

# Developing and Using a Prayer List

The daily practice of prayer is encouraged by teaching and example throughout the Bible:

Matthew 6:11

Luke 18:1

Daniel 6:10

Psalm 5:3

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Ephesians 5:18

Colossians 4:2

Yet many Christians struggle to pray consistently and effectively.

Many 'forget' to pray all too often.

Many who do pray end up repeating the same few prayer requests over and over.

Many who try to pray for others have no system to stay organized and so end up forgetting or being overwhelmed by their lack of organization.

The proposal I offer, along with so many others that teach the discipline of prayer, is the use of a prayer list that is flexible and easy to maintain, and the use of prayer schedule or schedules to organize your praying according to your desires.

There are many practical advantages to using a list of prayer requests and developing a prayer schedule:

It can remind us to pray regularly.

It helps us remember what we want to pray for.

It helps us be more specific about what we want to pray for.

It can allow us to focus on different prayer requests on different days

It reminds us of what we can be thankful for as we see items on our list get answered.

## The simple approach:

Get a piece of paper, notebook, or use a program such as Microsoft Word to list every prayer request you want to pray for.

Get out that list each day and pray through all or it or a section of it. You can then mark where you stop and pick up the next day.

## A more complicated and organized approach:

This approach requires that you organize each day's praying ahead of time. You begin with individual prayer requests, then set up a system to remember to pray for them on the days you choose:

### Create individual prayer requests:

List every prayer request separately.

Determine how frequently you will pray for each request.

Assign each request to one of your weekly or daily prayer lists below:

### Create daily and weekly prayer lists:

Designate days to pray for certain topics. Assign prayer requests for these topics to that day. For example:

Monday: extended family

Tuesday: church friends/members

Wednesday: lost people

Thursday: missionaries/mission agencies

Friday: church leaders

Saturday: local, state, and national leaders

Sunday: persecuted Christians, unreached people groups<sup>2+</sup> or nations

Assign other prayer requests to a day or days of the week you want to pray for that request

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Assign some requests to an on-going daily list.

Examples:

Spouse/children/grandchildren

Personal needs and praises

Assign other requests to a short-term daily list.

Examples (critical but short-term needs):

Medical or other emergencies

Short-term activities/needs/events

## Example using a ring binder.

A ring binder provides the most flexibility and ease of maintenance (other than using a computer/phone/tablet app). It allows you to remove and move around prayer requests quite easily.

Create a page for each prayer request. List as much information on that page as you need to remind you of what to pray for. Also list at the top of the page the day or days of the week you plan to pray for that request.

Create a single page for each day-of-the week 'topic' prayer category you've selected (extended family, lost people, missionaries, etc.). Add specific people or requests to that page. (These 'topic' requests won't change often so you can list them all on the proper page rather than create a separate request for each one.)

Create seven blank sheets with a day of the week at the top (I'll explain these below).

You will also need ten dividers or tabs, seven labeled for each day of the week, plus a Daily tab, a Short-term tab, and an Answered tab (Staples Item: 477147 – pack of 20 for \$4.99).

To set up your prayer binder, insert the ten tabs in the following order:

Daily

Short-Term

The seven week days

Answered

Now place the daily 'topic' page for each day behind the appropriate weekday tab. Then place the blank but day-labeled page you created for each day behind the correct tab. Finish by adding the individual prayer request pages you've created behind the tab for the day of the week you plan to pray for the request. If you have decided to pray more than once a week for a certain request, insert the request itself on the first day of the week you will pray for it, then note that prayer request briefly on the blank day-labeled page behind the tabs on the other days you want to be reminded to pray for that request.

On your first day, turn to the Daily tab and pray for the requests behind it. Then go to the Short-term tab and pray for any requests there. Next go to the day of the week tab for that day and pray for the topic requests for that day and the individual requests you've placed there. That's it.

To maintain your prayer binder, add new requests as needed, move answered requests to the Answered tab, and remove requests you feel you no longer need to pray over that haven't yet been answered (you may want to store these in another ring binder). If you change the frequency of prayer for a request, update the day of the week reminder pages where you previously placed the request reminders for that request. Likewise, cross out requests you've removed from those day-of-the week reminder pages.

