



THE PRAYER CLOSET

Equipping & Encouraging Believers
In Prayer

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PRAYING FOR PARENTS



The Word of God declares that you are to honor your father and mother, "Honor your father and mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you" (**Exodus 20:12**). I can just imagine that some of you are groaning as you read that verse of Scripture. You're probably thinking, "Honor my father and mother! You just don't know my father and mother! You just don't understand my situation."

The relationship between parents and children can be stretched and strained at various points in life. This becomes more of a reality as the child becomes an adult. There is a constant tension between living your life as an adult and honoring your parents. However, God does not put an "escape clause" in this verse of Scripture. He does not say, "Honor your father and mother until you are 18," "Honor your father and mother until you move out," or "Honor your father and mother unless you believe that they failed in their parenting." Honoring your parents is a lifelong responsibility before God.

What does it mean then to "honor" your father and mother? Honoring your parents means that you are to prize and cherish them. The word "honor" means to be weighty, to be heavy. Your parents should have an important place in your life. You are to value them as individuals.

Honoring your parents also means that you are to show respect for your parents. This commandment forbids rudeness and harshness with one's parents. It prohibits a haughty and critical spirit toward one's parents. God desires that you exhibit compassion and reverence for your parents both privately and publicly.

A final aspect of honoring your parents is showing affection for them. God desires that you express your love and appreciation to them. You can do this through your words and actions. He longs for you to exhibit kindness and warmth toward your parents.

The most powerful and practical way that you can honor your parents is by praying for them. In this article, I want to encourage you to pray fervently for your parent(s). If your parents have passed away, I would challenge you to pray for other parents and their children. You might consider praying for your children and their children. You can stand in the gap for other parents and children with these prayer pointers.

In this article, I want to share with you some motivations for praying for your parents. Then you will be provided with prayer pointers on how to pray specifically for your parents. My fervent prayer is that you will commit yourself to praying for your parents in fresh and new ways.

Dr. Kevin Meador, 595 Stratton Road, Decatur, MS 39327 (601) 635-2180

Email: prayercloset_1998@yahoo.com

OUR WEB PAGES: www.prayerclosetministries.org - www.kingdompraying.com



Why Should I Pray For My Parents?



Praying for your parents enables you to fulfill God's commandment. By praying for them, you are showing how much you value, love, and respect your parents. It will enable you to receive the power, the strength, and the wisdom to honor your parents. It is a practical way to put God's command into practice in daily life.

At the same time, your praying for your parents can help you in your relationship to them. By praying for them, you are preparing your heart and life to honor them and to have a healthy relationship with them. Fervent prayer is essential to having a healthy relationship between parents and children. It will open your mind and heart to God's wisdom and leading in your relationship to your parents. It can create compassion and perspective in your heart for your parents, especially in the midst of disagreement and a lack of understanding.

Praying for your parents releases God's blessings and power into your parents' life. As you pray for your parents, God works and moves in their lives. He sends His blessings. He turns his mighty power loose in their lives. This will bring help, hope, and change in your parents' lives. Your parents' greatest need is the blessing and power of God. They can experience these things as you pray for them.



How Can I Pray For My Parents?



The following is a prayer guide that you can use to pray for your parents. These requests are based on the Word of God. You can plead them with confidence and expectation. You can use these requests to intercede for your parents or for parents that you know. If you parents have passed away, ask God to place parents on your heart that you can pray for on a regular basis.

- *Plead that God will grant you the grace and power to obey His command (Exodus 20:12).* God's commands should be turned

into prayer requests. This is God's desire for your life. Pray for His power to practice it in your personal life.

- *Ask God to bring your parent into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ (John 3:16, 6:44, and 14:6).* If you parent does not know Jesus Christ as his/her personal Lord and Savior, plead with God to draw him/her to Jesus in true faith and repentance.
- *Plead that your parent will have the assurance of salvation (1 John 5:13).* Pray that he/she will be assured of his/her right relationship with God. Ask that your parent will live in the hope and security of being made right with God through Jesus Christ.
- *Pray that your parent will hunger for God and His Word (Psalm 42:1-2).* Call on God to produce them in a yearning, an unquenchable thirst for Him. Ask that as your parent gets older, he/she will grow in his/her desire for God and His Word.
- *Ask that your parent will seek the Lord with all his/her strength on a daily basis (Colossians 4:2).* Pray that your parent will have a growing, vibrant prayer life. Ask that he/she will be consistent in spending time in prayer and God's Word.
- *Plead with God to strengthen your parent's faith in Him (Romans 10:17, Hebrews 11:6).* Pray that your parent's faith in God will grow deeper and stronger. Ask that your parent's faith will be an example to your family and to those around you.
- *Pray that your parent will surrender his/her aging fears to God (Psalm 37:25).* As your parent grows older, he/she will experience a number of fears. These are fears that relate to growing older and can be staggering. Call on God to ease those fears and to give him/her strength to stand against those fears.
- *Ask that God will reassure your parent with his/her presence (Psalm 37:28, 39-40).* Pray that your parent will experience God's presence as never before in his/her life. Ask that God's presence would comfort, help, and strengthen him/her.
- *Plead that your parent will be thankful, prayerful and filled with the peace of God (Philippians 4:6-7).* Ask that your parent

