



**20-DAYS OF PRAYER
FOR
VULNERABLE CHILDREN**



20 DAYS OF PRAYER DEVOTIONAL

This is only a suggested guide. You can add, change, or take out parts to have it better meet the needs of our church and community as the Spirit leads you. Use the simple suggestion as it is or expand upon it as time permits or you feel led. The most important part is to commit to 20 days of praying! Some days you may only get five minutes and other you will enjoy lots of time praying.

If some faithful members can meet regularly in addition to your small group time, even better; but if not, do not let that discourage you. Pray alone when necessary and meet whenever possible to join together in agreement in prayer. Gather two or three (or more) people in a home or a church or anywhere, and the Lord will be with you and hear your prayers, as it says in Matthew 18:20, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them.”

In the pages that follow you will find daily prayer prompts with space in the margin to make notes. One of the coolest parts, is sharing among yourselves the notes you have to see where God is aligning your thoughts. We would love to partner with you in your group, and hear about your unique prayer walk. Our #ZEROby2020 ministers are available to come visit your group and offer guidance and support as God inspires your journey...

DAY ONE

The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.

Luke 10:2 NIV

Reflect: Harvest is a time that is hard to miss. After the hard work of sowing and tending, the crops are bursting with vibrant life, basket-fuls of colorful fruit. The landscape that Jesus paints in chapter 10 of Luke, suggests that the work of growing is already being done, but workers are needed. The first work God calls us to is the work of prayer. Jesus models prayer as an important part of His work on earth. In the same way, we begin with prayer knowing that God begins His sacred work here and now as He sets in motion the work that He calls us to, as he shapes our hearts to beat and break for the broken and hurting. We start with the work of prayer as we trust that God is growing the harvest and preparing the laborers. While we cannot cradle every vulnerable and hurting child in our hands, we turn to our God, who can.

As you begin this prayer journey, tie your heart to the bright balloon of hope, knowing that God will accomplish His work here on earth. We come to Him with joy-filled hearts knowing that as we begin our 20 days, that He is going before us, growing and preparing the harvest--that He will send out the workers, as we ask.

Pray: Today, pray that the Lord would give you a personal sense of responsibility for the next 20 days to pray for vulnerable children. Jesus commanded us to pray as a way to rally ministry leaders, churches, and your community to help the marginalized. Ask Him to break your heart for vulnerable children. Ask that He would help you to see vulnerable children with His eyes and His heart. Ask Him to use this 20 days of prayer to change you and your church.

DAY TWO

Pure and lasting religion in the sight of God our Father means that we must care for orphans and widows in their troubles, and refuse to let the world corrupt us. James 1:27

Reflect: As Jesus' brother, James, teaches, if you are merely listening to God's Word but not living it out, then it is like looking into a mirror only to walk away and forget what your face looks like. God's Word is as intimate and complex as your own face. When we are reading God's Word, we are seeking God's face. Time in God's Word, and prayer are like our two hands folded together. Apart, each hand has power and purpose, but as they link around each other they create even more strength and purpose. As we sink deeper into prayer and God's Word, the Holy Spirit weaves into our hearts and changes them, but more, God empowers us to change the face of our world. Even crazier, we can pray for other people's hearts too. As we live out Pure Religion as one united church, by caring for orphans and widows, God provides us with the tool of prayer and God's Word—our lasting provision in a world polluted by sin and brokenness.

Pray: Today, pray for Pastors and the staff of churches to have guidance and provision as they seek to follow the Lord's commands to mobilize all believers to care for vulnerable children. May all of the churches in the area function together as a unified Body of Christ to represent our faith.

DAY THREE

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2:10

Reflect: In Ephesians, Paul reminds Christians that we are God's "handiwork." There are so many other more generic terms he could have used there to describe Christ's followers. "We are God's creation," "We are God's people," "We are God's chosen," are all good options-- all of which are used in other parts of the Bible. But here, Paul calls us "God's handiwork." We are artisan, hand-made, one-of-a-kind treasures, woven and formed by God's careful hands. But there's more. As if being His handmade creations weren't enough, Paul explains that as God's handiwork, He purposes each of us with unique good works to accomplish. Looking closely throughout the Bible, we see that good works are accomplished in relationship with others. These works we accomplish in Christ's power, shape us, and shape the people we serve.

