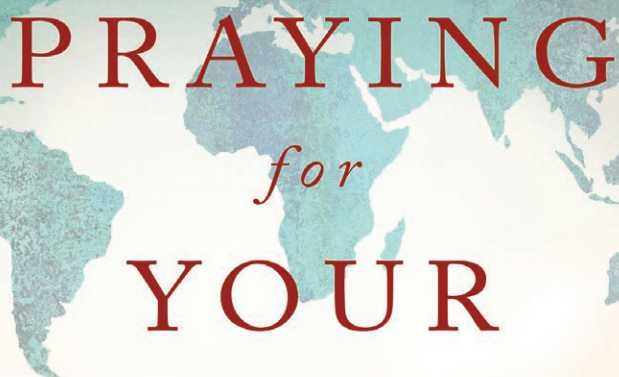


EDDIE BYUN



PRAYING
for
YOUR
Missionary

HOW PRAYERS FROM HOME
CAN REACH THE NATIONS



simply picked the least reached group on the list. From that point on, he dedicated his life to being a witness to the least reached parts of the world. I was so blessed and challenged by that devotion. Let us pray that God will raise up more people with a passion for his kingdom and compassion for the lost.

Those who love Jesus will do all they can to prepare for his second coming. This means lovers of Jesus need to strategize well to reach this goal. Missions must be put intentionally into his disciples' plans if it's going to be a priority in their lives. Plan to partner in missions through your giving, praying, going, and sending. Plan your vacations around going on mission trips, visiting missionaries, and blessing them. It could be something as simple as babysitting for them so they can have a long-overdue date, or it might be cooking meals for them. Ask how you can help serve them, and commit to being their friend, supporter, and servant for the days that you are there.

A family in our church used their vacation time to visit missionaries our church supported. Though they could have gone to Disneyland or some other vacation destination, they wanted to teach their two young children about the importance of the kingdom of God by serving our missionaries in Thailand. The experience was such a blessing for them that the next year they organized another trip with five other families, and all of them went to serve these missionaries. They were happy to serve, but an added benefit was how the parents and children bonded as they served together for the first time in their lives.

It's also important to plan your giving around missions. Tithe to your local church, but also get in the habit of giving a portion of your income to missions on a regular basis. Some of you might be thinking, *I can't give to missions! I don't have that much money.*

But did you know

- If you make \$1,500 in a year, you are part of the richest 20 percent in the world?
- If you make \$25,000 a year, you are the richest 10 percent of the world?
- If you make \$50,000 a year, you are the richest 1 percent in the world?⁵

We are a wealthy generation. But instead of planning for our giving, we more often dig through our cars and pockets and sofas for loose change and then say, "Here, God! All for you! Use it to save the world!" But those transformed by grace understand that *all* we have is from God and belongs to God. And all of it is to be used for the glory of God.

We must also learn to plan our future around missions: our next contract, our career, and even our sabbatical. It has been said that missionaries are simply doing what God has called them to do, with the gifts he gave them to use, in a place where there are no Christians. I've been pastoring an expat congregation in South Korea for the past eight years, and I repeatedly give this challenge to our congregation. I tell them, "When your work contracts expire, don't assume that your home country is

your default destination. Instead, pray about doing the same job you did before but in a country that needs a Christian witness.” I was thrilled to see many people taking this challenge. We had one couple who were English teachers in South Korea. As their two-year contract to teach was coming to an end, they looked for teaching opportunities in other parts of the 10/40 Window and ended up moving to a country in the Middle East to teach *and* to be witnesses. Others responded as well, with several moving to Thailand and Cambodia, and others going to different parts of the Middle East. It was exciting to see them living for the mission of God.

Another thing to consider is tithing not just your money but also your life to the Lord. I’ve heard many people say, “I’ll wait until I retire and then I’ll give those years to the Lord.” We don’t know when God will take us home, so why not prayerfully see how God wants to use your life *now*? How about tithing six, seven, or eight years of your life to God—living, working, and serving in nations where few know Jesus? Several years in Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, or Iran. That’s not a waste of life; that’s an investment of life that honors Jesus as worthy of it all. That may not be a viable option for many, but I know God is calling some to make that kind of sacrifice for Christ and his kingdom.

Just as the breaking of the alabaster jar was wasteful to the world but sweet worship to Jesus (Mark 14:3), so is a life that gladly gives it all for him. Give your life, your degrees, your careers completely as an offering to Jesus. Declare to him, “Here, God, this is yours! Use it all for your glory. It’s all for you.” Pray

for this kind of heart and these kinds of workers to be released into the nations.

