



PRAY FOR SCOTLAND

From the Booklet “How do I pray for my neighbours?” by Alvin J. Vander-Griend

One of the simplest ways to start being a **LightHouse Of Prayer** is to pray **five BLESSings, on five neighbours, for five minutes a day, five days a week for five weeks.**

You don't have to spend hours praying each day or pray every day of the week in order for your prayers to make a difference. Twenty five minutes a week is probably 24 ½ minutes more than most neighbours are getting now. I have found that it is natural and easy to pray for my neighbours by praying first for all of them using the BLESS categories. Many “pray-ers” have found it helpful to use the acronym BLESS as memory device to remember basic life issues to pray for their neighbours B stands for Body needs; L stands for labor or work concerns; E for emotional or inner world blessings; S for Social or relational areas of life and the 2nd S for Spiritual concerns.

Week one ; What's the Good of prayer?

Friendship with God

You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand. Psalm 16:11

Human beings are created to live in fellowship with God. We are meant to have and enjoy relationship with God. Without this relationship we are like branches cut off from a tree, like toasters not plugged in. Prayer is the way we get in touch with God and the way we keep in touch with Him. I used to think of prayer as a spiritual exercise, a discipline that had to be worked at. Through the years, however God has taught me to see it more and more as taking part of a friendship. One of the early church fathers called it “keeping company with God” I like that!

Several years ago as I tried to define prayer, God led me through a series of steps. At first I thought of prayer *simply as talking with God*. Then the idea of relationship emerged, and I began to see that *prayer is the talking part of a relationship with God*. Months later my definition changed again, and I began to understand that *prayer is the talking part of a Love relationship with God*. I thought I finally had it, but God added one more element.

I came to see that prayer is the talking part of the most important love relationship in my life.

Sometimes people ask how much time they should try and spend in prayer each day. I used to suggest that 20 minutes of formal prayer a day was a minimum. I reinforced that by reminding them of the many things that need to be included in prayer, and then I added that 20 minutes a day was only about 2 percent of our waking hours each day.

Now when people ask I simply tell them they should spend enough time to build a good relationship. And considering that the relationship we are talking about is life's most important love relationship that means plenty of time. What does God do for those who relate to him in love? The psalmist put it well when he said “You will fill them with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand. Are you spending time enough time with God so that he has the opportunity to fill you with joy in his presence?

Reflect:

- What can your prayer life tell you about your love relationship with God.
- What more could you do to deepen your friendship with God?

Prayer- Starters for Praying Palm 16:11

- Praise God for his love and for his readiness to have a love relationship with you
- Ask God to strengthen your prayer life and deepen your relationship with him
- Ask God to make known to you the path of life, to fill you with joy, and to give you eternal pleasures
- Thank God for his generosity in making these gifts available

Pray a BLESSing on those who live or work near you

Body (physical): Pray that the Father who sends “every good and perfect gift... from above” (James 1:17) will meet their needs.

Labor (work): Pray for diligence in work. “Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth (Proverbs 10:4)

Emotional (inner life): Pray that they may have the Holy Spirit and his fruit.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. (Galatians 5:22-23)

Social (relational): Ask God to give them good friendships.

“Pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!” (Ecclesiastes 4:10)

Spiritual: Pray that they will receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in [Christ]” Acts 26:18

Pray also for specific needs of your neighbours you are aware of.

Act:

Intentionally set aside some time to spend with God. Do some relationship building things with him during that time. Write down three most important things that you got out of your time with God.

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