With the billions of Christians sprinkled in our world, God has planted a purpose within some of them to provide for and give hope to every single vulnerable child. Today, we fold our hands together and pray for that very thing. More, we open our eyes and see vulnerable children as God's gorgeous handiwork, made to be cherished and loved.

Pray: Today, ask God that of the over 2 billion Christians in the world, He would call a portion to give hope to every single vulnerable child, looking after the child in their distress. Ask the Lord to convict the church around the world that if we did this, there would effectively be no more vulnerable children. Ask the Lord to show each of His followers how we can be apart of this effort.

DAY FOUR

A Father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families . . . Psalm 68:5–6

Reflect: God is a Father to us. He is there for us in our loneliness, in our longing, and in our deepest needs. He loves us, before we have done anything worth claiming, and yet He claims us as His own, He invites us into His family, and builds His home in our hearts. And just as our hearts seem an impossible place for the divine to dwell, we doubt our own ability to serve the vulnerable children in our communities. But we look to the one who loved our own lost, and lonely hearts, trusting that His power lives in us. So we live out His great power, in the very small ways, as we make our hearts a home for God to dwell, and our homes a place for widows and orphans to find rest.

Pray: Today, ask the Lord to help His people, the Church, to feel His heart for the vulnerable children. God designed children to be in families not in institutions. Pray that more Christian families would open their homes for children who need a place to call home.

DAY FIVE

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Proverbs 31:8

Reflect: The Bible is clear about God’s heart for justice. His Word does not remain flat and unmoving on a page, but weaves into the fabric of our hearts and lives. Through faith in Jesus, we are changed so that we also can no longer remain unmoved, but God’s Spirit empowers us to live out our faith as salt that brings out flavor, as light that illuminates God’s color saturated world. As we engage with His Word and in prayer, God calls us back to Him more and more. As you crave time in relationship with your Father, think about the children in your communities that need Father figures to plant the seed of faith into their hearts and bring out the unique people that God has called each of them to be as His salt and light.. As you spend time with your Father, trust that He is spending this sacred time to do active work in your heart, life, in your community and church that creates actual movement and positive change in the lives of those that are vulnerable and in need. Know that the first step to “speaking up for those who cannot speak,” is praying on their behalf.

Pray: Today, pray for the fatherless in your community. Ask the Lord to protect them, to care for them, to defend them and keep them safe. Pray that our churches would provide male mentors for children with a man in their life to call dad. Today, ask the Lord to help your church family to live out Proverbs 31:8.

DAY SIX

...share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Isaiah 58:7

Reflect: Who is man that you are mindful of him (Psalm 8:4)? Our God clothes us, feeds us, more, He turns His face to us. When we see our gentle and compassionate God that provides for our every need, we too respond with compassion. As we look to God who does not ignore the hungry and wandering, we are compelled to show God to those around us. This begins as we look at those around us that are stretched to provide for their families.

In prayer, God gives us His eyes to recognize the people among us that are in need of support, but more, he enables us to extend His love and provision to them as we rest in His power.

We take the first step in prayer, knowing that God will empower us to do something when we move with Him in obedience.

Pray: Today, pray for families who are taking care of their grandchildren or nieces or nephews in addition to their own children. Ask the Lord to bless them for their sacrifice and to provide enough food, clothes, education, and shelter for all the children in their home.

DAY SEVEN

Jesus replied, "What is impossible with man is possible with God."
Luke 18:27

Reflect: We live in a world of scarcity. We go to bed tired, we wake up tired, we fuel ourselves with coffee to tap into more energy, more motivation. Yes our energy is finite, our bank accounts limited, our time is always coming up short. We faint for God in a world that seems to come up short. Yet God talks about His kingdom that is also among us with untapped resources. His riches are not to gratify the cravings of our flesh, but to taste, and to share God's glory with a hungry and thirsty world.

So we pray to our God who rains down manna, who sends springs of water from a rock, who breathes flesh and life into dry bones. Yes we remember His great works, we cling to His promises, and in prayer we focus our eyes to see God's kingdom that is at work in this world, bringing forth His provisions for the vulnerable and weak. Not by might, nor by power, but by [His] Spirit (Zephaniah 4:7).

Pray: Today, thank the Lord in advance for all that He is going to do to bring glory to His name in your church and community. Thank Him for the care He is going to provide for vulnerable children through your church. If God can create the universe in six days he can restore communities and heal the hearts of vulnerable children too.

