

# PRAYING THE 4 P's



# PREFACE

I read an article recently about a “Pastor’s Prayer Life.” It was helpful, inspiring, and encouraging. While reading, I had this thought in the back of my mind ... am I praying “enough”?

Enough prayer? What is that? Is that like George Mueller, who rose early to pray three or four hours before beginning his day? Is that like James, who spent so much time on his knees, apparently those joints became calloused or distorted and his nickname became Camel Knees?

Enough prayer?

Richard Blackaby says we should “*Pray until you are released.*”

That stirs me. That convicts me. That inspires me. That challenges me.

The clock in my head beats toward efficiency, proactivity, and, sadly, toward control of my busy schedule.

Yet, every conversation with those I love

(wife, children, friends) has some sense of beginning and end. Some sense of getting to the point and bringing focus, even if the conversation will continue later. I don’t hang up prematurely. I don’t do all the talking. Even when I do a lot of listening, I respond at least with a courteous acknowledgement of the conversation. The dialogue continues until enough is understood and action is made possible.

As I think of prayer and this indescribable gift of communication with our Heavenly Father, I consider what He wants in prayer. What would He say is “enough”?

That is a loaded question. Loaded with power, personal reflection, purpose, and more.

The hope of this simple Prayer Guide is that you would engage with the Father until you are released. That you would pray ... enough.

Pray ...

Enough to experience God in a personal way.

Enough to realize His power in your life and ministry.

Enough to release the pressures of this world and lay them at His feet.

Enough to walk in the confidence of His promises.

Enough to see His sovereign, gracious, redeeming plan at work.

Enough to feel His heart for those far from Him.

Enough to know His love for His children.

Enough to trust Him and join His agenda at all costs.

Enough to treasure the waiting moments He orchestrates.

Enough to hear Jesus praying for you while seated at the right hand of the Father.

Enough to embrace His fullness.

Enough to worship Him with your heart, soul, and mind.

Enough ...

Using this guide will help focus your thoughts. These four areas are on the heart of God. He will guide you by His Spirit. You can experience more than enough as you ...

*Pray for Our Pastors*

*Pray for God's People*

*Pray for God's Providence*

*Pray for the Perishing*

Imagine what could happen if believers throughout Arizona pray.

*"Every great movement of God can be traced to a kneeling figure."*

— D. L. Moody

Imagine enough prayer ...

Prayer in Jesus' name for the glory of God to happen. (John 14:13)

Prayer changing things, mostly me and you. (1 Kings 18-19)

Prayer that is powerful and effective. (James 5:16)

Prayer showing us great and mighty things which we have not known! (Jeremiah 33:3)

Prayer opening the door to heaven. (Matthew 7:7)

Prayer unleashing power. (Mark 9:29)

Prayer connecting us to the source of eternity. (Matthew 6:6)

Prayer as Jesus taught His disciples. (Matthew 6:9-13)

Prayer moving mountains ... and obstacles in our heads. (Matthew 17:20)

Prayer healing ... especially the wounds in my heart. (James 5:13-15)

Prayer powering the work of our hands and His. (Isaiah 64:8-9)

Prayer that is fruitful. (John 15)

Prayer tackling the impossible. (Luke 1:37)

Prayer that *IS* enough.

Will you join me and pray? Will you pray until you are released?

— Chris Stull

*Senior Pastor of Wellspring Church in Goodyear*

*"Prayer does not fit us for the greater work; prayer is the greater work."*

— Oswald Chambers

*"Our prayers may be awkward. Our attempts may be feeble. But since the power of prayer is in the one who hears it and not in the one who says it, our prayers do make a difference."*

— Max Lucado

The pastor hung up the phone and exhaled a sigh of relief. It had been a long and difficult phone call with a valued member of his church, but by the end of the call, they were able to reconcile their differences and had a plan to move forward in a healthy, God honoring way. Or so he thought. The next few weeks brought more conflict with that church member and with others who sided with her.

Because of the hurtful things said about him, the pastor began to question himself. Was he a loving shepherd of this flock? Was he loved by his church? Did he have the leadership qualities needed to lead the church? Was he even sure that he was still called to be a pastor there? Was he still sure of his call at all?

