

Name:



Leader's Guide

# Praying for Global Mission

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Updated May 2023

1. How does prayer currently feature in your life? What would you like to see happen in your own prayer life and the prayer life of your friends/church/university group?

**(5 minutes)** Use this question to kickstart reflection, conversation, and dreaming. I suggest making a big challenge: 'In prayerful dependence on God, you could create a culture of personal and corporate prayer for mission by which the ends of the earth will be reached and resourced.' Pray that the Lord might grant this.

As a transition into the next Biblical question, you could use the first story (Dick McLellan) from **Appendix 1** and ask the rhetorical question: is it really true that our prayers have big implications for mission?

2. What does the Bible teach about prayer both generally and specifically for mission?

	Verse	Implications for Prayer
<b>When</b>	Luke 18:1 (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:17)	Prayer is an <u>always</u> action.
<b>Why</b>	James 5:13-18 (cf. Matthew 7:8-11)	Prayer is <u>powerful</u> because God <u>answers</u>
<b>Who</b>	James 5:16 (cf. 1 Peter 3:7, 12)	...the prayers of the <u>righteous</u>
<b>How</b>	(1) Luke 18:1-14, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Ephesians 6:18 (2) Romans 12:12, Colossians 4:2, Acts 1:14, 2:42, 6:4 (3) Luke 22:44, Acts 12:5, Hebrews 13:19	...that are <u>persistent</u> , <u>devoted</u> , <u>earnest</u> .
<b>What - Global Mission</b>	<b>A model of prayer:</b> Psalms 67	<b>We pray mission prayers for...</b>
	Matthew 6:10 + Psalm 22:27-28	<u>God's all-nations kingdom</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Colossians 4:2-3,</li> <li>◦ 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2,</li> <li>◦ 1 Thessalonians 5:25,</li> <li>◦ Ephesians 6:18-19,</li> <li>◦ Philippians 1:18</li> </ul>	<u>Missionaries (/gospel workers)</u>
	Matthew 9:35-38 (cf. Acts 13:3)	<u>More missionaries (/gospel workers)</u>
	1 Timothy 2:1-7	<u>[Interceding for] The lost from all nations</u>
	Ephesians 6:18	<u>God's all nations people (/the saints)</u>

**Summary:** Prayer is an always action, powerful because God answers the prayers of the righteous that are persistent, devoted, and earnest. So, we pray mission prayers for our Father's all nations kingdom, missionaries, more missionaries, intercession for the lost, and for God's people from all nations.

**(25 minutes)** This question is intended to engage participants with what the Bible teaches about praying for global mission. One possible way to use the table is to have the leader share the answer to the first section (general teaching on prayer) and then have the group work through the second section from the 'what' of prayer (specific teaching on global mission). See **the script (Appendix 3)** beneath for further information and an example.

### 3. What makes praying for mission hard?

**(10 minutes - 3 minutes individually, 3 minutes feedback, then 4 sharing)**

Having been challenged by the Bible, this question is an opportunity for participants to reflect on their practice and the practical challenges to praying for global mission. One possible way to do this is to have students reflect for a minute then share or discuss. For more information, see **the script (Appendix 3)** beneath.

### 4. How can we fuel missions prayers?

**(5-10 minutes)** This question dovetails with the former and offers participants the opportunity to share or receive wisdom. If there isn't much time left, the leader can share some suggestions perhaps from **Appendix 2** and/ or **the script (Appendix 3)** beneath.

### 5. Reflect, Pray, Act!

**(5-10 minutes)** As this session draws to a close, participants should be offered an opportunity to reflect on at least one thing they'd like to implement immediately in their prayer lives and pray together for global mission. This could be a good opportunity to form or invite participants to ongoing prayer groups. One way to do this could be to suggest students pair up and select one resource from Appendix 2 and pray together until the leader closes in prayer.

If time remains, the David Platt (second) story in **Appendix 1** can be read before returning to the initial challenge: "What would happen? Do you want to find out? Because I'm convinced 'that in prayerful dependence on God, you could create or foster a culture of personal and corporate prayer for mission by which nations will be reached and resourced.'" Further remaining time can be devoted to prayer or further questions.

