

Prayer Across America: Week 6



Welcome back to Week 6! If you are new to Prayer Across America, read [this post first](#).

A few words of explanation are in order. This is actually our 8th week on the road. Due to visiting relatives in St. Louis and having guests with us, I didn't get up a post sooner but was still praying as I drove. So to catch everyone up, Mark and I left from our break in Indianapolis on June 6 and have been through Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri. We just crossed in to Kansas yesterday, so keep these states in your prayers this week.

What to Pray About

Here are some suggested topics of prayer for this week, and of course pray as the Lord directs you.

- **Heat wave.** Much of the nation is sweltering in a heat wave, and we have been dealing with it ourselves. We are changing our planned course of riding/RVing and heading north into Nebraska and on to Portland instead of through Denver to try and reach some cooler temperatures. California and Arizona are supposed to be well over 100 degrees this upcoming week.
- **School is out.** With most schools now out for the summer, we can focus some prayers on safety for children and teenagers, that they will have worthwhile activities and jobs for the summer, and for family time together.
- **Unity.** Please spend some time praying that our country unifies and stops the hate-filled speech.
- **Revival.** Pray that revival sweeps through our country.

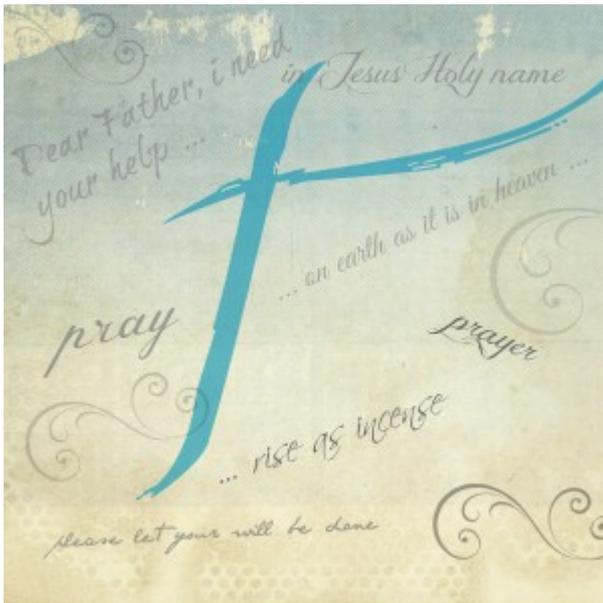


Missouri sunset and Kansas wildflowers

Feel free to add your prayers below and any prayer other prayer topics you would like to mention.

Pray on!

What Is One Prayer?



I don't know about you, but I often feel overwhelmed by the daily news.

Whether it's in my community, the state, our nation, or the world, the amount of evil out there is just plain disturbing. I know that many good things are also happening, but those are often overshadowed by what isn't.

Prayer is the powerful antidote to evil.



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To counteract this helpless, hopeless feeling, Mary and I thought it would be helpful for us to focus our prayers. Even when an event seems so horrific that we despair of being able to do anything to help, we need to remember that prayer is the powerful antidote to evil. Let us not ever forget that. The enemy wants us to be overwhelmed and ineffective. That is *not* what the Bible says.

*The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.
James 5:16*

The Greek word for powerful in this sentence is *Ischyō*. Are you ready for its definition? It means “to be effective, capable of producing results.” Wow. Our prayers are capable of producing results – even when ISIS is on the move, even when the diagnosis is cancer, even when aborted baby parts are being sold on the market, even when refugees are backed up on a country’s border.

To help us focus our prayers, several times a week, we will select a person, issue, or topic for us to pray about. The reminder will be short, perhaps just a sentence or two in the sidebar of our website [OnlyByPrayer](#) under the heading **One Prayer**. Please add your one-minute prayer silently or aloud to the collective praying we will all be doing. If you’d like you can tweet that day’s prayer focus using **#OnePrayer**.

