

## How to Pray For Home Missions

Missions is more than God's people obediently serving Him. Missions is God at work. If He is not working in and through His people to accomplish His purposes, nothing eternal is getting done.

A good example is Paul at Philippi in Acts 16. He was faithfully teaching about Jesus when Lydia believed. God led the missionary to the right place, empowered his witness, and opened the heart of the hearer.

In Matthew 9:36-38, Jesus looked at the multitudes and their unmet needs and said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few." He compared the huge task of meeting the crowd's needs with the few people available to do the job. What is to be done in this tragic situation? Jesus answered, "Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest field." The solution is to ask God to touch hearts and challenge His people to work the harvest.

### Unleashing God's Power

The apostle Paul was a great missionary who often urged God's people to pray for him. He linked the success of his mission to the faithful prayer support of the saints of God. In II Corinthians 1:8-11, he described some of his experiences as "hardships we suffered," "under great pressure," "beyond our ability to endure." "despaired even of life" (NIV). Yet he spoke confidently of God's deliverance. Paul was sure that God would sustain him as the believers prayed.

This passage shows that God actively protects, delivers, and uses us for blessing. Any prayer links us to the most exciting aspects of ministry. Paul said, "Many will give thanks . . . for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many" (II Corinthians 1:11, NIV). An inseparable link exists between prayer and effective missions.

The place God wants you in His missions program is something wonderful that you must discover from Him. But it is His will that you pray for world evangelization. We do not dare sidestep this opportunity and responsibility. "Pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17). "They should always pray and not give up" (Luke 18:1, NIV).

### Pray on Two Levels

Here are two suggestions to help you pray more effectively:

1. Maintain a broad general interest in world missions. Keep up with home missionaries in various parts of North America as well as foreign missionaries in various countries. Pray for them along with your church's missionaries each day.
2. Pray regularly for one home missionary and his family. After you have cultivated your interest worldwide, focus on one particular outreach. Ask God to put a specific home missionary on your heart. As He leads you, make a definite commitment to pray daily for your partner in ministry. This special connection to another ministry holds all the mutual benefits of deep and purposeful friendship.

Learn all you can about your home missionary—the family, city, and state or province where he is serving, the type of work he does, the people whom he is working, and the status of the church he is building. Assume responsibility in your friendship with your home missionary. Write to him regularly without burdening him to respond. Rejoice with him in his answers to prayer. Worship God with thanksgiving for meeting his needs.

### Weekly Cycle of Prayer

It is not easy to pray for someone every day for an extended period of time. To keep your intercession fresh, vital, and directed to specific needs, use the following weekly cycle of prayer topics each day.

#### **RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**

Too often we assume that home missionaries do not struggle as we do in their relationship with God. But this is a home missionary's primary need.

Pray that your home missionary will:

- \*Love and study God's Word
- \*Have a strong prayer life

- \*Be continually filled with the Holy Ghost
- \*Be maturing spiritually
- \*Make progress over personal sin

## **PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL NEEDS**

Satan often discourages us through our physical and emotional lives. Frequently a home missionary must live in difficult circumstances with financial straits and personal struggle during the early stages of founding a church. These hardships can weigh heavy on him. Pray for his financial stability, peace of mind, and good morale in the midst of hardship.

With hectic schedules, home missionaries need your prayers for safety, stamina, and a sense of priority. Pray preventively. Cover your missionary's health continually with prayer. Pray against discouragement, loneliness, and depression.

## **FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**

Pray for family relationships—husband/wife, parent/child. Pray for the children's salvation, spiritual growth, health, and education. Pray too that the home missionary's family life will provide an excellent model for local Christians and the unsaved. And pray against the temptations that destroy families. Pray that the home missionary would also maintain good relationships with his home church, parents, and family members left at home.

## **ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE**

In evangelism, communication is the name of the game. Your home missionary is in ministry to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. Whether he is communicating with his life or lips, he must be understood.

The home missionary competes with the high-dollar, professional blitz of Hollywood-style special effects in the media and entertainment industries and vies for time with countless recreational distractions. To reach numbed, lost souls with the gospel, he needs to be an anointed preacher, a sound Bible teacher, a dedicated soulwinner, and an excellent communicator. Pray for the Lord to enhance these qualities in your home missionary.

Many home missionaries reach into ethnic minority cultures where simple communication becomes a major difficulty due to language barriers. Learning a new language and a new culture is frustrating and difficult, but it is essential to good communication. Even an elementary knowledge of a language takes years of study and practice. And a superficial understanding is insufficient for communicating spiritual truths and defending the faith. Would you listen to a speaker who was not fluent in English?

To really communicate, the missionary must adapt culturally to identify with those he is trying to reach. Getting close to the local people and understanding them means adjusting lifestyle and cultural preferences. Pray that your missionary will have the stamina and understanding to demonstrate Christ cross-culturally.

## **EFFECTIVE MINISTRY**

Remember to pray for what your missionary is actually doing; witnessing, visiting, teaching, preaching, counseling, nurturing—and pray for the people to whom he is ministering. Prayer letters will teach you how to pray specifically for these things. When praying, include requests for boldness, open doors, open hearts, and excellence in the effort. Most of all, ask for Holy Ghost empowerment for your home missionary's productivity (John 15:16).

## **TEAM RELATIONSHIPS**

Hopefully your home missionary is not completely on his own. In some instances, the home missions church is a daughter work of a larger mother church. In other instances, a home missionary teams up with other local pastor, evangelists, and burdened believers in his region.

Unfortunately, this mix of personalities designed to strengthen the ministry can sometimes be used of Satan to weaken it. Poor team relationships can spoil the work. Pray for all the fellow workers your home missionary mentions in his letters. Pray that they appreciate and sharpen one another in good and healthy ways.

## **STATE OR PROVINCE OF SERVICE**

Expand your prayers to include the entire state or province where your home missionary is located. The political leaders and situation, the economy, the spiritual condition of the hearts of the people and their attitude toward the

gospel are important factors in home missions evangelism. Pray that the whole region will become more open in responsiveness to the gospel.

Whether you use this guide regularly or use some other method, you can never run out of prayer material. You have an important work to do in giving the world the message of Jesus Christ.

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