Situations like this happen to pastors more often than many people realize. While some pastors are able to navigate the difficult waters and emerge from the storm with healthier churches and a stronger walk with the Lord, many do not.

This is why our pastors need our prayers. They need greater strength than they possess on their own. They need to

be reminded that they are approved by God. They need to know and embrace God's mercy and grace when they are faced with their own failings. They need to be assured that the call God has placed on them is certain. They need to be reminded that God has a purpose for them: to proclaim Jesus and to point people past themselves and on to Christ.

When we lift up our pastors in prayer, we enable them to give glory to God as they realize and recognize it is only through His empowering that they are able to humbly serve the Lord and His people, the church.

In his letter to Timothy, Paul expresses this humility and dependence on God.

**1 Timothy 1:12-17** *"I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and*

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*love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."*

As you pray for pastors today, consider praying the following in addition to what God places on your heart:

—Thank you, Father, for saving these men. Thank you for calling them out from a life apart from you and to a life of loving you through your Son, Jesus. May they know and appreciate your great grace and mercy. May they show that same grace and mercy as they shepherd. Keep them far from sin today. Protect them from the enemy's attacks and strategies.

—Thank you, Lord, for calling these men to serve you. Remind them

today of that calling. Give them a fresh assurance that they are right where you want them. May they humbly acknowledge that you show your greatness through their weakness. Keep them far from pride today.

—Thank you, God, for letting these men lead your people. Use them today to show your great love and patience. As you have shown them love, let them love your people. Let them lead and love as shepherds of your flock. Help them to place the needs of others ahead of their own. Keep them far from selfishness and laziness today.

—Thank you, Father, for doing what only you can do in these men and in their ministries. Whether big or small, may they give you all the glory and honor today. Help them to see where you are at work, and lead them to glorify you. Let them not glory in the things the world celebrates, but let them celebrate what they see you doing in your people. Keep them from defeat and discouragement today.

— Ashley Evans

*Pastor of 22nd Street Baptist Church  
in Tucson*

**A**s we pray for God's people, let us also ask God to give us a committed, compassionate heart, like He gave the Apostle Paul, to pray for God's people wherever they are. When God gave us Paul, He gave us a great example to follow when praying.

The Apostle Paul was used mightily by God to start churches throughout the Roman world, and those churches were constantly in his prayers. As we read his letters, we see that each church faced various challenges and trials, and nothing has changed today. Our churches are just as much in need of prayer as were the churches in Paul's day. We need to pray for one another.

Paul's prayers on behalf of the churches demonstrated how deeply he cared for God's people. His prayers for them reflected his tireless, sacrificial love. May we demonstrate the same love for each other as we pray for God's people.

The following list of prayers was taken from an article by Hal Seed, Pastor of New Song Community Church in Oceanside, California, and was published in March 2016 at [www.pastormentor.com/pray-like-paul-your-church/](http://www.pastormentor.com/pray-like-paul-your-church/).

If you will use these prayers listed here as a guide to pray for God's people, then, like Paul, you will be praying with great

faith and great confidence in a great God who answers prayer!

**Pray for Abounding Love** — Philippians 1:9-11 “And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”

**Pray for the Spirit of Wisdom** — Ephesians 1:15-19 “For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might.”

**Pray for Inner Spiritual Strength** — Ephesians 3:14-21 “For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from

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whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith — that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

**Pray for Fruit in Every Good Work** — Colossians 1:9-12 “And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.”

**Pray for Righteousness** — 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 “To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

**Pray for the Salvation of Others** — 2 Thessalonians 3:1-5 “Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you, and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men. For not all have faith. But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one. And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will do the things that we command. May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.”

**Pray for Boldness to Proclaim the Gospel** — Ephesians 6:19 “and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.”

— *Mike Bishop,*

*Harvest Church at Anthem in Florence*

**A**s we pray for God's providence and provision, let's give thanks for His blessings in our lives and in our churches. Pray that we would be fully submitted to God's will. Pray that we would use all that God has entrusted to us to bring Him Glory.

King David famously gave glory to God. He praised God for His love, mercy, faithfulness, and protection. When it came time to gather resources to build the Temple, David made sure to praise God for the blessings and providence of the Almighty.

