

# Prayers for a Nation in Crisis

April 21, 2020

We are in unique times. The church has lost its voice among a culture pursuing pleasure, prosperity and self-promotion. In this time of trial and greater threat, the church is called to prayer. The early church, facing various threats turned to God in corporate prayer.

## 1. Encouragement to Corporate Prayer

Consider the practice of the early church, resulting in obedience and fruit.

- **Acts 1:14:** They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. **Result:** Outpouring of Spirit in Acts 2.
- **Acts 2:42:** They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. **Result:** Acts 2:43, Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.
- **Acts 4:24:** When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. **Result:** Acts 4:31, After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.
- **Acts 6:4:** Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word. **Result:** Acts 6:7, So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.
- **Acts 12:5, 12:** So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him. When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. **Result:** Peter released by angel.
- **Acts 13:2-3:** While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. **Result:** Many churches planted.

## 2. Reasons for Corporate Prayer

May we not fear the threat but use it to turn us to God in prayer.

- **Corporate prayer reminds us of our common dependency for all things in life.** We can do nothing, individually or collectively, but God can do more in a moment than we can in a lifetime (Piper). **John 15:5:** I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.
- **Corporate prayer reminds us of our common identity as children of God.** **Matt 6:9:** Our Father. **Matt 6:31-32:** So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.
- **Corporate prayer reminds us of our common adversary.** Satan does not simply attack you. He cares little for us as individuals, but he attacks the church, the visible display of God's grace and mercy in Jesus. **Eph 6:12:** 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.

- **Corporate prayer reminds us of our common hunger for the Spirit of God to bring revival.** We cannot bring change to a soul; we cannot create love for Jesus in the heart of another; we cannot forgive sin or cleanse the conscience. **Luke 11:13:** If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!
- **Corporate prayer reminds us of our common unity in a shared vision for the kingdom.** As we gather, we are reminded that our goals and purpose are all the same: To see God's glory and kingdom advance and our souls prepared to meet God. **Luke 11:2:** "When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.

### ***3. Directions for Corporate Prayer***

#### **For those suffering and sick**

- **Pray that those in darkness would turn to God in this crisis.** Ask God to reveal the fragility and weakness of human life before this crisis and that they look to the heavens to seek help and comfort.
- **Pray that God would move with mercy and halt the spread of this virus.**
- **Pray for those suffering and sick from this virus.** Ask God to comfort and aid to those who are sick. Ask that he might grant healing and prolong their lives so that they might seek him. Ask God for grace that this sickness may instruct them of their need for him. May this lead them to repent and believe in the gospel for the healing of their souls.
- **Pray that all might gain true wisdom as we reflect upon our mortality.** Ask God to help us see that he alone is our dwelling place in all generations. May God grant us to see that we are frail and mortal. We are like a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away (James 4:14). Ask God to teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom (Psalm 90:12, 15).

#### **For our leaders/servants**

- **Pray for wisdom and discernment for our leaders.** Ask God for discernment and wisdom for our state and national leaders as they make decisions for our country's welfare and strength.
- **Pray for those who are working to serve, doctors, nurses, police and other health care professionals.** Ask God for endurance, patience and skill as these professionals seek to bring comfort and help to the sick and struggling.

#### **For the church**

- **Pray for the church to be an bold witness to the truth of the gospel.** Ask God to give us a voice to speak with grace and truth to the brokenness of this world and be prepared to give a defense of the hope that is with us.
- **Pray for the church to be sacrificial and joyful in our care for the suffering and troubled.**
- **Pray for Jesus to return quickly.** "He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming soon.' Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev 22:20).