Let’s stop sticking our heads in the sand and take advantage of the very real power of prayer. God did not make us helpless but bestowed upon us the gift and responsibility of prayer to bring about real change in the world.

Pray on!

Jane

Resources for the Current Prayer Concern

2-14-17 [Florida School Shooting](#)

9-20-17: [Mexico earthquake](#)

[Aleppo](#)

[Information about kidnapped journalist Austin Tice](#)

[First Transmission of Zika virus in U.S.](#)

[What Is Zika?](#)

A Poem for the Persecuted

Once again today we hear of Christians being slaughtered for their faith. The TV replays their deaths over and over; we can't get used to wholesale murder, lives snuffed out before our very eyes. We must keep the **persecuted** ever before us in our prayers.

PERSECUTED

CRIES ARISE.
WHO WILL SEE?
WHO WILL HEAR?
WHO WILL HELP?



KIDNAPPED, RAPED, SOLD, ENSLAVED.
BEATEN, BURNED, BEHEADED, BURIED.

AND YET, THE WORLD WAITS.
HOLDS ITS BREATH.
DEBATES.
VACILLATES.
BLINKS.

LIVES, SOULS WRITHE IN THE AGONY
OF THE IGNORED, FORGOTTEN,
EXTERMINATED.

EVIL MARCHES ON.
GOOD MUST
WAKE UP,
STAND UP,
PREVAIL.

FOR PRECIOUS IS THEIR BLOOD
IN HIS SIGHT.

by Jane VanOsdol OnlyByPrayer.com

Please join with Only By Prayer in praying for those in so many countries around the world who suffer at the hands of evil. Let's lift up our prayers for the persecuted and their persecutors. **If you feel so led, please add your prayer in the comment section below and share this post so we can keep their plight fresh in our minds and hearts.**

Pray on!

Jane

Five Ways to Pray in February



The shortest month of the year, February is still a busy time. At **Only By Prayer**, we think this world could use more love and prayers, and this month gives us the perfect excuse to start showing it! Whether you have a sweetheart or not, Valentine's Day can be a bright spot in the winter and an inspiration for our prayers. Keep reading for **five ways to focus your prayers** over the next few weeks.

1. National Shut-In Visitation Day, February 11 – Every community, church, or neighborhood has shut-ins: people who aren't able to leave their homes due to physical limitations, illness, psychological problems, age, or other issues. Regrettably, I never thought much about this until I experienced it in my own family. My mom has Alzheimer's and has mobility issues, so during the winter months my parents are quite often housebound. I also have a friend who is ill with a chronic disease, unable to leave her condo on her own.

Seeing the world through their eyes makes me realize how difficult it can be to lose the ability to come and go as you please. This month, let's make the effort to visit someone who is a shut-in. If possible, assist the person with a trip away from her home, even if it's just to a grocery store or a park. A change of scenery always perks each one of us up, so imagine how much good it will do for someone who hasn't been out of the house in weeks or months.

Resources:

- Focus on the Family Resource
- [God's Shut-ins](#), a poem by Annie Johnson Flint

Verse: *"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Psalm 91:1 KJV*

Prayer: Lord, we pray for those whose lives have been interrupted by circumstances beyond their control. We ask for their peace and comfort. We pray for healing. We ask that you would restore hope where it has been snuffed out. We pray that shut-ins would not be forgotten and invisible but would continue to live vital, vibrant lives where they can contribute in a way that fuels their passion and honors you. We ask that you would help others to reach out to them, offering friendship and fellowship. Make us sensitive to your Holy Spirit's leading. In Jesus' name, amen.

2. Valentine's Day, February 14 – This day has its roots in both Christian and Roman culture. History notes a Roman priest by the name of Valentine who was martyred for marrying young couples, going against an edict of Emperor Claudius. Claudius thought young men would make better soldiers for his military if they were single. Legend also says this day is tied to a Roman fertility festival called Lupercalia. Wherever the truth lies, today we celebrate this holiday by showing love to our sweethearts and other family and friends. With evil being so

visible in our world right now, let's focus on being loving to those in our lives, and most importantly, being an example of the selfless love Jesus demonstrated for each one of us.