DAY EIGHT

Give up your wicked ways. Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the orphan. Fight for the rights of widows
Isaiah 1:16-17

Reflect: The Greek word for “repent” that is used in the New Testament is “metanoia,” meaning to “change one’s mind.” If you’ve ever pulled out weeds from a plot of land without filling it with something else, then you know what happens. When we don’t fill the empty soil with something else, the weeds pop right back up. God knows that the same is true of our human minds. We can cease doing one bad thing, only to quickly replace it with another. John Calvin has been credited with saying that, “But instead of just giving up our sin, God changes our hearts and minds with the desire to do good. With each good thing we are spurred on to do more good, as the Holy Spirit continues to form us to be more like Jesus. As we resurrect and reclaim the dying and hurting things in this world, God’s power is at work in us. He fills us with His deep abiding joy. He gives us eyes to see His kingdom being built here on earth. We pray today for repentance, and for acts of goodness, justice, and deliverance for the glory of God by the work of His Spirit.

Pray: Today, pray for the Lord to raise up workers for the harvest from your church and community. Ask Him to call Christians to go to the “fields of the fatherless” to experience the joy of caring for vulnerable children as we are commanded in Isaiah 1:16–17:

DAY NINE

God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure Ephesians 1:5

Reflect: Our world would have us find our identity in our own accomplishments and significance. But in God's upside down kingdom, we find our identity as we acknowledge our sin and shortcomings. When we see that we are orphans, fatherless, lost sheep, it is then in this humility that we discover sonship. As we recognize the ways that our Father has adopted and cared for us, we are able to recognize how we ourselves were once spiritual orphans. As we encounter His G.R.A.C.E. (God's Riches At Christ's Expense), we pray that God would awaken a desire to show His GRACE to the vulnerable children and orphans in need of love, provision, and adoption.

Pray: Today, pray that every member of your church would remember and acknowledge that they were once spiritual orphans and adopted by a Heavenly Father. Praise the Lord that before the world was made He choose us to become sons and daughters.

DAY TEN

But you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted; you consider their grief and take it in hand. The victims commit themselves to you; you are the helper of the fatherless Psalm 10:14

Reflect: Nothing is unknown to our God. It can make us wonder why God does not intervene on behalf of every vulnerable child Himself. But our ways are not His ways. God calls us to be His hands and feet and heart in a world of broken and hurting people. He does not abandon us in this task but dwells in us through His Spirit. He listens, answers and provides for us through the power of prayer. He works in our hearts and minds as we turn to Him in His Word. We trust that God is at work in every difficult situation, as he sings over those that are poor in spirit, those that mourn, that thirst, and hunger for Him, “Blessed are you...blessed are you...for yours is the kingdom of heaven.”

We train our eyes to see the people who are going about the work of God’s kingdom, as they take every opportunity they can to heal, provide, restore, and love the fatherless in their midst. We entrust the unknowns and the known injustices to God, and we seek His face.

Pray: Today, pray for any church ministry leaders working with and for vulnerable children. Ask for the Lord’s hand of blessing on their lives. Lift up the health and safety of them and their families. Ask also that the Lord would secure their hearts for the vulnerable children in your community find real holistic solutions.

DAY ELEVEN

...I rescued the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to assist them Job 29:12

Reflect: We pray, and things happen. Do you believe that? In the book of Job we get a tiny glimpse of things happening behind the scenes that we cannot begin to fully comprehend. We see Satan challenging God on whether or not Job would continue to be faithful if he were to experience affliction. And we see that in the very worst circumstances, Job still will not curse the Lord. Job holds fast to God who does not change in changing circumstances. In the same way we know specific children, specific situations that burden our hearts, but like Job we hold fast to faith and hope in an unchanging God that stoops down to help His creation. Every name and circumstance we whisper in prayer matters to God. So we pray and we believe that in the name of Jesus, things happen. We rest in the power of prayer, as we are empowered to be a part of His solution.

Pray: Today, pray specifically for any vulnerable children you may know by name. Pray for their safety and that they would experience healthy family relationships. Pray that they will be brought into loving families who will provide for their needs, education, and emotional support.

