

# A Resource for Family Prayer Life and Prayer Walks

by Jane Haas ©2021

## Prayer Ideas by Month

### January

In January we begin a NEW calendar year, a fresh beginning.

- Have a “watch night” prayer vigil together as you end the old year and prepare to begin the new year. Pray for family members, neighbors and friends, your county, state and country, your church pastors, teachers, church family and more.
- Set up a prayer poster or white board in your home where family members can add to prayer requests and share God’s answers to prayers.
- Use these ideas at the end of the old year or at the end of a week or a month to welcome a new week, month, or season of the year.

### February

This month includes Valentine’s Day, Black History, and Presidents Day observances. Many times, the church season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday—a time of reflection, repentance, and thanksgiving for Jesus’ suffering and death.

- Pray especially for those dating, engaged to be married, and for marriages of those in your family and friends’ circle.
- Pray for the commitments to a Christian relationship for your children even before they are born and through their lives.
- Pray for those who are in conflicting and abusive relationships that they may be healed and restored and that they may know their worth in God’s eyes.
- Include in your prayers a thanksgiving for God’s creation of all people being His children, equal and equally loved, for acceptance and forgiveness, and for relationship building.
- Ask God to bless your leaders and give them wise decisions.

### March

In March we might observe the Spring equinox and the new season of Spring, as well as a continuing of Lent, and sometimes an early Easter.

- Pray for repentance, renewal, the greening of Spring, the season of Lent and Jesus' suffering and death/forgiveness of all our sins. Thank God for new growth in His earth, for farmers, fields and gardens, seeds, awakening insects, hatching birds and new birth of animals.
- Pray for families traveling and/or having stay-vacations during Spring break from school.

## April

Thank God for the new life He gives us in Jesus Christ—for Easter and our celebrations related to Jesus and His resurrection, and for His promise of our home in heaven with Him.

- You might have an Easter Saturday Vigil that includes a prayer walk at your church parking lot, around a school track, or inside the building.
- Ask God to protect all who live in areas affected by Spring weather changes and tornadoes, and to keep them safe.

## May

This month includes National Day of Prayer as well as Mother's Day and Memorial Day. Many also plant gardens and enjoy God's creation in nature as temperatures warm the ground.

- Pray for farmers and all who plant seeds, grow crops and produce food for our marketplaces. Ask God to give good weather conditions to all the growers and their fields.
- Include in your prayers our nation and our freedom to pray and worship. Pray for those who have served in the nation's military and for those who have families of fallen soldiers. We remember with thanksgiving all who have died in the faith.
- Pray with thanksgiving for all mothers and for those who serve as children's caregivers, for those who have lost children, for those expecting children, for those who have given children for adoption, for those who have adopted children, and for women who are unable to have children. Thank God for surrogate mothers too, and all women who nurture others and provide good Christian examples.

## June

Summer begins this month. With summer comes a variety of activities! We observe Father's Day, summer gardening and family activities.

- Pray with thanksgiving for all fathers and for those men who serve as children's caregivers (grandfathers, uncles, brothers), for fathers who have lost children, for those

expecting children, for men who are unable to father children. Thank God for all men who nurture others and provide good Christian examples.

- Pray for students and teachers at the ending of the school year, for a safe and healthy summer for all.
- Pray for VBS leaders and families and for outreach in your community to share Jesus.
- Pray for safety during summer travel and family activities.

## **July**

This month we celebrate the United States' Independence Day and Canada Day too.

- Thank God for citizenship and patriotism, for our freedoms and our right to vote. Talk about how our family can respect and love our nation. Ask God to help us be good examples and take care of our land that God provides.

## **August**

Say back to school prayers for families, students, teachers, and volunteers. Include children and students of all ages (early childhood through college programs) and those in both public, private and homeschool situations.

- Pray for missionaries who serve to share the Good News of Jesus both nearby and far away.
- Ask God to help the farmers by yielding good crop harvests and providing for their needs.

## **September**

In September we observe Labor Day, Grandparents Day, and the first day of Fall/Autumn season.

