

5 Ways to Pray in July



Whether it feels like it or not where you live, summer has arrived in full force. In July we usually enjoy long, hot days with lots of sunshine. Summer evenings are illuminated by thousands of lightning bugs, and crickets and cicadas serenade us with a chorus of songs.

Thanks for taking some time to pray with Only By Prayer this month.

1. Independence Day, July 4 – In 1776, the American colonies won their independence from Great Britain, and we have enjoyed the privileges of a free nation ever since. As we consider the persecution that many are suffering around the world for personally held beliefs, our freedom is not to be taken lightly. In recent years, controversies regarding race, sexual orientation, religion, and politics have made us seem anything but the *United States of America*. We can pray for Americans to seek God and His plans for their lives and our nation.

Resources:

Intercessors for America

Verse: If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their

wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. 2 Chronicles 7:14 NIV

Prayer: Jesus, we thank You for the freedom we have enjoyed for many years in America. We never want to take these for granted. May we keep a spirit of thankfulness ever before us. Many times, however, we have abused these freedoms and made ourselves an offense to You by our sin. We ask for Your forgiveness. May Americans repent and turn to You, seeking Your plans for us as individuals and for our nation as a whole. In Jesus' name. Amen.

2. Mission Trips – Churches frequently schedule mission trips during the summer months when individuals and families may have a bit more time to devote to this commitment. Let's pray that God prepares the hearts of all those involved. This can be a life-changing experience for both those going and those who are on the receiving end of the mission's work.

Resources:

Avoiding Pitfalls of Short-term Mission Trips

Verse: Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:19 NIV

Prayer: Lord, may the short-termers' first thought be of preparing their hearts before You and seeking Your plans for the trip. We ask that those going would be aware of cultural customs so as not to offend anyone and would be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. We pray for safety and good health while traveling. For those whom the trip is planned, we pray for salvation, healing, and growth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

3. Ebola – Although it's been out of the news lately, Ebola continues to be a problem in certain parts of the world.

Liberia, which the World Health Organization declared clear of Ebola in May 2015, has just confirmed two new cases. Neighboring countries Sierra Leone and Guinea are still reporting several cases every week. Let's pray that this disease can be wiped out and that another widespread outbreak does not occur.

Resources:

News Story

Verse: Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits – who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases. Psalm 103:3 NIV

Prayer: Lord, we pray that the scourge of Ebola would be wiped off the earth. We ask for healing for those who are suffering from this illness. We pray it will not spread any more. We pray it will not cross the boundaries of cities and countries. We ask a hedge of protection around those who have contact with Ebola patients. Please give the doctors and health care workers wisdom as they treat those infected. In Jesus' name. Amen.

4. Shooting at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston

– Nine people were killed at this black church when a lone, white gunman opened fire after a prayer meeting that he attended. Since then, three arson fires have been set at predominately black churches in the South. These tragedies should spur us on to pray against racism in the United States. We have always been a melting pot of different races and cultures; rather than letting that divide us, let's be a force for prayer that can overcome prejudice and hate.

Resources:

Prayer Against Racism and Prejudice

Verse: A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have

loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another. John 13:34.

Prayer: Jesus, out of a heart filled with love, You died so that we might all have eternal life. When You look at us, You see your children. Help us to remember we are all brothers and sisters in Christ. May our hearts cultivate a spirit of love. We ask for healing at Emanuel Church and for the friends and families of those murdered. We pray for these other churches that were victims of arson. We pray that hearts of stone and hatred would be changed by your unfailing, color-blind love. May your church be leading the charge of changed hearts. Amen.

5. The Feast of Mary and Martha of Bethany, July 29 – This church feast day celebrates the story of Mary and Martha offering hospitality to Jesus as He was visiting and teaching at their home. We can cull many lessons from this vignette of Jesus' life. First of all, we can see the importance of offering hospitality and sharing our home with others, just as Mary and Martha did. Perhaps even more, we see the importance of priorities and how we spend our time as we study Jesus' words to the worried Martha.

Resources:

She Sat by Mary Kane

Mary and Martha at Lectionary.com

Verses: *Now as Jesus and his disciples went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried*

and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.” Luke 10:38-42 NIV

Prayer: Jesus, we ask for the trait of hospitality that Mary and Martha demonstrated. Help us to freely share our homes and resources as they did. And we pray for the focus that Mary had on what is important – You. May we set our eyes on You as she did; align our priorities with Yours. Amen.

Thank you for praying with us this month, and be sure to add other requests in the comment section.

Pray on!

Jane