

THE PRAYER CLOSET

Encouraging & Equipping Believers in Prayer

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SPIRITUAL MAPPING

Jeremiah 29 is the account of a letter written by the prophet Jeremiah. This letter was addressed to the people who had been carried off into captivity in Babylon. In this letter, Jeremiah encourages the people to settle down and to make the best of their new life in Babylon.

At this time, there were false prophets who were telling the people that they would be immediately delivered from captivity and brought back to Jerusalem and Judah (**Jeremiah 29:8-9**). Jeremiah writes this letter to let them know that it would be 70 years before there would ever be any return to their homeland. Because of this, the people were to become active, influential citizens of their new home.

One of the startling instructions that the prophet gives the people is found in **Jeremiah 29:7**. The Word of God says, "And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace." God desired that the people pray for the city where He had placed them. They were to intercede for this place because God had put them there. God wanted them to exercise spiritual influence in their new home.

The same is true for you today. God desires that you pray for the city, the neighborhood, or the community that you live in. You don't live where you live by chance. God has placed you there. He has worked to put you in the place where you are that you might pray and exercise spiritual influence.

Acts 1:8 is the New Testament equivalent of **Jeremiah 29:7**. The Word of God says, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." When Jesus gave the disciples His plan for reaching the world, He told them to start in Jerusalem – their city – the place they lived. They were responsible for praying for and ministering to the place that they lived.

This applies to us today. God desires that we exercise spiritual influence in our area—whether it is our neighborhood, community, or city. He longs for you to intercede for the people and circumstances around you. He wants to transform your area through your intercession.

In order to pray powerfully for your area, you will need to practice spiritual mapping. Spiritual mapping is a tool that can help you

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pray specifically and powerfully for your area. It will provide you with insight to know how to seek the Lord in behalf of your neighborhood, community, or city.

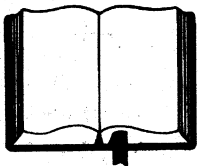
What Is Spiritual Mapping?



Spiritual mapping is looking and examining where you live with spiritual lenses. It is determining the spiritual climate around you that you might know how to intercede. It is discerning the needs of the people around you that you might pray for them.

How can you have a powerful impact on your area if you are not aware of the spiritual climate of the area? How can you pray powerfully for others if you don't know what their needs are and where they stand in relation to Christ? Spiritual mapping is a way of discovering the spiritual climate and needs of your area that you might pray for and minister to your area.

Spiritual mapping can assist you in moving beyond generic prayer for your area. God longs for you to pour your heart out to Him for the place you live – its people and their needs. It can guide you into specific and effective intercession for the real people and the real problems around you. It can help build your faith because your praying is focused and specific.



The Biblical Basis For Spiritual Mapping

Whenever I have taught on this subject, the question that I'm most frequently asked is, "Where does the Bible teach spiritual mapping?" There is no particular text that teaches this specific concept. You will not find it written in the Bible, "You shall practice spiritual mapping."

However, the practice of spiritual mapping is built on the foundation of biblical

principles. Spiritual mapping is the implication of some basic biblical truths. Certain biblical truths call for this practice.

The Eyes Of Jesus

The Word of God reveals that Jesus was often moved with compassion when He saw the crowds, "But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd" (**Matthew 9:36**). This characterized the life of Jesus (**Matthew 14:14, Mark 6:34, Mark 10:21**). Jesus looked beyond the physical to the spiritual needs of people. He didn't just see bodies; He saw real people with spiritual problems and an eternal destiny.

As a follower of Jesus, you are called to follow His example – to become like Him. Becoming like Jesus means having His eyes – seeing what He sees. He doesn't want you to see your neighbors, friends, coworkers, and acquaintances as you always have. He desires that you look beyond the outward appearance to the spiritual needs in peoples' lives. He longs for you to see your area with spiritual eyes. He desires that you view your area with an eye to the problems and spiritual needs that exist.

