

Worldwide Prodigal Prayer Day: We Will Pray for Your Prodigal

The gang our son had joined had a confrontation with another gang. It didn't lead to violence, but for some reason the other gang thought Josh was the instigator. He came home terrified, saying he needed to get out of town.

Our ministry had a summer conference beginning in Colorado and needed some teenagers to serve in various needs. Josh had not been willing to do that, but within a few days he was on his way to Colorado, to work and to be with strong believers for a month.

That was one of many answers to prayers prayed on a June 2 Worldwide Prodigal Prayer Day. For 21 years, every June 2, hundreds and now thousands of people from around the world have joined together in a day of prayer for those who are walking away from God, their families—and often making destructive choices.

On June 2, 25 years ago, our prodigal, Josh, met Jesus. He was living at House of Hope, a nearby residential home for troubled teens. His house dad, Mike, loved him, prayed for him, sought to guide him into better life choices, and on June 2, 1997, he introduced our son to Jesus. That night, Mike baptized him in the nearby lake.

Josh's life changed then, and when he came home—for a while. But wrong friends and the trauma of his early life put him on a roller coaster. He would do well and make good choices for days, weeks, even months. Then down he would go for many months. The unpredictable cycle went on for 15 years.

At the beginning we invited friends to pray for our son—on

June 2, Josh's spiritual birthday. We called it a worldwide day of prayer for Josh. Then God encouraged us to expand it to others needing prayer, and the Worldwide Prodigal Prayer Day was born.

The objective of this day is to come together before God to petition Him for the redemption, restoration and deliverance of those we love. Most often these prodigals are our children, but they might also be grandchildren, a spouse, parents, relatives, friends, co-workers or anyone we care about.

We started putting first names on a list to share with others to join us in praying. Every year, we add to the list of first names for whom prayer has been requested, which is posted on our Prayer for Prodigals site.

Anyone can submit as many names for prayer as they desire. Feel free to tell many others about this special day. It has grown to include thousands of prayer warriors lifting up more than 7,000 names around the world.

So if you love a prodigal, we would love to pray for your loved one. And we invite you to join us in praying.

Does this make a difference—a lot of people naming names of people they don't know? Oh yes. Usually it takes a while, maybe a long time.

But sometimes it happens quickly. As in the story of Josh's need to "get out of town." In another incident, shortly after June 2, our son was put on probation for two years for a minor incident. The consequences were much greater than the offense.

But it was an answer to prayer that we could never have anticipated. We had prayed he would receive some real-life accountability for some of his poor choices in his late teens.

Two years of probation put the fear of jail in him. Every time he was tempted to make another bad choice, he stopped to think

about the possibility of getting caught—sometimes he still did it, but often he didn't.

Another teen we had prayed for asked to come home and finally accepted help for his substance use disorder. He had been homeless with no contact for a long time.

A daughter who turned into an angry atheist in her first year of college, not wanting anything to do with her parents, experienced a radical change of heart through the influence of a few Christian friends. She is now on fire for the Lord.

Another son finally agreed to go to rehab.

A daughter reunited with her parents after years of being estranged due to an abusive relationship with a man who kept her from her family.

God hears and God answers—in His time.

But a word of caution: The evil one, the enemy of our souls, loves to lead our rebellious ones astray. When we interfere, especially through prayer, he tightens his hold on them. But we have the power of prayer to El Shaddai, the almighty God.

I have found it is good to prepare my heart and mind to enter this battle. And one of the most effective ways I have found to confront Satan is to “give thanks in everything,” as Paul urges us in 1 Thessalonians 5:18. If we resist the enemy, he flees. And giving thanks to our God sends him running.

So our theme for the 2022 Worldwide Prodigal Prayer Day is “Give Thanks.” I have been posting a weekly devotional to encourage you in giving thanks. I hope you will read it, ask God to make it real to you, and begin to practice it as a way of life. Find it at this link:

If you are new to the Prodigal Prayer Day, we invite you to send us the first names of anyone you would like us to pray for.

You are also invited to join the Prayer for Prodigals virtual prayer community. This is a safe and encouraging place to post specific requests for others to pray for, and you can pray for the posted community requests.{eoa}

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