

PRAYING

For our Friends in

Cross-Cultural Ministry

TOGETHER

Global Outreach
Golden Hills Community Church
2401 Shady Willow Lane
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Informed Intercession

“Lord, please bless workers around the world. Be with them each day. Protect them and give them strength to do their work.”

Does this prayer sound familiar? Perhaps you’ve noticed that much of the intercession made for overseas workers is general. Yet prayer is an important way to support and care for workers.

To make those prayers more specific, up-to-date information is important. The following may be ways in which you can get current news from your friends involved in cross cultural ministry:

- Get their newsletters;
- Set up a blog site for them and interact regularly;
- Set up a website for them so they can upload current news, pictures and stories;
- Get relevant information from the web on the country people group in which they are working;
- Watch the news (BBC, CNN) and other international web pages. Find a news source from the country on the web;
- Use a communication tool such as *Skype*, so they can interact live with your group during times of prayer.

Every Christian should be involved in world evangelism through faithful, biblically based prayer. The question is how should we pray for those we have sent?

On the following pages are some specific areas to pray into regarding these topics:

1. Relationship with God
2. Love for Others
3. Heart Issues
4. Ministry
5. A Strong Family
6. Protection
7. Material Matters
8. Health and Strength
9. One Last Thing

1 Relationship with God

Those committed to serve are usually overworked. We can identify that there are often far more responsibilities than time to fulfill them. As a result, like Martha of Bethany, it is easy to become service oriented, rather than love oriented. The most important commandment for all Christians, including those we have sent, is *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”*

Maintaining a close walk with the Lord is essential if the dangers of spiritual dryness are to be avoided. Paul reminded the Ephesians that he was praying for them. He prayed, *“that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you might know him better.”* (Ephesians 1:17). ‘The knowledge of him’ is fundamental to every believer’s life that is surrendered to Christ and to his purposes.

Pray for the spiritual life of your friend in cross-cultural ministry and their walk with God

- Their bible study time -
that their love for God’s work will grow
- Their prayer life -
that it will become stronger and more consistent
- That they will be led by the Holy Spirit
- For maturity and growth in grace

2 Love for Others

The second great commandment is *“Love your neighbor as yourself.”* A major difficulty for many is getting along with other co-workers. One sending agency discovered that 80 percent of its members who did not return to the field had problems with their co-workers. It is common for cross-cultural workers to have problems with each other, especially in an international team setting where there can be miscommunication and misunderstandings.

It is equally vital that good relationships are kept with local people; this is key to seeing people reached with the gospel message.

Paul’s prayer for the Thessalonian believers is a model for today: *“May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else.”* (1 Thessalonians 3:12).

I Corinthians 13:4, 5, 7

Love is patient, love is kind. .it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Romans 15:5

Now may the God of endurance and encouragement grant you agreement with one another according to Christ Jesus.

Colossians 4:6

Your speech should always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person.

Philippians 2:3-5

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Pray for relationships with co- workers and local people

- For team unity; the ability to forgive and a willingness to be flexible; that cross-cultural workers will have a servant heart and a willingness to be Christ-like in all relationships
- For teamwork; may they appreciate differences in the body of Christ and gifts others have
- Learn to respond and not react
- Practice humility and forgiveness-strive for unity in all things
- Wisdom in knowing with which local people to build relationships
- Work with nationals who are being trained

3 Heart Issues

Sins of the flesh burden the servant. He must be delivered from pride, from racism, and from prejudice, which would hinder his effective ministry to the people of another culture.

Contrary to the concepts of some, those called to serve and witness cross-culturally are ordinary people. They have an old nature just like the rest of us. They need to be sanctified.

