

BECOMING AN INDIVIDUAL INTERCESSOR

Using songs

Your role as an individual intercessor in this work is having an effect. May the Lord bless and encourage you as you penetrate heaven on behalf of the remaining Bibleless people.

We sing a song:

I am covered over with the robe of righteousness

That JESUS gives to me.

I am covered over with the precious blood of JESUS

and He lives in me . . .

Let us PRAY that this wonderful covering of the blood of Jesus would be extended to those who are without God's Word.

Using a list

Sometimes the needs for prayer are so overwhelming that we feel defeated before we begin. If this is the case for you, may I suggest taking just one prayer item and lifting it before the Lord throughout the day? Check boxes are provided beside each request to help you keep track of your prayers.

Using the names of God

"Lord, teach us how to pray for sufficient finances to accomplish the tasks you have called us to do. In Your Word You promise you will supply all our needs. Lord, please help us to understand what our needs really are and to seek you above all else. Thank you that you are our Jehovah-Jireh, our Provider and that you are our ultimate source of 'pro (for)-vision (calling),' that is, provision. Teach us to trust you more and to take you at your word. Jesus, please be Lord of our finances."

Knowing the tactics of our enemy

"The one concern of the devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work and prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray!"

Using scripture

How often have we heard the "Lord of the Harvest" verse in Matthew 9: 37, 38? Have we become dull to its urgency and passion through its repetition? Lord, teach us how to pray to You, the Lord of the Harvest, for workers, for individuals, couples and families who will obey Your call and allow You to thrust them forward into the harvest field of Bible translation.

Using the news as a prompt

Lord teach us to pray . . . (Luke 11: 1b NIV)

As we watch the news, read the newspaper, listen to talk shows and converse with each other, some frequently recurring topics of conversation these days are wars and rumours of war (Matt 24:6), trouble spots in the world and displaced peoples. These current events affect Wycliffe missionaries as well as their national colleagues. Uncertainty, danger, trauma and displacement aren't experiences that happen only overseas and to unknown others. "Lord, teach us to pray for those in Wycliffe who are impacted by wars, rumours of war, trouble and displacement."

Knowing what to pray about

The evil one delights in taking advantage of us. The Scriptures say he is a destroyer (John 8:44). When people are in crisis situations, they feel vulnerable. That's when the father of lies (John 8:44) likes to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10), tempt us to doubt God and to fear, and stir up old issues and unhealed wounds. This magnifies the difficulty and distress of the current situation. God has created us as spirit, soul and body (1 Thess. 5:23). In a crisis, all these areas are affected and need covering in prayer. Here are some topics for prayer as well as corresponding Scriptures to use for prayer.

CRISIS ISSUES

SCRIPTURES TO PRAY

Physical

- * Danger or potential danger
- * Isolation
- * Injury or death
- * Loss of personal goods or property
- * Loss of translation work or other work data

- * Unexpected financial costs due to loss, evacuation, relocation, re-establishing lives
- * Flashbacks and nightmares

Psalm 27:1
Psalm 27:10
Psalm 139:7-12
Matthew 6:25, 33
Jeremiah 29:11
Colossians 3:15
1 Thessalonians 1:4

Philippians 4:19
Psalm 31

Emotional

- * Grief and bereavement
- * Loss
- * Fear
- * Anxiety
- * Frustration
- * Anger
- * Shock and trauma
- * Guilt
- * Helplessness
- * Confusion and uncertainty
- * Insecurity

1 Thessalonians 4:13, 14
Psalm 30:5b, 11, 12
2 Timothy 1:7
Isaiah 26:3
Psalm 40:1; 90:12
James 1:19, 20
Psalm 27:11-14
1 John 1:9
Psalm 46:1
Psalm 91:2
Psalm 139:1-5

Spiritual

- * Loss of trust in God
- * Testing of faith
- * Fear rather than peace
- * Hatred rather than love
- * Unforgiveness
- * Prejudice and condemnation
- * Desire to take revenge

Proverbs 3:5
James 1:3, 4
Isaiah 41:10
1 Peter 4:8
Matthew 6:14, 15
Matthew 7:1
Leviticus 19:18

Praying by topic

"Lord, teach us to pray. . . " (Luke 11:1b NIV). "Lord, teach us to pray for our teens."

