

“The Puritan William Gurnall once said, ‘Prayer is nothing but the promise reversed or God’s word turned inside out and formed into an argument and retorted back again upon God by faith.’ It sounds great. But what does it look like in practice? *5 Things to Pray for the People You Love* and *5 Things to Pray for Your Church* answer that question. They’ll walk you through using God’s word in prayer. And praying God’s word is my number one tip to help people invigorate their prayer life. Read these books and invigorate your prayers.”

Tim Chester, Pastor of Grace Church, Boroughbridge, and author of *You Can Pray* (IVP)

“*Five Things to Pray* is a brilliantly simple but hugely effective means of stimulating your prayer life for church, mission, family and friends. Accessible and attractive, with lots of Scripture to focus prayer, it will be a great tool for churches to help members to pray regularly and creatively.”

Trevor Archer, FIEC Training Director

“I recommend this series to you on the basis of the simple fact that they moved me to pray. They both showed me ways to pray for my church and my loved ones, and they kindled in my heart a *want* to pray. These are simple books, with the modest and eternally profound aim of showing how the Bible informs our prayers. Rachel Jones manages to withdraw from the picture and leaves the reader to see how simple it is to align our prayers with the will of

our listening Father. These books could well be a cause of great blessing for your church and people you love.”

John Hindley, Pastor of BroadGrace Church, Norfolk, and author of *Serving Without Sinking* and *You Can Really Grow*

“For those of us who often struggle to know what to pray for our church and for the people we love, these books are brilliant at giving us lots of really helpful, specific things to pray that are straight from God’s word. With a mixture of praise, confession, thanksgiving and petition, the prayers are repeatedly focused on what it looks like to live in the light of eternity in the various different situations that are highlighted. Starting with Scripture really helpfully ensures that we are not praying merely for changed circumstances, as we can tend to do, but rather for changed hearts that bring honour and glory to God.”

Andrea Trevenna, Associate Minister for Women at St Nicholas, Sevenoaks, and author of *The Heart of Singleness*



FOR YOUR
CHURCH

RACHEL JONES

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the goodbook
COMPANY

5 things to pray for your church

Prayers that change things for the life of your church

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INTRODUCTION

I wonder if you have ever struggled to believe this famous verse from the Bible:

“The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective” (James 5 v 16).

James is telling us that when righteous people pray righteous prayers, things happen. Things change. The prayers of God’s people are powerful. But they are not powerful because we are powerful, or because the words we say are somehow magic, but because the Person we pray to is infinitely, unimaginably powerful. And our prayers are effective—not because we are special, or because there is a special formula to use, but because the God we pray to delights to answer our prayers and change the world because of them.

So what is the secret of effective prayer—how can you pray prayers that really change things? James suggests two questions that we need to ask ourselves.

First, are you righteous? A righteous person is someone who is in right relationship with God—someone who, through faith in Jesus, has been forgiven and accepted as a child of God. Are you someone who,

as you pray, is praying not just to your Maker, not just to your Ruler, but to your heavenly Father, who has completely forgiven you through Jesus?

Second, do your prayers reflect that relationship? If we know God is our Maker, our Ruler and our Father, we will want to pray prayers that please him, that reflect his desires, that line up with his priorities for our lives and for the world. The kind of prayer that truly changes things is the prayer offered by a child of God that reflects God's heart.

That's why, when God's children pray in the Bible, we so often find them using the word of God to guide their prayers. So when Jonah prayed in the belly of a fish to thank God for rescuing him (Jonah 2 v 1-9), he used the words of several psalms strung together. When the first Christians gathered in Jerusalem to pray, they used the themes of Psalm 2 to guide their praise and their requests (Acts 4 v 24-30). And when Paul prayed that his friends would grow in love (Philippians 1 v 9), he was asking the Father to work in them the same thing the Lord Jesus prayed for us (John 17 v 25-26), and which the Holy Spirit is doing for all believers (Romans 5 v 5). They all used God's words to guide their words to God.

How can you pray prayers that are powerful and effective—that change things, that make things happen? First, by being a child of God. Second, by praying Bible prayers, which use God's words to make sure your prayers are pleasing to him and share his priorities.

That's what this little book is here to help you with. It contains suggestions for how to pray for 21 different

aspects of church life. And for each them you'll find guidance for what we can pray—for leaders, for children, for those who are seeking, for faithful preaching, for loving community, for bold evangelism, and much more. Each prayer suggestion is based on a passage of the Bible, so you can be certain that they are prayers that God wants you to pray for your church family.

There are five different suggestions for each. So you can use this book in a variety of ways.

- *You can pray a prayer each day for your church family, over the course of three weeks, and then start again.*
- *You can take one of the prayer themes and pray a part of it every day from Monday to Friday.*
- *Or you can dip in and out of it, as and when you want and need to pray for a particular area of church life.*
- *There's also a space on each page for you to write in the names of specific church members you intend to remember in prayer.*

This is by no means an exhaustive guide—there are plenty more things that you can be praying for your church! But you can be confident as you use it that you are praying great prayers—prayers that God wants you to pray. And God promises that “the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective”. That’s a promise that is worth grasping hold of confidently. As we pray trusting this promise, it will change how we pray and what we expect to come from our prayers.

When righteous people pray righteous prayers, things happen. Things change. So as you use this book to guide your prayers, be excited, be expectant, and keep your eyes open for God to do “immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine” (Ephesians 3 v 20). He’s powerful; and so your prayers are too.

Carl Laferton

Senior Editor

The Good Book Company



THAT MY CHURCH WOULD...

REMEMBER
WHAT WE ARE

1 PETER 2 v 9-10

PEOPLE TO PRAY FOR:

Help my church family to remember that we...

1 A HOLY NATION

"But you are a chosen people ... a holy nation" (v 9).

Thank God that he has chosen to show his wonderful grace to you and your church family. Thank God that those who are in Christ are new creations—a whole new "race" (or nation) of people. Pray that members of your church would increasingly act like the holy people God has declared you to be.

2 A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

Thank God for the job title that he has given his chosen people: "priests".

Like the Old Testament priests, we're to represent people before God and represent God before people. Ask that your church would be faithful in praying for those inside and outside of your community. And pray that you'd be faithful in speaking and applying God's word into the lives of those around you.

3 GOD'S SPECIAL POSSESSION

Thank God that he has made your church his "special possession" (v 9).

Thank him that you can be assured of his love, whatever life throws at you. Pray that this would give your church a great sense of security and confidence—pray that you would not fear what others might think of you or do to you.

4 CALLED

Thank God that he has called each member of your church "out of darkness into his wonderful light" (v 9).

Take a few moments to thank God for the way in which he called some specific people you know. Pray that your church would increasingly "declare the praises" of God by living distinctively and speaking the good news boldly.

5 RECIPIENTS OF MERCY

Thank God that though "once you had not received mercy ... now you have received mercy" (v 10).

Pray that your church would grow in your appreciation of the depth of God's mercy—and that this would crush any lingering feelings of self-righteousness. Pray that you'd show mercy to each other—forgiving the small things, the big things, and the things that seem to happen again and again.