This is the reason for spiritual mapping. It is the intentional act of looking at your area, as Jesus desires. It is no longer looking at the people around you and the place you live as you always have. It is looking beyond the outward appearance of things and seeing the real people and the real needs of your area that you might pray with power.

The Command To Watchfulness

In **Colossians 4:2**, the Word of God calls on believers to watch and pray, "Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving." The phrase "continue earnestly in prayer" means that we are to be devoted to prayer. It is telling us that prayer should characterize our lifestyle. We are to have continual communication with God.

Yet, the Word adds that we are to be vigilant in it. The word "vigilant" means watchful. It is paying attention to what is happening around you. According to God's

Word, praying and watching should characterize every believer's life.

Why does the Word combine these commands? It is because watching fuels and enriches your praying. Watching should lead to praying. As you watch, you will see what is going on around you. You will see peoples' lives—their needs, their burdens, and their ups and downs. You will see the trends and developments in your city or community. This will then guide your praying to specific issues and needs. You will be able to pray powerfully and effectively because you are praying about what is happening at the moment.

Spiritual mapping is the practical and intentional application of **Colossians 4:2**. It is looking for distinct and specific ways that you can pray for your city, community, or area. In spiritual mapping, you are intentionally watching that you might pray. You are observing and studying what is going on around you that you might have a powerful and righteous influence. Spiritual mapping is a practical way to obey **Colossians 4:2**.

The Reality of Unseen Warfare

There is more going on in your neighborhood or city than you can see with physical eyes. The Word of God reminds us that there is a spiritual war being waged that we cannot discern with physical eyes, "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (**Ephesians 6:12**).

The Bible teaches that Satan and his demons are active in this world. You can apply this to your area – Satan and his demons are working in your area. He is seeking to do as much damage as possible in peoples' lives and the churches of your area. He is filled with malicious intentions for your area – leading the lost to hell, trapping and wounding Christians, hindering and dividing churches, destroying relationships and lives.

Spiritual mapping is taking **Ephesians 6:12** seriously. It is acknowledging that there is an unseen warfare going on where you live. It is agreeing with the Word that there is more going on than just what you see in the physical

realm. It is paying attention to the fact that there are powers behind the flesh and blood of your area. It is looking at your area as a battleground – a battleground where the souls and lives of people are at stake. And because of this, you watch and pray.

Spiritual mapping is looking at your city or area in light of this unseen warfare. You examine what is happening in order to see what forces are at work around you. As you observe and discern the strategies and attacks of the enemy, you pray for their hindrance and destruction. At the same time, you are to cry out to God for the invasion of His power and righteousness into your city or area. You ask that the wickedness and demonic strongholds of your area would be removed and replaced with righteousness.

The Call To Be Salt And Light

The Word of God is clear and direct. You are to exercise a righteous influence where you are. The Word says, "You are the salt of the earth . . . You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (**Matthew 5:13-16**).

Jesus uses the images of salt and light to speak about your influence. Both salt and light make a tangible difference. When you put salt on food, you can taste it. When you turn the lights on in a room, you can see the light. In the same way, your faith in Christ should make a tangible impression on those around you and the places that you are.

God has placed you where you are to be salt and light. Your life is not governed by chance or fate. You just don't happen to work where you work, live where you live, or go where you go. God has appointed these things and He has put you there to exercise spiritual influence.

Spiritual mapping is an intentional way to be salt and light where God has placed you. It is interceding for people and situations where you are that you might exercise spiritual influence. By praying, you can have enormous

impact on people and situations. Spiritual mapping is a tangible way that you can be the salt and light that Jesus desires.



How Do I Put A Spiritual Map Together?

You may be wondering, "How do I put a spiritual map together for my area?" There

are some basic steps that you will need to consider in putting together a spiritual map for your praying.