DAY TWELVE

One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts Psalm 145:4

Reflect: God prepares a way for us. But often we overlook that God uses people to accomplish His purposes. In prayer, God gives us spiritual eyes to see the bigger picture. As we pray for individual children and circumstances, we also think about the means He uses to accomplish His purposes for their lives. We give thanks for the individuals who are called to serve children in education and ask that God would use them to accomplish miraculous things in the lives of vulnerable children. We say, “it takes a village to raise a child,” and we recognize that God empowers one generation to shape the next. We pray that God would use one generation to prepare a way for the next generation to arise and shine with the light of Christ, as all generations recognize God as the source of all good things.

Pray: Today, pray that God, the Defender of vulnerable children, will rise up and secure justice for the oppressed. Pray especially for those struggling in the classroom with learning disabilities. May God bring each child an education advocate. May the Lord rise up tutors who can help with homework and pass wisdom down to the next generation.

DAY THIRTEEN

In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).

Reflect: There is no limit to God's wisdom. As we seek Him in His word and through prayer, He continually offers us greater depth of understanding. But, even in the absence of clear answers, He calls us to act. How? He calls us to serve, to love, to help, to forgive, and more. In living a life like Jesus lived, the Spirit uses our obedience to also shape our heart and mind. As we keep walking through life's questions, and yet keep loving as Jesus calls us to love, we experience the peace of knowing our work is never without purpose.

We pray for the people who continue to give their lives and service to God, even in uncertain political climates, changing economies, lack of clarity, and under the strain of criticism. In everything, we trust that our hard work is enough, and more, that God is enough, despite our failed attempts. Today we trust that relationships are more important than garnering popularity or wealth, and we look for the brave among us who are courageously choosing to serve the least of these over building their own greatness on earth.

Pray: Today, ask the Lord to strengthen the ministry workers who come alongside adoptive, foster, kinship, and safe families who coordinate care for those families. May God provide wisdom and discernment to these precious ministers who help vulnerable children thrive in new families.

DAY FOURTEEN

A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor (Proverbs 22:9).

Reflect: We love because He first loved us (1John 4:19). God does not ask us to give anything that He has not already given us. But our own wealth easily blinds us to God. As we try to meet our own needs with our own bank accounts we can become lulled to a dull contentment that quiets the hunger pangs for God. But even in our stupor God gently pursues us and nudges us back toward Him, toward living lives of self sacrifice and reckless generosity. Many of us stand at the edges feeling the lap of God's love wash over our feet but afraid to dive into it fully-- we're tugged toward the comfort and safety of the sand. But hear the good news. Even though we are hesitant to obey, Jesus obeyed to the full, holding nothing back, not even His life. We rest in His generosity that washes us clean, and in His power of sacrifice we are moved deeper and deeper into a life of sacrifice. Today it begins with the sacrifice of our time as we pray that God's kingdom would come through the generous hearts of believers.

Pray: Today, pray that all Church congregations will believe and be convicted by Proverbs 22:9. Ask for the Lord's blessings on those who share their food with vulnerable children and their families. May the church help prevent orphans by alleviating poverty and providing relief, hope and love to moms trying to make ends meet.

DAY FIFTEEN

He has shown you O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God Micah 6:8

Reflect: Prayer is often our first step of obedience toward God. As we cease working and planning and turn to God, He meets us. He gives us courage and encouragement in the moment; He shows us the next places to put our feet; He goes before us in ways we cannot know or understand, to carve the paths in front of us. It's easy to want to entertain hustle and hurry, to invite worry and his sidekick fear into our hearts, as we stare into a future that looks like a confusing maze rather than a clear path. In the noise of our disquiet we have trouble discerning God's voice saying, this is the way walk in it (Isaiah 20:21). But even in the noise of right now, as we stare at a fogged over future, we look to Jesus and remember the way. Jesus doesn't promise clarity or contentment, but right in this moment, in prayer and His word, He offers Himself. As we take the next steps forward we pray that God would give us the boldness to offer ourselves as a gift and a way forward for others.

Pray: Today, pray for yourself as a church member. Ask the Lord to lead you on, that you might walk in obedience. Ask God to show you how to encourage your church family or youth to care for the needs of vulnerable children.

