

3 Ways to Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem

With Passover and Easter quickly approaching and Israel's airports still officially closed, residents here in Jerusalem are doubtful that we will welcome any tourists to the city's alleys or once-bustling markets for these sacred holidays.

As that reality sets in, small business owners, shopkeepers and their families will get ready to endure another month without visitors, whose support is essential to keeping them afloat.

But just because one cannot physically visit Jerusalem doesn't mean there isn't anything that can be done to help.

Jerusalem is a unique city with a special place in history. Many of God's promises unfold in Jerusalem and will one day be fulfilled in Jerusalem. In fact, this City of David is mentioned almost 900 times in the Bible. And it's such a significant place that David singles it out in his instruction to us in Psalm 122:6: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem."

As we fulfill our responsibility to pray for the City of Jerusalem, here are a few of the ways you can focus those prayers at this special time of the year with the Holy Land and this Holy City on our mind and close to our hearts:

1. Pray for healing from COVID and protection from future infection, particularly for the most vulnerable. As in every city around the world, we have been most concerned for the elderly who are seriously at risk if they are exposed to the virus. But what many folks may not realize is that there are still Holocaust survivors living in Jerusalem today, and many of them don't have the resources or the family network to help ease the burden the pandemic has placed on their shoulders.

They also deal with loneliness and isolation. This is a generation that has already suffered so much in their lifetime. It pains me to think of this pandemic becoming their final battle, so I hope that you will join me in praying for a miraculous recovery for those infected and a hedge of protection around those who are well.

The good news is that the daily case count is dropping, and many of those most vulnerable have been able to receive a vaccine. But the work is not yet finished. Please keep these resilient sons and daughters of Abraham in your prayers!

2. Pray for the business owners and shopkeepers struggling financially due to COVID-19 restrictions. Many small business owners and shopkeepers—particularly those serving customers who would normally make their way to Jerusalem for a pilgrimage or tourism—are struggling right now. They're having to find a way to adapt to restrictions on travel and face-to-face interaction or sadly close up shop and find other ways to financially support their families. I know many of those personally who are dealing with this daily reality.

Those who manage these storefronts are eager to share the treasures of Jerusalem with the world, and their trade is their livelihood. Fortunately, there are ways for these families to overcome such obstacles—like travelers booking future trips in anticipation of a return to normalcy, vendors selling their gifts and artisanal goods online, or even in monthly subscription boxes that are shipped right to your front door in the U.S. This is actually one of the ways that we at Artza have found to help these shopkeepers get creative in unforeseen circumstances.

Pray that more business owners will be able to tap into new opportunities like these and find ways to get over their present hurdles.

3. Pray for life to return to normal—but pray that daily

violence does not. Protection for God's people from violence and war is what we often think of when we recall the reminder to pray for peace in Jerusalem, and this is not to be overlooked today.

Rockets still fly overhead, and families still have to run for cover in bomb shelters. As we all long for life to return to normal, pray that Jerusalem can leave violence and unrest behind. Pray that those seeking to undermine Israel's security would be thwarted. Pray that terrorism and those who fund it will be foiled. And pray that peace agreements will replace anti-Semitism and animosity around the world.

I take comfort in the fact that we have many friends in every corner of the globe who keep this sacred city in their prayers. I know your prayers have been answered before, so I am confident that God hears us and will keep His promises.
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