- *Pray that God would give you discernment concerning your area.* Ask God to help you discern the spiritual climate of your area. Call on Him to grant you the understanding that you need to pray.
- *Plead that God would open your eyes to the people of your area.* Pray that you would no longer see the people around you as you always have. Ask that you will see them as God does.
- *Observe what is going on around you.* Throughout your daily routine, watch what is happening around you. Take notice of and listen to people throughout your day. As you watch and listen, you will receive much insight on how to pray for your area and the people around you.
- *Keep up with the local news.* The local news can provide you with a great deal of insight on how you can pray for your city or community.
- *Interview people.* When I say, "interview," I don't necessarily mean a formal interview. What I mean is talk to people about their lives, particularly their spiritual needs. Ask others what you can pray about for them. Survey people to see what the greatest needs of the area are.
- *Confer with other believers.* Ask other believers about their understanding and sense of the spiritual climate of your area. Talk with them about what they are praying about for your area.
- *Do research.* Study the history of your area. Find out about the roots of

Christianity in your area. Discover the other religions or cults around you.

- *Join with other believers to pray about these things.* You might consider getting together with other believers for this purpose. You could have each believer share about what they are seeing and how they are praying. As you do this, you could come up with a comprehensive spiritual map of your area.



The Basic Ingredients For A Spiritual Map

As you begin the process of putting together a spiritual map, there are some basic ingredients that you will need. These things are essential to knowing and praying about the spiritual climate around you. These basic ingredients are:

Area Churches And Pastors

The churches and pastors in your area have significant impact on the spiritual climate of your area. It is crucial that you prepare a list of the churches and pastors in your area. Do not limit your list to the churches of your denomination. Seek to discover all the churches around you and the names of their pastors.

Institutions And Businesses

The institutions and businesses in your area will have a definite impact on your area. You have to keep in mind that there is an intimate connection between the economy of your area and the spiritual and emotional life of your city or community. They are intertwined. Your intercession can have significant impact on all aspects of life where you live.

Area Schools

The schools in your area need your intercession. The hearts and lives of the youth are shaped and molded in the schools. It is also a battleground for the enemy who wants control of their hearts and lives. Record the names of the schools in your area along with that of their administration.

Places Of Wickedness

When I use the term "places of wickedness," I mean strongholds that the enemy has built in your area. This refers to any place in your area where evil is practiced and its influence reaches out to your community or city. Examples of this are stores that sell pornography or occult and cult centers. Call on God to open your eyes to the strongholds in your area. Pray that you will discern the places that Satan is using to attack your city or area.

Roadblocks To The Gospel

What is hindering people from coming to Christ where you are? Is it apathy, hypocrisy, or attraction to evil? What has happened in the churches that might have turned people away? This is essential to discerning the spiritual climate of your area.

Prevalent Sins In Your Area

What are the primary sins committed in your area? Are there some sins that seem to have greater hold over the lives in your area? Pray for discernment concerning this. Satan often binds an area or a city through particular sins. Call on God to break the grip of these sins on your area. Plead that He will replace it with righteousness. For instance, if hatred and racism plagues your area, pray that God will break that and replace it with mercy and love.



Putting It All Together

We have examined what spiritual mapping is. We've also looked at how to put a spiritual map together along with the essential ingredients for that spiritual map. Yet, you may be wondering, "What do I do with all this?" There are a variety of ways that you can use the information that you gain. The key issue is to seek God. Pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you in how to use the information that He gives you. The following are suggestions on how you might use your spiritual map.

