

# Praying For Your Neighbors

## Praying For Your Neighbors

*By Kim Butts*

Prayer is the most powerful form of evangelism, and everyone can do it! It is my personal belief that no one comes to Christ apart from prayer. Many of us had parents, grandparents or friends who prayed that we would know Jesus personally. Some of us may not know who prayed for the eyes of our hearts to be opened, and may never know until we arrive in heaven. What we do know, through Scripture, is that no one comes to the Father except through Jesus Christ (John 14:6). And, no one can come to Jesus Christ unless the Father who sent Jesus draws him (John 6:44). God draws us to Himself through the prayers of His people.

Be constantly aware of the people whom God places on your heart to pray for – they may be your prayer assignments. Your prayers may ultimately result in their eternal destiny being changed from darkness to light. The Lord wants everyone to pray for, care about and share his or her faith in Christ with others because He *“wants all men [and women and children] to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth”* (1 Tim. 2:4). His way of accomplishing this is for His people to pray for those who are still in darkness.

Perhaps the greatest mission field that most families will ever have is the neighborhood. There are many families and individuals living within a short walking distance of your home who have never known Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Whether you live in a subdivision, an apartment building, a college dorm, or even out in the country, you can pray effectively and powerfully for your neighbors.

### **Praying the Word of God**

As we pray for our neighbors, we should always remember that His Word will bring life and light into the lives of others, as it has for us. *"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path"* (Psa. 119:105). Praying the Word of God into the lives and situations of those around us blesses them, and fulfills God's desire to see us apply His Word to our actions. For example, try praying the blessing from Numbers 6:24-26, "Lord, bless them and keep them. Make Your face shine upon them and be gracious to them. Father, turn Your face toward them and give them peace." Isn't that a much more powerful prayer than, "Lord, bless our neighbors"?

When we pray the Word of God into the lives and situations of others, God can do some amazing things. *"The unfolding of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple"* (Psa. 119:130). Those who could not understand before are able to grasp the things of God. When we pray, their hearts and minds can be opened to receive from the Lord.

### **The Light of Christ in You**

Matthew 5:14-16 says, *"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."* Your neighbors need to see the light of Jesus Christ in you. When they begin to see that there is a difference in you, they will want to know what it is and they may even want it for themselves. We need to allow God's plans and purposes to shine through us.

When you pray for your neighbors, ask God to give you

opportunities to care for them as well. Perhaps an elderly woman needs someone to mow the lawn, or a mother with a new baby would appreciate someone going to the grocery store for her. Maybe a new couple in the neighborhood would appreciate being invited over for dinner to get to know your family. God will open up opportunities to care about people if you will simply ask Him. Then, He can allow your light to shine into the lives of others. Praying for neighbors will lead to caring about them, which will eventually open a door for you to share Jesus with them.

### **The Light of Life**

*"...[Jesus] said, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life'"* (John 8:12). God's plan is for lost people to seek and know Christ. As we walk in obedience to the Lord, and begin to pray for them, their eyes can be opened so that the truth of Jesus can be made known to their hearts.

As we pray for our neighbors, we will find an amazing thing happening. We will begin to care for them more deeply, and even to love them as Jesus does.

### **The Five Blessings**

One way to pray for our neighbors (and others) is to pray the Five Blessings based on the acronym BLESS:

