

How to Pray for Your City

When we think about the book of Acts, we usually think about the beginning of the church, the miracles performed by the Apostles, the work of the Holy Spirit, the conversion of Paul, and so on.

Too often, we overlook a wonderful thread that weaves its way throughout the entire book. The early church was made up of Christians that were dedicated not only to the gospel, to community, to mission but also to *prayer* (Acts 1:24, 2:42, 4:24-31 6:6, 16:25, 20:36 and many more).

It is easy to neglect praying for our cities I believe for three reasons.

1. If we were to be honest, many of us believe that the “heavy lifting” of ministering to our city comes in the form of our Sunday gatherings, community groups, missional events, etc. While these things are necessary, when it comes to prayer we are often times (as Jeff Vanderstelt puts it) “functional atheists.”
2. We forget how important prayer is to God. In Jeremiah, God instructs the prophet, “Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile and pray to the Lord on its behalf...” (Jer. 29:7). Jesus in the Gospels commands the disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” (Matthew 9:37-38). From beginning to end, the call to pray is commanded in scripture and not something to be abandoned.
3. We are a prideful people. I am often reminding myself that I am a workman in a field that does not belong to me, using tools that do not belong to me, reaping a harvest that does not belong to me, and working for a glory that does not belong to me (1 Corinthians 3:5-9). By His grace, making prayer for my city a priority has allowed the Spirit to remind me that God *alone* saves, and God *alone* deserves glory for redemption.

During a sermon on 1 Peter 2:7, Charles Spurgeon made the statement, “Every Christian here is either a missionary or an impostor.”

A disciple of Christ is a life on mission, one that I believe is marked deeply by prayer for the people God has sent them to. Our states, our cities, our neighborhoods desperately need the life-giving renewal and redemption that flow from Christ’s life, death and resurrection.

Praying for the mission of God in our cities is one of the beautiful ways we join God in His renewal and redemption of our city. Let us be people who are marked not just by lives on mission in the everyday, but people who intercede daily and earnestly on behalf of our cities.

Below I have listed out prayers that we have recently been utilizing to pray for our city. My prayer even now, is that the Lord would use these to glorify Himself in the redemption and renewal of your city.

- **Sunday** - That the Gospel would be boldly and unashamedly proclaimed in our local churches. That our churches would be places for the broken, unwanted and hurting. That Christ will be offered as the only remedy for the very thing we cannot do, make ourselves better or save ourselves.
- **Monday** - Pray that Romans 8:35-39 would become a reality. Pray for yourself, for your family, for your pastors, for your church. That our hope would be found in Christ and in Christ alone and that his hope would produce Gospel boldness in our lives.

- **Tuesday** - Pray Matthew 6:10 over your city. Spend this day replacing the word “earth” with the name of your city... for me it is “In Charlottesville as it is in heaven”.
- **Wednesday** - Pray that the Spirit would weed out the sin in your life that has kept you from living a life on mission. That He would open up opportunities for you to be present and intentional with the gospel in your neighborhood. Pray for your neighbors by name.
- **Thursday** - Pray boldly Psalms 33:8 over your city. The people would stand in awe before Him.
- **Friday** - Pray Habakkuk 3:2 over your city. That the Lord’s love, wrath, justice and mercy would be made known in the City.
- **Saturday**: Pray that the Lord would increase our burden for our city. That our love and growth in the Gospel would produce a desire to see others saved and grow in their love and understanding of who God is, what He has done and what He is doing.

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