- *Develop a strategy of intercession.* Take this information and come up with a plan to pray for your area. You can use it personally or put it together for your church to pray through. You might consider using the essential ingredients as an outline:
 - Monday:** Area Churches And Pastors
 - Tuesday:** Institutions And Businesses
 - Wednesday:** Schools And Colleges
 - Thursday:** Places of Wickedness
 - Friday:** Roadblocks To The Gospel
 - Saturday:** Prevalent Sins In The Area
 - Sunday:** Our Church's Ministry and Influence in the Area
 You might develop another plan as the Spirit leads and according to the information that you glean.
- *Use your spiritual mapping for your prayer meetings.* One of the common concerns that I hear from pastors and members is that their churches have turned inward. Their only concern is for what is going on in the four walls of the church. Use your spiritual mapping to enrich your prayer meetings. Have a prayer emphasis in your prayer meetings for your area. You might consider using the topics listed above or those that you might come up with. The goal is to lead your church to see and pray about the real needs around you.
- *Practice targeted prayerwalking.* You can use your spiritual mapping to know where to prayerwalk. As you pray and discern what is going on in your city or community, you can plan where to prayerwalk. You will have insight on how to seek God as you prayerwalk. One church discerned that many of the area churches around them were under attack. They planned a prayerwalking Saturday in which they went to and prayerwalked around every church in their city. The other churches in the city noticed a distinct difference in their worship and atmosphere after the prayerwalking.
- *Develop prayer teams.* Have teams of believers join together in prayer concerning the insights that you gain through spiritual mapping. These teams can pray specifically about what is going on in your city or area. You might consider forming

your own team of two or more believers to pray for your city or area.

- *Have joint prayer meetings.* Call for other believers around you to come together to pray for your city or area. Compare and pray over the insights that God has given and develop a plan for prayer in the joint prayer meetings.
- *Implement specific ministries.* As you pray over and study your area, you might notice specific needs. Develop ministries that can meet those needs.

Praying For Spiritual Influence (Matthew 5:13-16)

The purpose of spiritual mapping is to exercise powerful, spiritual influence in your city or area. The following are Scripture prayers that you can use to pray for your church or yourself concerning this need:



Father, I plead that _____ would be salt in this area. Deliver us from anything that would hinder our ability to influence and bless others. Empower us to make a difference here (Matthew 5:13).

Father, I ask that _____ would be light to this community. Help us to make known the truth of Your Word with both our lips and our lives. Enable us to fulfill this responsibility in this area. (Matthew 5:14 -15).

Father, I ask that we would let our light shine so that the people of this area would see our good works and glorify You, our Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

Father, empower us to pray fervently with vigilance. Help us to pray with wisdom and power concerning the people and the needs of this area (Colossians 4:2).

Father, open doors for _____ in this area. Grant us open doors for speaking the

truth, praying for people, and ministering to their needs (Colossians 4:3-4).

Father, I ask that You would grant _____ the power and insight to walk in wisdom toward those who are without. I pray that we would redeem our time, making the most of our opportunities to pray for and bless others (Colossians 4:5).

Father, I plead that our speech would always be with grace and seasoned with salt so that we might be able to answer those who are outside of faith in Jesus (Colossians 4:6).

Father, grant us the wisdom and power to minister to our area. You came to minister; empower us to do the same here (Matthew 20:28).

Father, I pray that all will know our obedience to You. Cause them to see our love and commitment to You. Help us to influence others by our walk with You (Romans 16:19).

The Pastor/Deacon Prayer Journal



Pastors and deacons or elders are to be partners in prayer. The strength and effectiveness of any church is dependent on the praying of its spiritual leadership. It is absolutely crucial that spiritual leaders pray together and pray in agreement. God will bless and empower the church whose leaders seek Him personally and as a group. If church leaders are not praying, they are playing church.

One of the ways to encourage prayer among your leaders is by establishing a pastor/deacon or elder prayer journal. This prayer journal can become a guide for the prayer times of the pastor and leaders. It can help your leaders pray in agreement on a variety of matters.