will not give in to ingratitude, grumbling, or complaining. Pray that he/she will be thankful in all things, praying over his/her concerns. By doing this, he/she can experience God's peace that passes understanding.

- *Pray that God will grant your parent the ability to adapt to the changes in his or her life (2 Corinthians 12:9).* This is especially true, as your parent(s) grow older. They will have to adapt to many changes. Ask God to pour out His grace in order that he/she can adapt to these changes.
- *Ask that your parent will be filled with the Spirit and sensitive to His leadings (Ephesians 5:18).* Plead that your parent will walk in the power and leading of the Holy Spirit on a daily basis.
- *Plead that you will notice when your parent needs you (Matthew 9:36).* Ask God to give you the compassion and discernment to know when your parent(s) needs you. Pray for the eyes of Jesus. Pray also that your parent(s) will practice tender honesty, sharing with you when they need you. Ask God to enable you to help them in a way that leaves their dignity intact.
- *Pray that your parent(s) will be faithful to God and His church (Hebrews 10:25).* Ask God to grant your parent the strength and help him/her to remain faithful.
- *Plead that your parent will be useful to the kingdom regardless of his/her age (Joshua 14:6-15).* At 85, Caleb still believed God and was a powerful example of faith to all the Israelites. Pray that your parent will be useful to God and His people no matter what age he/she is. Ask that he/she will have a place, a way to serve God and advance the kingdom. Plead that his/her faith will be an example to the church.
- *Ask God to supply all your parent's needs (Philippians 4:19).* You can do much for your parents. Yet, God and God alone has the power and the resources to supply and care for your parent. Ask Him to reveal His care and concern by supplying his/her needs, especially his/her financial needs.
- *Pray that God will strengthen and bless your parents' marriage (Ephesians 5:22, 25).* As your parents experience health

problems, disputes, losses, mid-life crises, successes, temptations, and work or retirement pressures, it will strain and stretch their marriage. Plead that God will help them to face these things together, trusting in Him and depending on Him. Ask God to use these things to strengthen their marriage. Pray that He will lead them toward each other rather than apart through the joys and troubles that they face. Ask that they will be gracious and generous with one another.

- *Plead with God to help your parent cope with loneliness (Psalm 130:5-6).* This is especially true if your parent is widowed or divorced. Pray that God will touch him/her, providing him/her with the grace and love to cope with the loneliness that he/she feels.
- *Pray that God will fill voids and losses in your parent's life with new or renewed goals (Matthew 6:33).* As your parents experiences voids and losses, plead with God to fill those with goals and experiences that He desires to give your parents. Pray that God will match their voids and losses with His goals and plans.
- *Ask God to help you make a list of noticeable worries that have surfaced in your conversations with your parent (Proverbs 2:6).* As you talk with your parent, listen for the noticeable worries that he/she has. Pray that God will give you discernment concerning these worries. Ask that He will enable you to discern the worries that your parent is experiencing. Then begin praying for each of these concerns. Call on God to act powerfully in each of these areas. Ask God to show you how you can alleviate these worries.
- *Release and repent of the grudges that you are holding against your parents (Ephesians 4:31-32).* Yield all of your grudges – serious or petty – to the Lord. Surrender them to Him. Release these things to the Lord. Do not cling to them. Do not make “emotional hostages” of your parents – refusing to show them respect and affection until they act in the way that you would like them to. Repent of these grudges and forgive your parent(s). Remember that forgiveness is an act of the

will. It is choosing to release the offense and to freely love those who have offended. Make the choice to release the grudges, the unforgiveness that you are feeling. At the same time, ask God to show you how to accept your parents – sins, flaws, and all. Pray that He will enable you to show them that you love them – sins, flaws, and all.