- Thank God for all grandparents and for those who serve as grandparents to children, for their teaching and good examples as children learn from them.
- Pray for old and new friends made in your neighborhood, school, workplaces and community.
- Remember all who work at their jobs and do them diligently, being thankful for their labors.

- Maybe your Sunday school has a Rally Day and kicks off a new season of classes. Celebrate and pray for Sunday school leaders and children/youth and also Bible study leaders and adult classes.

## October

This month includes national Clergy Appreciation Month. Pray for all pastors and seminary students, their families, and their leadership that God would bless their ministry and study as they share the Word with others.

- Thank God for the celebration of the Reformation and talk about why it is important in our Christian history.
- Hallowed Eve (Hallow'een) is the last day of this month, a day that families can remember to thank God for the gift of the Holy Spirit and also celebrate Fall festivals.

## November

November 1 is All Saints' Day in the church, a day to remember those who have died in the faith, and to thank Jesus for His true promise to take all believers to live with Him in heaven when we die.

- Early in November national elections are usually held, and we can pray for those to be conducted smoothly and fairly, and for wisdom in the discerning and voting process.
- We celebrate our veterans especially on November 11, those both active and inactive, who have served us through military branches.
- Ask God to protect those who live in areas affected by hurricanes and tsunamis.
- Pray for a national Thanksgiving celebration for families and friends and for safe travel for all.

## December

December 21 marks the first day of Winter season. Ask God to show you ways to serve others so that they may stay safe and warm and fed through weeks of winter. Make a list of people who may be especially alone and lonely in this season and think of ways your family can cheer them.

- Pray for Advent and Christmas celebrations and for God to help us prepare our hearts and minds for the "coming of Jesus as a baby" on the first Christmas.
- Remember to pray for missionaries who are local and world-wide.

*\*Use these ideas to spark and create even more ideas for your family. Add them to your calendar at home!*

*\*A family might designate a Monthly Day of Prayer to pray outside the home and yard in a beautiful park or space. Include your monthly or weekly prayer starters in your family prayer walks.*

## **Specific Ideas for Families Who Pray Together**

### **What is Prayer?**

A prayer/our praying is simply talking to God/Jesus/the Holy Spirit. When we pray, we have a conversation with our heavenly Father, our Savior, our Comforter.

Prayer is power as an engine that drives a car—it is ACTIVE. Praying does make a difference. We say or think the words; God listens and responds to our prayers.

### **Why do we pray? What is Your Why?**

God WANTS us to talk to Him! He desires a close relationship with His children.

- We want to talk to our God, our best Friend Jesus.
- As Christians we want our children and other family members to talk to God and have a close, personal relationship with Him.
- Jesus taught us to pray. (The Lord's Prayer—Matthew 6:9-13)
- Praying shows our love for and our dependence on our Creator God.
- Praying is powerful and effective (James 5:16) and we know God hears ALL our prayers.
- Matthew 18:20 – For where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I among them.  
He is always with us! We acknowledge Him as our Creator, Redeemer, Helper.
- Deuteronomy 4:7 – God is near us whenever we pray to Him.

### **He commands and expects us to pray:**

- Matthew 6:6—When you pray, go into your room ...
- Luke 18:1—Jesus told His disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.
- Philippians 4:6—In everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God.

- 1 Thessalonians 5:17—Pray continually. Pray without ceasing/stopping.
- James 5:16—Pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.
- Ephesians 6:18 – Pray at all times in the Spirit (after putting on the whole armor of God).
- Deuteronomy 6:7 – Teach (these words that I command you today) diligently to your children, talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

### **He wants us to pray for others:**

- Colossians 1:9 – We have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding ...

### **He heals and forgives:**

- 2 Chronicles 7:14 – 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 will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

## **Acronyms for Prayer Starters**

### **ACTS (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplications)**

Dear heavenly Father, Creator and Caregiver of us all ...

I'm sorry that I disobeyed my parents today when I ...

Thank You, Father God, for sending Jesus to be our Savior ...

Please heal Uncle John and help him know Your great love for him ...

### **PRAY (Praise, Repent, Ask, Yield)**

A reminder that God wants to hear anything and everything we have to tell Him, and that He helps us be patient in waiting for His answers to our prayers as we yield to "God's will be done."

