

Millions Expected to Pray Nationwide Thursday

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According to organizers of the National Day of Prayer, an annual event established by an act of Congress in 1952 to occur the first Thursday of each May, tens of thousands of prayer events are scheduled for small and large churches, homes and town squares across the U.S. The theme of this year's prayer event is: "Prayer! America's Strength and Shield."

"America trusts in the abiding power of prayer and asks for the wisdom to discern God's will in times of joy and of trial," said President Bush, in a proclamation released last week. "We recognize our dependence on the Almighty, we thank Him for the many blessings He has bestowed upon us, and we put our country's future in his hands."

Shirley Dobson, chairman of the National Day of Prayer Task Force, said the nation is in troubled waters and that it's "critical" for Christians to pray.

"The biblical principles upon which America was founded are under attack. We pray God will raise righteous leaders for our country," she said. Christian scholar and apologist Ravi Zacharias is this year's honorary chairman.

To honor the esteemed role he was offered, Zacharias recently wrote *Is There Not a Cause*, a book that links Nehemiah's rebuilding of the ancient walls of Jerusalem with the modern church's mandate to reach the lost. Zacharias is scheduled to

speak at two national observances on Thursday in Washington, D.C.

Preceding the National Day of Prayer has been a Bible-reading marathon, in which participants have gathered at the U.S. Capitol since Sunday night. For 90 consecutive hours people will read aloud, without comment, every Scripture of the Bible beginning in Genesis and ending with the final chapter of Revelation on Thursday at 2 p.m..