Having grown up a lifelong Chicago Cubs fan, the 2016 baseball season was an incredible journey. When it looked like the Cubs were going to make the postseason and possibly win their first World Series championship since 1908, a number of my friends asked me if I would be okay if Jesus came back right before the Cubs won it all. Some friends replied, “Hmm, that’s a tough one.” Now, I know the question and even the response were just a joke, but sadly for a lot of Christians today, that *would* be a tough decision. It’s a difficult decision because our love for sports, games, and personal pursuits are in competition with our love for Jesus.

We need to pray for a people whose love for Jesus and for the lost burns brighter than their love for anything in this world, because those who love Jesus long for his return. And if reaching the nations with the gospel will signal the return of Jesus, then our priority must be to reach the nations with the gospel. Pray that this generation will be the one that completes the Great Commission.

WORKERS WITH INTERCESSION AS A PRIORITY

One more thing to pray for concerning the kind of workers to be sent out is that they would be people who put prayer as a priority in their lives. Matthew 9:37-38 says, “Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to

send out laborers into his harvest.” Jesus declares the great need for people to get on mission with God, therefore pray! He doesn’t say, the need is huge, so hurry up and get out there! He says pray. Pray and ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest fields. So before we go to the nations, we are to go before the throne of God and intercede for the nations.

We must pray for missionaries who prioritize prayer in their lives. Why? *Because prayer and missions go hand in hand.* I don’t think it’s a coincidence that at the peak of the Korean church’s influence around the world it was known for its prayer and missions. In a place of prayer and worship Isaiah saw a vision in Isaiah 6, and from that place before God he received his call to go and be the Lord’s messenger.

And later on in Isaiah 56:7 the Lord says,

These I will bring to my holy mountain,
and make them joyful in my house of prayer;
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar;
for my house shall be called a house of prayer
for all peoples.

God’s house will be called a house of prayer for all nations. Prayer and mission are connected in the kingdom of God because those who dwell in his presence gain his heart and receive his assignments. His heart cries out for the lost to know saving grace. So pray for people to pray for the nations.

PRAYER IS THE COMMUNICATION
LINE IN THIS BATTLE FOR SOULS

In his book *Desiring God*, John Piper refers to prayer as a wartime walkie-talkie calling in troops and asking for protection. But we don't seem to use it that way anymore.

Could it be that many of our problems with prayer and much of our weakness in prayer come from the fact that we are not all on active duty, and yet we try and use the transmitter? We have taken a wartime walkie-talkie and tried to turn it into a civilian intercom to call the servants for another cushion in the den.⁶

That is why we must pray for workers who understand that we are not yet home. Instead, may they live in such a way that prayer becomes their home.

The following are a couple of excellent tools that can help increase your prayers for missions:

*Operation World.*⁷ This is a prayer book published by InterVarsity Press that guides us through praying for every country in the world. I have used this for many years for my personal prayer times. We have used it in our church too. I make this a required resource to pray through for everyone going on short-term and long-term mission trips for our church. A version is also available online (operationworld.org).

Global Prayer Digest. This daily prayer guide highlights unreached people group to pray for each day. You can order a physical copy or view it online (globalprayerdigest.org). I learned

about this resource through a John Piper sermon. He encouraged families to use this during family devotions. Read through the story of an unreached people group and have your children become involved in interceding for them. It will help them grow in prayer and also grow a heart for missions.

I encourage you to use both of these resources. Your prayers will impact lives for eternity.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Do you agree with the author's statement that "sometimes the American dream is heaven's nightmare"? What do you think he means by this statement?
- Does sending more workers into the mission field mean simply sending more traditional missionaries? Who else would be considered workers?
- Why are the 10/40 and 4/14 Windows so important for missions work?

PRAYER POINTS

- Ask God to give your missionaries increased passion for the kingdom and the lost.
- Pray that God would send out more workers specifically to the unreached and unengaged parts of the world. Pray for God to send many to the 10/40 and 4/14 Windows of the world.
- Ask God to increase your and your church's financial giving for missions.

ACTION PLAN

- Print a map of the 10/40 Window (or visit eddiebyun.com to download a graphic), put it in your Bible, and begin praying for the nations located on the map.

- If you're not serving in a ministry at church, prayerfully consider serving with children age four to fourteen in order to minister to this important age group.
- Buy a copy of *Operation World* or *Global Prayer Digest* and begin praying through those important resources. Also consider buying a copy for your church library if it doesn't have one.

BUY THE BOOK!

ivpress.com/praying-for-your-missionary