## Appendix 1: Stories

### Dick McLellan: Warriors of Ethiopia

Dick McLellan went as a pioneering missionary to Ethiopia. At the age of 21, he stood atop a mountain and looked down into a valley where he saw many tribes who had never heard about Jesus. When he returned to Australia on deputation, he wrote the names of those tribes on bookmarks which he gave to all who promised to pray. Two young girls took those bookmarks and promised to pray. Many years later, Dick returned and visited those two girls. They showed him a bookmark worn to tatters by use. And Dick had the privilege of telling them that their prayers had been heard, that every single one of those tribes now had Christians singing the praises of our Lord Jesus. If you ask Dick today, sixty years later, why those tribes were reached for Jesus, he will tell you: because two girls got down on their knees to pray.

### David Platt: Radical

Why do you think Jesus would look at the crowds around him, with all their deep needs, and then turn to his disciples and tell them to pray for themselves? The answer is humbling. When Jesus looked at the harassed and helpless multitudes, apparently his concern was not that the lost would not come to the Father. Instead his concern was that his followers would not go to the lost. Now think about it. What happens when you and I take these words from Jesus and put them in a world where more than a billion people have still not heard the gospel? A fundamental reality snaps into focus: we are not praying. This is the only possible explanation for how there can be such great need yet so few workers. The multitudes are waiting to hear, and our most urgent need is to pray for the Lord of the harvest to send out Christians into the harvest field...

Not long ago a friend of mine spent a couple of weeks in South Korea, a country that has seen explosive Christian growth in recent years. Over the last century, some estimate, almost half the population in that country has come to Christ. Church leaders there have been intentional about pointing to the power of God in prayer as the reason they have seen such widespread spiritual awakening. My friend was staying in a hotel, and one morning around four o'clock, he was awakened by a loud noise outside. He staggered over to the window and pulled back the curtains to see a stadium filled with people. He wondered: What kind of sports do Koreans play at four in the morning? Frustrated, he crawled back into bed and tried to sleep through the noise coming from the stadium crowd across the street. Later that morning he went down to the hotel lobby and asked the manager what kind of sporting event had been going on in the stadium. The hotel manager responded, "Oh, sir, that was not a sporting event. That was the church gathered for prayer." You and I live in a culture where we gather in stadiums and around televisions for hours at a time to watch guys run around a field with a pigskin ball in their hands as they try to cross a white line.

We express enthusiasm, emotion, and affection for football and other sports, and it begs the question, what would happen in our culture if the church prayed with such passion? What would happen if Jesus dominated our affections more than the superficial trivialities that garner our attention? What would happen if we spent hours before God praying on behalf of the church, the lost, and the poor around the world?

### James Fraser: Mountain Rain

James Fraser was challenged by a missions pamphlet which 'struck at the very roots of his assumptions.' As convicting now as it was then in 1906, the pamphlet reads: 'If our Master returned today to find millions of people unevangelised, and looked, as of course He would look, to us for an explanation, I cannot imagine what explanation we should have to give. Of one thing I am certain – that most of the excuses we are accustomed to make with such good conscience now, we shall be wholly ashamed of then.' Less than 50 years later, this challenge had affected not only the life of James, who left engineering for missionary service in southwest China, but also the eternities of countless Lisu. By 1950 (less than 50 years later!), as missionaries were withdrawing from Lisu regions, over 800 Lisu gathered to farewell them by singing salvation songs in praise to Jesus Christ. On prayer, James wrote:

- Many of us cannot reach the mission-fields on our feet, but we can reach them on our knees. Solid, lasting missionary work is accomplished by prayer, whether offered in China, India, or the United States.
- I used to think that prayer should have the first place and teaching the second. I now feel that prayer should have the first, the second, and the third.

## Appendix 2: Resources

### (1) Missionary Newsletters

- (2) Apps: ° Unreached of the Day (Joshua Project): [joshuaproject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday/app](https://joshuaproject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday/app)  
° Operation World: [operationworld.org/get-involved/prayer-app](https://operationworld.org/get-involved/prayer-app)

(3) Websites: Joshua Project- [joshuaproject.net](https://joshuaproject.net), Lausanne- [lausanne.org/pray](https://lausanne.org/pray), PrayerCast- [prayercast.com](https://prayercast.com)

(4) Mission Organisation Material: e.g., CMS prayer diary, OMF newsletter, etc

### Appendix 3: Leader's Appendix (*Script*)

What follows is a script Seth Fellows has used for his seminars on Praying for Global Missions. It is provided for informative reference for leaders who would like further preparation and can be used for further information at any point of the above questions.

