

fight + live
hate + love

Prayer Guide

“Go out and stand before me on the mountain,” the Lord told Elijah. And as Elijah stood there, the Lord passed by, and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper.

— 1 Kings 19:11-12

The competing voices in our world seem to be getting louder and louder, more and more shrill. And as the noise level increases, it's harder to hear anything, let alone to hear God's "gentle whisper" calling to us. Our intention in this prayer time is to listen for what God is calling us to do, what actions God has in mind for us to take.

This guide is meant to be a "jumping off place" for your prayer time — a place to start. Please add in your own prayers, your thoughts, worries, hopes, and dreams! And during this time, listen.

Then, after your time in prayer, and in the days ahead, please let us know what ideas you have about how we can take positive action in the world to *Fight Hate + Live Love!*

Many, many blessings to you!

Getting started

Find a place that is relatively quiet, with minimal distractions. Get comfortable. As you're praying, don't stress about random thoughts that enter your mind. Sometimes those thoughts can lead to really interesting ideas! Or, they can just be annoying, random trails that lead nowhere. :) Don't worry about it. Just follow the interesting, possibly fruitful thoughts, and for those others ... just come on back to the prayer guide.

Ready? Let's go!

Prayers of gratitude

Begin simply by thanking God for listening to your prayer, for guiding you, and for not giving up on you and on this world.

Whatever it is that you feel most thankful for in this moment, pray about that.

Starting out with gratitude — even for the littlest of things — helps us to remember that we are praying to a God who actually wants us to be reaching out to God. Prayer is not an academic, futile exercise. It is powerful, beautiful, a gift from our God who loves us!

Prayers for our world

Next, lift up your worries, anxieties, fears for this world that we live in. Pray about those things, lifting them up to God with complete openness. You don't need to be calm. You don't even need to be polite. You just need to be honest. God loves you, and God can take it. God wants you to be able to bring it all to God.

What do you see around you that makes your blood boil in frustration or anger? What makes you want to stick your head back under the bed covers and hide out until it's all over? What, in short, strikes you as so very, very broken, so deeply wrong in our world?

Pray about these things.

Then imagine for a moment that it is five years down the road — the year 2023 — and the world is in a very different place. There is peace. There is safety and security. There is understanding and love. There is justice.

Try to picture what exactly that would look like. What would you see on the news? What articles would pop up on your news feed? What conversations would you be having with your friends and family? What would your local community look like? What would you be feeling and thinking?

Now stop and pray about the issues that you pictured as resolved. What were they? Why do you think those particular things popped into your mind?

Ask God to help you to know what to do to make that picture of the future a reality. Pray for God's direction. Pray that God would give you ideas for powerful, grace-filled actions that we can take to bring healing and hope to our communities and world!

Prayers for our country

Take a moment to pray for the governmental leaders of the country. Pray for the President, for the Cabinet, for our legislators and judicial leaders. Ask God to guide them as they wrestle with complicated issues and as they make decisions with far-reaching implications. Pray that God would enable them to both receive and give wise counsel.

Pray for the political factions in our country, that we would understand each other and work for the common good of the people. Ask that God would guide us toward the future that God desires for us, and that our hearts and minds would be opened so that we could clearly see the way forward together.

Pray for the divisions in our country — political, ethnic, cultural, economic, gender, and so many others — that God would give our leaders, and give us as individuals, the wisdom, strength, and courage we need to bring healing to our land.

Prayers for others

Think for a moment about a person or a group that you cannot stand, who you wish would just be quiet and go away, whose stance in the world you passionately disagree with. Who are those people for you?

In a deeply divided world, it is often difficult to pray for those we see as "other." And it is so very, very easy to vilify the other, to see them simply as a villain, an enemy. But that makes those divisions even deeper than they really are, and makes it virtually impossible for us to find effective solutions to our very real problems. So, as painful as it may initially feel for you (and, admittedly, for me)... Pray for God to bless those people.

Yes. For God to bless those people. Those very ones whose beliefs make your spirit cringe.

Pray that God would work within their lives to bring them healing, peace, and wholeness. That they would know deep in their spirits that they are beloved children of the God who created them. And that they would, in turn, know the people around them to be their brothers and sisters, also beloved children of God.

Then, pray that God would give you an understanding of why it is those people believe what they do, why they act in the way they do, why they say the words they do. Ask God for clarity in how you — how we — can reach out in love to them in a way that they can understand, and to which they may respond.

Prayers for you and your circle

Now pray for your loved ones, for their safety, for their healing. Lift up to God your worries about them, your hopes and dreams for them. Ask that God would bless them.

As you prayed a moment ago for others, pray now those same things for the people you care for the most.

Pray that God would work within their lives to bring them healing, peace, and wholeness. That they would know deep in their spirits that they are beloved children of the God who created them. And that they would, in turn, know the people around them to be their brothers and sisters, also beloved children of God.

Then, pray for yourself! Pray that God would continue to work within your life, drawing you ever closer to God's love. Whatever is on your heart and mind in these moments, lift it all up to the God who loves you.

Prayers for action

In closing, ask God — or even beg God — to give a clear way forward to you and to us all. Pray that God would direct and guide us to take whatever actions we can in our particular context.

If you haven't already done so, spend a few moments in silence, listening for that "gentle whisper" from God.

Then, in whatever way you would like, end your prayer time. Amen and amen!