



***Change your family
through prayer***

**Praying Children
[VOLUME 1/2010]**

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Praying children

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Introduction

The purpose of this booklet is to provide some guidelines in leading groups of young people, children or individuals in prayer on different issues of concern to their peer group.

This booklet is a compilation of articles that were published the past 5 years in the Jericho Walls Prayer Guide. Its aim is to serve as a guideline and to set the Christian on a road of praying Scripture for and over different issues such as their interpersonal relationships, families, our country, its people and everything to do with South Africa. When we learn the language of the Bible, we can pray with much more confidence, since we know that the words we use are from Scripture and God promises that His words will never return void.

We trust that this booklet will inspire you to teach others to also pray from the Word of God.

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THINGS CHILDREN SHOULD PRAY ABOUT

1. Why pray?

Why is prayer such a big deal? If grownups believed in prayer, then why are they so worried? Can I really trust God to answer my prayers? How should I speak to God? How often should I pray to have a good prayer life? These are all questions we will try to answer this month and so encourage you to pray!

MONDAY: What is prayer? Prayer is talking to God, as well as listening when God speaks to us! We talk often with our friends and family. God is our friend and our heavenly Father. He wants to talk to us. *Heavenly Father, I love You and want to speak to You more often. Please remind me to speak to You right through the day! In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

TUESDAY: Why should we pray? There are many reasons for praying: To give the Lord our thanks and praise, to confess our sins, to ask Him for help with our problems, to ask His help for others, and just to talk with our Father. *Heavenly Father, thank you for my life, and that I can tell you anything that happens in it. Help me remember to speak to You about my problems until they disappear, so that others can also come to know You are real. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: How should we pray? You can close your eyes, bow your head, kneel down or fold your hands to pray. This position shows respect. But, you can also pray while you walk to school, sit in the bus or taxi, or when you wake up in the middle of the night and feel scared. Remember to pray in Jesus' Name, because Jesus told us to ask or pray in His Name and through the cross and His blood that was shed, we have free access to the throne of God (**John 16:23b**). *Lord Jesus, teach me how You want me to talk to you. Help me remember at any time and place that I can talk to you and that you are never far away. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

THURSDAY: When should we pray? Men and women in the Bible have taught us that we can pray anytime. **1 Thessalonians 5:17** tells us to "Pray without ceasing". There is never a bad time to pray. *Heavenly Father, thank you that You are always awake and listening to my prayers; that You never get tired and are available to help me day and night! Remind me to pray all the time. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

FRIDAY: Where should we pray? You can pray anywhere. The Bible says that God is everywhere, so you can be in any situation, place or any kind of trouble, and when you pray He will hear you and answer your prayer as He knows best how to answer it. *Thank you Heavenly Father, that You are with me, even when I am scared or something bad happens to me. Thank you that I can always cry out to you, day or night. I put my trust in You alone. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

2. Pray "off your hand"

Some friends came up with a great way to teach young children to pray, using a pair of gardening gloves! They designed the gloves as visual reminders for five steps of prayer. On the top side of the gloves are written the more "technical" names: praise, thanksgiving, confession, intercession and petition. On the palm side are "sentence starters" that help the kids beginning their prayer. Here is the left glove:

Thumb: Praise—talking about God, who He is. "You are great because ..."

Index: Thanksgiving—giving thanks for what God does. "I am thankful for ..."

Middle: Confession—telling God what you have done wrong. "I'm sorry for ..."

Ring: Intercession—asking for the needs of others. "I pray for that You would ..."

Pinkie: Petition—asking for yourself. "I pray that You would help me ..."
(Parents may need to make suggestions in this area: things children need to learn, physical needs, etc.)

The child then moves to the right-hand glove. For each day of the week, he or she prays for specific needs in the categories provided. Monday (thumb) is for church, local and world-wide; Tuesday (index), for school and teachers; Wednesday (middle), missions and social concerns; Thursday (ring), family and friends; Friday (pinkie), the nation and its leaders. Saturday and Sunday (when they are out of fingers!), the child can pray for general needs.

Those who have used the gloves have found that they move kids from praying a list of "what I want" to a specific plan for talking with God on

things other than their own concerns. Kids are so "hands on" and they always have their hands with them. The gloves help them learn that prayer is right at their fingertips and that God is instantly approachable. (PrayKids! Online Newsletter. Website: www.praykids.com, e-mail: praykids@lists.navpress.com).