1 Chronicles 29:14-16 says, "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. We are foreigners and strangers in your sight, as were all our ancestors. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you."

Answered prayer story: Romans 8:28 says, "We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God: those who are called according to His purpose."

We are taught at a young age to make plans and to pursue our dreams.

However, when those plans clash with the providence of God, His ways always prevail. God's plans can affirm the path we are on or can take us down different paths. In all of it, God gets the glory!

One such example occurred when we were missionaries overseas. We had a volunteer team of four men from the United States. During the week, a local pastor we had been working with asked us to visit the next day at 1 p.m. instead of at 9 a.m., which was our plan. With this change of plans, we picked up the team and told them that the Lord was leading us to start a new work in another town. While driving there, we agreed that the main focus was finding a person of peace to start a Bible study.

As we entered a local store, the gentleman behind the counter, who was kneeling, stood up and greeted us. He asked us what we were doing there. We said that we were missionaries and the four guys with us were on a mission trip. He asked us if we were Christians and we said, "Yes." He then asked, "What kind of Christians?" We said, "Evangelicals." He continued, "What kind of Evangelicals?" We said, "Baptists." He asked, "What kind of Baptists?" We said, "Southern Baptists." He said that he was a Southern Baptist as well! He explained that he had been

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saved in 1978 through the work of a missionary with our agency who had since retired.

We asked him if he would like to have a Bible study in his bookstore. He said that when we walked into his shop, he was kneeling behind the counter and praying for three things. One prayer request was to do more for the Lord. He had given himself until the end of July to figure out how to serve God. The day we entered his shop was July 27. He said that being able to invite people to study God's Word in his store was an answer to his first prayer.

During the course of the conversation he asked my name. I said, "Phil." He then asked, "Phil what?" I said, "Phil Calvert." He said, "You're not going to believe this, but the second thing I was praying for when you entered my store was how to find Phil Calvert."

The previous night, he had been speaking with a Baptist pastor about his desire to serve the Lord. The pastor suggested that he contact a Baptist missionary named Phil Calvert. As he was praying to find me, we walked into his shop. After rejoicing in the Lord, the guys on the team bought some Bibles, books, and CDs. We agreed to visit him the next week when the team had returned to the United States.

The next week, we visited him to plan the launch of the Bible study, and we

asked what the third prayer request was. He said that our team had purchased enough Bibles, books, and CDs to pay July's rent. This was an answer to his third prayer!

We asked him if he knew of a sports stadium that we could use the following July for a volunteer group. He said, "Hop in my car. I want to show you something." We drove to a facility that included a soccer field, stadium seating, and a community center. He said that he had signed a one-year agreement to manage the stadium. I said that it was the perfect spot, but the group would need it July 8-14 of the following year. He said he had just signed the agreement and it ran through July 15!

The next July, we used the stadium. More accurately, the Lord used that stadium. We brought a volunteer team there and the Lord moved mightily. The team performed a drama, which they called David and Goliath. Our 10-year-old son played the part of David. After the drama, between 20 and 30 people came forward to give their lives to Christ. Praise God that His providence prevails in all circumstances and in all places, and that He had changed our plans the year before so that on *this* day, many would be saved!

— *Phil Calvert*

*Senior Pastor of Trinity Southern Baptist Church in Casa Grande*

This passage haunts me.  
 2 Thessalonians 1:7b-10 (CSB)  
*“This will take place at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels, when he takes vengeance with flaming fire on those who don’t know God and on those who don’t obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will pay the penalty of eternal destruction from the Lord’s presence and from his glorious strength on that day when he comes to be glorified by his saints and to be marveled at by all those who have believed, because our testimony among you was believed.”*

Most people in Arizona seem to be spiritually lost and disconnected from Jesus. As one man in Tucson told me, “If the gospel is true, I want to go to hell when I die, because that’s where all my family and friends are now.”

I pray this makes you pause.

Jesus and the disciples spent time in temple/synagogue space and traveled within community space. A careful reading of the gospels shows they spent more time in community or life space than in church space.