**Intro:** There's nothing like preparing a seminar on prayer to remind you how far you are from what you ought to be. I want to confess right at the start that I'm not the man of prayer for mission that I want to be; but I do want and I have prayed that I might become one. And I'm not content today with merely calling you to personal maturity in prayer for mission, no... my aim in this seminar is: **to convince you and mobilise you and me towards this conclusion: That in prayerful dependence on God, you could create a culture of personal and corporate prayer for mission by which the ends of the earth will be reached and resourced.**

**Pray!** So, let's begin in prayer: *Our Father in heaven, we long for your will to be done on earth. We long for the earth to be full of knowledge of you as the waters fill the sea. We long for people from all nations—male, female, slave, free, Australian, Indian, reached and less reached, resourced and less resourced—we long for all to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to your glory forever and ever. And so we pray that you would use this short time to prepare us for a life-time of calling upon you. Fuel our prayers for your purposes in your world. And hear us, Father, not for our sake only, but for the sake of your people here and their prayers, and for the sake of those who are there—lost and impoverished—amongst the nations and whom you will save in answer to our prayers. We pray these things according to your pleasure, by the power of your Spirit, through the name of your Son. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

**Rant on prayer and the opportunity** So, you know where we're going, I'm going to rant for a little bit about prayer and mission with a semi-interactive Bible bit, then we're going to think about what makes praying mission prayers hard, then we'll try to come up with some solutions to fuel our prayers and after some reflection choose at least one thing to put into practice. Hopefully we'll have time for questions at the end.

So, first, a rant on prayer and mission. Whether you were a first year or next year will be your last, you have an incredible opportunity to influence the prayer-life of everybody around you at your uni group and your church. What would you like to see happen in your own prayer life? What would you like to see happen in the lives of your friends? Because what you think about prayer and what you do about prayer—the way you pray, when you pray, how you pray, if you pray for mission— your doctrine and your life can have a massive impact on your friends, church family, and even on your staff. I firmly believe that as students you have a massive opportunity to create and foster a culture of prayer.

And whether you seize this opportunity or not has big implications for mission. Whether you pray or not, whether you create cultures of prayer for mission around you or not, has big implications for the ends of the earth. Do you believe that? Or not really? I mean, what difference would it make if more people were praying persistently for mission? ([Cont. next pg.](#))

My grandfather first went as a pioneering missionary to Ethiopia. At the age of 21, he stood atop a mountain and looked down into the valley and saw many tribes who had never heard about Jesus. When he returned to Australia on deputation, he wrote the names of those tribes on bookmarks which he gave to all who would promise to pray.

He told me that two young girls took those bookmarks and promised to pray. Many years later he returned and visited those two girls. They showed him a bookmark worn down by use, now just a tattered piece of paper. And my grandfather had the privilege of telling them that their prayers had been heard, that every single one of those tribes now had Christians singing the praises of the lamb. If you ask my grandfather today, sixty years later, why those tribes were reached for Jesus, he will tell you: because two girls got down on their knees to pray.

Now, that's a good motivational story. Makes me want to pray. But is it true? Were the less-reached really reached because of answered prayer? What does the Bible say about prayer and mission anyway? Do our prayers really have big implications for mission?

**(Question 1:)** What does the Bible teach about prayer both generally and specifically for mission?

(Move to **Question 2:**) Let's turn to the Bible. I've got a table of a few Scriptures for us which I want to work through together from the top. Let me take us through the first few, then I'll get you to work together... [\(refer to pg.2\)](#)

Jesus tells us that we ought always to pray and not lose heart. Paul says that we should pray without ceasing (1 Thes 5:17). Prayer is an **ALWAYS** action. Are you hungry? Pray for daily bread (Matt 6:11). Guilty? Call upon the Lord who is faithful and just to forgive as you forgive those who sin against you (Matt 6:12). People problems? Pray for your enemies (Matt 5:44). Are you suffering? James says: pray (James 5:13). Sick: pray (James 5:14). Prayer should be the Christian knee-jerk reaction to the situations of life.