Psalm 51: 10

*Create in me a pure heart,
O God, and renew a steadfast
spirit within me.*

Galatians 5:22-23

*But the fruit of the Spirit is
love, joy, peace, patience,
kindness, goodness,
faithfulness, gentleness and
self-control. Against such
things there is no law. Those
who belong to Christ Jesus
have crucified the sinful nature
with its passions and desires.
Since we live by the Spirit, let
us keep in step with the Spirit.
Let us not become conceited
provoking and envying each
other.*

Pray for spiritual vitality

- The Lord's servants will be guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit. They will see the results of the work of the Spirit in the lives of those with whom they come in contact
- That the fruit of the Spirit will be evident in the life of those called to serve
- For a willingness to regularly seek examination by God and to repent from any errors that have crept into their lives
- For a spirit of humility and to willingly ask God for wisdom in carrying out their assignment
- To be so renewed by God's Word so that no sin will have dominion over them

4 Ministry

The Book of Acts contains thrilling accounts of God's amazing providence in bringing His messengers into contact with prepared people. God led Philip to speak to the Ethiopian eunuch, who was reading Isaiah 53. God guided Peter to the Gentiles, Cornelius and his household, [who were] waiting to hear words whereby they would be saved. God sent Paul to the Philippians jailor who cried out, "What must I do to be saved?"

Living through tough situations and being in a foreign culture for a long time can cause your friend to lose sight of their calling and purpose.

The following are factors that can be challenging and /or discouraging:

- Living in another culture
- Working among an unresponsive or hostile people
- Lack of team members which means more of a work load
- Ministry can mean extended time away from the family
- Tensions between demands of work and needs of the family
- Physical discomfort through poor living conditions
- Isolation and lack of fellowship with other people
- Security issues, lack of freedom to meet and share with people and government restrictions
- Lack of meaningful news from home

Colossians. 1: 9-11

We have not stopped praying for you . . . that you might [be] strengthened . . . so that you might have great endurance and patience and joyfully give thanks.

Ephesians 6:19

Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the Gospel.

Revelation 7:9

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no-one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

Psalms 33:12

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he chose for his inheritance.

Pray for their ministry

- For new contacts and a growing ministry
- For boldness and open doors
- For prepared hearts and fruitfulness
- For sharing, discipleship and leadership training
- For progress in reaching goals they have set
- Perseverance; that the passion for the lost and the burden to see Christ made known will not be lost

Pray for the country in which they are working

- Governments
- Openness to the gospel and open doors for ministry
- Peace - so cross-cultural workers can stay and spread the gospel
- People in the region to have open hearts and not hard hearts towards the gospel

Pray for ability to communicate

- Patience as they do language study
- Ability to improve in their communication skills
- Desire to understand the culture they are in and adapt to it

5 A Strong Family

A doctor serving the Lord overseas wrote: “If you were praying for me, I would want you to pray specifically about my relationship with my wife... I find it amazing how living in a foreign society causes silly little things to become major irritations. Ask God to help us maintain a loving relationship that is an outstanding testimony to the grace of God.”

Children as well as parents need prayer in this way, enabling all family members to carry out their responsibilities to each other in love.

The tasks of a fulltime worker, often in a foreign culture, can cause a strain on the relationships within a family -- husbands and wives, parents and children. Pray that the Lord would strengthen these family bonds and draw them close together.

Sickness, education issues and family concerns at home are some of the ways with which cross-cultural workers have been limited, frustrated and even forced back home.

When God calls His people to leave their homes to serve Him in foreign lands, their extended family remains behind, and children sometimes accept to leave their parents for schooling. Pray for the health, safety, and encouragement of these family members.

1 Peter 3:7

Husbands, in the same way, live with your wives with understanding of their weaker nature yet showing them honor as co-heirs of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Ephesians 5:1-2

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

1 Timothy 3:4

He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect.

Pray for the family

- Husband/wife relationships
- Children; relationship with parents, education. friends and church people
- Family life can be a model to those saved and unsaved
- Extended family in other parts of the world
- Singleness and related issues
- Don't forget family members back at home
- Whole family's protection and well-being

6 Protection

Those who faithfully go out in response to God's calling on their lives are prime targets of the enemy. The Lord prayed to the Father: "My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one." Paul asked the Christians at Rome to join him in his struggle by praying for him. "Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea."

Discouragement is a favorite device of the devil. The temptation to leave the work on the field and enter "greener pastures" of service at home is great. It is essential that workers stay alert to the spiritual fight they are in and know their authority in Christ to overcome any temptation or attack.