We praise You, Creator, Redeemer, and Helper! You are our Triune God.

We are sorry for the sins we've done and for the things we haven't done and should have done to help others.

We ask You to hear our prayer, to heal (name person), to bless us with ... We pray that Your will be done, that You answer our prayer according to what's best for us.

**ASK (Ask, Seek, Knock) Matthew 7:7** God tells us we can ask Him for anything! He always provides for all our needs. He is always waiting to hear us.

## **Being a Prayer Leader in Your Home**

**Are you equipped to pray? The hardest part is to begin ... the rest is easy! Ask God to help you and trust that He will!**

Praying is easier for some, harder for others. Acknowledge your comfort level and that of others. Accept. Practice. Keep it simple. Just talk to your loving Lord. Immerse yourself in Scripture. The nearer you are to Him, the closer He is to you!

Model simple child-like prayers in your home, words from your heart, and focus on age-appropriate words and thoughts to pray. Keep prayers short with young children; have them “echo” your spoken prayer words to set an example for them as praying people.

Believe and trust in God and His loving care for you.

Believe and trust that He hears your prayers, no matter how short or long, and even knows what you pray when you do not have the words.

Believe and trust that God answers all your prayers—in His time, in His way, according to His will and plan for you—sometimes not the way we ask for something, but always something BEST for us.

Believe and trust that your spouse and children NEED a prayer life, need you to be a good prayer leader example, and that your prayer words are heartfelt and age appropriate for children, pleasing to God’s ears too.

Being accepting of others as they learn to pray with family comfortably; teach and lead patiently by modeling; prayer is not something to be forced or always scheduled but can be spontaneous and from the heart. For example, “Thank You, God, for our food and drink. We know that You love us. We love You too.”

Make prayer a priority; share prayer concerns and ways God has answered your prayers; give thanks in all things.

**Remember that praying is simply having a conversation with God, our best Friend Jesus. Unlike others, He ALWAYS listens!**

## How, Where and When Can We Pray?

Remember that you can pray ANYwhere! And ANY time!

**Say a variety of made-up prayers (spontaneous) and memorized prayers** such as those in children's prayer books and those you might remember from childhood. Maybe your children are learning prayers in preschool, day school, and Sunday school. For example, "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. Guard me, Jesus, through the night and wake me with the morning light." At your bedside or child's bedside on awakening say a simple joyful statement such as, "Thank You, God, for this new day! Keep us safe with You, I pray."

**Pray before and after mealtime**, whether you are at a dining table together at home or eating at a park, a restaurant, or elsewhere. Make praying a habit. Babies and toddlers can learn to fold their hands and eventually say simple words. Thanking God for giving us our food and drink is a priority in Christian living. In public each can fold hands and bow heads and pray silently if desired.

**Teach your children "prayer postures"** to help them focus on praying. Sit together holding hands at a mealtime. Or fold hands. Close your eyes to help you think about your prayer words. Or place your arms crossed over your chest (a "prayer pretzel").

While washing your face and brushing your teeth, while showering or bathing, while using water, **say thank You prayers for the water and Word in Holy Baptism** when God made you His dear child.

You might want to designate a small space in your family room where all of you can light a candle, read a Scripture verse for the day, and join in prayer. You could call this space your prayer station or **family worship center**.

**A family prayer station (devotion center)** might have a Bible, a picture of Jesus, an empty cross, and window clings or suncatchers to remind you that Jesus is always with you. Include a small bulletin board, white board, chalkboard or clipboard with paper and pen where you can list prayer requests and God's answers to your prayers. Add an MP3 player with peaceful hymns and Christian music.

Individually, you might want to choose a small space such as **a prayer closet** (as in the movie "War Room") where you can escape life's hustle and bustle and be quiet in prayer time. Some use sticky post notes to write prayer requests and answers to prayers and attach to the wall as reminders while praying.

**Draw pictures of your prayers.** This works well especially with children. Keep these in a basket or post them on a visual board as reminders.

**As you say a prayer, toss a beanbag into a laundry basket.** Older children might print short prayers onto paper airplanes they create and "fly the prayers high."



## For Whom and What Can We Pray?

For anyone! For anything!

