

Prayer Guide

3 September 2020

**Thank you for your commitment to pray
for 30 minutes on the third day of the month!**

HONORING THOSE WHO LABOR

In just a few days, we will observe Labor Day (Monday, September 7), a time where we honor and recognize the works and contributions of American workers.

While that holiday is not celebrated in the Bible, the idea is! The Apostle Paul commended a man who labored—not in running a business, but in prayer. *“Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always **laboring earnestly for you in his prayers**, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God”* (Colossians 4:12). What do we know about this man that Paul commends?

He was a **common** man. *“One of your number.”* He wasn’t an Apostle, a pastor, or elder. He was an ordinary member of the church of Colossae.

However, he had an **uncommon** commitment. *“Always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers.”* For Epaphras, prayer was not a leisure time activity—something he did when he got around to it. No, his praying was focused, intentional, and even draining.

The Greek word from which we get *“laboring”* is familiar to us. It is the Greek word “agon.” You don’t have to be a Greek scholar to see the English word that is derived from it—agony. A struggle. A fight. Laboring. That’s the biblical picture of praying.

There is a world of difference **between saying your prayers and truly praying**.

- **Saying your prayers** is really pretty easy. You say what you've always said as you've always said it. It is general and non-engaging. You don't have to think about it much, and you don't have to put much thought or energy into it.
- However, **truly praying** is purposefully laying hold of the living God. It requires exertion. If you see athletes before an event, you'll notice they begin by warming up. They will purposefully take time to go through a set routine before they fully engage in their contest. Praying is like that.
 - It takes time to fully sense the presence of God. While God is always with us, and we are always in His presence, experiencing that manifest presence and realizing that you are in the Holy of Holies with the King cannot be rushed. Charles Spurgeon captured the power of praying when he wrote, **"Prayer is the slender nerve that moves the muscle of omnipotence."** What a picture of the power of praying!
 - It takes time to truly pray these topics; take time to go through the verses, laying hold of the reality of both the presented need and the power of the One we are praying to.

I don't know if the people of Colossae knew Epaphras was a man who labored in prayer. However, Paul knew, and more than that, God knew. Does God know the same about you?

PRAY THAT MEMPHIS WOULD BE COVERED IN PRAYER

God wants His people to be a praying people! That was the vision Isaiah prophesied and predicted over 2700 years ago! *"On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed **watchmen; all day and all night they will never keep silent.** You who remind the LORD, take no rest for yourselves; and **give Him no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth**" (Isaiah 62:6–7). Day and night, giving no rest—that's the calling to intercede.*

Can we who are able to enter the Holy of Holies every day (not just have a high priest who used to enter for us once a year) live in less spiritual fervor than those who lived in the Old Testament? We, you and I, are now *"the watchman on the walls."* We are the ones God has called to stand in the gap for the land, to **pray fervently like it matters!** Jesus gave us a parable to demonstrate that *"men ought always to pray, and not to faint"* (Luke 18:1^{KJV}). Unceasing prayer is the biblical model to bring revival and the blessings of God!

- Pray God will lead churches to join with us in *"giving God no rest"* over Memphis.
- Pray larger churches will take a full day of intercession.
- Pray smaller churches will take a half day of intercession.
- Pray one day soon, Memphis will be prayed over all day, every day, every year.

PRAY WE WILL EXPERIENCE SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

“Let us **draw near** with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” (Hebrews 10:22).

To be a catalyst for spiritual awakening is our Vision as a church. One of the greatest spiritual dangers we face is going through the motions. God sees when we live that way. “Then the LORD said, ‘Because this people draw near with their words and honor Me with their lip service, but they remove their hearts far from Me, and their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote’” (Isaiah 29:13). Let’s think that was just the wayward experience of those living under the old covenant, Jesus said the same thing, “You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: ‘THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN’” (Matthew 15:7–9). Intimacy with Jesus is the first value in our Vision frame, and God notices when that intimacy is there and when it isn’t.

- Pray for Pastors
 - To having a burning heart: “Who makes His angels winds, and **His ministers a flame of fire**” (Hebrews 1:7).
 - To come to the pulpit with a word from God.
 - To have a sermon that has grown in their hearts, lives, and souls—one they must deliver as a mother delivers a baby that has grown in her womb.
- Pray for Worship Ministers
 - To have walked with the Lord in a worshipful way all week.
 - To point to Jesus and away from themselves as they lead worship.
 - To have an anointing on them that leads people into the very presence of God.
- Pray for Congregations
 - To come to church hungry for the Word and ready to “draw near to God”.
 - To not lose the wonder of the cross.
 - To respond in humility and repentance to the Word of God.

Finally, pray for God to manifest Himself in our churches in such an awesome way that no one can do anything but fall on their face before God. Like Bro. Steve Gaines says, “**Revival is when the glory of God fills the house of God.**”

PRAY GOD WILL BRING HEALING TO OUR LAND

God’s desire is healing. One of the most familiar passages on healing in the Old Testament is 2 Chronicles 7:14, “And My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will **heal their land.**”

- Pray God will raise up righteous men to be godly leaders.
 - “By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it **is torn down**” (Proverbs 11:11).

