

## **How to pray for missionaries**

**"Pray for us." -- Hebrews 13:18**

Want to know how to pray for those working to fulfill Jesus' Great Commission among those yet unreached?

You can use your fingers as memory aids when you pray for missions. Here's how those fingers become prayer points:

1. **Thumb**

Since your thumb is nearest to you, begin by praying for those missionaries closest to you. They are the easiest ones to remember. C.S. Lewis said that praying for those we love is a "sweet duty."

2. **Index or pointing finger**

Let your "pointing finger" remind you to pray for missionaries who teach, instruct, and heal. This includes teachers, doctors, and evangelists. They need support and wisdom for pointing others in the right direction.

3. **Middle finger**

Our tallest finger reminds us of our church leaders. We can never pray too much for them. Pray for those who supervise and direct missionary outreach.

4. **Ring finger**

Surprisingly, the ring finger is our weakest finger (as any piano teacher will testify). This weak finger reminds us to pray for those missionaries who are discouraged, in trouble, or in pain.

5. **Little finger**

Our little finger is the smallest finger of all, which is where we should place our individual wants and desires in relation to world evangelism needs. The Bible says, "The least shall be the greatest among you." Your pinkie should remind you to pray for the people of the world who have the greatest need to find Jesus. Pray that they will open their eyes and see Him.

## **Seven things all missionaries need . . . and which people forget to lift them up in prayer over:**

1. Victory over mental stagnation
2. Freshness in prayer and in Bible teaching
3. Guidance in how to present the Gospel
4. Deliverance from the temptation to pride
5. Wisdom in relationships with other missionaries
6. Strength to overcome temptations brought on by loneliness
7. A saving sense of humor

**Specifics to pray for:****When traveling . . .**

- That missionaries will pass effortlessly through customs and immigration lines
- That the planes on which missionaries travel will not encounter mechanical problems or trouble from terrorists
- That our missionaries will make all their connections

**Health and safety objectives**

- Protection for the missionaries from accidents, crime, natural disasters, terrorists, and dangerous animals
- Protection for the missionaries from sickness
- That missionaries will find time for proper sleep, rest, and exercise
- That missionaries' food and water needs will be met

**Spiritual watchcare objectives**

- Times of intimacy for missionaries with Jesus in Bible, prayer and worship
- Shielding for the missionaries from dark forces in spiritual realms
- Preservation for missionaries from discouragement, fear, and doubt
- That missionaries will demonstrate purity, humility, boldness, wisdom, patience, love for people, a teachable spirit and the power of the Holy Spirit

**Teamwork objectives**

- That teams of missionaries will experience and express unity, love, good communication, patience, and spiritual gifts
- That missionaries will resist temptations toward jealousy, envy, bitterness, and pride
- That missionaries will be granted grace for cultural adjustments, dealing with jet lag, being away from family and friends and lack of privacy.
- For missionaries to have wisdom to design and implement effective efforts that will make a long-term difference here . . . and that they will be able to establish and maintain solid friendships with government officials and other leaders in their chosen land.

**Verses to read at prayer time**

- Exodus 4:12; 33:14
- Psalms 4:8, 19:14, 121:1-8
- Isaiah 40:29-31; 55:10-11
- Zechariah 4:6
- Acts 1:8, 4:29,30
- Ephesians 3:16-20; 6:10-20

## Praying for Missionaries

One of the most common questions we are asked is, "How can I pray for missionaries?" Let me share some suggestions on how to pray:

**1. Select at least one of the missionaries your church supports and pray for their relationship with God.** I'm afraid, all too often, we assume too much in this area. We have placed all missionaries on a high pedestal marked "Super-Spiritual Saint." It doesn't occur to us that our missionaries have any need in regards to their walk with God. On behalf of your missionary, pray for his or her:

- a. Feeding on God's Word
- b. Prayer life
- c. Filling with the Holy Spirit
- d. Maturity and growth in grace
- e. Victory over Satan and the flesh

**2. Pray for your missionary's physical and emotional life.** Many missionaries live and work in difficult climates and where various diseases are prevalent. Pray for their health and safety. Also pray for deliverance from discouragement, loneliness and depression as they are in the thick of the spiritual battle.

**3. Pray for your missionary's family.** Pray, if married, for the husband and wife's relationship. Pray for the children---for their salvation and growth in the Lord. Pray that as a family, they will provide an excellent model for the people among where they serve.

**4. Pray for your missionary's ability to communicate.** Communication is the key to everything a missionary does. We must communicate with our lives and lips. For many, they must adapt to a new culture and learn a foreign language. Many languages, if not all, are difficult to learn. And a superficial knowledge of a language makes it very difficult to communicate spiritual truth. But knowing a language is not enough. A missionary must adapt culturally and communicate the love of Christ with the people he is seeking to reach.

**5. Pray for your missionary's ministry.** Here you want to support your missionary in what he is doing: witnessing, visiting, teaching, preaching, or whatever he does to serve the Lord. His letters posted on our Missions Bulletin Board in the church sanctuary will usually give you lots of ammunition for prayer. Pray for boldness, open doors and open hearts.

**6. Pray for your missionary's fellow workers.** Most probably, your missionary is not working completely off on his own someplace. He is usually part of a team and he will likely be working closely with the believers in that country. Probably, more than any other place, this is where Satan often gets in and causes havoc.

**7. Pray for your missionary's country of service.** Expand to include the whole country where your missionary is located. Pray for a climate of responsiveness to the gospel. I would highly recommend *Operation World* by Patrick Johnstone as the best guide available for praying for all the countries of the world.

