers will overflow from our homes into the surrounding community.

When my good friend Arlyn and her family moved into a new house in a rural area, they had no idea of the spiritual darkness they were about to encounter. They discovered that their new neighborhood was riddled with alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence, and crime.

Rather than moving away, the Lord led Doug and Arlyn, along with their five young children, to begin praying together for their neighbors and their neighborhood. They drew a map of the streets directly around their home, labeling the houses with what little information they knew about their neighbors—names, observations, impressions, etc. As a family, they began to prayerwalk their neighborhood regularly, noting clues that might indicate the needs of the families living in the houses, and how they should pray.

At one house, they frequently felt drawn by the Holy Spirit to pause, noting its run-down appearance and sensing a deep need. They prayed.

One day, the police were called there, lights flashing and bull-horn blaring. Doug and Arlyn learned the live-in boyfriend had been arrested on a domestic violence charge. Doug, Arlyn, and their children prayed fervently for this household, that God would do a miracle and bring salvation and healing.

Not long afterward, this same family showed up unexpectedly at Doug and Arlyn's

church. The woman explained, “Our life is a mess and we need help. When I was a small child, a bus would come to our trailer park to pick me up for Sunday school. This was the church it brought me to. I didn’t know where else to go.”

Doug and Arlyn were able to befriend the couple and lead them to the Lord. After coming to Christ, the couple was married, and the man was set free from a longtime drug and alcohol addiction.

Another set of neighbors, observing the first couple’s transformation, also gave their lives to Christ. That husband, too, was delivered from drug addiction. These new, young believers joined Doug and Arlyn’s church fellowship and the small-group Bible study that met weekly at Doug and Arlyn’s house.

As they all continued to pray over the neighborhood, a drug house was shut down and demolished, and a beautiful new home built in its place. The abandoned house next door to it sold to a Christian missionary family, who moved in and contributed to the changing climate of the neighborhood.

Within the growing small group were two sheriff’s deputies who also lived in the community, one the head of the SWAT team, and one the head of the narcotics squad. At the same time, the new believers were still struggling to overcome their addictions and past lifestyles. All were coming together to pray and worship the Lord together—it was a diverse group, to say the least!

“We all experienced a mini-revival that changed the course and direction of multiple families and our entire neighborhood,” Arlyn says.

All because one family built a “family altar” and prayed!

## Are We Ready?

**A**re our families prepared to be used by God when He calls us? While the ten Boom family’s courageous decision to begin hiding Jews in their

home was a significant one, it was simply the next logical step in a pattern of life characterized by prioritizing the family altar of worship and prayer and serving those in need around them.

**R**emembering the vision I had years ago, I can see again in my mind’s eye the “fire from heaven” falling on families, spreading to the family of God—a concentric move of God that starts in our own hearts, as the Holy Spirit prepares us to become a place once again where He is welcome.

In the tumultuous times in which we are living, God is calling His people to again light the family altar—to establish our homes as places to regularly meet with and encounter Him. He is saying, “I want to come into your homes and lives in a fresh, new way!”

In Exodus 9:16, God tells His people, “But I have raised you up for this

very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.”

I believe, as God’s people respond to this invitation, it will usher in an unprecedented move of the Holy Spirit, igniting households with healing, restoration, and a renewed love for God and one another as it moves outward from our homes to our neighborhoods, communities, nation—and the world. 📖



**CHERYL SACKS** is co-founder and leader of BridgeBuilders International Leadership Network. She is the author of numerous prayer guides including *Reclaim a Generation—21 Days of Prayer for Schools* (prayershop.org). This article contains some excerpts from *Fire on the Family Altar: Experience the Holy Spirit’s Power in Your Home*, Destiny Image, Shippensburg, PA.



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## Reclaiming Hollywood

I took a surprising Hollywood walking tour in 2022 when America's National Prayer Committee met there to pray and learn more about the entertainment industry. And no, it was not a tour focused on celebrities. Instead, we explored the spiritual heritage of Hollywood.

Of course, you cannot walk down Hollywood Boulevard without stepping on the sidewalk squares honoring famous entertainers along the Walk of Fame. But we were more interested in learning about the history and influence of the Church in Hollywood.

Our tour guide was a believer who had devoted herself to digging into the history of Hollywood and any spiritual influences. I was surprised to learn that Hollywood was originally established as an alcohol-free Christian community!

You read that right.

Hollywood was founded by Harvey and Daeida Wilcox in 1887 and incorporated in 1903. It was intended to be a place of refuge, rest, and second homes for Christians who wanted to live in like-minded community. In fact, Daeida made it a priority to give land to any church that wanted to establish itself as a ministry in Hollywood.