Jesus is called a friend of sinners: (Luke 7:34 CSB) “The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’”

The Lord entered the brokenness of Israel’s communities. How do you personally enter into the brokenness of Arizona’s communities and join Jesus in his mission to rescue the spiritually lost

and disconnected? How can we follow Jesus’ model today? Let me suggest that you consider three spaces.

First space is your home and those we live with together. The second space is the workplace, and third spaces are public spaces where the community gathers.

Of course, ministry in our home or first space is key. We must practice what we preach and live godly lives, share the gospel in word and deed with those we love at home base.

Second space is our workplace environment. We are typically paid to work and ought to be the best employees. If you preach to people at work, you may find yourself looking for new employment. Be wise and salt conversations sharing how faith guides your life in second space conversations. Pray for fellow workers and watch how the Lord uses your life to enter conversations naturally at break times and work events and in third spaces.

Third space appears to be key in discipleship evangelism today. In our 21st century culture of North America, we need to learn to emphasize listening over talking, as you will be judged as to how well you listen (see James 2:19).

Notice in Luke 5 that Jesus walks in the community and has different conversations with both religious and non-religious types. Studies show that people are more interested in hearing a Christian’s story of life-change than Christians are in sharing their stories.

Let’s approach our third spaces of com-

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munity like we would the mission field.

Identifying the six S's in your community can help you grapple with third spaces, and this exercise works within rural and small town/city communities.

1. Structures and Buildings: What structures, buildings, restaurants, and markets (old and new) are in the community?

2. Signage and Art: What's in your third space? Do you see a theme(s), and what does that tell you about the community?

3. Spatial Dynamics: How is your community laid out? Do you have wide or narrow streets, free parking, bike lanes, public transit, places to play, rest and relax, etc.? Are the spatial dynamics designed for interaction or just traffic flow?

4. Spirituality representation:  
GODISNOWHERE

What formal places of worship do you see, and what activities and/or services do they offer? You may encounter postings and signage like the atheists' groups, "In No God We Trust," or nightclubs/pornography/marijuana dispensaries. How does this inform your prayer life?

5. Social Interaction: How do people travel in your community? Where do the people spend time in the community? Are there outdoor and indoor spaces for people? What yearly large events take place in your community? What is celebrated in the area?

6. Story: What is the creation story in your community's location? What is changing in the community?

Consider three connecting questions based on the above exercise:

*First*, what makes your community unique?

*Second*, what is the spiritual temperature in the community?

*Third*, where does the community connect? Think like Mr. Rogers for a moment and ask: Who are the people in your neighborhood? Who works at your supermarket, coffee shops/restaurants, flea markets, hair salons/barber shops, auto shops, doctors' offices, golf courses, cycling groups, basketball, tattoo shops and the like? Do you know people's names?

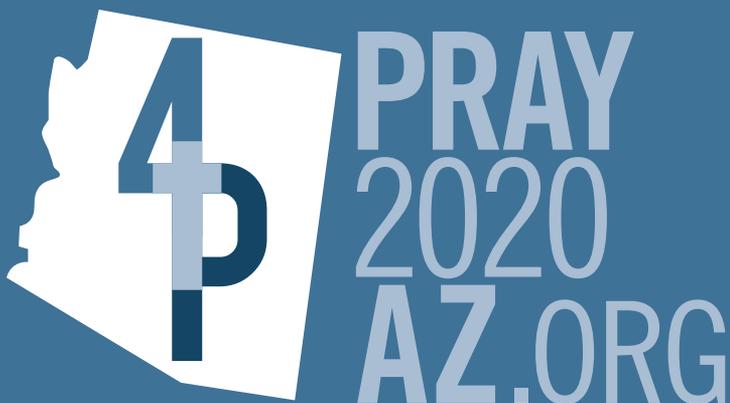
Are you a friend of sinners, those far from God, spiritually lost, and/or disconnected? Brokenness has no socioeconomic boundaries. Wealthy people need the hope of the gospel just like everyone else. Your physical presence in a third space group leads to connecting conversations. In fact, your new friends may become open to your story of life-change and a personal invitation to attend your Christian community.

Take courage, God is at work in your community and accomplishes His work through His people.

Join Him.

"Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" Joshua 1:9 (CSB).

— *Edward Pearson is a Church Life Team Facilitator with the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention*



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