- o *“When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when a wicked man rules, **people groan**”* (Proverbs 29:2).
- Pray godly leaders will lead out of a fear of God and with **righteous justice**.
 - o *“The king gives stability to the land by justice, but a man who takes bribes overthrows it”* (Proverbs 29:4).
- Pray a vaccine for COVID-19 will be developed.
 - o *“And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 4:19).

PRAY FOR SCHOOLS AS THEY REOPEN

God is able to protect. However, His way to provide that protection is through prayer and fasting. We learn from Ezra that God’s will is for us to seek Him for safety through humbling ourselves by prayer and fasting. *“Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God to seek from Him a safe journey for us, our little ones, and all our possessions”* (Ezra 8:21).

- Pray God will give supernatural protection for students and teachers.
- Pray teachers and administrators will have wisdom.
- Pray students, especially, will be consistent in walking wisely (wearing masks, washing hands, and maintaining appropriate distancing.)

PRAY FOR MEMPHIS

Don’t just read. Please take time to verbally pray Bro. Steve’s Prayer for Memphis.

Heavenly Father, thank you for Memphis. Thank You for strategically locating our city in the middle of this nation, so we can be a catalyst for revival and spiritual awakening. Please pour out Your Spirit on Memphis, Shelby County, the Mid-South, and beyond. Help every Christian and every Bible-believing, Jesus-loving, Gospel-preaching church to Love God, Love People, Share Jesus, and Make Disciples. Demolish every demonic stronghold of pride, violence, racism, poverty, crime, sexual immorality, drug abuse, sickness, religious formalism, fanaticism, legalism, liberalism, and traditionalism. Replace them with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, blessing, mercy, grace, hope, healing, liberty, and freedom. Destroy the stronghold of religion in Memphis that has a form of godliness but denies the power thereof. Give us churches that believe in the Bible and preach salvation only in Jesus Christ. Let Your Kingdom come and Your will be done in Memphis on Earth as it is in Heaven. Bring pastors, lay leaders, and congregations together as we pray for this city. Bless our governmental leaders, schools, and economy. Please send good jobs to Memphis. Keep casinos, strip clubs, and occultic activity out of Memphis. Do a work of revival in Memphis that can only be explained by Your presence and power and do it all for Your glory. Call Your people to fervent, united, visible, extraordinary prayer. May the latter glory of Your Kingdom in Memphis be greater than the former, and please grant Memphis Your peace. Do exceeding and abundantly beyond all that we can ask or think. In Jesus’ name, Amen!

PRAY FOR NATIONAL, CITY, AND COUNTY OFFICIALS.

We are commanded to pray *“for kings and all who are in authority so that we may live a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity”* (1 Timothy 2:2).

- Pray that in the upcoming elections God will give us Christian leaders who love the Lord Jesus, are guided by the Bible and the Holy Spirit, are pro-life, pro-Biblical marriage, and will govern under the light of the words of the prophet Micah, *“And what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”* (Micah 6:8).
- Pray leaders will have wisdom to lead during these challenging times. Specific areas of prayer include COVID-19, economic issues (helping businesses recover and prosper), and unity.

United States Elected Officials

President:

Donald J. Trump

Vice President:

Mike Pence

Speaker of the House:

Nancy Pelosi

Senate Majority Leader:

Mitch McConnell

TN Senators:

Lamar Alexander

Marsha Blackburn

West TN Congressmen:

Steve Cohen

David Kustoff

Memphis/Shelby County Elected Officials

Mayor:

Jim Strickland

City Court Clerk:

Myron Lowery

Director of Police:

Michael Rallings

Shelby County Mayor:

Lee Harris

Director of Fire Services:

Gina Y. Sweat

Shelby County Sheriff:

Floyd Bonner, Jr.

City Council:

District 3:
Chairwoman Patrice Robinson

Super District 8-1:
JB Smiley, Jr.

District 1:
Rhonda Logan

Super District 8-2:
Cheyenne Johnson

District 2:
Vice Chair Frank Colvett, Jr.

Super District 8-3:
Martavius Jones

District 4:
Jamita Swearengen

Super District 9-1:
Chase Carlisle

District 5:
Worth Morgan

Super District 9-2:
J. Ford Canale

District 6:
Edmund Ford, Sr.

Super District 9-3:
Dr. Jeff Warren

District 7:
Michalyn Easter-Thomas

Shelby County Commissioners:

District 4:
Chairman Mark Billingsley

District 6:
Willie F. Brooks, Jr.

District 11:
**Chairman Pro Tempore
Eddie Jones**

District 7:
Tami Sawyer

District 1:
Amber Mills

District 8:
Mickell M. Lowery

District 2:
David C. Bradford

District 9:
Edmund Ford, Jr.

District 3:
Mick Wright

District 10:
Reginald Milton

District 5:
Michael Whaley

District 12:
Van Turner

District 13:
Brandon Morrison

“If a church is to be filled with the flame of the Holy Spirit of God, it comes through the intercessory prayer of His people. He comes in no other way.”

— W.A. Criswell

