



EXCERPT

IVP Books

Praying for Your Missionary *How Prayers from Home Can Reach the Nations*

December 4, 2018 | \$16, 192 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-4556-9

Missionaries need the support of the church and a faithful covering of prayer. But for many Christians, they are out of sight, out of mind. How can we effectively intercede for the missionaries in our lives? Eddie Byun shows the vital connection between prayer and missions, providing a handy guide to praying for missionaries' needs, as well as for protection from burnout and harm.

Why a Book on Praying for Missionaries?

I've been in pastoral ministry for over twenty-three years now, spanning four countries—America, Canada, Australia, and South Korea. So I know how hard, lonely, and challenging being a pastor can be. I grew up thinking pastors didn't have the same kind of struggles that "regular" people had, but I know now that they bleed, bend, and break just like everyone else. In the early years of my ministry, I never shared the struggles I had with anyone, especially my congregation, because I didn't want them to think I was a weak leader or a spiritually immature pastor. But after I finally got over my ego and reputation, I knew I had to let people in to see the real me—struggles, shortcomings, and all. One way to increase my vulnerability in front of my congregation was to preach a sermon series on the many challenges that pastors face. The angle I took was to teach our church how they could more effectively pray for their pastor.

When I first did that sermon series several years ago, a common response I received from people after the sermons was, "Eddie, you're making me feel so guilty!" (because they weren't praying for me). Far too many congregation members confided in me that they simply forget to pray for me. Some said they thought pastors didn't need prayers because they were so holy and already had a close walk with God. Others said they didn't feel their prayers would make a difference because they felt so spiritually weak. I realized the enemy had done far too good of a job in making the church believe their prayers weren't needed and were powerless. The church believed these lies. There is power in prayer because of the One who hears our prayers. He calls us to pray to him, commune with him, and partner with him in prayer so his kingdom purposes can be realized here on earth, as it is in heaven.

I also felt led to raise prayer support for missionaries. I discovered that we forget to pray for our pastors, who we see each week, how much more do we forget to pray for our missionaries, who we don't see often. In general, it's "out of sight, out of mind." A number of missionaries shared that when they came back to their sending churches they felt discouraged because no one had read their updates, and some congregation members didn't even know who they were. I want this book to be a means of getting our missionaries back on our radar on a daily basis. They need our prayers. They need our support. And this book is a small gift to our missionaries to help increase the prayer coverage from their family, friends, and supporting churches.

We all have a role to play in global missions. We may not all have the same role, but we do have a role. God calls many to go to the nations as they declare and demonstrate the gospel of Jesus Christ. God also calls others to support those who go by giving financially, praying faithfully, and supporting creatively. I discovered quite early on in my ministry that if I wasn't going to be sent overseas as a missionary, then my role would be to support missionaries and do my best to send out missionaries from the churches I would be pastoring. Through this book I want to raise up more prayer support for missionaries whose lives have been dedicated to bringing the gospel to the world's unreached places.



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Eddie Byun is the missions and teaching pastor of Venture Christian Church in Los Gatos, California. He has previously taught practical theology at Torch Trinity Graduate University and has been lead pastor for Crossway Mission Church and Onnuri English Ministry in Seoul, South Korea. He has also pastored in Sydney, Australia, and Vancouver, Canada. Eddie is the author of *Justice Awakening* and *Praying for Your Pastor*. He was also the executive producer of *Save My Seoul*, an award-winning documentary on sex trafficking in South Korea. He resides in San Jose, California, with his wife, Hyun, and their son.

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Another reason for this book is that I want to go home—to heaven. Jesus tells us in Matthew 24:14, “This gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” The end of this world and the beginning of our glory with Jesus is connected to the completion of Jesus’ Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). For this to happen, we need more missionaries and more support for our missionaries so they will have the strength, resources, partnerships, and joy to last their whole lives. They will be more effective with more prayer. And I want to do my part in providing that help.

Discussion Questions

- Do you struggle with thoughts that your prayers are insignificant or powerless? Do you believe that this can be a form of spiritual warfare? How so?
- What ways can we keep our missionaries in our minds and prayers?
- What countries are being supported through the missions efforts in your church? Commit to praying for those nations as well.

Prayer Points

- First, let’s repent of any prayerlessness and ask God to increase prayers for your church’s missionaries.
- Pray that God would give you his heart for the lost, the nations, and his missionaries during this study.
- Pray for God to transform your church to be a greater praying church throughout these coming weeks as you pray through this book.

Action Plan

- Search for the names of all the missionaries your church supports and commit to praying for them and the nations they serve in.
- With approval from the church leadership, consider adopting a missionary family as a small group and commit to supporting them.
- Find the place in your church facilities where your missionaries are recognized. Go to that place and pray for them as you see their faces and photos.

—Adapted from the introduction



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