



Missionary Prayer Guide By Mark Renfroe

There is no such thing as easy ministry. It does not matter if you are trying to make disciples in the Bible Belt, gospel-resistant places like the American West, the Northeast, or among an unreached people group in the most remote parts of the earth; it is all difficult and fraught with spiritual landmines. With that said, missionary life has some unique challenges, and missionaries need your prayers. This list is fashioned to help you pray with intentionality and focus for missionaries you church supports.

- 1. Pray for their spiritual life.** Missionaries are just like pastors and other church leaders. It is easy for them to get caught up in the daily grind of ministry and neglect the most essential part of missionary service. It is out of the abundance of our hearts that we speak, and it is out of an ever-deepening spiritual life that we bear fruit. *I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing* (John 15:5 NIV).
- 2. Pray for gospel focused ministry.** The primary goal of the devil is to shut our mouths as it relates to gospel proclamation. There are several tools the enemy uses to prevent missionaries from sharing the gospel. They include language limitations, fear of rejection or persecution, busyness, etc. Pray the Lord will empower speech and fill hearts with boldness. Paul asked the Ephesians to pray for him regarding this issue: *Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel* (Ephesians 6:19 NIV).
- 3. Pray for courageous faith.** Fear is a debilitating emotion. It can leave us paralyzed in inaction. Planting the church among the unreached is a risky proposition, but the glory of God is worth it. Pray that your missionaries will walk in power, love, and self-control, not surrendering to fear. *So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand* (Isaiah 41:10 NIV).
- 4. Pray for financial provision.** Humanly speaking, missionaries live completely dependent on the generosity and financial faithfulness of others. When the economy takes a hit, people tend to pull back on their giving, leaving missionaries without the resources to live and work. *So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well* (Matthew 6:31-33 NIV).
- 5. Pray for physical, mental, and emotional health.** Our hearts, souls, and bodies are wonderfully connected, but when one part is not working as it should, it impacts everything we do. Pray that God will safeguard your missionaries' physical, mental, and emotional health. This is particularly important as medical resources may be severely limited in some contexts. *He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak* (Isaiah 40:29 NIV).

6. **Pray for life-giving relationships.** One of the key reasons missionaries leave a field of service is relational turmoil with other missionaries. God does not seem to call weak-willed people to the mission field, but this strength can become detrimental to healthy relationships if we are not careful. Pray that your missionaries will have healthy, life-giving relationships within the missionary community and among those to whom the Lord has called them to serve. *Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace* (Ephesians 4:2-3 NIV).
7. **Pray for families.** Undoubtedly, obedience to the missionary call has implications for the whole family. It is hard for missionaries to see their children suffer due to their calling. Likewise, missionaries leave behind extended family when they go overseas. This can lead to loneliness and isolation. Finally, pray for the spiritual welfare of missionary kids. *But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord* (Joshua 24:15 NIV).
8. **Pray for single missionaries.** Did you know that most single missionaries are women? Being single on the mission field carries with it a lot of challenges and some benefits. There can be loneliness, financial hardships, misunderstandings, and a longing for companionship; but there is a freedom that families do not have. Pray that God will help your single missionaries through these challenges while leaning into the advantages. *Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory. Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever* (Psalm 73:23-26 NIV).
9. **Pray for spiritual effectiveness.** Work in some places can be very slow, requiring painstaking labor and perseverance. It often feels like you spend years removing rocks from the field before you can even begin the process of sowing seed. The biographies of missionary heroes are full of stories describing how they labored for years before they experienced a breakthrough. While the Bible commands us to work with all our might, we understand that lasting spiritual fruit results from the Holy Spirit's empowering presence and activity in our lives and ministries. *For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God* (Colossians 1:9-10 NIV).
10. **Pray for open doors.** The Lord opens doors that no one can shut and closes doors that no one can open. Acts 16 is a great example of this. Closed doors in Asia and Bithynia resulted in an availability to walk through an open door for ministry in Europe. Pray that God will open doors, provide your missionaries with discernment, and give them the wisdom and boldness to walk through those doors at the appropriate time. *A great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me* (1 Corinthians 16:9 NIV).
11. **Pray for joy in the midst of hardship.** Challenges come in many forms. Some are quite serious, but even smaller ones can feel overwhelming as they pile up one on top of another. Sickness, loneliness, seeing your children bear the weight of your calling, lack of spiritual fruit, relational misunderstandings, frustrations with organizational policies, financial challenges, language barriers, perceived lack of fruitfulness, unmet expectations, marital discord, and the frustrations of everyday living. These can distract us from our primary calling and bring about discouragement, but God can also use these challenges to produce lasting spiritual fruit. Understanding this can fill our hearts with joy; and of course, it is the joy of the Lord that is our strength. *Consider it pure joy, my brothers and*

sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance (James 1:2-3 NIV).

- 12. Pray for demonstrations of the Spirit's power.** The Book of Acts highlights how demonstrations of the Spirit's power call people to make a decision. People can argue with our theology, but they cannot disregard the miraculous work of God. *My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power (1 Corinthians 2:4 NIV).*
- 13. Pray for more laborers.** A constant theme throughout this book has been how much of the world suffers from a lack of gospel access. While technology can be very useful and a powerfully strategic tool, most unreached people will not be reached by something they stumble across online or by watching gospel content on television. God's primary instrument for making disciples is through the work of the Spirit in the lives of those who have been transformed. Only 3 percent of missionaries go to the unreached. Likewise, there are strategic ministries that lack personnel. Pray that God will speak to people in your church and those worldwide to respond to God's Great Commission. *The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field (Luke 10:2 NIV).*
- 14. Pray as the Holy Spirit leads you.** Has the Holy Spirit ever put someone on your heart? You did not know why, but you felt a strong compulsion to pray for that person. Do not ignore those impulses. Feed them. Read your missionaries' newsletters, follow them on social media, and let the Holy Spirit guide your prayers. *Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people (Ephesians 6:18 NIV).*
- 15. Pray in the Holy Spirit.** Sometimes, we do not know how to pray. There is a gap between the heaviness of our hearts and words. This can happen as we are praying for missionaries. We use tools like this one, but we hit a spiritual wall. In times like this, we need to lean deeply into the work of the Spirit in our prayer life—understanding that He intercedes for us and others even as our words fail. *The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God (Romans 8:26-27 NIV).*

We often hear that as Jesus-followers, we are called to pray, give, and go. We cannot express strongly enough how much missionaries need your prayers. Missionaries rely and depend upon the prayers of God's people. They can often remember times when God intervened in supernatural ways to keep them safe, meet a need, or provide a breakthrough in a situation that seemed hopeless. Thank you for investing your time in prayer for missions and your missionaries. It is never a wasted activity.

You can also access other resources to help your church be more effective in missions at [this link](#).