Why? What's so special about prayer? Well: Prayer is **POWERFUL** because God **ANSWERS**. Prayer is how God has decided to work. Contrary to the suggestion that prayer is primary about changing the pray-er, James reminds us of the prayers of Elijah—to which we could add the prayers of all the heroes of faith: Abraham and Moses and Daniel—James says that 'the prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working' (James 5:14-18). Because God answers prayer. Jesus tells us that our Father in heaven loves to give good gifts to his children (Matt 7:11). God loves to answer prayer.

But not just any prayers. No, God loves to give good gifts to his children. As James tells us, God answers the prayers of the **RIGHTEOUS**. Because although God sometimes hears even his wicked enemies (that's how we all begin), Peter tells us that prayers may be hindered by evil (1 Peter 3:7) because the 'eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil (1 Peter 3:9; Ps 34:12-16).'

So, the people which God answers are from the righteous and the patterns of prayer which he answers ... well, what do you think are the most common qualifications for prayers in the Bible? How does the Bible tell us or show us to pray? [\(Cont. next pg.\)](#)

I think the three words or ideas most associated with prayer are:  
**PERSISTENT** (Luke 18:1–14; Rom 12:12; Eph 6:18; Col 4:2–3; 1 Thes 5:17),  
**DEVOTED** (Acts 1:14, 6:4; 1 Cor 7:5),  
and **EARNEST** (Matt 9:38; Luke 22:44; Acts 12:5; 1 Thes 3:10; Heb 13:19).

If any of our theology, any ways we think about God or prayer, undermines praying prayers that are persistent, devoted, or earnest ... then something has gone wrong. If our views of God's sovereignty leave us fatalistic or apathetic ... something is wrong.

Because so far we have just learned that prayer is an always action. Prayer is powerful because God answers the prayers of the righteous who pray persistently, earnestly, with devotion. God uses our constant prayers as vehicles for his work as we pray for....

Well, now we turn to the 'what' of prayer: mission. I'm not saying mission is the only thing we should pray for. But... No, no, no. In a moment, let's break into pairs and look at the remainder of the table for 10 minutes. You'll have to go fast as you consider 'what' we're meant to pray for.

**(10 mins – for filling out rest of the table “What - Global Mission”)**

**Summary (of Question 2):** Prayer is an always action, powerful because God answers the prayers of the righteous that are persistent, devoted, and earnest. We pray mission prayers for our Father's multinational kingdom, missionaries, more missionaries, intercession for the multinational lost, and for God's people.

**What struck you?**

And if we combine these 'what' verses with the things we learnt above, and I understand this could sound somewhat controversial: if we do not pray then we will not receive. If we do not pray global mission prayers for missionaries, more missionaries, interceding for the lost and all the saints; if we do not pray for the less reached and the less resourced at the ends of the earth, then we will not get to play perhaps the most important part in them being reached with the gospel or in them being resourced. On the other hand, if we do pray, because God does answer prayer, we can expect that God can and will use our prayers for the advancement of his kingdom even to the ends of the earth.

**(Check time here/ question before moving to question 3)**

**(Question 3):** Well, let's turn now to asking what makes praying for mission hard?

We have been commanded to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:16), but as Don Carson says: prayerlessness *'characterises so much of the Western church.'* And when we do pray, do we really pray for God's will to be done—his kingdom, where his promises to Abraham that all nations will be blessed in a single body formed from people of all tribes and peoples and nations and languages—do we pray for his multinational will to be done...or do we mostly pray small, parochial prayers for our will to be done? Praying is hard; praying globally mission-minded prayers is really hard. And I want us to begin by asking: why? Why is prayer hard? What makes praying for mission so hard? I'll give you a minute to reflect for yourself, then I'm going to pick on you as we compile our answer for 'what makes praying for mission so hard'? **(3 minutes individually, 3 minutes feedback, then 4 sharing)**

**(Cont. next pg.)**

**So, why do you reckon it's so hard to pray and to pray for mission?**

While studying at Moore College, I wrote a paper on the reasons and remedies of prayerlessness in youth groups. And what I found there is applicable here as well. I divided the reasons I found for prayerlessness into three groups:

- Intellectual,
- Character-based, &

- External factors.