It was not intended to be a place for movies—and in the early days people were resistant to actors and movie companies invading the community. Eventually, because of the scarcity of water, Hollywood was forced to incorporate into the city of Los Angeles. The vision of a Christian community was soon overwhelmed with the influx of movie companies from out East flocking to this new land of opportunity.

As our tour guide April Clemmer says, “It’s important for local Christians to know there is a foundation of faith in Hollywood and that it’s something that can be reclaimed.”

### Hollywood Prayer Network

It’s on this foundation that Karen Covell, director of the Hollywood Prayer Network (HPN), encourages Christians to envision what God might do to restore Hollywood. Her prayer network includes some 10,000 Christians in Hollywood who feel called to work in the industry—and even make a difference. Covell, a producer herself, believes “there is no place in America you can go that is not affected by Hollywood.”

Although Hollywood may be a very dark place spiritually, Covell highlights the hope through prayer and the presence of believers throughout the industry. There are 15 active ministries in Hollywood, along with Bible studies meeting on every movie lot. She is passionate about the influence of Christians.

“Don’t discourage young Christians who want to be here. I will get them connected and make them a part of community. We need Christians in Hollywood to build community,” she says. Covell adds, “Through prayer for Hollywood comes cultural revival.”

Their website ([hollywoodprayernetwork.org](http://hollywoodprayernetwork.org)) even quotes the famous film director and producer Cecil B. DeMille: “I have found the greatest power in the world, is the power of prayer.”

### Adopt a Professional

The Hollywood Prayer Network provides multiple touchpoints for professionals in



the industry to gather with each other for worship, prayer, and encouragement.

But the organization also encourages Christians across the country to become prayer partners with industry professionals. I took Covell up on this offer and applied through their website to be partnered with Stephanie, an aspiring actress. After going through a screening process, the organization matched and introduced us. We communicate through email to receive prayer requests, and I also follow her on Instagram to keep up with her professional endeavors.

There are many professionals awaiting a prayer partner. You can fill out an intercessor application on the website to see if you might be a good fit for someone. You can also sign up to receive the HPN Call Sheet—a resource to guide more general prayers for the people, projects, and issues in Hollywood.

Covell is also the author of *Hollywood, Jesus, and You: 365 Days for Growing Your Faith and Praying for Hollywood*. Each chapter tells a story about Hollywood and directs you in ways to pray.

The point is to believe Hollywood is redeemable. God can work a miracle through the people He has placed there. He can reclaim a city that was originally founded to honor Him!

**CAROL MADISON** is editor of *Prayer Connect* and a member of America's National Prayer Committee.

## Prayer Mailbox to Connect with Neighbors

An Anglican church in St. Barnabas on the Danforth sits in the middle of a busy shopping street in a diverse Toronto (Canada) neighborhood. It's a beautiful old building, but that's not what makes people stop to take a look. Outside the church, there's an old-fashioned mailbox, with a sign saying:

*Like us to pray for someone?  
Please put the name in this mailbox and it will be added to our prayers on Sunday morning.*

Rev. Jeanette Lewis says the mailbox was put up just prior to the pandemic and was getting as many as 12 requests a week after it launched. Things have slowed down, but it still receives new requests every month. Lewis says many people in the neighborhood have thanked the church for this ministry.

"When something happens in the neighborhood, folks now think to let us know and pray about it, which is wonderful. It is helping to make the church an active part of the community and a place that they think of when something happens," Rev. Lewis says.

That's especially impressive, considering Toronto is a largely secular city.

Many times, the church never gets an update on the effect their prayers have had. But some people leave a name and phone number with their request, which Rev. Lewis always follows up on. One person, who did not leave a name, even left an unsolicited cash donation in the mailbox after the prayer request was answered and the person had been healed!

Rev. Lewis explains the key is to check the mailbox at least once a week so that the prayers can be gathered and prayed over during the service or passed on to a prayer group.

It's also important to make sure the signage is clear. At one point the mailbox simply said "Prayers," and did not garner

many requests. Once that was replaced with a more detailed sign, people better understood the concept and felt more encouraged to submit their requests.

Rev. Lewis recommends securing the mailbox. Theirs is now affixed to a metal fence after two theft attempts. It's also worth reaching out to your post office to let them know this is not a traditional mailbox.

"We all feel it is a wonderful ministry and outreach and that the community has responded well to it," says Rev. Lewis. The church has even gotten calls from strangers across the province and in the U.S. requesting prayer because word has spread that they are a prayerful community.



A prayer mailbox can be a great way to connect with the neighborhood surrounding your church, especially with those who may not have anyone else to pray for them. One can only imagine the seeds that St. Barnabas on the Danforth is planting!