3. ... on the *F-A-S-T* track...

Fasting is when you choose to give up something you really want, so you can focus on God and pray at the same time. It is not just for adults. Normally when we pray, it is with our spirit and soul (our soul is our mind, will and emotions). When we fast, we pray with our bodies too! So, when we fast, our whole person prays. What would you do if Jesus asked you to put Him above everything else in your life? We have many things in our lives that take up our time and attention – things like friends, MXit, eating, sleeping, TV, cellular phone games, the Internet, shopping, school, etc. None of these things are wrong, but they keep our minds and bodies busy with things other than God.

On what occasions does one want to pray and fast?

A 'fast' is when you willingly decide to give up things that are important to you to show you are serious about God. Sometimes it is when you need to **repent of sin** (**1 Sam.7:5-6**). Sometimes to **pray for protection** or a **crisis** (**Ezra.8:21-23, Esth.4:15-16**), or simply when you want to **hear God's voice** clearly (**Dan.10:1-3; Acts 14:23**). Jesus fasted for 40 days to be able to resist all the temptations of the devil. When we fast it should be for the right reasons (**Matt.6:16-18**). Jesus said when we fast we should not fast to be seen by everyone – almost like fasting in secret. But what if your friend invites you over to watch a movie and you have already decided to give up TV for a while as a way of fasting? Then it is fine to let your friend know that you are fasting. The Bible encourages us to be humble and kind when we fast (**Isa.58:2-11**).

Don't chicken out!

Sometimes when we fast, we are tempted to give up. This even happened to Jesus during his 40-day fast. He was really hungry and Satan came to tempt Him to turn stones into bread (**Matt.4:1-4**). You can also experience temptation during a fast. If you are tempted to break your fast before you planned, consider praying some Scriptures – and don't chicken

out because it's becoming tough on you. Remember **Philippians 4:13: *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.***

During the month of June, there is a special prayer focus on children at risk. There are millions of children who do not have enough food to eat. By fasting, we feel a little of what they experience every day of their lives. When we pray and care for poor people, it is like we are caring for God Himself (**Matt.25:34-40; Ps.72:13**). In His eyes, we truly worship and obey Him when we consider people in need (**Isa.58:6-7,10**). One way we can do this is to pray for them from **Lamentations 2:19: *Arise, cry out in the night, as the watches of the night begin; pour out your heart like water in the presence of the Lord. Lift up your hands to him for the lives of your children, who faint from hunger at the head of every street.*** Will you not think about praying for children at risk from Monday to Friday? You can decide to fast one day per week by skipping one meal. You can also decide to fast from television for one week. Ask your mother to help you do it the right way.

Prayer pointers:

- 1. MONDAY: Children without food.** Father, I pray that You will draw hungry children to Jesus. That they will come to know Him as the Bread of Life and that whoever comes to Him will never be hungry or thirsty (**John 6:36**). Please provide food for them every day.
- 2. TUESDAY: Children in danger.** Father I pray for children who are sick or who are living in a war zone. Please protect them from diseases and harm to their bodies. Give them shelter and safety in times of war and disaster. Reveal Yourself as their Helper so they will not be afraid (**Heb.13:6**).
- 3. WEDNESDAY: Children without parents.** Heavenly Father, please watch over and care for all the children without parents. Give them shelter, food and love. Also help Christians to have a desire to defend weak and fatherless children and give them courage to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves (**Prov.31:8, Ps.82:3-4**).
- 4. THURSDAY: Children on the streets.** Father I pray for children living on the streets in our cities and towns. They are so dirty, Father, and always begging. Forgive me for not having pity on them. Reveal Yourself to them, let them come to You and let no one hinder them, let them enter into Your kingdom (**Luke 18:16**).
- 5. FRIDAY: Children that are abused.** Father of mercy, I pray for children who are beaten, abused or misused by other people. I cannot

imagine what it is really like to be treated so badly. Please will You show them that Your love and faithfulness will never leave them, write it on their hearts (**Prov.3:3**). Let them know for sure they are never alone, no matter how difficult things are.

