



HOW TO PRAY FOR YOUR CITY

Every time you turn around, the New Testament church was praying. They prayed waiting for the Holy Spirit. They prayed as a matter of routine. They prayed under persecution. They prayed until the place was shaken. They prayed when one of their number was in jail. They prayed, and God sent out two of their best on the first missionary journey.

What are we doing every time we turn around? By the way, what are Korean Christians known for? What are American Christians known for? How can you help your church bring prayer to bear in your city? Here are just a few suggestions to help your church pray for its city.

- Get the names of the key officials in your city (mayor, city councilmen, city department heads, police superintendent, fire chief, etc.) and pray for them by name in a rotation in your service.
- Get the names of the CEOs/owners of key businesses in your city and pray for them by name in your services.
- Ask the police superintendent for a couple of the biggest problems he faces. Pray for these issues specifically.
- Ask the police for a couple of their hot spots and pray for those areas specifically. Pray for ministries that are at work in or near those areas and for any believers who may live in or near that area.
- Ask your police chief for a list of the most-wanted fugitives, and pray for them by name publicly. Pray for their families.

- Pray for the families of those who are incarcerated (people your church members may know).

- Pray for the principals of your high schools and grade schools by name in rotation.

- Pray for your hospitals by name, asking God to give the administrators, the doctors, the nurses, and staff great wisdom, sensitivity, compassion, and a sense of righteousness and justice as they serve your community.

- Pray for other churches and their pastors by name (Now there's a revolutionary idea).

- Pray for your newspapers and television news outlets by name, asking God to use them for good in your community and not evil, asking that the management would have a sense of accountability to God and the community.

- Identify the biggest evil targets in your city (a bar, nightclub, adult bookstore, etc). Make it a prayer focus, praying for those who work there, those who own it, those who frequent the establishment, and praying God's truth would overwhelm, convict, and save them.

- Take your prayer meeting on the road. Have everyone bring their families, their kids and babies in strollers, and hold a prayer meeting in front of city hall, praying for all of the officials, praying for righteousness, justice, fairness, honesty. Or, take the whole congregation to the police (or fire) station. Call the commander in advance and let him know you are going

to be coming to pray for them and their families. Ask where you can stand on the sidewalk so you will be out of the way.

- Do a prayer walk. Choose an area of your neighborhood, community, or city where you can make a 4- or 5-block circle. Walk in groups of three, praying out loud as you walk, praying for the people you pass, the schools you pass, letting the Holy Spirit lead people to see things with spiritual eyes. When you return from the prayer walk, ask people what God impressed on their hearts as they walked and prayed. You walk by a bar, ask God to close it. You walk by a Bible-preaching church, ask God to bless it. You walk by a Mormon temple, ask God to empower His truth against deception. Ask God to bless and prosper legitimate businesses and to free institutions of bureaucracy and corruption.

At Armitage Baptist, we rotate the names of those we have targeted for public prayer in our services and in our mid-week prayer list. Encourage people to include the name, or names, of the week in their personal and family devotions.

Every time I cross paths with Mayor Daley, I am able to say to him, "We regularly pray for you by name at Armitage." I recently was having lunch with the police commander from our district. I had already told him that we pray for him by name. He took me to an Italian restaurant for lunch, and while we were sitting there, one of the aldermen came walking by. I had never met him. When the police commander introduced him to me, I was able to say, "At Armitage, we pray for you by name regularly."