**B** – BODY – pray for their physical bodies; for health and safety

**L** – LABOR – pray for their work, school, finances

**E** – EMOTIONAL – pray for their emotional needs

**S** – SOCIAL – pray for their relationships with family and friends

**S** – SPIRITUAL – pray for their relationship with Jesus Christ

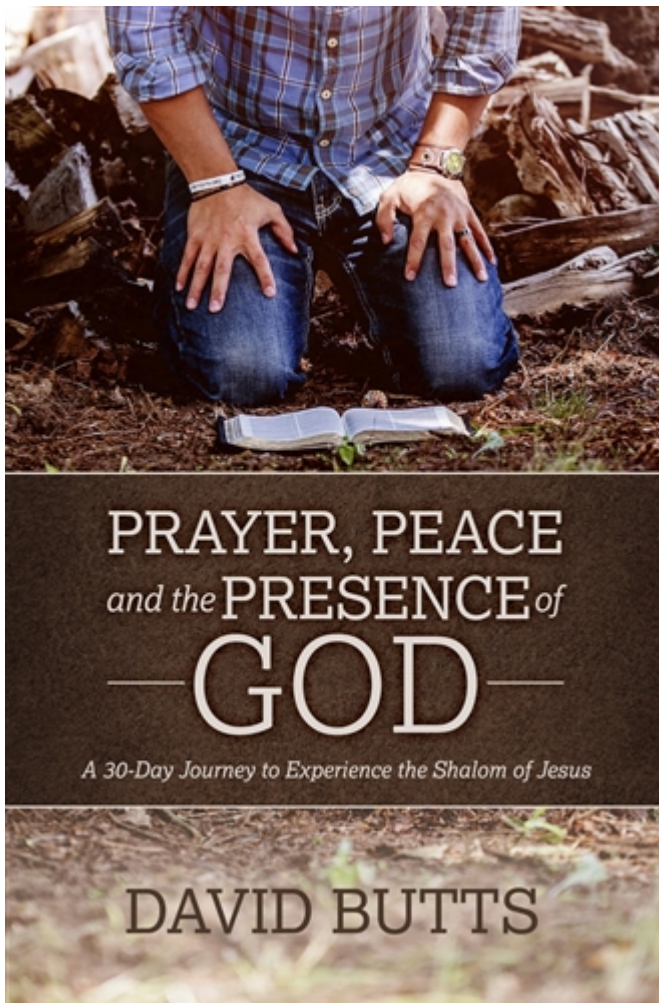
The most effective way to pray the Five Blessings for your neighbors, as we have already established, is to pray the Word of God into their lives. Here are some examples:

- **Body**– “Lord, help my neighbors to lie down and sleep in peace because You make them dwell in safety” (Psa. 4:8).
- **Labor**– “May Your favor rest upon my neighbors, Lord. Establish the work of their hands” (Psa. 90:17).
- **Emotional**– “Father, help our neighbors to live in peaceful, secure homes and to have undisturbed places of rest” (Isa. 32:18). “Help them to know that the joy that comes from You is their strength” (Neh. 8:10).
- **Social**– “Lord, give my neighbors the ability to live in harmony with one another, and to be sympathetic, loving, compassionate and humble in their families and relationships” (1 Pet. 3:8).
- **Spiritual**– “Gracious God, let my neighbors see that You are the Way and the Truth and the Life. May they realize that no one can come to You except through Jesus Christ” (John 14:6).

## **Powerful Results**

Using this simple plan to pray for your neighbors as a family will yield powerful results – even though you may not see the results for some time. As you begin to pray for your neighbors, you will be amazed at how much love God pours into your hearts for them. Look for ways to show the love of Jesus to them through acts of caring. Then, as you feel led by the Holy Spirit, begin to share the Gospel with them. Let them know what Jesus has done in your lives. Because you have prepared the ground in advance through prayer, and because you have shown them love through acts of caring, they will be more prepared and ready to hear what you have to say.

Children love to pray for neighbors, and will readily join in. You will have an opportunity to grow as a family together in prayer and in the process of becoming more like Christ.



**PRAYER, PEACE, and the PRESENCE of GOD by David Butts**

As believers, we are supposed to walk in the peace of Christ, yet we all have stressful issues and circumstances that rob us of this peace. Subtitled “A 30-Day Journey to Experience the Shalom of Jesus,” *Prayer, Peace and the Presence of God* powerfully encourages the reader on how to hold onto that peace in any circumstance.

The author, David Butts (1953-2022), started writing this book and 10 days into it he got word that he was in stage 4 with a rare form of lymphoma. God allowed him to live in a greater way for five additional years of full-strength ministry. Dave has challenged readers in *Prayer, Peace and the Presence of God* to seek after His best life, no matter what it holds.

His 30-day devotional will encourage, inspire and challenge you that you, too, can experience and walk in the peace of Jesus no matter what circumstances you are walking through.

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