



## REFRESH YOUR PRAYER LIFE IN THE NEW YEAR

I don't know about you, but I'm ready for some changes in 2021. I do realize that just because I want things to be different in my life, they aren't going to automatically happen. Changes take planning, time, and effort. This is why so many New Year's resolutions end up failing. People sincerely want to change, but they are either not sure how to start or don't realize the effort it will take to get there. Their goal becomes overwhelming and unmanageable.

Many people want to improve their prayer life. We desire a closer relationship with God, but some don't know where to start while others feel overwhelmed by all the things that need prayer. I'd like to provide you with a suggestion that may help to refresh your prayer life and make prayer time more doable.

Focused prayers organize your prayer time and make it more doable for you. You decide on a different topic for every day of the week. This will give you direction in your prayer time, give you time to pray about what's important to you, allow you to pray for a wider variety of things each week and most importantly, develop your relationship with God.

This is an example of daily prayer focuses. You may want to choose ones that better reflect what you want to pray for:

SUNDAY: Church

MONDAY: Missionaries

TUESDAY: Family and friends

WEDNESDAY: Lost and unchurched

THURSDAY: Our country and its leaders

FRIDAY: Sick and vulnerable

SATURDAY: Gratitude

You can start today. Divide a page into seven parts or have a separate one for each day. Select the prayer topics that work for you and then add things/people to pray for in each area. Challenge yourself to try this for a week.

Set aside a specific time every day for prayer, but be realistic on what will work for you. Keep it short and simple at first and gradually make changes so it will be manageable for you. Ask God to give you a desire to pray.

It can be easy to get bogged down in chaos of your day, but if you mess up just start again with whatever day it is. Don't dwell on what you didn't do, but look forward to what God has for you in the future.

*Then times of refreshment will come from the presence of the Lord, and He will again send you Jesus, your appointed Messiah. Acts 3:20 NLT*

I appreciate Pastor Rich's sermon series on "Robust Living" in this New Year. Isn't that what we all want? We don't want to just exist, we want to thrive. Our relationship with God through our prayer life will help us to thrive no matter what happens.

I'd like to encourage you with a prayer that Kim Butts has written from Psalm 86:11:

*Teach me Your way, Lord, so that I may continually rely on Your faithfulness from moment to moment. Help me to keep short accounts with You whenever I fail to extend the love of Jesus to others, or when I find myself in weak moments that cause my heart to turn away from complete obedience to Your work and your ways. Give me the strength to press into Your heart for lost people and nations, and to cry out to You for spiritual awakening, beginning in my own heart! Thank You, Father, for Your faithful, loving-kindness towards me so that I may serve You with reverence. May I be more faithful in this New Year to be Jesus to those I encounter, so that nothing I do or say strays from Your kingdom purposes. I ask this in the Name above ALL Names! Amen!*

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