

GOD'S WELFARE PROGRAM

Seeking the Peace and Prosperity of the City

THE POWER OF PRAYING TOGETHER

- Something happens when we pray together that does not happen when we pray alone
- When a church in a city comes together to pray, things can really break out
- “We don’t know the power of calling out to God. We don’t know what can happen, what God wants to happen when we call out to Him.” [Cheryl Sacks, August 18, 2019 at Wonderful Mercy Church]

PRAY FOR THE CITY

- **Jeremiah 29:7** NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

“Work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare.”

- “If we were to analyze the prayer life of most local churches today, we would find little overt, explicit prayer for the community. Most churches pray for the unsaved of the community but *they do not pray for the community as a whole*. This is partly because the needs of the congregation are so great they themselves require much prayer time.”

[C. Peter Wagner, *Churches That Pray* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, ©1993), p. 135.]

PRAY FOR THE CITY

- Praying for our town is connected to our core value, SERVING THE WORLD: “What goes on beyond our church walls is as important as what goes on within. God calls us to love the world and we do! We have a local and global missional mindset that includes evangelism and generous love for the forgotten ones.”

IT STARTS WITH THE FATHER'S HEART

- **John 5:19-20** THE MESSAGE

“I’m telling you this straight. The Son can’t independently do a thing, only what he sees the Father doing. What the Father does, the Son does. ²⁰ The Father loves the Son and includes him in everything he is doing.”

IT STARTS WITH THE FATHER'S HEART

- Will prayer for the city make a difference? It will if we're working where God's working
- “Discerning and agreeing with God's will in prayer releases power to change people and places.” [Tom White, “Prayer Components for City-Wide Movements,” in *Giving Ourselves to Prayer*, edited by Dan R. Crawford (Terre Haute: PrayerShop Publishing), ©2008, p. 367]

WHY IT'S HARD: BECAUSE IT'S WARFARE

- **Ephesians 6:12,18a** NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION
“For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹⁸ Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication.”
- “Without a weapon as powerful as prayer we could not hope to take people out from under the power of Satan, whom Paul describes as ‘the god of this age who has blinded the minds of unbelievers’ (2 Corinthians 4:4).” [C. Peter Wagner, *Churches That Pray* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, ©1993), p. 135.]

WHY IT'S HARD: BECAUSE IT'S COUNTER-INTUITIVE

- How hard it must have been for Israel to obey the command to pray peace and prosperity for Babylon!
- In 597 B.C. King Nebuchadnezzar defeated Judah and the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem, ransacked the Temple, ruined the economy, removed its leaders, and enslaved the people
- Satan's goal: turn Gilbert into a suburb of Hell. All that stands between him and that goal is the cross of Christ and his praying church

PRAYER PRINCIPLES FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT

- Principle #1: Don't regard your city as though it's temporary; be fully present—*live* there! (Jeremiah 29:4-6)
- Principle #2: We're to ask for the full measure of God's divine favor for Gilbert

GOD'S WELFARE PROGRAM IS JEREMIAH 29:7

- “Pray to the Lord for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare.” NEW LIVING TRANSLATION
- “Pray for Babylon’s well-being. If things go well for Babylon, things will go well for you.” THE MESSAGE
- “Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.” NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION
- This is God’s welfare program for us!

SHALOM

- **Jeremiah 29:7** NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION
“Also, seek the **peace and prosperity** of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it **prosper**s, you too will **prosper**.”
- **Shalom**: “Completeness, wholeness, harmony, fulfillment. Implicit in *shalom* is the idea of unimpaired relationships with others and fulfillment in one's undertakings.”

[Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament]

PRAYER PRINCIPLES FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT

- Principle #1: Don't regard your city as though it's temporary; be fully present—*live* there! (Jeremiah 29:4-6)
- Principle #2: We're to ask for the full measure of God's divine favor for Gilbert
- Principle #3: While it is warfare, the focus of our praying is Jesus, not his enemy
- Principle #4: The command to pray is a command to corporate praying



PRAY FOR OUR TOWN

“I am a friend of God. His heart is for my city. Therefore my heart is for this city. I love to pray for my city.”

Pray for Gilbert's peace and prosperity

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