You might consider the following guidelines for setting up a pastor/deacon or elder prayer journal:

- ✓ *Ask God to give your leaders a heart for prayer.* This is the beginning point. Leaders must have a heart to seek God.
- ✓ *Choose a journal.* There are a variety of journals with empty pages that can be purchased. A plain wire bound notebook will suffice. The key issue is to have something to record requests and answers in.
- ✓ *Appoint someone to be in charge of the journal.* This person will be responsible for recording and updating the information in the journal. This person can also prepare guides that the leaders can take with them to use in their personal prayer times.
- ✓ *The contents of the journal will depend on what you feel God wants you to put in the journal.* The following are some suggestion on what to put in the journal – prayer requests (what are the needs of the church), problems (what are the struggles of the church), answers to prayer, or insights that the Spirit is giving concerning the life and the ministry of the church. Make the journal personal and practical for your church.
- ✓ *Encourage your leaders to pray in agreement concerning these things.* One of the key purposes of the prayer journal is to pray in agreement concerning issues and concerns (**Matthew 18:19-20**). As leaders pray in agreement, God will move in powerful ways.
- ✓ *Praise God for answers to prayer.* As God works through the praying of the leaders, rejoice in what He is doing. Record the answers and exalt God for hearing and working.
- ✓ *Examine yourselves when prayers go unanswered.* When you have prayed for a long period of time and there is no answer, the leaders' need to examine themselves. Check to see if there are any hindrances.
- ✓ *Challenge your leaders in both corporate and private prayer.* It is important that leaders spend time praying about the needs and issues of a church – as a group and in their individual prayer times. Encourage both.

Using The News As A Prayer Guide

Have you ever considered using the news as a guide for your praying? The news can provide you with much insight and guidance for prayer. It will help you minister to myriads of people and circumstances. Whether you're reading your local paper or Time or Newsweek, you can pray and make a difference for Christ in the lives of countless people.

You might consider using the following suggestions for praying the news:



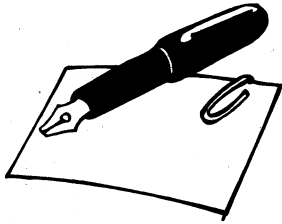
- (1) Before you begin reading, ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to what you need to pray about.
- (2) Call on the Holy Spirit to give you insight to pray as you read.
- (3) Pray specifically for people and events that you read about in the news.
- (4) Use the obituaries to pray for people who are grieving and in need of Jesus.
- (5) Pray for churches and their upcoming events.
- (6) You might consider keeping a "News Notebook." This can help you keep track of your prayers for major news issues.
- (7) Pray the headlines at prayer meeting.



Getting Bulk Amounts of The Prayer Closet Newsletter

Many Bible study groups use the newsletter as the basis of their Bible studies. Churches distribute them to the people involved in their prayer ministries. Some churches use them as the basis of their prayer meeting times. Because of this, they desire to receive the newsletter in bulk amounts. If you would like to receive bulk amounts of The Prayer Closet newsletter, please contact us. Simply let us know how many you will need and we will send them to you each mailing.

Study Guide For The Prayer Closet Newsletter



Dr. Meador is now preparing a study guide to go along with the newsletter. This study guide will help you teach the newsletter to a Bible study group. It can also help you guide your prayer

meetings through the material in the newsletter. If you would like to receive this study guide, please contact us. Simply ask for the study guide that goes with the newsletter.

Every Neighbor For Christ Bible Study

The Every Neighbor For Christ Bible study will equip you to have spiritual influence throughout your neighborhood, community, or city. It provide you with the concepts and practical suggestions for reaching out to your area. This seven week Bible study can radically alter how your church reaches out to the lost around you.

\$8.00

Volunteers Needed!



The Prayer Closet Ministries is looking for volunteers who can do data entry. As God expands our ministry, this has become an essential position. We are in need of people who would like to join and help our ministry by entering addresses into databases. Our

basic requirements are: a committed Christian, a conviction that God wants you to serve in this ministry, computer skills, and Microsoft Works. If you feel that God is calling you to help this ministry in this way, please contact us at The Prayer Closet.



New Products From The Prayer Closet

Healing For The Broken Heart: Praying For Emotional Healing

This tape series will help you grow in your understanding of emotional healing. It will guide you in how to seek God for healing and how to pray for others who need that healing. This tape series includes eight tapes along with a study guide.

\$12.00



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