4. Bibles everywhere, please Lord!

Imagine life without the Bible. How would you know the story of God's love and **forgiveness**? How would you know what God wants you to do? How would you know about prayer? The Bible is like a light that shows us the path through life. But almost 400 million people don't have the Bible in their own language. Most of these people are children. Many languages don't have the translation of even one Bible verse. That's because some languages don't have an alphabet. If there is no alphabet, there are no written words. And if there are no written words, there's no Bible. The good news is that hundreds of people all over the world are working as Bible translators. They take the words and thoughts of the Bible and write them in the words of another language. Some translators are missionaries who go to distant countries to live with the people there, learn their language and help with Bible translation. Will you not think about praying for these matters Monday to Friday?

Ask your parents to find you a big world map. See if you can find India, China and Africa. Every evening, or whenever you remember, put your hand on these countries and pray for each person living there to come to know the Lord Jesus and have a Bible of their own.

1. **Understanding:** Lord, I ask for Your Spirit of wisdom and revelation to rest on Bible translators so that they can do their work well (**Isaiah 11:2, Proverbs 2:6**).
2. **Protection:** Father, protect the Bible translators from danger and illness. Deliver them from evil people that want to do them harm (**Psalms 16:1, Proverbs 18:10, 2 Corinthians 11:26**).
3. **Distribution:** Father, may every person without a Bible soon have one of their own which they can read and that those who cannot read, will be able to listen to the Bible on CD or cassette.
4. **Labourers:** Send people to translate the Bible for those who do not know You, because they can't believe in someone they have not heard about (**Romans 10:14,17**).

5. **Thanksgiving:** Forgive me for taking the Bible I have for granted and not reading my Bible enough. I rejoice in Your Word—it's worth more than money (**Psalm 119:14,72**).

5. Praying for children at risk

This week we will pray for other children that are in trouble because bad things have happened to them. Every time we pray for a child who is in trouble, we can also say thank you to God for giving us so many things, and people who are our family and love us. We do not always think about it this way, but we have many things that other children do not have.

Monday: HIV/AIDS: South Africa has the highest number of people living with HIV/AIDS. This means that many children are born HIV positive because their parents have AIDS. Many children are left behind all by themselves when both their parents die of AIDS. Often other family members are also sick or too far away to take care of them. *Lord Jesus, I pray for these children, that they will not feel alone. Please send someone to take care of them and give them food every day. Help them to come to know You, Jesus.*

Tuesday: AFTERCARE: Many parents work during the day and leave their children at daycare or after school care centres. The people caring for children at these places are really amazing and special. But, sometimes bad things happen to children in these care facilities, because some adults do not really love the children and do and say nasty things to them. *Lord Jesus, I pray for children that suffer because adults do and say nasty things to them. Please help them so that these bad people will be found out. I thank you for the good people who watch and take care of children everywhere in South Africa.*

Wednesday: POVERTY: Many parents are not able to find a job and then they cannot buy food for their children. It sometimes happens that children begin to beg for money at street corners, because they really want something to eat. *Lord Jesus, I pray for children who do not have enough food to eat every day. Please will You do miracles for everyone, so that they will know You are a good God. Please help their parents to find good jobs, so that they can buy food for everyone.*

Thursday: PARENTS: Many children do not have parents and live with their grandparents. Other children's parents work in towns far away and they only see them once in a while. *Lord Jesus, I want to say thank you for every child who has parents and who is able to live with them. Please help these children to love and respect their parents. Also comfort those children who do not have parents or who are in orphanages to know that You are a heavenly Father who also provides for their needs on earth.*

Friday: GIVE THANKS: As we have prayed about the troubles of other children, let us take time to look and see what we have, compared to them. Ask someone to help you to write down the things you have that you can thank the Lord for. Also say thank you to your parents/family or guardians who look after you. *Lord Jesus, I give thanks to You for You are good and Your mercy endures forever (1 Chron.16:34). Thank you for showing me how much I have to give thanks for.*

6. Praying with your body

Did you know that you can worship Jesus with your body as well as with your heart and spirit? Jesus gave you your body and He loves it when you worship Him also with your body. There are many different postures you can take in prayer and the Bible is full of them! Each one is a way of showing Jesus what is in your heart by expressing it in a physical way.