- Ask God to give *physical strength and healing to your parent (Exodus 15:26)*. As you parent grows older, health issues will become a more pressing concern. Pray that the Lord our Healer will grant sustaining grace to your parent. Plead that He will touch the aches and pains of your parent. Plead that He will release His strength into his/her life.
- Pray that God will grant you a growing, healthy relationship to your parent(s) (*Psalms 133*). Call on Him to provide you with the wisdom and strength to have a growing, healthy relationship with parent(s). Ask that He will empower all of you to make the necessary changes that will lead to godly, healthy relationships.

Father, I plead that _____ will be willing to serve You regardless of his/her age. As long as _____ has breath in his/her body, I pray that _____ will be faithful to You and useful in Your kingdom (**Joshua 14:10**).

Father, I plead that _____ will believe Your Word. I ask that _____ will claim Your promises and will cling to the truth regardless of feelings and appearances (**Joshua 14:6-9, 12**).

Father, I ask that _____ will exhibit an unshakable trust in You. I pray that _____'s faith will be an example to the entire body. Just as Caleb was an example of implicit faith in the midst of the unbelieving younger generation, cause _____ to be a shining example to the younger generation of what it means to trust God regardless (**Joshua 14:12**).

Father, I ask in the name of Jesus that _____ would wholly follow You all the days of his/her life (**Joshua 14:8, 14**).

The Example Of Caleb

Joshua 14 presents the remarkable faith of Caleb. In this passage, Caleb receives the inheritance that he was promised forty-five years earlier. Caleb's inheritance was not exactly the best in the land. In fact, it was filled with the Anakim, war-like giants. They lived in great and fortified cities (**Joshua 14:12**). Caleb would have to fight and overcome these giants and their fortified cities in order to take possession of his inheritance.

Amazingly, Caleb is ready for the battle and willing to fight the Anakim. He is determined to take possession of what had been promised to him. And, on top of this, he is 85 years old. Even at this age, he trusts God and is ready to do His will.

The example of Caleb provides a model for praying for your parents. It can also be used to intercede for the older Christians in your church. The following are some Scripture prayers that you can use for the older believers in your body or for your parents.

Father, I pray that _____ would acknowledge Your sustaining power in his/her life. I ask that _____ would know that You have sustained him/her through all the days of his/her life. I plead that _____ will continue to trust You for Your strength and sustaining power (**Joshua 14:10-11**).

Father, I plead that _____ would be ready and willing to take on new responsibilities for You. I ask that _____ will recommit himself/herself to You and Your will. I pray that _____ will not let his/her age be a hindrance to hearing and responding to what You will for his/her life. Cause _____ to lead the way in doing God's will for this church (**Joshua 14:12**).

O God, grant Your strength to _____. Fill him/her with Your strength so that he/she can do Your will and accomplish great things for You. I pray that _____ will take his/her eyes off of his/her strength and resources and will put them on You – Your strength and Your resources (**Joshua 14:10-12**).

Praying The Metaphors Of The Word

The Bible describes itself in a variety of ways. It portrays itself through different pictures. These pictures help us to understand the purpose of the Bible and our need for it. These pictures are simple, common items that give us insight into the character and purpose of the Word.

These metaphors also provide you with a model that you can use in your prayer life. You can pray for a deeper work of the Spirit through Word in your life. You can pray for revival in your church with these metaphors. You can also use these to prayerwalk. You can use them to plead for an area to hunger for and hear the Word of God.

Father, Your Word is like a counselor; I pray that the people here will turn to it for guidance. I plead that the people here will seek it for the questions and needs of their lives. (**Psalm 119:34**).

Father, Your Word is like fire; I ask that it will burn away the sin in the lives of the people here. I pray that you would purify the people here and that You would remove everything that is not pleasing to You (**Jeremiah 23:29**).

Father, Your Word is like gold; I plead that the people here will desire it more than anything in this world. I pray that it will be the greatest treasure and possession of their lives (**Psalm 19:10**).

Your Word is like a hammer; I pray that it will smash the idols of the people here. I ask that it will destroy the false ideas that the people here have about God (**Jeremiah 23:29**).

Father, Your Word is like honey; I ask that people will crave and hunger for it. I pray that it will be the greatest desire of their lives (**Psalm 119:103**).

Lord, Your Word is like a lamp; I plead that people would walk in obedience to Your Word. Grant understanding to the people and enable them to live out its truth (**Ps. 119:105**).