Missionary kids (MKs) are not immune to the evils, difficulties and issues with which Canadian teens and young adults struggle. Additionally, they often face other challenges that arise out of their "MKness." As 1 Peter 5:8 says, Satan is like a prowling lion seeking whom he may devour, and Wycliffe MKs, both overseas and in Canada, are some of his choice prey. Sometimes the only thing between an MK and the despair that leads to suicide is someone's faithful prayers. Other times the only thing that keeps an MK pushing through loneliness to friendship is a prayer. Join us in building hedges of protection, encouragement, comfort and strength around our young adult MKs with your prayers.

The story of Joshua fighting the Amalekites (Exodus 17:8-13) illustrates what your prayers will be doing on behalf of Wycliffe MKs. Joshua and his men fought the battle while Moses held his arms up, supported by Aaron and Hur. In the same way, your prayers (upraised arms) help MKs to stand firm in the face of the struggles and issues with which they deal (the battle).

Being in the right relationship with God

'Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him . . . ' (Psalm 37:7, NKJV). All the exercises of the spiritual life, our reading and praying, our willing and doing, have their value. But they can go no further than this—that they point the way and prepare us in humility to look to and depend upon God Himself, and in patience to wait for His good timing and mercy.

"It is in waiting upon God that our eyes are opened to believe in His wise and sovereign will. Then we will see that the sooner and the more completely we absolutely yield to it, the more surely His blessing can come to us.

"Unfortunately, there can be a lot of praying . . . and very little waiting on God. Why? Because when we pray we are often occupied with ourselves, with our own needs, and with our own efforts in presenting those needs to God—thinking that if we find just the right way to present our needs, then we can make God hear and answer.

"But when we wait on God, our first thought is of the God on whom we wait. We enter His presence, and we need simply to be quiet so that He, as God, can overshadow us with Himself. Waiting on God gives Him time, in His own way and divine power, to come to us. And resting in Him is nothing but being silent unto Him, still before Him—having our thoughts and wishes, our fears and hopes, hushed into calm and quiet in that great peace of God which passes all understanding.

"Bow quietly before God. Remember who He is, how near He is, how certainly He can and will help. Be still before Him and allow Him to stir up in your soul the childlike disposition of absolute dependence and confident expectation. Wait on God until you know you have met Him.

"And when you are praying, let there be intervals of silence—reverent stillness in your soul—in which you yield yourself to God in case He may have something He wishes to teach you or to work in you.

"Pray in this way, and prayer will become so different. Waiting on God will become the most blessed part of prayer, and the answer to your prayer will be twice as wonderful because it is the fruit of your fellowship with the Holy One."

Being in conversation

Prayer is much more than just making requests of God, more than making plans and tacking His blessing on the end, more than presenting Him with a "shopping list" and asking Him to fill it. Prayer is communion with God, a two-way conversation that requires us to listen as well as speak. Prayer is the expression of a Christian's dependence upon God for all areas of life, a reflection of his or her personal relationship with God. Because of who God is, the Creator of heaven and earth, we come into His presence with reverence. But He is also our loving heavenly Father who cares for us. As a child of God, you are invited to come boldly before His throne of grace and wait with great expectation, and as you wait and listen, the Holy Spirit is able to lead you into praying according to the will of the Father in the name of Jesus (John 16:13-15).

Using acts of Prayer

Adoration

God desires and is worthy of our worship and praise.

"Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness" (Ps. 29:2 NIV).

"Let everything that has breath praise the Lord" (Ps. 150:6 NIV).

Confession

When we confess our sin and receive forgiveness then fellowship with God is restored.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9 RSV).

"...and forgive us our sins, just as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us. . . Your heavenly Father will forgive you if you forgive those who sin against you; but if you refuse to forgive them, he will not forgive you" (Matt. 6:12, 14, 15 TLB).

Thanksgiving

"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thess. 5:18 KJV).

"Be careful for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God"(Phil. 4:6 KJV).

Supplication

Supplication includes petition for our own needs and intercession for others.

Pray for yourself: "Morning by morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation" (Ps. 5:3b NIV).

Pray for others: ". . .always keep on praying for all the saints" (Eph. 6:18 NIV).

Using scripture

As you are presented with the prayer needs of Wycliffe members or situations around the world you can also ask the Lord to show you Scripture for them. When you are having your Bible time, you could make a note of passages to use later in prayer. Following are some passages that could start you off, BUT you can also enjoy the fun and special pleasure of discovering passages for yourself. If you base your prayers on your own personal Scripture reading, you will never run out of prayers for others.