Monday: Kneeling is a way to show Jesus you are entering into His presence and accept that He will answer your prayer in the way that is best for you. It is a physical way to humble yourself before Jesus. *You can kneel down when you have an important prayer request you want to bring before God. You may always kneel when you pray to show honour to Him.*

Tuesday: Standing shows that you are waiting for Him to tell you what to do. You take your position before Him in prayer and wait on Him. *You can ask Him about a problem you are facing, and then wait to listen what He says to you.*

Wednesday: Raising hands shows Jesus that you are reaching towards Him in praise to glorify Him, or asking something with arms

open in order to receive it. *You can sing Him a song, telling Him how much you love Him.*

Thursday: Walking shows Jesus that you are ready for His direction or plans. *You can e.g. pray for the school every time you walk into the school building.*

Friday: Bowing shows Jesus that you honour Him and feel humble because He is so wonderful and powerful and supplies in your needs. *You can do this when you want to say thank you to Jesus because of who He is when He has answered one of your prayer requests.*

Weekend: On your face. Whenever someone was overcome by Jesus' presence in Bible times, they would fall down on their faces. It shows Jesus that He is so awesome and that you are overcome by His love for you. *You can do this after you have had your quiet time or prayer time. When lying down, you do not need to do anything but think upon Jesus' greatness in your life.*

7. Praying for atheists

Many people who are without any religious belief are unhappy because they cannot find purpose in life. Will you not spend 5 days to pray for people who do not believe in God?

- 1. Open their eyes!** Even if they are not Christians, almost 85% of the people in the world believe in some kind of god. Some worship the moon or stars, rivers, plants or animals. But an estimated 938 million people in the world do not believe in any god at all! They are irreligious. Read **Romans 1:20** and pray: *Father, will you reveal Yourself to all irreligious people as the One who created them!*
- 2. Touch their hearts!** There are three types of irreligious people. Atheists do not believe God is real. An agnostic thinks you cannot know for sure if God is real. The third group doesn't really care if God is real or not. Read **Acts 17:26-28** and pray: *Eternal Father, help irreligious people to know that You can fill the emptiness in their hearts.*
- 3. Let them know You made everything!** Irreligious people do not pray or believe in miracles, heaven or hell. They think the world happened by chance. Read **Matthew 13:22** and **Revelation 3:17-18**

and pray: *Wonderful Saviour, help irreligious people see that true riches are found only in You.*

4. **Let them hear!** Irreligious people often look at the lives of Christians and they do not look any different to them than their own. That makes them think they are no worse off without God than Christians. Read **Daniel 6:20** and pray: *Father God, You are the only Living God. Like Daniel showed the heathen king You are alive, please show irreligious people that you are alive through the testimony of other Believers.*
5. **Help them see You are real!** To irreligious people the Bible is just another book. But many have never even considered picking up a Bible to read, or have not even heard of the existence of the Bible. Read **Luke 4:4** and pray: *Father, You are the living Word. Please help irreligious people find a Bible and be curious enough to read it. Please touch their hearts and minds to see You are real.*

8. Praying for government

You can change the world – by simply praying for those who are kings and rulers in the nations. God specifically tells us to pray for our government leaders so that our country will be blessed (**1 Timothy 2:1-2**). The following are some prayers from God’s Word to help you as you pray for our president and other government officials, for all of them need a closer and growing relationship with the Lord Jesus!

1. **For their homes:** Father, reveal the truth of Jesus Christ to the family and heart of every government leader. Make them willing to do what is right. Give them wisdom and understanding. Let each home be filled with peace and quiet (**Psalms 127:1, 101:7; Proverbs 14:11, 24:3, 17:1**).
2. **For their spiritual lives:** Father, please open the eyes of all our government leaders who do not yet follow Jesus as their Saviour, so that they may see that You are the best plan for their lives. I pray that they would turn away from bad things and that they would live good lives and serve You. Give them much faith, love, patience, and gentleness. (**John 6:44; Ephesians 2:8; 1 Timothy 6:11,12**).
3. **For their work:** Father, please pour out Your Spirit of wisdom and revelation upon the heart and mind of every government leader. Cause them to seek wise counsel, take only good advice, and accept correction if they need it. Help them make the right decisions (**Proverbs 15:22, 19:20**).

4. **For strength:** Lord, help our leaders to be strong and brave and to do what is right even if they stand alone. Give them confidence that You are their helper so that they will not be afraid of what anyone says or thinks (**Joshua 1:7; Hebrews 13:6**).
5. **For humble hearts:** Guide our leaders to be humble, to do what is right for other people, and to show kindness. Will You please protect, guide, and teach them when they show true humility. Cause them to speak no evil about anyone, to live in peace and to be polite to all people (**Micah 6:8; Psalm 18:27, 25:9; Titus 3:2**).
6. **To be honest:** Father, give our leaders an undivided heart to speak and walk in the truth. Help them not to listen to lies and to be trustworthy themselves (**Psalm 101:2-4, 86:11, Proverbs 16:13, 29:12**).
7. **To have compassion:** O Lord, help our government to do what is right for the poor and needy in our country. Help them come to the rescue of the weak and the orphans. Help them not to seek revenge or hold a grudge (**Proverbs 29:14; Psalm 82:3-4; Leviticus 19:18**).