“You will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.” Jeremiah 29:12

Consider categorizing your requests for prayers such as:

- Urgent
- Health
- Sympathy
- Job and Financial
- School
- Family Matters
- Friend Matters
- Faith Family
- Salvation for Others—Intentional Witnessing
- Spiritual Growth
- World and Country Situations

## Prayer Visuals to Help You

**STOP (STOP sign visual) for the acronym Stop To Offer Prayers** – Photocopy and laminate Stop Sign shapes to place along your walk for visual reminders on your prayer path.

**Set up a Prayer Wall** using a whiteboard or chalkboard or display sticky post notes having printed prayer requests and God’s answers to your prayers.

**Use Christmas cards/letters/photos you have received** from family & friends as prayer starters. Keep the cards in a basket near your dining table or prayer center; pray for one or more families/persons as you hold their card(s) after eating your meal or having family devotions.

**Use your cell phone to take a photo** of a number that corresponds with one of your loved ones’ birthdays or special occasions. For example, a son’s birthdate on the 5th of a month. Take a photo of the clock with the hand pointing to FIVE or a numeral or the word five wherever else you might see it. Send that photo with a one-line prayer such as, “I pray God blesses you on your special day!” Or “God bless and keep you, dear (name)!”

**Your phone photo library can provide quick prayer starters** as you look at a photo you have saved and pray for a person or an event.

**Use a small notebook to keep a prayer journal.** Jot prayer thoughts your family brainstorms together. After praying, later read and review how God faithfully answered your prayers!

## Prayer Walk Ideas

### Why, Who, When, Where, AND How

**Christian believers walk and pray together.** Do this with your family. Then invite other Christian families to join you in an “intentional prayer walk.” Plan and organize “on site” praying according to your family’s needs and situations. It is most helpful to walk and pray with Christians and avoid any conflicts of religious beliefs. Be in unity with one another.

**Your prayer walkers might be** you and a friend, you and your spouse, you and your children (a family unit), your intergenerational family unit, a single person who asks a Christian friend to walk and pray, a retired couple or friends, a small Bible study group of friends. Prayer walkers can be a small group, or a large group made up of a variety of ages with the same purpose: walking and praying with joy and trust in the Lord!

If you don’t have a prayer walking partner or small group, ask your pastor or Bible study leader to suggest someone for you to invite. Your congregation could promote a “church family prayer walk” at the parking lot, playground, or inside the building. If possible, link the Prayer Walk on the church’s web site for members to find praying/walking friends who would be interested in joining you as a one-time event or as a continuing activity. With the help of the Holy Spirit, this could lead to some powerful prayer walking and answers from God!

**Be as inclusive as you can for persons who have disabilities.** How can you plan a prayer walk for those who need help walking with walkers, wheelchairs, canes? For those who are sight-impaired and who would benefit by holding and feeling objects? For those who are hearing impaired who might be helped by an ASL interpreter? Adapt to include those kinds of needs. Safety first!

**Where might you have a prayer walk?** Whatever location you choose to pray and walk, be sure the participants will be safe, whether it is an urban, suburban, or a rural setting. Consider special safety precautions for the very young, the less able, and the elderly.

In your home with your family, planned or spontaneous; pray in each room and outdoors in your yard, driveway, on a sidewalk as you walk together.

- In your neighborhood
- At a park
- At a church parking lot

- At a school playground or sports field
- At a shopping mall

Encourage those in college and away from home in school or workplaces to create prayer walking groups; walk through campus, or through the workplace.

Facilities where your loved ones live could create simple prayer walks through their hallways and cafeterias. (Nursing homes, residential apartment buildings ...)

**Designate prayer “stations” in your yard or where you will be walking.** Paint and decorate rocks/stones with symbols and words. In addition, carry small rocks/stones in your pocket and set them where you stop to pray for people, situations, etc. Pray the Lord’s Prayer together at the end of your walk together. For middle-schoolers and older, this can become a safe place where they can grow to openly share things going on in their lives.

**Set a prayer walk pathway of bricks** into your yard deep enough that you don’t trip. Or create stepping stones together to designate as prayer walk “stops” and perhaps put a loved one’s name on each one. (Make your own from concrete poured into a bucket; or find stepping stones at a local hardware/home and garden shop.) Pray for that person as you stop and walk to the next.