Psalm 23

Psalm 27

Psalm 28

1 Chronicles 4:10 (prayer of Jabez)

Ephesians 4

2 Timothy 1

James 1

Romans 14:17

1 Peter 5:6-11

Scripture can be prayed in two ways:

FIRST, pray what the Scripture says in your own words.

For example: Psalm 23

Lord, be the Shepherd of (person's name) so he (or she) won't need anything. Help him to take rest periods by being led by you. Lord, restore his spirit, soul and body. Be his guide and show him the way forward.

The SECOND method is to insert the person's name or the group name into the Scripture.

For example: Psalm 27:2

"When evil men advance against (person's name) to devour _____'s flesh; when _____'s enemies and foe attack _____ may they stumble and fall. Though an army (of problems) besieges _____ may _____heart not fear. One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek, that _____may dwell in your house" (NIV).

Scripture is living and active and sharper than a two-edged sword. (Hebrews 4:12) One of our Wycliffe members praised God because he had seen Scripture speak directly to his son in this way. His son was struggling with an issue in his life. A Scripture he picked randomly from a basket during a special prayer time with others spoke specifically and directly to the issue. Wow! God's Word really is pertinent to our daily lives. As you allow the Word of God to dwell in your heart and you pray for others, you will be a blessing to them. (Colossians 3:16, 17).

Believing we make a difference

According to the Scriptures, God sees each person He has made as a special individual, and His Father heart longs for each one to know Him personally and intimately. That's why Jesus came. Yet millions of people have never heard about Jesus and have no opportunity to read about Him in the Bible. They have no Easter to commemorate and celebrate. They have no hope for their unknown futures. What a heart-breaking tragedy!

But we don't need to despair because we know how the story ends, and we can each play a part in bringing the story to its magnificent and joyful conclusion. One day, individuals from every tribe, language, people and nation will gather around the throne of the Lamb to worship, praise and glorify God (Rev 7:9,10 NIV)!

Meanwhile—today—your prayers are part of the process of bringing the story to that glorious conclusion. Prayer is vital, imperative, essential and mandatory not optional. Scripture also teaches that fasting can be part of the process of praying for others.

Using the Lord's Prayer

"When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret will reward you" (Matt. 6:6 NIV).

When we are confronted with many prayer requests for people or situations we don't know, it's hard to know how to pray. In not knowing how to pray we are in good company. Jesus' disciples, even having lived for a while with the Master, needed to ask, "Teach us to pray." In the model of prayer Jesus taught them and left us we see a pattern we can apply. You may like to try praying using this pattern for a change. It is not intended to be prescriptive, but an example for you to consider.

MATTHEW 6:5-13

First Jesus taught HOW NOT TO PRAY:

** Don't pray out loud with the intention of impressing others (vs 5).

** Don't keep praying long, repetitive prayers of empty words that sound as if there is some magic formula attached to them (vs 7).

Then Jesus taught the disciples HOW THEY SHOULD PRAY:

** Give glory to God for who He is (vs 9).

(How easy it is to start praying for our needs and miss out this part of coming before our Lord.)

** Always seek to know God's will in a situation (vs 10).

(How often we follow what we have been asked to pray without asking the Lord what His will is for a situation.)

** We are free to come and ask for what we or others need in the practical issues of daily life (vs 11).

(It's reassuring to know we have a God who cares about such things and wants to hear our requests.)

** We need to be in a right relationship with God when we come to Him (vs 12a). We need also to pray for the spiritual health and well being of those for whom we have been asked to pray.

(Often this isn't as easy as the practical issues.)

**** We must be in "clear" relationship with others, forgiving them as we come to God with our praise and requests (vs 12b).**

(How often have we skimmed over this part with the result that we now carry long-term unforgiveness from our past? Take time with the Lord to see if there is anyone who should be on your forgiveness list.)

**** Do not give temptation a foothold (vs 13a).**

(Temptation is something we may think happens primarily to others, but the Scriptures tell us we have an enemy prowling around; prowling around not just ourselves but also around the people and situations for which we are praying. Take a moment to check where your temptations may be and pray for spiritual protection for yourself and others.)

**** Resist the evil one (vs 13b).**

(The evil one would like to stop the work of Wycliffe as it seeks to support the work of getting truth and light to people in the language they understand the best. Ask the Lord to show you what protection the people or projects need that you are praying for.)

WE ARE IN A BATTLE. You are a vital part of that battle which is not against flesh and blood but against spiritual forces of darkness in the heavenly realms (Eph 6: 10-13). Your relationship with the Father and your prayers on behalf of others will make a difference in that battle.