9. What can I pray for Mom and Dad?

Sometimes you feel so lonely, and actually really in the way when things are going wrong at home or when Mommy and Daddy fight. Is it your fault? Can you perhaps do something to change things so that everything will get better? Sometimes you just want to show them you love them and help them with all the difficult things they have to do. There is something very powerful that you can do; you can ask your heavenly Father to help them. Your prayers can really change their lives; praying is one of the most important things you can do for them. Why don't you start praying for your parents with one of your trusted friends every school day during break for 5 minutes, or in the evening before dinner? Do not wait for bedtime, then you may be too tired to pray. Here are five things you can pray.

1. **MONDAY: Lonely...** When your parents fight it makes them feel really lonely, especially if they are still angry when they go to sleep. Every time you hear them fight, or if they are unhappy, go and find a place where you can spend a few minutes alone with God. Ask His help and pray that Jesus will give them peace and that they will understand how much Jesus loves them.

2. **TUESDAY: Afraid...** In many homes money is a problem. Sometimes there is not enough money. Ask your Heavenly Father to help you as a family. Remember that Jesus taught us to pray: Our Father who is in heaven, give us our daily bread. Ask and you will see how God will provide for everything. And many times it will help Mom and Dad if you go to them and ask if you can pray with them that God will provide for all your needs.
3. **WEDNESDAY: Angry with you...** Sometimes you do something that you realise afterwards was wrong. Pray that they will help you to do the right things and show you the right way. Pray and ask the Lord to help them to forgive you and make sure you say that you are sorry.
4. **THURSDAY: Give a hand...** When your parents come home, see if there is something that you can help them with. Sometimes you can offer to make them a cup of coffee, do the dishes or wipe the table. Ask the Lord to show you small things that will make them proud of you and be a blessing to them. Reaching out to them like this will definitely change their heart and attitude towards you.
5. **FRIDAY: Their relationship...** Pray for them to live in peace with one another. Also ask them to sometimes do something together at home as a family and pray that God will make them willing to do that. Tell them that you love them, and that you want to spend time with them. They do not always realise that you need them.

10. Who is God really?

It is difficult to imagine what God looks like, because we cannot see Him! One of the reasons is because God is a Spirit. We are made in God's image, that is why we think of Him in 'human' terms. But God is Spirit and no man had ever seen Him. You can't see Him like you can see your parents or friends. How then can we know He is real or what He is like? The answer is simple. It lies in what we call God's character, as He explains it to us in the Bible. He has special names that help us understand what He is like. An important word to remember when you're praying according to God's character is the word 'always'. 'Always' means 'eternal'. God has always existed and always will. With this in mind, take note of these 6 important reminders of God's character.

1. God is **always** present. This means God is everywhere, all the time. *Thank you God that I can pray anywhere, any time. Especially when I feel lonely, help me to remember You are with me, closer than my mom and dad, or my friends.*
2. God is **always** powerful. God can do anything, nothing is impossible for Him. *Thank you God that You always answer my prayers, even though You sometimes say 'no'. Your will is best for me. Please come and do the things that I cannot do.*
3. God **always** knows. God knows everything, even before it happens. *Thank you God that I can have peace and confidence when I pray because You are in control of all things that will happen in my life.*
4. God is **always** fair. God does only what is right and just. *Thank you God that I can turn to You to help me out when I do not know what the right thing is to do. Please do in my life what is best in Your eyes.*
5. God is **always** holy. 'Holy' means 'perfect'. God can never sin. *Thank you God that You never make a mistake in the way You hear or answer my prayers. I also want to be holy. Make me holy as You are holy.*
6. God is **always** good. His plans for your life are for your own good. *Thank you God that in every situation, You work out all things for my own good. Help me to see circumstances like You do.*

Can you think of other parts of God's character that are not on this list? Make your own list. But most of all, remember to give thanks to God every day for being with you always, even now!