

Pray Your Way Through 2011

Perhaps one of your New Year's goals is to pray more. Well, January is a good time to pray and ask God what major issues or topics He wants you to zero in on for the year. Of course, as the year goes along, you'll find plenty of things, people and situations to pray for. But right now we can all **take some time to seek God on what ongoing requests He wants you to focus on for 2011**. Mary and I were just talking about this the other day and decided to share our Top 6 Prayer List of what we're focusing on this year.

Top 6 Prayer List for 2011



1. Pray that we can love God with all our hearts. (Deuteronomy 6:5)
2. Pray that we can believe God to do big things in our lives. (Ephesians 3:20,21)
3. Pray for perseverance. (2 Peter 1:5-7)
4. Pray for persecuted Christians. (2Thessalonians 3:1-2)
5. Pray for justice for the oppressed. (Psalm 103:6)
6. Pray that we would be developing and using our God-given gifts. (1 Corinthians 12:4-11).

You may be led to similar prayer goals, or God may reveal to you totally different goals. One of the challenges with goals is actually doing them or keeping them. What I decided to do

to help keep these fresh before me for the whole year is to write each goal on its own index card and keep it in my prayer card file. I'll use a larger 4 x 6 size card. (See [Ready, Set, Pray](#) if you need suggestions to help you establish a prayer time.) **As I go through the year, I'm going to record any specific requests or how I see God working in these areas on the appropriate cards.**

Set aside some time tonight or over the weekend to ask God what your prayer priorities should be this year. If you want to share any of your prayer goals for the year, just leave a comment. We'd love to hear them.

Click to listen to the [Pray Your Way Through 2011 podcast](#).

Pray on!



Elizabeth's Place in the Christmas Story

"And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the

Lord.'” Luke 1:41-45 NKJV



Focus:

Let's look today at Elizabeth's place in preparing our hearts for Christmas. It was particularly hard on a woman to be barren in the Jewish culture. You see, the Jews considered children to be a sign of God's favor on a couple and His displeasure if you could not have children. We know that God was not displeased with Zecharias and Elizabeth because God tells us in Luke 1:6 that both Elizabeth and her husband Zacharias were righteous, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. But Elizabeth's contemporaries did not have the benefit of the scripture.

She probably suffered for years over their inability to have children. I wonder how many sideways glances or snide comments she had to endure.

Yet, God had a very special plan in mind for this couple. **But it had to be the right timing.** Elizabeth remained faithful through all those difficult years without knowing that she would bear a son who would prepare the hearts of the people for the Messiah. What an honor she had!

Let this encourage us when we feel that we are tired of waiting for what we are praying for. Keep lifting up that wayward child in prayer. Keep praying for that long awaited child. Keep asking the Lord for healing. Keep seeking God for a new job. What unanswered prayer have you lost hope for? Be open to God's timing and how He wants to work in your life. Is

there something bigger at stake God is trying to show you? Is He trying to change more than what you're praying for? Maybe something at the very core of you? Let Him do His work in your life and remember that some prayers take a lifetime to birth! Some we may see right away, and others maybe not this side of heaven. But don't give up!

Prayer: Dear Lord,

We pray for the perseverance to be faithful to You no matter what our circumstances may look like. Help us to remember that your timing preempts our timing. **May we keep praying, keep believing, keep loving.** Amen.

Pray on!