

When we go before God with our needs and requests, it often helps to have a prayer list. At times, people can be hesitant to write down their prayer needs and the needs of others because some believe that prayer should be approached in a completely spontaneous manner (i.e. no specific times for prayer, no prayer list, etc.). But we find that Jesus often withdrew in the morning and evening for prayer, the disciples in the early church gathering for scheduled prayer times, and Paul, in his letters, lists concerns for the churches to lift up in prayer. It is true that, when we begin with a list of requests, the Holy Spirit might direct, add or intensify concerns as we seek God, so we must understand that a targeted prayer list does not mean we are “locked in” to only praying for the things written or praying at a specific time alone. There is always a temptation to turn prayer into a legalistic practice no matter the approach, but a list of concerns helps focus our thoughts and hearts.

Secondly, when we write down prayer concerns, it can be encouraging to see God’s answers to those specific prayers. I have a few prayer lists with numerous dates written next to the requests prayed. Those dates correspond to God answering those particular prayers.

If you are not in the habit of praying with the focus of targeted prayer, allow me to share the approach I take. This is one of many ways to think through concerns as we pray, but this approach has helped me the most. What follows is a blending of suggestions from the books The Battle Plan for Prayer and Growing Disciples: Pray in Faith...

Prayer prompt: As you read through these questions and suggestions, think about each area and voice those concerns to God in prayer...

- **What are my top three biggest needs right now?**
- **What are the top three things I am most stressed about?**
- **What are three issues in my life that would take a miracle of God to resolve?**
- **What are the virtues or attitudes God wants to develop in me?**
- **What spiritual needs must be restored for me to enjoy a closer fellowship with my Heavenly Father?**
- **What spiritual needs must be met in order to be reconciled with fellow Christians?**
- **What is something good and honorable, that, if God provided it, would greatly benefit me, my family and others?**
- **What is something I believe God may be leading you to do, but I need his clarity and direction on it?**
- **What is a need from someone I love that I would like to start praying about?**

What are my needs? (Complete the thought with your own prayer.)

- **Spiritual growth and maturity through...**
- **Being a godly family member by...**
- **Guidance for family, work, church and ministry in the areas of...**
- **Strength to overcome the temptation of...**
- **Deliverance or protection from...**
- **Enabling for ministry and serving others by...**
- **Power and boldness to witness to...**
- **Emotional needs or concerns for...**
- **Material or financial needs concerning...**
- **My health and fitness needs are...**
- **The work concerns of...**

And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him. - 1 John 5:15

It is possible to move men, through God, by prayer alone. - Hudson Taylor