DAY SIXTEEN

“Give justice to the poor and the orphan; uphold the rights of the oppressed and the destitute. Rescue the poor and helpless; deliver them from the grasp of evil people.” Psalm 82:3-4

Reflect: Our God heals our wounds, He repairs our bodies, He makes dry bones live. But there’s more. God is the creator and healer of hearts. It is through the supernatural act of prayer and by the power of the Holy Spirit that He can bring about heart healing, forgiveness, and reconciliation. He also provides people to bring about hope and healing through the power of relationship as He provides their hearts to serve. Today we start continue this journey in prayer, knowing that God is at work even now.

Pray: Today, pray that because of God’s mercy, He will provide caregivers and counselors for children who have been abused. Injuries that happen in relationships only get healed in relationship. May God surround traumatized children with healthy adults to heal them.

DAY SEVENTEEN

“If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?” 1 John 3:17

Reflect: We began our prayer journey thinking about God’s harvest and praying for workers. As we near the end of our 20 days we again ask God to raise up workers. We also know that God provides workers as he gives His people eyes to see the needs of vulnerable children, their families, foster care workers and volunteers in their sphere of influence. We remember that God has storehouses to provide for the needs of His people. As we pray, we look for God to “open the windows of heaven,” as He “pours out blessings until it overflows.” As we pray, we learn more about God’s generous character, His heart for those in need, and are moved to become the blessing for others (Malachai 3:10 NIV).

Pray: Today, ask that Christians around the world, and in your community, not be apathetic toward vulnerable children. Pray they would see opportunities to invest time and resources serving the needs of families that are struggling. May the love in their hearts grow for those who are in need.

DAY EIGHTEEN

“Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Nehemiah 8:10

Reflect: There is a difference between the “joy” talked about in the Bible, versus the world’s version of happiness. Joy is deep and abiding: it lines the soul with peace even in the midst of uncertainty. God is an ever-present help and provider for the downcast, as He meets us in the God-shaped hole in our heart. We trust that God answers our prayers as we pray for the spiritual and emotional wellbeing of vulnerable children and families. We also trust that through prayer, God would move the hearts of His people to be encouragers and ambassadors of the Gospel.

Pray: Today, ask the Lord to raise up respite care providers to support and give relief to the caregivers caring for vulnerable children. Pray God will fill the emotional, mental, and spiritual tanks of foster, adoptive, kinship and Safe Family parents with His provision.

DAY NINETEEN

“He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.” Proverbs 14:31

Reflect: God calls us to pray for our leaders. We trust that He can use government leaders to make powerful changes to support our cause. Today we acknowledge God’s perfect timing, and circumstances, knowing that He has put legislators, and other leaders in place according to his good will, to bring about changes that seem beyond our understanding and personal limitations. We find rest in the knowledge that His ways are higher than ours, and yet, we are empowered to take part in His plans through prayer.

Pray: Today, pray that the Christians of authority in your city, county and country would believe and live out the truth of Proverbs 14:31. May the legislators in our governments be advocates for the rights of children, so they can have a permanent safe and loving family as soon as possible!

DAY TWENTY

“... I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you,... strengthen your brothers.” Luke 22:32

Reflect: Jesus loves His children. We follow a God who is not far off, but enters our world, wrapped in flesh, to love, heal, serve, and redeem us. As we pray in far off places, God draws us close. He draws our hearts together, and He calls us to enter into His broken world. In Jesus’ name, to carry out the Father’s heart for justice, the Spirit moves in us and through us to love, to heal, to serve, and redeem. It’s the end of 20 days, but it’s just the beginning of the redemptive work that God is accomplishing through the ZEROby2020 initiative. Thank you for entering into the work God is calling us to, and we ask that you continue to find ways to be apart of God’s heart for vulnerable children.

Pray: Thank the Lord for the past 20 days of prayer for vulnerable children. Ask Him to bring more prayer warriors into the battle. Ask Him to help you to continue praying diligently. Ask Him to continue to give you His love for the vulnerable children. Ask Him to continue to challenge the hearts of your Christian brothers and sisters.

Nothing is impossible for God;
that's why we believe the ZEROby2020 vision
will happen:

**Find a family for every child in OC by 2020
and equip the church to support them!**

With the help of our local government, agencies, and a church-to-church strategy we can accomplish this God-size goal. As long as just one vulnerable child is waiting for a loving family to take them home, we should not rest!

“Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible.” Matthew 19:26



#ZEROby2020
VISION

To learn more please contact us at
949.609.8555 or info@zeroby2020vision.com
ZEROby2020vision.com