



MOVEMENT WOMEN



Back to School

Prayer Guide

Student Edition

Spotify Playlist



Introduction

“Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.” Ephesians 6:18

NLI

The first day of school always held a certain tension for me. It was one part excitement and another part terror. No matter how many “first days” I had been through, there was still an element of the unknown to starting a new school year. And when something is unknown, it also means it’s out of our control. So what are we to do when confronted with what is outside of our control? We go to the one who is in control of all things—God.

In the book of Hebrews, it describes Jesus as being able to empathize with us because he experienced life in this fallen world too. And it is because of that we can approach Him in confidence, asking for the mercy and grace that we need to get through the school year (Hebrews 4:15-16). Jesus empathizes with all that we go through daily. He too had to deal with personal conflict, prioritizing time with God, and the daily ins and outs of life. Jesus knows what it’s like to live this life, and He wants to be in it with you.

In addition to spending these next 7 days praying, I want to challenge you to *fast* something as well. Fasting is purposefully abstaining from something for a set period for spiritual reasons. Two years ago, I fasted from social media. Last year I fasted from all food for 24 hours. This year I plan to do a mixture of fasting from food and media. Whatever you choose to fast from, it should be something that is challenging for you. Fasting is meant to be a means of humbling ourselves before God (Ezra 8:21-23). It creates an awareness of our own weakness, not so we can feel bad about ourselves, but to highlight God’s strength and grace in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). Fasting can be a way to amplify our prayers;

integrating our entire person—mind, body and soul—in dedication to seeking God’s heart.

I also want to encourage you to keep a prayer journal for the next seven days. This can be anything from a store bought journal, your notes app on your phone or even just a few sheets of paper. Use this journal to write out your specific prayers, and anything you think God may be speaking to you. Then, keep your journal in a safe place so that you can refer back to it throughout the school year. This will allow you to look back and see how God answered prayers and can remind you of words God has spoken to you. You may even find that this is a practice you want to keep up after the seven days are over.

Lastly, I want to encourage you to continue to pray regularly. This prayer guide may only be seven days long, but you can continue to use these prayers to cultivate a habit of praying. There is power in our prayers. So as 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says, “Never stop praying.”

-Leslie

Verses

Hebrews 4:15-16 “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” NIV

1 John 5:14 “And we are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him.” NLT

2 Corinthians 12:9 “Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.” NLT

Ezra 8:21,23 “And there by the Ahava Canal, I gave orders for all of us to fast and humble ourselves before our God. We prayed that he would give us a safe journey and protect us, our children, and our goods as we traveled...So we fasted and earnestly prayed that our God would take care of us and he heard our prayer.” NLT

1 Thessalonians 5:17 “Never stop praying.” NLT

Day 1: Laying our worries at the feet of Jesus.

“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” 1 Peter 5:7 NIV

I don't know why worry seems to come so easily to me, but it does. And when I am not careful, these worries can easily consume me. I can get stuck in my own head, and instead of moving forward, I become immobilized by my own fears and insecurities. But as children of God, we are not helpless. We have power through Jesus! Power to take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ (2 Cor. 10:5) and the power to seek help from the creator Himself.

Let's start this week of prayer by laying our worries at the feet of Jesus (1 Peter 5:7). In Matthew 6, Jesus tells us not to worry about the everyday concerns of life. He points out the birds and how God provides for them. Then in verse 26 He says, “Are you not much more valuable than they?” Sometimes in the midst of our own concerns, we forget just how much God loves us. We can be confident of the Father's love and concern for every detail of our lives.

No matter how old you are, what school you go to, or what stage of life you are in, you wield power in Jesus' name. So let's not succumb to our own thoughts, fears and insecurities. Let's pray!

Verses

2 Corinthians 10:5 “We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

Matthew 6:25-26 “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?” NIV

Philippians 4:6 “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” NIV

2 Thessalonians 3:3 “But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one.” NIV

Prayer

God, your word says not to be worried about anything but to pray about everything, so now I come to you with all of my fears and worries over the coming school year. I lay them at your feet, knowing that you care for me and that you are faithful. And I thank you, God, for your abounding love and care for me. Help me to take every thought captive, to run it through the filter of your Word, and to take any thought that is not true and make it obedient to you. You are Jehovah Nissi, my banner. In you, I have strength and victory; victory over my thoughts, over my worries and over any battle the enemy brings my way. I pray, not in my power, but in the power of the mighty name of Jesus. Amen.

Day 2: Praying for our mental health.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Romans 15:13 NIV

Praying for our mental health has never been more important than it is today. In a CDC study conducted in 2023, among high school students, 40% reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness in the past year. God wants so much better for us than this.

The enemy is out to steal, kill and destroy, but Jesus came so that we may have life abundantly (John 10:10). That includes our thought life. Today, let’s pray for that abundant life. Abundant peace. Abundant joy. Abundant hope.

Verses

John 10:10 “The thief comes to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” NIV

Philippians 4:8 “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — is anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” NIV

Psalms 34:18 “The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” NIV

Prayer

Jesus, I pray for my mental health. May your peace guard my heart and mind. Lord, you are near to the brokenhearted, so I pray for any who are currently struggling with anxiety or depression. Fill them with joy and peace and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, let them abound in hope. Finally, I pray that my mind would be fixed on what is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, admirable and praiseworthy. Thank you, Jesus - our peace. Amen.

Day 3: Praying for blessing and favor.

“The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.” Numbers 6:24-26 NIV

Our God is a good God, who the Bible says is the source of every good and perfect gift. It may seem selfish to pray for blessings or favor, but I believe God wants to bless us. He wants to show us His goodness here on earth as well as in heaven. He delights in us as we delight in Him. So today we pray that we will grow as Samuel the prophet and Jesus himself did: in wisdom and in favor with both God and man.