## Example using a journal or composition book:

A journal or composition book is less flexible than a ring binder, but is probably more portable than a ring binder, and often (depending on what you choose) less expensive. It does not allow removal or easy moving of prayer requests.

Choose a journal or composition book with at least 100 pages.

Divide your book up into the following sections using glue-on/self-stick tabs (Staples Redi-Tag line):

Daily (3-4 pages)

Short Term (5-10 pages)

Answered (10 pages)

Monday-Sunday (divide to remainder of the book into seven equal sections)

Since you will not be able to easily move prayer requests once they are entered, a good practice is to use a separate sheet or sheets of paper to briefly list all your current prayer requests and after you have this list decide what days to assign them to. Then go about entering these requests in your journal. Likewise carry a piece of paper, small notebook, index card to church to jot down new prayer requests. Enter these in the section(s) you want to later.

Now enter your initial prayer list:

On the first Daily page list the prayer requests you will pray for every day all year.

On the first page of the Short Term section list any short term requests.

On the first page of the Monday section list the topic prayer requests for Monday. Leave a blank page after these and then list prayer requests you will pray for on Monday on the next page. (Write these one after another, not one per page, but leave some space after each request to add additional information.)

Do the same for your Tuesday-Sunday sections.

If you want to pray for a request on more than one day, create a briefer second or additional entry on the additional days you will pray for it.

To use the prayer journal, open to the Daily section and pray for those requests. Then go to the Short Term section and pray for those requests. The turn to the day of the week section for that day and pray for those requests. Don't forget the daily topic section that starts that day.

To maintain your journal, list answered requests in the Answered section, and either cross out or highlight those requests on the appropriate pages so you can skip over them easily. Similarly, cross out or highlight requests you no longer need to pray for or have another reason to eliminate.

Once your journal or composition book begins to feel 'cluttered' (especially with requests that have been answered or you no longer need to pray for), you can start over with a fresh book and retire your current journal.

## Example using a prayer app

This approach is the most flexible, easiest to maintain, and provides a way to keep track of your praying. Its disadvantages are that it requires the right hardware to run and costs a little money to purchase. It does not require additional purchases to keep it going, however.

In this case I will use the iOS app Let's Pray! as the example.

Create the following Prayer Schedules:

Monday-Sunday (one for each day)

Label them with the day of the week.

Set the Interval for Every (Monday) at 7:00 a.m. (or the time you choose)

Monday – (Topic) – Sunday (Topic) (one for each Day-Topic)

Label them with the day of the week and the specific topic you will be praying for that day (Example Monday-Extended Family)

Set the Interval for Every (Monday) at 7:00 a.m. as above.

Daily

Set the Interval for Every Day at 7:00 a.m.

Short-Term

Set the Interval for Every Day at 7:00 a.m.

Create your individual prayer requests.

Include prayer requests to add to your Daily schedule and to each of the Day-Topic schedules.

Assign prayer requests to the day (Prayer Schedule) you will pray for them.

Those you will pray for Daily will be assigned to your Daily Schedule, etc.

Be sure to assign the topical requests to the correct Day-Topic.

You can schedule a request for more than one day.

To use the app, simply open it and choose the Prayer Calendar tab. Your Prayer schedules for the current day will show below the calendar. You should see Daily, Short-Term, (Day), and (Day-Topic) schedules if you have followed the above instructions. Click on one of these and go through the requests, clicking on each one to open the details panel. After praying for that request, click the Pray Now button to complete praying. The app will move to the next request.

When you have completed one of the prayer schedules for the day use the Back button to return to the Prayer Calendar and select your next schedule to open those requests.

To maintain your app, simply add new requests, re-assign prayer schedules to your requests, and when they are answered, click the “Not Answered” tab on the request so it changes to “Answered”. Remove answered prayers from your schedules by hitting the Edit button on the request and then selecting the Prayer Schedules button. Delete all prayer schedules assigned to that request.

Should you want to delete a request do so in the Request panel.

Should you not want to delete a request but suspend praying for it, just remove all the Prayer Schedules assigned to that request using the Edit button on the request. You can then later restore the request to a schedule should you desire to do so without reentering the request.

## Prayer Apps for Android Devices

Christian Prayer App (Pray)

Echo (iOS and Android)

Prayer Mate (has Operation World daily feed)