Pray that your friend will know their authority over Satan and over the demonic activity

- That the Lord will grant His powerful protection to His servant
- For victory over Satan, sin and the flesh
- That they will not be caught off guard or be open to discouragement

1 John 4:4

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

Ephesians 1: 13

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.

7 Material Matters

In many countries, double-digit inflation and unstable currencies have had negative effects. This has significant effects on their national economies and upon those who go there to serve the Lord as well.

Cross-cultural workers as well as many of the nationals, often face times of exceptional financial crisis. Most called to serve depend on others for their financial support, and at times, that can be burdensome.

School fees are often very expensive and international travel expenses, health insurance, visa costs, language study fees, conference costs are all added expenses on top of the usual living expenses.

However, many workers have wonderful testimonies of how God provided, and how waiting on God increased their faith and dependency on Him.

Make yourself aware of the financial pressures and pray that the Lord will provide all their needs.

- Pray for them to give all their anxious thoughts to God and rest in His peace.
- Pray that juggling priorities or lack of funds will not become a source of stress or conflict.
- Pray that God will provide the resources needed to achieve His purposes and in ways which will bring praise and glory to Him.

Philippians 4:19

And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7

Don't worry about anything, but, in everything through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 14:17-21

We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered. "Bring them here to me," he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

8 Health and Strength

Constantly living and working in a second culture and language can be very taxing. Lack of relaxing activities, books and other refreshing materials can also add to mental tiredness and depression.

In foreign countries just the daily stress of living can be daunting. Unless one has lived in other cultures, this is difficult to understand. Shopping can be quite a chore and require many hours of time. In certain areas the climate can be stressful.

Interactions with government officials can be exasperating and time-consuming.

There can be interminable delays in securing needed goods or services.

Overwork due to the lack of personnel and not taking time out is potentially a factor that might have physical repercussions.

Those on their first term overseas are particularly vulnerable to disease as they come into contact with an environment they have never encountered before. One Sending Agency discovered several of its members came down with serious illnesses in the term just before furlough. It concluded they were physically drained, so their resistance was low.

Ephesians 3:16

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being.

Isaiah 41:10

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Psalms 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Pray for their physical and emotional life.

- Adaptation to climate
- Health in the midst of disease
- Safety in all types of travel
- Victory over loneliness, discouragement and depression
- Financial needs
- Against depression in any member of the family or single worker
- Recognition of the danger signs before it is too late
- Ask God to help them recognize their need for weekly rest away from ministry responsibilities
- Pray for endurance, stamina, and pacing for missionaries to insure long-term, fruitful ministry
- Pray that their hearts are encouraged and strengthened

9 One Last Thing

And remember....

Praise God for the answers!

Let your friend know that you are praying for them and ask for regular feedback so that you are aware of how God is answering them. Develop an authentic two-way relationship with them by asking them to pray for issues that concern you too.

This simple guide is not exhaustive but we trust that it will be a help to you to pray specifically and consistently for your friends who desire to glorify God through living Spirit-led lives and making Christ known to those whom they have been called to be His witness. Your commitment to praying for your friends and their ministry will have an eternal impact in the world.

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice:

“Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying:

“Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God forever and ever. Amen!”

Then one of the elders asked me, “These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?” I answered, “Sir, you know.” And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Rev 7:9-14

Sources

By Paul G. Zimmerman Eternity Magazine/May 1984 - Modified Text

Modified original written by the late Ernest Pickering, Th.D.

<http://www.baptistworldmission.org/get-involved/pray/998-how-to-pray-for-missionaries.html>

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Mission Board, SBC [http://gbim.org/component/content/article/46/603-30-](http://gbim.org/component/content/article/46/603-30-ways-to-pray-for-missionaries)

[ways-to-pray-for-missionaries](http://gbim.org/component/content/article/46/603-30-ways-to-pray-for-missionaries)

<http://www.allaboutprayer.org/prayers-for-missionaries-faq.htm>

Caring for Our Workers Together, WEC International.

Prayer Summary Sheet

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