Verses

Psalm 23:6 “Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.” NIV

Romans 8:32 “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for all - how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” NIV

James 1:17 “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.” NIV

Psalm 107:1 “Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever?” NIV

Psalm 90:17 “And may the LORD our God show us his approval and make our efforts successful. Yes, make our efforts successful!” NLT

Luke 2:52 “And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.” NIV

1 Samuel 2:26 “And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the LORD and with people.” NIV

Prayer

God, I pray that you will bless and protect me. That you would smile upon me and be gracious to me. That your favor would be with me as I start this new school year. Please make my efforts successful. That the time and hard work I put into school will be supernaturally multiplied. LORD, help me to grow in wisdom and in favor with you and with all the people I interact with. I give thanks to you, LORD, for you are good and your love endures forever. Amen.

Day 4: Praying for Jesus to lead me.

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV

There are many things you might be hoping for this school year; academic success, good friends, success in extracurriculars, but the greatest thing you could desire is to be an apprentice of Jesus. To follow Jesus so closely that you are covered in the dust of your Rabbi.

Yet, there are so many people and things actively trying to influence us on any given day. There’s the constant and overwhelming pull of social media telling us that following the latest trend or influencer will lead to the best life. There’s pressure from peers, advice from teachers or coaches, and so many other voices that can be tempting to follow. But narrow is the road that leads to life (Matthew 7:14). You can find it only by following Jesus. So, today we are going to pray that we will follow Jesus wholeheartedly and without hesitation.

Verses

Matthew 7:14 “But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.” NIV

Psalms 5:8 “Lead me, LORD, in your righteousness because of my enemies—make your way straight before me.” NIV

John 10:2-5 “The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to this voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will

never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." NIV

Prayer

Jesus, I want to follow your lead without hesitation, no matter where it takes me. I pray that you would make your way evident to me. That as I trust in you with all my heart, you would make my paths straight. May I find my identity and self-worth in being your dearly loved child, instead of looking to the world around me for validation. I pray that I will hear your voice above the noise of this world and recognize it as you, my good shepherd. And may I have a single-minded passion for following you all the days of my life. Amen.

Day 5: Praying for my relationships.

“There are “friends” who destroy each other, but a real friend sticks closer than a brother.” Proverbs 18:24 .NLT

For as crowded as our schools are these days, they can be one of the loneliest places. Between bullying, peer pressure and the increasing lack of interpersonal skills; school can be a relationship minefield. Not only can it be challenging to make friends, period, but it can be even harder to make the right friends; friends who will encourage and build us up instead of seeking to tear us down.

We need to be praying for the relationships we are building. We can't do life alone. We need peer relationships — and the right ones. Let's pray to God for guidance, and the courage and kindness to find and to be a good friend.

Verses

Proverbs 27:17 “As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.” NLT

Proverbs 13:20 “Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble.” NLT

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 “Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble.” NLT

1 John 4:11 “Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other.” NLT

Prayer

God, please lead me to good, godly friends who will stick closer than a brother rather than trying to tear each other down. May these friends be a source of strength and encouragement. I also pray that I can be a good friend to others; showing kindness and love just as you have shown kindness and love to me. I ask that you protect me from any form of bullying or toxic relationships. And I thank you Jesus, for being my ultimate friend. Amen.

Day 6: Praying to stand firm in the faith.

“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong.”

1 Corinthians 16:13 NIV

The Bible says that our enemy, the devil, is prowling around like a lion, looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). The enemy is neither complacent nor apathetic, so we cannot afford to be either. We need to be praying to stand firm in our faith no matter what the enemy throws our way—whether it’s doubt, temptation or persecution. Let’s pray that we would be on guard, and prepared with the full armor of God, and to stand firm no matter what.

Verses

1 Peter 5:8-9 “Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are.” NLT

Ephesians 6:10-11 “Finally, be strong in the LORD and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.” NIV

Ephesians 6:14-17 “Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” NIV

Prayer

Almighty God, help me to be courageous in the face of adversity and to stand firm in my faith in you. Let me be aware of who my true enemy is. That the things of this world would not distract me from remaining alert. I pray that through your Word and Spirit I can put on the full armor of God so that no schemes of the devil will prevail against me. LORD, guard my heart and mind, and give me strength when I need it. Thank you, Jesus, for your grace and protection that is with me always. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Day 7: Praying to be a light for Jesus.

“In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.” Matthew 5:16 NLT

Not only can we stand firm against the attacks of the enemy, but we can go a step further and be a light for Jesus to the world around us. The testimony of our actions is oftentimes more powerful than that of our words. Friends, classmates and even teachers can see our behavior and wonder what it is that makes us so kind and full of integrity. Our actions have the potential to lead those we come into contact with to seek God and praise Him. Today let's pray for our lives to display the character of Jesus, and for us to have the boldness to share our faith.

Verses

Philippians 2:14-15 “Do everything without complaining and arguing, so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people.” NLT

Matthew 5:14-16 “You are the light of the world - like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.” NLT

2 Corinthians 5:20 “So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, “Come back to God!” NLT

Ephesians 6:19-20 “Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.” NIV

Prayer

Holy Spirit, help me to live a holy life as a child of God so that I can shine bright like a light in a world that is full of darkness. Remind me of who I am, an ambassador of your kingdom, so that I can conduct myself accordingly. Holy Spirit, give me the words to speak to bring encouragement, hope and light to those around me. Give me boldness to speak and to act in accordance with your Word. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.