**Have a Neighborhood Prayer Walk** See Deuteronomy 6:7—“Love the LORD your God with all your heart ... “You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, **and when you walk by the way**, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”

**Cut hearts from construction paper and print “I prayed for you today.”** If you see neighbors working or playing outdoors, give them a heart. Or leave a heart rubber-banded onto the front door handle. Include a note if you wish to ask the neighbor to leave the heart in a visible window of their home if they would be comfortable for you to approach them, meet one another, and become friends. People will see Jesus working through you and your family. It may lead to your inviting them to church and Sunday or weekday Bible hour.

Making neighborhood friends might also lead to being a good neighbor, noticing who might need grass mowed, leaves raked, windows washed, and more.

**If you walk on a sidewalk, stop in each section to pray** for a specific individual and/or need. Or if you walk on a nature path together, count steps to 10 or 20, then stop and pray together.

**Have a driveway walk if you have a long driveway. If you have a backyard or side yard, designate prayer stops outdoors around your home.** Have a Lenten Passion Walk, and Easter Victory Walk, or a Walk to Bethlehem before Christmas and use plastic Easter eggs with Scripture verses and prayer starters or a small gift box to open and read Scripture and/or prayers at each “station.”

**Pray in each room of your home.** Use the “War Room” movie concept at home with a designated closet or more spaces to stop and pray as you walk. Attach a Post-It note to the

doorway or wall for a prayer reminder for a person, situation, or an event. Eventually add how God answered your prayers to Post-It notes to display.

**Touch a photo on your wall or refrigerator at home and pray as you hold your touch.** Or look at a memory photo album together, put your finger on a photo, and pray for that person.

## Sing Prayers Together

**Upon awakening, sing** “This Is the Day, this is the day that the Lord has made ... Let us rejoice, let us rejoice and be glad in it ...” Walk to a window (by yourself, with a spouse, with your children or elderly care receivers) to watch the sunrise or the sunset, the birds, squirrels, deer, butterflies and other creatures. “I thank and praise You, God, for the gift of this new day, the present.” “Thank You, God, for all your creation!”

**Start simple;** use prayer words and melodies that you hear in congregational worship. “Chant” simple prayer words using two or three notes of the scale, creating your own melody. “Bless my family today and keep them safe ...” “Help me to be kind ...” “Forgive me, Lord Jesus ...” “Help me to walk in Your ways ...”

### **Sing before or after your meal:**

The Johnny Appleseed Song (Oh, the Lord is good to me, and so I thank the Lord for giving me the things I need: the sun and the rain and the apple seed. Oh, the Lord is good to me.)

Thank You, God, thank You, God, for this food, for this food. We know that You love us, we know that You love us. Thank You, God. Thank You, God.

Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow (*Lutheran Service Book* 805)

**Sing the Psalms** — A family might use the *Lutheran Service Book* (see p xxvi) to learn to sing the psalms together. See Psalm 1—150 that follow that directional page. Be sure to choose the tone (cheerful or somber) according to the psalm text.

**Sing the Liturgy** — See the *Lutheran Service Book* divine services settings 1-5 and more on pages 151- 249. Say or sing the words of the liturgy; choose a simple Scripture to teach your family to begin, such as The Alleluia and Verse (p. 156) and repeat it together daily for a week before going on to learn a new section. Read the Scripture verse(s) from the Bible to help your children understand the words that you are singing together are God’s Word that is written down and really true!

## Starter Ideas

**The Alleluia and Verse** – (p. 156)

Alleluia, Lord to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia, Alleluia!

**Praise prayer**—The Sanctus (p. 161)

**Supplication** — The Agnus Dei (p. 163)

**Thanksgiving** - Thank the Lord (p. 164)

**Offering to the Lord** — The Offertory (p. 176)

**Praise prayer** — The Nunc Dimittis (Song of Simeon; p. 182)

**For Mercy** — The Kyrie (p. 186)

**Create in Me** — Offertory (p. 192)

**The Lord's Prayer** - (p. 196)

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