

Thousands Pray for Recovery of Gospel Artist Timothy Wright

The Grammy-nominated musician was critically injured in a car accident that killed his wife and grandson.



[] The news of a car crash that left the Rev. Timothy Wright critically injured and claimed the lives of his wife and grandson has sparked a nationwide prayer vigil for the famed gospel singer and Pentecostal pastor.

On Sunday, hundreds of people flocked to Wright's Grace Tabernacle Christian Center Church of God in Christ in Brooklyn, N.Y., to pray for the 61-year-old, who is in critical but stable condition at a hospital in Danville, Penn. Calls for prayer have also circulated via e-mail from supporters of the Grammy-nominated gospel artist.

"I'm here to pray for pastor Timothy Wright and his family," said Brooklyn resident Barbara Upsur, who does not attend Wright's church but said she has been inspired by his music. "I'm so saddened by the loss of his wife and grandson, but I believe that through prayer God will restore him."

Wright was returning from his denomination's annual summer convention in Detroit late July 4 when a driver traveling the wrong way on Interstate 80 struck his car head-on near Greene Township, Penn. Wright's wife, Betty, died at the scene. His grandson, 14-year-old Danny "D.J." Wright, died the next day at Geisinger Medical Center in Danville.

During a press conference held Monday outside Wright's home in Roosevelt, N.Y., family members said Wright's leg was broken in three places and that he had a broken jaw and other serious injuries. "Dad is opening his eyes and moving his head from side to side," said David Wright, one of the couple's five

sons.

He said Wright knows his grandson was killed in the accident but is unaware that his wife also died. "We did not tell him about Mom because we want to wait until he gets stronger," David Wright told *Charisma*. "We don't want to cause a setback in his recovery."

New York pastors Donnie McClurkin and Hezekiah Walker were among the thousands who packed Grace Tabernacle Sunday for the prayer vigil, which Wright's longtime friend, pastor and gospel artist Bishop Albert Jamison, organized.

Attendees prayed for Wright and remembered Betty Wright, 58, who was co-pastor of the church. "It's a tragedy losing our first lady Betty Wright," said Elder Anthony Williams, who drove three hours to visit Wright in Danville after learning of the accident. "Our pastor is incapacitated, but the church family is in constant prayer for his recovery."

A popular preacher in her own right, Betty Wright is remembered as a beautiful wife, mother and grandmother. "I referred to her as always being rapture-ready," David Wright said. "We know she's in a better place."

D.J. Wright had just completed the eighth grade and was traveling with his grandparents to Detroit as a graduation gift. "D.J. was a good kid," David Wright said of his nephew. "He would never hurt anyone."

Bishop James Gaylord, a leader in Wright's denomination, spoke during a Sunday morning worship service at Grace Tabernacle and told the congregation he was "standing on the Scriptures" for Wright's recovery.

Considered by many to be the "godfather of gospel music," Wright has released more than a dozen gospel recordings, including 2007's *Jesus, Jesus, Jesus*. Along with The N.Y. Fellowship Mass Choir, Wright was nominated for a Grammy award for best traditional soul gospel album for 1994's *Come Thou Almighty King*. In late June, he released a book, *Who's Really*

on the Lord's Side, based on his award-winning 1995 CD, *Who's on the Lord's Side*. **–Vanessa L. Robinson in Brooklyn, N.Y.**