

The Heartbreaking Reason Christians Across the World Are Joining in Prayer Today

My mother pours her prayers onto the page every morning.

Consistently, she sits at her dining room table before anyone else is awake. Before the early sunlight has even trespassed onto the linoleum floor. Before she exercises, eats breakfast or showers, she brings a list of thanks and requests to God.

Her notebook for prayer requests is simple: a plain, college-ruled notepad. It holds lists of names, circumstances and dates beside each.

To say my mother is a prayer warrior is an understatement. And she doesn't just live it out at our dining room table. She exemplifies it in life.

Every once in a while as I was growing up, I'd catch a glimpse of my name near the top of her list along with my father's and sister's names.

And beside my name was usually a need, depending on what I was dealing with at the time. Today, her list also includes my fiancé's name as she prays for our upcoming wedding and marriage.

But what if we took the time to learn the needs of our friends and neighbors so we could pray for them like we do our family members? And what if we expanded those prayers to include our town or city?

Or imagine being bold enough to take on praying for the entire world. You'd need a pretty big notebook to write down all those prayer requests!

But despite how impossible praying for the world might seem, I believe we can all “up” our prayer game and ask God for some genuine miracles.

Friday, March 6, is World Day of Prayer, initiated by women in the 1890s who believed prayer is vital for both home and foreign missions. It’s also a day when they specifically pray for and look for ways to support women and children in need.

But it all begins with knowing what’s happening to people around the world living in poverty.

Of all the stories I’ve written for World Help, the Christian humanitarian organization where I work, the one that is etched in my memory is the story of Laura Grace. If her name were to take up residence on my mother’s prayer list, it might look something like this:

Laura Grace can’t feed her children. Depression. Anxiety. Suicidal thoughts.

This woman’s story would break anyone’s heart. She’s a South Sudanese refugee living in Uganda. Her monthly food rations are limited to a little oil and grain, barely enough to last her family for two weeks. Because her children are starving, Laura Grace feels like a failure.

“I feel like committing suicide because I’m worthless,” she said.

I remember watching her interview and thinking, “How can I help her?” I felt a connection, and I wanted to do something. Although I couldn’t give much financially, I was rich in my ability to pour out my prayers for Laura Grace.

And that’s what World Day of Prayer is all about.

Prayer is bearing one another’s burdens before the Lord. And bearing someone else’s problems is the greatest act of love we can offer. My mother taught me that.

Laura Grace and her children still need food. They still need prayers, too. But first we have to know their story. Just like my mother knows how to pray for me, we need to actively search for how to pray for our world.

It won't change otherwise.

We can't ignore the plight of refugees. We can't forget about Hurricane Dorian victims who are still struggling to rebuild. We should continuously lift up persecuted believers in prayer, even though we may never know their names.

We need to dedicate our time, energy and finances to helping these people. And it begins by exploring the needs of others—just like anyone on the mission field would do.

Whether your mission field means traveling to the rural mountains of Guatemala to rescue starving families or sitting at your dining room table with a small notebook of names and requests, you can make a difference.

Global change can begin with you. Right now. And it starts with prayer. {eo}

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