So, how about it? Why not pick a missionary, write them, read their letters and get involved! Jesus said, "Men ought always to pray and not to faint." (Luke 18:1)

**Pray that the missionary will...**

- gain wisdom to understand God's purpose and plan
- have a heart for the lost - Matthew 25
- have a sense of personal sin and confession - 1 John 1:5-6
- not grow weary in well-doing - Hebrews 13
- have a true vision for God's work in him -
- a willingness to listen to needs of others -
- have the proper financial support so as to be free from the distractions of daily needs and a confidence that it is God who provides daily bread - 2 Timothy 5, Matthew 6
- have a burden to pray –

**A Seven Day Prayer Guide**

**Sunday**

The missionary's own Spiritual walk, growth in grace through the use of the means of grace (the Word, prayer, sacraments, fellowship, worship, etc.)

**Monday**

The missionary's personal life, health, safety, emotional stability and well-being, avoidance of loneliness, and the desire of fleshly things

**Tuesday**

The missionary's family life, husband wife relationships, parenting, children, extended family from whom they are separated, and the model of a Godly family they display before those who observe them daily

**Wednesday**

The missionary as a communicator, facility with the foreign language, cultural adaptation, and communicating the truth by the example they set

**Thursday**

The missionary's ministry, teaching, preaching, witnessing, boldness, fruitfulness and satisfaction in their work, and open doors through which they may pass to share Christ

**Friday**

The missionary's relationship with fellow workers, a sense of cooperation and not competition, humility, consider others better than self, avoidance of pride, working with nationals

**Saturday**

The missionary's county of service, stability, freedom, governmental leaders, passports, visas, work permits, etc.

### **A Suggested Guide For Praying For Missionaries from A to Z**

**Anointing** - Ask God for the anointing of the Holy Spirit on this person so she or he will be operating out of the Spirit's power not out of human abilities. 2 Corinthians 1:21-22

**Boldness** - Pray that the missionary will speak the Word of God with boldness. 2 Timothy 1:7

**Comfort** - Ask for comfort in those times when the missionary is discouraged broken-hearted or stressed so he or she can pass that comfort to others. 2 Corinthians 1:4

**Direction** - Ask that the missionary will be able to sense God's specific direction in his or her ministry. Proverbs 3:5-6

**Encourager** - Ask God to send someone to encourage the missionary. Hebrews 3:12-13

**Family** - Pray that the missionary will be able to guide his or her children in the way they should go and would be the kind of spouse who pleases the Lord. Isaiah 40:11 Ephesians 5:33

**Glory to God** - Pray that each minute of the missionary's day will be lived to glorify God. 1 Corinthians 10:31

**Humility** - Ask that the missionary will develop a sense of humility rejecting pride. James 5:10 1 Peter 5:6 7

**Insight** - Ask that the missionary will see people and things from God's perspective. Ephesians 1:7-8

**Joy** - Pray that the missionary will be full of the joy of the Lord in all situations. Nehemiah 8:10

**Knowledge** - Pray that the missionary will crave knowledge of God's Word and apply it consistently. Psalm 119:105

**Love** - Ask that the missionary will be a vessel through which God's love flows to others. 1 John 3:16

**Motivation** - Pray that this missionary will do his or her work from godly motives not to please other people. 1 Thessalonians 2:4

**Needs** - Pray that the missionary will realize that in Christ all of his or her needs will be met. 2 Peter 1:3

**Open door** - Pray that the missionary will recognize opportunities to share the gospel. Acts 28: 30 31

**Prayer Partners** - Ask God to provide prayer partners for the missionary people who will intercede on a regular basis. 2 Thessalonians 1:11

**Quiet Time** - Pray that nothing will get in the way of the missionary having a quality quiet time with the Lord each day in which knowing who God is and what He does becomes a priority. Psalm 46:10

**Revival** - Ask God to work in the missionary's life so he or she will be willing to meet the conditions for personal revival. 2 Chronicles 7:14

**Servanthood** - Pray that the missionary will do his or work with a servant spirit. Philippians 2:5-7

**Thankful Heart** - Ask that the missionary will learn to thank God for what he is doing even in difficult situations. Ephesians 5:20

**Unsaved** - Pray that unsaved people the missionary encounters will develop a hunger and thirst for Jesus Christ in their lives. 2 Corinthians 4:4

**Victory** - Pray that the missionary will know victory in spiritual warfare. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

**Weariness** - Pray that the missionary will not get bogged down in having to much to do. Galatians 6:9

**X-ray vision** - Ask that the missionary will have x-ray vision of the heart to see anything in his or her life that needs confessing; pray that the missionary will desire a cleansed life. Psalm 51

**Yieldedness** - Pray that the missionary will be completely yielded to Christ being willing to be dead to self. Galatians 2:20

**Zeal** - Pray that the missionary will have a renewed zeal to share the gospel. Colossians 1:3-6

### **Praying for a People Group**

1. Praise the Lord that “a people for His Name” will be established from among every people. (Rev. 7:9-10)
2. Demolish spiritual strongholds and human philosophies or arguments against God which produce barriers of resistance to the gospel. (II Cor. 10:4-5)
3. Pray that willing, skillful workers would be sent to reach this people group. (Matt. 9:38)
4. Believe God to enlighten the minds of the people about their worship of other gods. (Psalm 115:4-8)
5. Plead for the opening of eyes to the revelation of the Creator God and His Son, Jesus Christ. (Eph. 1:17-18)
6. Ask God to give understanding and discernment to those who communicate truth that it may be clearly understood. (I Peter 1:18-19)
7. Intercede for people to come to faith in Christ, repenting from their sin and from their own good works. (Eph. 2:8-9)
8. Ask that new believers will share the gospel as bold witnesses. (Acts 4:29-31)