



Pathways Weekly Reading & Prayer Guide

Week 12: Praying for Others

April 30 - May 6 • Pastor Kenny Ellis

Guest Speaker This Week

We began our Pathways journey with guest speaker, Bob Allums, who serves with A Praying Life Ministries. Bob will be joining us again this week as we explore the pathway of praying for others. He will be with us Sunday morning at 9:15 a.m. (not 9:30 a.m.) and Wednesday evening at 6:15 p.m. The sessions will be identical, so you need only attend one of the options.

Change of Plans

The Prayer Gathering that was scheduled for Thursday, May 4, has been changed to Wednesday, May 10. This will take the place of the final Pathways Class and allow us to finish our 90-Day Prayer journey with an all-church prayer experience. We will gather in the sanctuary at 6:15 p.m.

Loving Others Through Prayer

"When we move from petition to intercession we are shifting our center of gravity from our own needs to the needs and concerns of others." Richard Foster, *Prayer* (p. 191)

One of the most powerful expressions of love for another person is to ask your Heavenly Father to meet their needs and work in their life. There are several places in the Bible where we are commanded to pray for one another:

- James 5:16, "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."
- Ephesians 6:18, "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people."
- 1 Timothy 2:1, "I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people..."

It is an amazing privilege that God invites us into the process of His work in the lives of other people through prayer. He weaves our lives together with His own life as we thoughtfully consider the needs of others and offer prayers on their behalf. It is an act of love which requires selflessness, discipline and perseverance.

To pray for others requires that you slow down and pay attention to their needs. You enter their world and imagine what it is like to experience life as they do. This willingness to empathize fills you with compassion and then shapes your prayers. To pray for others is to mirror the very heart and life of Jesus who made the needs of others His preoccupation.

Often times, loving others through prayer leads to serving and loving them in other ways. In this sense, we find that in part, we become the way that God answers our prayers. For example, you may be praying for someone who is dealing with the loss of a loved one. You pray for God to bring them comfort, peace and a sense of His presence. As you pray, the Holy Spirit prompts you to drop by and spend some time with the person. As you leave, you have a sense that God used you to bring His comfort, peace and presence.

What Should We Ask?

Many times, the needs of others may be obvious, practical and straightforward. In those times, we simply ask our Heavenly Father what is on our heart. Though the need may be obvious, we cannot assume God will meet the need in the timing or way that we think He should. But, that is up to Him. Our part is to ask with a childlike simplicity and faith.

Other times, we can use the Bible to guide our prayers beneath and beyond the physical needs of those we care about to address emotional and spiritual issues. The Bible is full of passages or verses that can be turned into prayers for people. In fact, there are several passages that are already prayers that can easily be adapted and personalized for people in our lives.

Each day this week, pick one of the passages below and use it as a guide to pray for one or more people in your life:

1. Ephesians 1:15-23
2. Ephesians 3:14-21
3. Ephesians 2:1-10 (pray for unbelievers)
4. Colossians 1:9-12
5. Acts 2:42-47 (pray for our church)
6. Galatians 5:22-26 (for a person or our church)
7. Matthew 5:25-44 (for someone struggling with contentment)

Wisdom from Others
Book Suggested Readings
Too Busy Not To Pray (Hybels) - Chapter 16
A Praying Life (Miller) - Chapters 30
Prayer (Yancey) - Chapter 17