**JILLIAN BELL** is a journalist based in Toronto. She also leads the prayer ministry at her small, urban Mennonite Brethren church.

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## Do It Again, Lord! | By Carol Madison

I've edited more than 50 issues of *Prayer Connect* magazine, and the consistent, underlying themes are bold and confident prayer, hope for the revival of the Church, and a vision for spiritual awakening in our nation. Throughout more than a decade of publishing this magazine, we have invited godly, discerning prayer leaders to write on the topic of revival, with the hope that the Lord will "do it again" in our day.

That's the name of a new 30-day prayer guide from PrayerShop Publishing. *Do It Again, Lord!* features excerpts from some of our best revival-focused articles, combined with hope-filled prayer points for revival. The following is a sample of two days in the prayer guide.

### When God Doesn't Respond

By Bill Elliff

Many believers today are getting desperate. Seeing the moral and spiritual free fall in the world around us and the declining condition of the church in our land drives us to cry out to God. We need Him. We need revival in the church and spiritual awakening among the unbelieving. We need our nation to be restored to its Kingdom calling as a mighty, gospel-sending station to the world.

According to Scripture, the precursor to any great movement of God is always humble, repentant prayer. We thank God that people across the country are praying in record numbers.

While Scripture contains hundreds of positive promises regarding answered prayer, God also outlines many things that will hinder our prayers. No one prays perfectly, and God is not playing with us. He does not make intercession so unattainable that only the super-

spiritual can be effective. He understands our weakness.

Are we willing to evaluate the effectiveness of our prayer lives? And when God shows us areas of need, we can turn to Him in repentance and take the necessary steps to adjust our lives to encounter Him afresh in prayer.

#### Prayer Points:

- Praise God that He established this nation with a Kingdom calling to spread the gospel to the world.
- Praise God for how the Spirit is calling more people to pray for revival and spiritual awakening.
- Pray for evidence of revival in your church that causes people to pray with greater faith and belief.

### Ripe for Revival

By Bob Bakke

Troubles are buffeting our nation.

Respected voices say that our nation, as it was conceived, is lost, and the American Church forever diminished.

In spite of these voices, I count myself among those who see the U.S. as ripe for revival and spiritual awakening. I've studied the often-horrific stories of Church history. I personally experienced the riots, the burned-out cities, the assassinations, the threat of nuclear war, and massive political upheavals of the 1960s. Yet, in the midst of tragic times throughout history, we have had many awakenings in our land.

God's people are being rattled from their small, distracted, complacent, and lackadaisical faith. They are being confronted in their sin, perhaps as a separating of the wheat from the chaff (Matt. 3:11–12).

While God's people need a fresh wind

of the Spirit to enliven, embolden, and refine their faith, an unbelieving world is realizing they need God. This sounds like a confluence ripe for God's intervention. I think we are seeing evidences of such.

There are hopeful signs of a coming spiritual awakening. We should be deeply impressed with the quantity and quality of prayer being mobilized across our nation. The bride of Christ is waking up to the dangers in front of her. A unity, unlike any in previous generations, is forming. This unity is diverse, multi-ethnic, and multinational. The one thing missing, however, is vision. I believe God will provide it, but we must pray for that united vision.

I believe we are, indeed, ripe for revival and spiritual awakening. Let's ask God to give us the vision to see what its fulfillment would look like. And let's ask God to give leaders the wisdom to embrace it.

#### Prayer Points:

- Praise God that there is always hope for another Great Awakening in our nation! Ask God to inspire your prayers with belief that it is His heart to do it again.
- Pray through Acts 1–2 by paying attention to the ways the Holy Spirit poured out life and power to the Church. Ask Him to do it again.
- Pray that your church will be inspired to lift up hopeful prayers that go beyond distracted and complacent faith.

*Do It Again, Lord!* can be purchased individually or in quantities for your church from [prayershop.org](http://prayershop.org). Consider calling your congregation to a united and strategic season of hope-filled prayer for revival. ☛

## Leading More Dynamic Prayer Meetings | By Paul Covert

**T**he first vital element of a dynamic prayer meeting is to paint the vision. This is so critical that I like to cast vision at the beginning of every prayer meeting and again at the end. And one of the visions I like to paint for the pray-ers comes from Hebrews 7:25: “. . . because he always lives to intercede for them.”

When Jesus went to heaven, He could have devoted Himself to any ministry throughout the generations. He chose the ministry of intercession! This proves we cannot overestimate the importance of prayer to impact history.

I then exhort our intercessors by reminding them that we can join Jesus in the ministry of intercession. What an honor! Do you see how that raises the value of prayer? This is much more helpful than the typical, “OK, let’s start our time of prayer.”