Resources:

- [The History Channel](#)
- [Blue Mountain E-cards](#), send a free Valentine's e-card

Verse: *"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8 NIV*

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your great love for us that is an example of how we are to love each other. Help us to shower that love on those around us. May we see our families and friends with a fresh set of eyes, not taking them for granted, but celebrating their lives. Help us to overcome any reticence, enabling us to show and tell them of our love. In Jesus' name, amen.

3. Ash Wednesday, February 18 – According to Dennis Bratcher in "A Service of Worship," an adaptation from *The Book of Common Prayer*, "The season of Lent is a time of prayer, fasting, self-examination, and penitence for all Christians as we prepare to celebrate Easter. Through this forty-day journey, we are reminded that we are totally unworthy before God, that we have nothing with which we can obtain salvation, and that our best efforts at being righteous fall far short. This season reminds us how much we need grace in our lives in order to live a transformed life that reflects God's love. We are called to renew our commitments and our faith as we continually acknowledge our need of God's transforming presence with us."

Friends, let us pray for ourselves and each other as we prepare for the celebration of Easter Sunday during this time of Lent. Over the next six weeks, try at least one of the

spiritual disciplines mentioned in the above list. Take the time to do a spiritual evaluation. Confess what needs to be confessed; release what needs to go; welcome what needs to be received; pray what needs to be birthed. And wait for God to work.

Resources:

- [Ash Wednesday – The First Step to Easter](#)
- [True Lenten Discipline Podcast](#)
- See the Spiritual Disciplines tab at OnlyByPrayer.com
- A Service of Worship

Verse: *“For dust you are and to dust you will return.”*
Genesis 3:19b NIV

Prayer: Lord, tune our hearts to your Spirit. May we unclog our airwaves of earthly noise and distractions so that we can receive what you have for us. Make us alert to what you want us to learn, confess, and live. Give us humble, contrite spirits. Amen.

4. President’s Day, February 16 – President’s Day was originally set aside to recognize our first president, George Washington, but is designated to honor all presidents. No matter whether you agree with President Obama’s policies or not, I think we can all agree on how important it is for us to pray for him. He is facing many challenging situations in our own country and abroad that would benefit from concentrated prayer.

Resources:

- [President’s Day](#)

Verse: *“First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and*

dignity.” 1 Timothy 2:1-2 NIV

Prayer: Lord, we pray for President Obama. We pray that he will humble himself before you and seek your wisdom as he leads our country. May he unite Congress and our country; may he be wise in his dealings with foreign nations; establish his priorities. We ask a hedge of protection around him, first lady Michelle, and his daughters Malia and Sasha. Amen.

5. Hostages – Unfortunately, too many times over the last few months the headlines have been filled with stories of hostages who have been murdered by extremists. Let’s fervently pray for those who have been kidnapped by extremists around the world and lift up the families of those hostages who have already been murdered. We can also pray for Christians in foreign countries who are also being tortured and murdered for their beliefs.

Resources:

- [News Story](#)
- [Iraqi Crisis](#)

Verse: “Rescue me, O Lord, from evil men; protect me from men of violence, who devise evil plans in their hearts and stir up war every day.” Psalm 140:1-2 NIV

Thank you for joining **Only By Prayer** in **praying** this month. Please add any prayers or comments below.

Jane



Jane VanOsdol

Five Ways to Pray in January



January is the start of a fresh year. It's the time when we have a completely blank book open before us waiting to be written. Much of the content is of our own making, and it depends upon our choices, behavior, thoughts, and actions. Other parts of the book are filled with things that happen to us, but again, we get to choose how we react to those things.

As we begin this New Year, here are a few suggestions to *fuel your prayers*.

