

5 WAYS TO PRAY FOR YOUR CITY

**A prayer guide for healing, hope, and transformation
for the people of your city**

CITIES MATTER

We love our cities. The fast pace, endless entertainment, job opportunities, professional sports teams, and diverse foods and cultures are just some of the reasons we enjoy city life. But many people in our cities are hurting. They face a myriad of social and economic challenges such as poverty, crime, racial discrimination, not having access to proper medical care or quality education. And still some live not knowing the truth that Jesus came to save them.

The evidence of brokenness in our cities can be overwhelming. But the story of Nehemiah in Scripture gives us hope for the restoration of broken cities. Following their exile in Babylon, some Jews began to make their way back to their homeland, Jerusalem. The Temple had been rebuilt, but growing opposition from neighbors and the desolation of their city left the people feeling discouraged, defeated, and defenseless. Distressed at the news of Jerusalem's condition, Nehemiah sought King Artaxerxes' permission to leave Persia, where he served as a cupbearer, to return home. Upon his arrival, Nehemiah was devastated to see that the once glorious city of King David had been destroyed. The walls were broken down. The city lay in ruins.

But God stirred Nehemiah's heart, and he devised a plan to restore Jerusalem. He says in Nehemiah 2:17 (GNT), "But now I said to them, 'See what trouble we are in because Jerusalem is in ruins and its gates are destroyed! Let's rebuild the city walls and put an end to our disgrace.'" Nehemiah decides it's time to rebuild Jerusalem so that it can be all that the people need it to be. He begins a campaign to rebuild Jerusalem physically, spiritually, and socially.



But he is not alone! Prompted by the people, Ezra, a priest and scribe, read the Book of the Law to men, women, and children assembled in the square. The crowd is moved by the powerful words of Scripture. They bow down and begin to worship God. Before long, the city of Jerusalem is transformed! New walls, communities, systems, services, and, most importantly, renewed hearts to follow God.

God can do the same in our cities. With God's help, we can rebuild and restore our cities so that people are cared for, built up spiritually, and thriving in community. That's biblical city transformation. As we pray and seek God for our city, just as Nehemiah did, God will lead us. He will show us how to bring healing and restoration. He will guide us as we seek to help fix broken systems, reach the marginalized, speak up for those who have no voice, and share the love of Christ. That's how we'll see both individual lives and the culture of our cities transformed.

CHURCHES MATTER

The witness of the first Christians is astounding. The small band of Jewish men and women radically transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit, would eventually go on to change the world. But it all began with an incredibly loving community. A community devoted to one another. Listen to how Scripture describes this close-knit community:

All the believers continued together in close fellowship and shared their belongings with one another. They would sell their property and possessions, and distribute the money among all, according to what each one needed. (Acts 2:44-45 GNT)

Simply put, they were there for each other. They were united in their love for their community and made sure that each person's needs were met. And the Bible says, "Everyone liked them, and each day the Lord added to their group others who were being saved" (verse 47 CEV). Their love for one another was so authentic and obvious, it caused many others to join their community and give their lives to Jesus, in a time and place when it was dangerous to become a Christian. That's the impact these Christians made.

Today, your church can also have an impact on your city the same way the early church did. Through unified prayer, caring for the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the people in our cities, and sharing the gospel of Jesus, broken cities can be restored. Your church can help your city become a place of healing and hope as it loves and cares for the hurting.

PRAYER MATTERS

God's power is invited into our cities through prayer. And we have this wonderful promise in Matthew 18:19 (CEV) which says, "I promise that when any two of you on earth agree about something you are praying for, my Father in heaven will do it for you." Your prayers are powerful. And when we pray together, God promises to act on our behalf. Let's pray together for our cities.

Here are 5 ways you can pray:

1. **Healing for the hurting.** Ask God to heal lives devastated by trauma. Pray for the restoration of individuals and communities to wholeness. Also pray for the healing of communities impacted by generational trauma. Generational trauma happens when heart wounds are passed on from one generation to another within families and across communities. Such trauma is likely to continue when society is structured to discriminate against others. Examples of generational trauma include poverty, addiction, domestic abuse, incarceration, and divorce or separation occurring in the current and previous generations. Pray for churches implementing [Bible-based Trauma Healing Ministry](#) to bring healing to those suffering deep wounds of the heart.

I cried to you for help, O LORD my God, and you healed me. (Psalm 30:2 GNT)

2. **Guidance for churches.** Pray for the churches in your city to be renewed in their efforts to reach their cities with God's Word. Ask God to guide churches as they seek to meet the needs of their city.

The LORD says, "I will teach you the way you should go; I will instruct you and advise you." (Psalm 32:8 GNT)

3. **Transformation of culture.** Pray for God's Word to penetrate every sector of society—family, business, education, media, government, and entertainment—sparking corporate revival in your city. Pray for Jesus to change your city as his presence impacts the culture.

"In the same way your light must shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16 GNT)

4. **Wisdom for leadership.** Pray that God will give church and community leaders wisdom to make decisions and govern with integrity, justice, and mercy. Pray for God to place leaders that will model Christ's love and compassion for all people in every sector of society.

But the wisdom from above is pure first of all; it is also peaceful, gentle, and friendly; it is full of compassion and produces a harvest of good deeds; it is free from prejudice and hypocrisy. (James 3:17 GNT)

5. **Salvation for all.** Pray that people’s hearts will be opened to believe the gospel, repent of their sins, and receive Jesus as their Savior. Pray that the gospel will permeate every part of city-neighborhoods, schools, businesses, and churches—bringing God’s saving grace.

“I tell you for certain that everyone who hears my message and has faith in the one who sent me has eternal life and will never be condemned. They have already gone from death to life.” (John 5:24 CEV)

RESOURCES FOR YOU:

- To join our prayer community, sign up at: abs.bible/prayer
- To learn more about Bible-Based Trauma Healing Ministry, visit: ministry.americanbible.org/mission-trauma-healing
- To keep you inspired as you pray for your city, check out our latest blogs, videos, and podcasts at news.americanbible.org/blog
- To begin to understand and address wounds of the heart, visit: traumahealingbasics.org

