

Prayers for 2022

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Leadership is our great responsibility; prayer is our great priority. The relationship between leadership and prayer is unmistakable.

Leadership initiates practical change; prayer brings power for deep change.

- Leadership solves problems; prayer brings wisdom for what seems unsolvable.
- Leadership moves things forward; prayer helps us head in the right direction.

Next to the favor of God, everything rises and falls on leadership.

However, . . . Good leadership is vital, but it is God's presence and power in its fullness through Christ that brings life-giving change through your church.

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. -Colossians 1:15-20

Jesus is the head of the Church; therefore, the things we pursue on earth in alignment with heaven are directly connected to His purpose of reconciliation.

Your leadership is incredibly important; it truly matters. Yet, it is prayer that makes the difference. We know that to be true, but amidst the problems, pressures, and deadlines of church leadership, it's easy for prayer to be robbed of the time it needs.

It's not about a legalistic approach to prayer. Prayer is not a duty to be performed or something to check off a list. It's a relationship. It's communion with our Father in Heaven, and that relationship brings great gifts from internal peace to power in ministry.

In this post, I describe four bold and courageous prayers we can all pray. *You can pray them once or all year!*

1) "Change me first."

“Change me,” This is certainly a courageous prayer. Leaders go first, so if we are helping people change, we need to change first. Change what?! Exactly. Sometimes we don’t know or can’t see it.

Do you occasionally take a moment to ask God to “search your heart?”

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.

-Psalm 139:23-24

That’s a great prayer! There may not be a dramatic need for change in your life, but it’s wise to acknowledge there is always room for a closer walk with Jesus, and that always calls for change at a heart level.

Other times we know exactly what changes need to occur, and we ask God for the courage and power to make those changes.

- What are your temptations and weak areas?
- What is your leadership kryptonite?

Courageous prayers will make a difference.

2) “Your Kingdom come; your will be done.”

Jesus taught us to pray this way. “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matt 6:10) This is a big, bold, and courageous prayer!

God’s overall purpose and plan is not a mystery; scripture makes it clear. Still, we often face situations that are out of our control. Gratefully, however, they are not out of God’s control.

Most of us prefer the ability to “see around the corner” and lead our churches with at least a sense of what’s ahead. Even if we can’t predict the future, we like leaning into what is predictable. None of us could have seen a worldwide pandemic coming, with all its impacts and implications, but God is still in control.

Trusting God completely in the fulfillment of His Kingdom over our desire to be in control is not easy. Still, it’s necessary, and pursuing His will over our preferences requires courage.

This prayer has the potential to usher in some of the most incredible possibilities we could ever imagine!

- Your Kingdom come.
- Your will be done.

What does that prayer mean to you? How do you engage it?

3) “May grace and truth interrupt and overtake hate and division.”

Read the news feed on any given day; it’s hard to imagine a more relevant yet bold prayer right now.

“May grace and truth interrupt and overtake hate and division.”

What comes to your mind when you hear that prayer?

- How might God intervene to interrupt and change what is likely headed for more pain?
- How might God use you and me to be part of the change?

There is great and encouraging news here. God has always been consistent in his love and grace. He can answer prayer in a moment, but it’s often true that He works through us, one person at a time.

God’s love and grace carry a power of their own, and it usually starts in our own homes, churches, and communities. From there, God carries it to greater territories and expanded influence.

This is a great time to carry the privilege of leadership! We can make a difference, and it starts with prayer.

4) “Grant waves of the miraculous.”

I believe in miracles. I’ve seen what God can do. My prayer is for more.

What miracle are you asking God for right now? Miracles can be large or small, but they involve something only possible with God.

Here’s the tough truth about how we see miracles. We believe in them; we know they are true, but the discouraging times of leadership can cloud our belief, and that can result in no longer praying for a miracle.

One of the powerful things about a miracle is that it can bring momentum to a movement. The movement can be about more prayer, your vision for God’s purpose, or for example, an unprecedented and unexplainable number of salvations. There really is no limit to the potential of a miracle, large or small.

I love this quote: “*Every miracle starts with a problem.*” That means most of us are candidates for a miracle.