1. New Year's Day – January 1 is about possibilities. We can leave behind the mistakes and regrets of the past and start over with the promise of a fresh start. It's worthwhile to reflect on what was and set goals for what is yet to be. Pray that God will give you His vision for your New Year and anything that He wants you to confess, learn, or do in the upcoming 365 days. The following resources may help you with goal setting.

Resources:

- [Only By Prayer One Word podcast](#)
- [Get One Word](#)
- [The Lens of Love](#)

*Verse: "But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."
Matthew 19:26 NKJ*

Prayer: Lord, we pray that you would drive deep into our hearts the truth that with You we always have a fresh start. We don't have to wait for the New Year to hit the reset button. But we do ask that You will help us to make the most of 2015. May we listen to Your plans for us and obey what You are calling us to do. We ask for the faith to believe that whatever You want to do in each of our lives is possible. In Jesus' name. Amen!

2. The Epiphany – January 6 commemorates the Magi's visit to Baby Jesus (this date is also used to remember Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River by John the Baptist). If we can cultivate the same characteristics that the kings had as they were searching for Jesus, we can grow in our faith just as they did. Read more about this below.

Resources:

- [Journey Like the Magi](#)
- [Re-gifting to the King](#) by Mary Kane
- The Season of Epiphany by Dennis Bratcher

Verse: "We saw his star in the East and have come to worship him." Matthew 2:2 NIV

Prayer: Lord, we pray that we have our eyes to the sky looking for You this year, just as the Magi did on their journey to Bethlehem. Help us to make You our top priority. May we remember to give You the best of our resources and gifts – not the leftovers. Amen.

3. Human Trafficking Awareness Day – January 11 is the day set aside to draw attention to the plight of those caught in the web of human trafficking. This problem is much more invasive than you may realize. When researching this topic, I came across a long article by Vanity Fair that sickened and convinced me of the horror of this problem right here in the U.S. I did not put it in the resources (choosing instead to focus on what we can do to combat the problem), but you could easily find it by googling it.

Resources:

- [5 Ways You Can Combat Human Trafficking](#)
- [Shared Hope](#)

Verse: "For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight." Psalm 72:12-14 NIV

Prayer: Lord, often times the victims of trafficking have no one to defend them, no one to help them. We pray for their

plight to be made known. We ask for their rescue, deliverance, and healing. We pray that all those participating in enslaving others would be brought to justice. And show us what each one of us can do to combat trafficking in our communities, states, and countries. Amen.

4. National Religious Freedom Day – January 16 is set aside to support the religious freedoms we enjoy as Americans and to particularly celebrate the rights our students enjoy in school. Download the short guidebook from the website below. Pay close attention to the section entitled “The Religious Liberties of Public School Students.” This section highlights seven areas underscoring students’ rights regarding religious freedom. In this day and age when it seems that there are so many challenges to religious freedom in our schools, these freedoms enacted by our own presidents (from Clinton to Obama) are eye-opening – and ones we should all be familiar with.

Resource:

[Religious Freedom Day](#)

Verse: Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. 1 Peter 2:16 ESV

Prayer: Lord, we ask for protection of the freedom to worship You. Perhaps we are guilty of not taking advantage enough of this freedom to worship and serve You. May we remember the old saying that says “If you don’t use it, you’ll lose it.” Give us the courage and gumption to speak up. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

5. Martin Luther King Day – On Monday, January 19, we will celebrate this federal holiday. Martin Luther King was a civil rights leader who worked for racial equality. Let’s pray for racial unity in our country where we are too often divided by politics, social standing, misunderstandings, and outright hatred. May we remember that we are all made in the image of

God.

Resource:

[How We Open Our Hearts to God](#) excerpt from Coretta Scott King's book

Verse: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:28

Prayer: Lord, we pray for your balm of peace and unity to spread across our country. May we treat each other with dignity and respect. Help us to remember that each person is made in Your image and is far more valuable than any material possession. Amen.

Feel free to add your own prayers in the comment section below.

Pray on!



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