Intellectual factors for prayerlessness include deficient views of God, deficient views of prayer or deficient views of the world. For example, one deficient view of prayer could be that I don't really believe my prayers matter—that prayer doesn't change anything because God's going to do it anyway. That minimises the motivation to pray. Another example, one deficient view of the world could be that I don't know (I'm not aware) of the needs of missionaries or people living at the ends of the earth so I don't pray or don't feel motivated to pray.

The character-based reasons include: pride, poverty of desire, lack of self-control. With pride, it's hard to pray—which is an action of dependence—when we feel self-sufficient. And maybe our prayerlessness is a practical proof that we really feel quite competent to action our goals (which are therefore obviously not the impossibly big plans of God for all nations to the ends of the earth). Poverty of desire. If I have what I want and I can get what I want by myself, then why would I pray? Few of us could say with Paul that we have unceasing anguish in our hearts for the lost (Romans 9), so few of us can say that we pray like Paul.

This obviously connects with mission because it's hard to desire a world that knows Jesus. Again, our prayerlessness for just that may be a practical proof that we don't really want that. Pride, poverty of desire, and lack of self-control. As Don Carson says, 'we do not drift into disciplined prayer.' Like any habit, prayer requires self-control. Without it, mental drift, feelings of spiritual dryness or bitterness, forgetfulness—especially of missionaries and less-reached less resourced groups who seem so far away (out of sight and easy to let slip out of mind)—these coupled with external factors will push prayer off the radar.

External factors are obvious. Busyness, disruptive settings, boring treatment of prayer, a lack of positive role models or teachers. Busyness and lack of role models are probably the key one here. The present—both in time and space—seem most important, clouding prayer out (especially prayers for the distant nations) and controlling what I pray for.

So the reasons for prayerlessness generally and when it comes to mission include intellectual, character-based, and external factors. Does that make sense so far?



**(Question 4:)** How can we fuel missions prayers? **(10 mins)**

Okay, we've covered my rant about mission prayers, the difficulties of praying such prayers, so **what can we do about it?** Have another chat with that person next to you.

To combat the intellectual factors of prayerlessness, we need to hear what the Bible says about prayer. We can't be fatalistic or apathetic because God does answer prayer. We have a responsibility to pray, more than that we have an opportunity. To pray for missionaries, for more missionaries, for the lost. Scripture will prepare us for such prayers. But more than Scripture, we also have a deficient view of the world. Thankfully there are plenty of resources to help us here. Books and videos and mission conferences. We can get missionary newsletters, the unreached of the day app, google and its maps to check churches in Australia, the Joshua Project website to check the rest of the world. So that we can see the world aright and be motivated to pray. **(Can refer to appendix 2)**

The character flaws are harder to combat. How do we defeat pride? How do we begin to desire the gospel to go forth amongst the less reached? How do we begin to actually care for the less resourced? It's a similar question to how we drum up discipline? The Puritans said to pray until you pray. They believed that 'eventually we come to delight in God's presence, to rest in his love, to cherish his will.' Some other suggestions: We can read biographies of women and men of prayer (James F). We can find some living prayer warriors and pray with them, seeking models for ourselves and encouragement. CMS prayer diary, photos on a wall, no end of resources, ten to fifteen minutes on a focus app/tide, organise your prayer requests and set aside one day to pray for mission (for me it's Friday). You can't pray for everything in detail, but you can pray for something in specific as symbol for everything. (7 nations)

**(Question 4:)** Reflecting and praying about one thing you want to put into action. **(10 mins)**

Take five minutes to reflect and pray about one thing you want to put into action (perhaps from the list we brainstormed before), then we will close.

**Close:** I want to close by reading a story from an excellent book about mission called 'Radical' by David Platt **(appendix 1)** (and I find the end is particularly resonant in light of the Olympics):

[\(Read second story of Appendix 1, turn to pg. 4\)](#)

**What would happen?** Do you want to find out? Because I'm convinced 'that in prayerful dependence on God, you could create or foster a culture of personal and corporate prayer for mission by which nations will be reached and resourced.

**(Finish, if time, with: Question Time)**