At the end of the meeting, I might take them to the story of Hannah and Samuel in 1 Samuel 1 or other similar biblical stories. Hannah had gone to the temple to offer sacrifices year after year and to ask the Lord for a child. But this time, God answered her prayer. Nine months later, she gave birth to Samuel.

“I wonder tonight,” I say, “if some of you are like Hannah and have come to the Lord asking over and over for something. Something you desperately want. Maybe for you, tonight is the night that God will move in answer to your cries.”

Ending a prayer meeting with hope and expectation will bring people back again to continue interceding for what might seem impossible.

### Making It Work

Have you ever been to a prayer meeting

that just didn’t work? There could be lots of reasons: no clear leader, no plan of what you want to accomplish, not starting on time, or allowing the meeting to go too long.

Recently, I hosted an annual Threshold Prayer Conference where Rachael Stohre led a powerful workshop on “Leading More Dynamic Prayer Meetings.” Here are some key thoughts from that workshop:

- Pray before your meeting for faith, energy, insight, and protection.
- Some prayer gatherings spend too much time in fellowship at the beginning and don’t start praying quickly enough. Plan your fellowship times a half-hour before the prayer meeting starts or at the end of the prayer time so that prayer is not hindered.
- Separate personal needs from the agenda of the meeting. This is a hard one. People often will jump over the pre-selected topic of the prayer meeting to pray for a personal need. I like to make it clear we will pray for each other, but it will be at the end of our prayer time. That way we don’t dilute the topic.

### Additional Tips

Another important element is creativity in how you pray. There’s no need to be stuck in the same way you prayed last week. With a little research using this magazine or sites like *prayerleader.com* or *prayeru.com*, you can find hundreds of creative ways to pray. That creativity will keep people engaged.


As you lead, be sensitive to new people. Never pray going around in a circle. Many people are uncomfortable being put

on the spot—and may not return.

Pay attention to how men and women pray differently. This one took me a while to learn. Although this is a generality, women are by nature more nurturing than men—at least that is true of my wife and me. Women are comfortable praying for needs because they have a heart of a nurturer. To be fair, they will pray about other things as well, but they may pray in a nurturing fashion longer than men. Men are generally warriors, and they like to pray for causes. Men will pray eagerly for Kingdom issues like taking a city for Christ or putting an end to corruption in our government. Plan your prayer meetings to include both nurturing times and warrior-type causes.

For years I have focused my ministry on men. Why? Because women are often more open and will pray. But it can be harder to reach men. Therefore, all my advertising and color selections for our website are directed at men. I make sure to plan prayer times with men in mind.

Finally, it is important to take breaks in the prayer gathering. For instance, try saying, “Now we will take a five-minute break and come back and pray for the needs of our city.” Prayer can be hard work and a short break allows pray-ers to be refreshed and recalibrate for the next portion of the prayer meeting.

I teach these and other prayer principles at the Threshold Conference. If interested, you can check it out at [thresholdprayer.com](http://thresholdprayer.com). 



**PAUL COVERT** is the author of *52 Creative Ways to Pray*, Founder of Threshold Ministries, a conference speaker, and a consultant on prayer.

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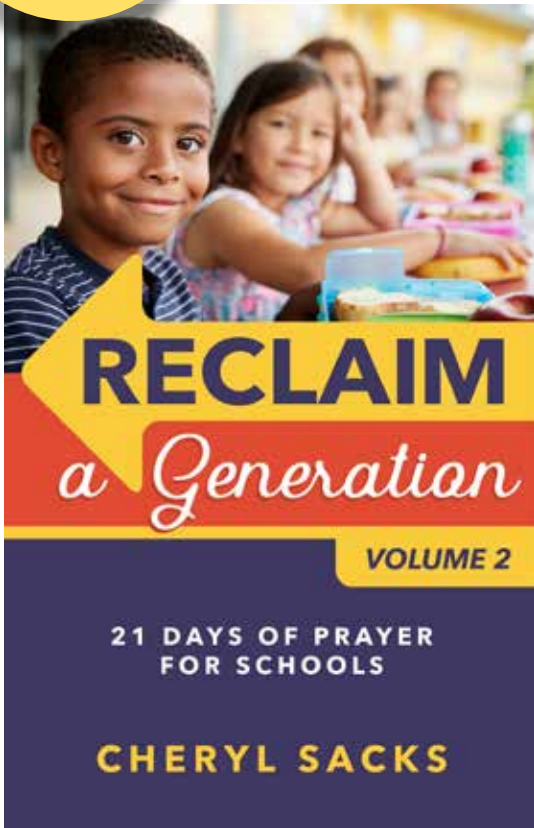
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