Your Word is like light; I pray that You will reveal Yourself and Your will to the people here. Make Your character and Your ways known to the people in this area (**Psalm 119:105**).

Father, Your Word is like milk; I pray that the people here will grow spiritually through Your Word. I plead that the people here will be spiritually strong and mature through Your Word (**1 Peter 2:2**).

Father, Your Word is like a mirror; I ask You to reveal the peoples' condition to them through Your Word. Reveal to them their need of You through Your Word (**James 1:23-25**).

Father, Your Word is like a heritage; I plead that the people here will love Your Word and find great joy in it. Cause them to instill in the next generation a love and reverence for the Word of God (**Psalm 119:111**).

Father, Your Word is like snow and rain that accomplish the purpose for which You send it; I pray that Your Word will fill this area and will accomplish Your purpose for this area (**Isaiah 55:10-11**).

Father, Your Word is like a seed; I ask You to plant the living and enduring Word of God in the hearts of the people. Bring forth much spiritual fruit in Your time (**1 Peter 1:23**).

Father, Your Word is like a sword; I ask that Your Word will destroy the wickedness in this area and establish righteousness (**Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12**).

Father, Your Word is like water; I ask You to purify the people in this area through Your Word. Make the people holy, cleansing them through Your Word (**Ephesians 5:25-26**).

Thanking God During The Dark Hours: Learning To Pray The 11/26 Prayer

The past two years of my life have been like a roller coaster ride. The highs have been

“high” and the lows, well, they have been devastating. You name an area of life—personal, health, family, finances, spiritual, emotional—and I have had to face a major crisis in each one. It seemed as if one dark hour passed only for me to walk right into another.

During these dark hours, I sensed that the Spirit was leading me to give thanks to God as never before in my life. I began receiving a burden to thank God in those moments when things weren't right—when it seemed that life was falling apart. God was asking me to cultivate a thankful heart when disappointment and frustration became my continual companions. He desired that I become as thankful in the dark hours as I was in the good times.

During this time, I was drawn to **Matthew 11:26**, “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.” Jesus experienced His greatest popularity and largest followings in Galilee. Yet, the people of three Galilean cities—Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum—simply disregarded Him. They ignored and rejected the Son of God. He had preached to them, offering His miraculous, life-transforming power to them. They had no interest in Jesus. They were passionately indifferent to Jesus.

How did Jesus respond to their indifference? Jesus rebuked these cities for their rejection of Him (**Matthew 11:20-24**). He denounced their hardness of heart. He declared how awful and consuming their judgment would be. **And He gave thanks.**

When Jesus spoke these words, His tone was one of righteous anger and pity. Yet, following these stern pronouncements, He gave thanks to God, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes” (**Matthew 11:25**).

Jesus trusted God in the midst of this indifference and rejection. He so trusted God that He believed that the rejection He experienced among these prominent and sophisticated Galileans did not thwart God's plan. He thanked God for the humble and childlike people who did hear and receive the

good news of salvation through Him. He was thankful that these had turned to Him. He offered thanks to God in this dark hour and said with deep conviction, “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.”

From this text, the Holy Spirit convicted me that Jesus trusted and thanked God even if the immediate circumstances disappointed or distressed Him. And, the Spirit wanted to produce this ability in me. At His prompting, I wrote **Matthew 11:26** down on a 3 X 5 card. I started asking for the power to pray this as Jesus did. I began carrying this 3 X 5 card everywhere. I began striving to thank God daily, especially in the dark hours. I began looking for ways to thank Him even if the situation were disappointing, distressing, or even devastating. I determined that I would thank Him in every situation in spite of my immediate circumstances. In the dark hours, I would pray **Matthew 11:26** and thank Him for specific blessings.

I would love to tell you that this made a miraculous change in my circumstances and me. I would love to tell you that, but I can't. I can't because I haven't seen any miraculous changes in my circumstances or me.

But, I have discerned **noticeable** changes in me. How has the Spirit used this in my life? *Now, my giving of thanks is richer and deeper.* Giving thanks in the dark hours purges you of insincerity and going through the motions. When you thank Him in the dark hours, it purifies your ability to thank Him. It helps you to thank Him from the heart.

*Giving thanks in the dark hours puts you in a position to see things from God's perspective (**Matthew 11:25**).* It can help you discern what God is doing in certain situations. It moves you to focus on what God desires and what God is doing. Even in distressing, discouraging situations, God is at work. Thanking God in the dark hours clarifies your view of this. It causes you to focus on this. It gets you to the place where you stop asking, “Why is this happening to me?” and you start asking, “What is God doing in this?”

Giving thanks in the dark hours causes you to love and appreciate God more. This is the main way that God has changed me during this. When I thank Him in the dark hours, it

reminds me that He is the one sure constant in my life. He is always good, loving, powerful, wise, and faithful. He never changes and will always be faithful to me. Even though everything around me changes, He remains true and good to me. This has stirred me to love Him and appreciate Him in fresh and unique ways. God is sufficient!

How can you learn to pray the "11/26" prayer? How can you start thanking God in the dark hours? The following are some guidelines to help you do this. I offer these to you as one struggler to other strugglers. They have helped me to grow in the ability to thank Him even in distressing or disappointing circumstances.

- *Ask God to create a thankful spirit in you (1 Thessalonians 5:18).* This is the beginning point. Giving thanks to God is not natural to us, especially in the dark hours. Plead for the Spirit to work in you and create a thankful spirit in you.
- *Plead with God to help you bless Him when He is the taking God (Job 1:21-22).* Job blessed God for giving and for taking. Pray that you will develop this holy habit.
- *Memorize Matthew 11:26.* Commit this verse to memory and pray it often.
- *Remember that giving thanks is an act of the will.* Giving thanks to God is not based on how you feel. It is based on the fact that God is good and faithful no matter what. You must choose to give thanks to Him.
- *Pray that you will become like Jesus—trusting and thanking God in spite of your circumstances (Matthew 11:20-25).* Jesus provides us with a powerful example in this verse. Ask the Holy Spirit to conform you to Jesus in this particular way.
- *When your circumstances are disappointing or distressing, look for what you can thank God for.* When those dark hours come, I start praying **Matthew 11:26**. Yet, I also look for concrete ways to thank Him. I begin finding specific ways I can thank Him in the dark hour.
- *Ask God to open your eyes to His work around you (John 5:17).* God is always at work—even in the dark hours. Pray that your eyes will be opened to this. Ask that

your faith in God and His constant work will be strengthened. This is crucial for thanking God in the dark hours.

- *Confess and repent immediately of doubt, despair, and unbelief (1 John 1:9).* Do not toy with these things. Don't allow them any ground in your life. The longer you allow these things to linger, the more it can weaken your faith and giving thanks to God in the dark hours.
- *Use the dark hours to get to know God (Isaiah 50:10).* It is in these times that you will come to know God and His ways more intimately. Let these times drive you to Him. Enjoy Him, love Him, and thank Him in the dark hours. When He is all you have, He is enough. He is sufficient when all other blessings are absent.

Meditating On God's Ways

The Word of God calls on us to meditate on God's ways:

"I will also meditate on all Your work, and talk of Your deeds" (**Psalm 77:12**).

"I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways" (**Psalm 119:15**).

"Make me understand the way of Your precepts; so shall I meditate on Your wondrous works" (**Psalm 119:27**).

"I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your works; I muse on the work of Your hands" (**Psalm 143:5**).

"I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works" (**Psalm 145:5**).

It is God's desire that you meditate on His works.

How can you learn to meditate on the works of the Lord? The following are some pointers to keep in mind to help you do this:

- ◆ *Ask God to open your eyes to His work in your life and around you (John 5:17).* Pray

that you will begin "seeing" His hand at work in your life and in the lives of others.

- ◆ *Make a list of the things that only God can do.* As you read the Word, jot down those things that God alone can do. Start looking for these things in your life and in the lives of those around you.
- ◆ *Ask yourself some questions.* Meditating on God's work means asking yourself the following questions:
What did God do in my life today?
What did God do in the lives of others today?
- ◆ *Examine your past.* What mighty works has God done throughout your life? Write down

how God has worked in your past. As the psalmist said, "I will remember the days of old" (**Psalm 143:5**). Remember how God has worked throughout your life.

- ◆ *Keep a record of God's works.* This is one of the best ways to meditate on God's work. You might even consider having a place in your journal called "God's Work." In this section, you can record on a regular basis what you see God doing in your life and in the lives of others.
- ◆ *Praise and thank God with all your being.* As you discern how God is working, praise Him and thank Him for His work. Let His works move you to praise Him and glorify Him.



THE PRAYER CLOSET MINISTRIES, INC.
Dr. Kevin Meador
595 Stratton Road
Decatur, MS 39327

Nonprofit Org.
U. S. Postage Paid
Hickory, MS
Permit #2

Steve & Ann Mayes
P. O. Box 525
Pelahatchie MS 39145