

“Pray for 5” is a concept that has been used around the world as a simple means for Christians to pray with purpose for their friends and family to become followers of Jesus.

In autumn 2023 the Halifax Elim Church family were invited to take a “Pray for 5” card, write down the names of five people they would like to come to know Jesus and then commit to praying for them regularly.

As we continue this adventure together, we can encourage one another by sharing stories and learning how to make our prayers more effective by praying in line with scripture.

These notes bring together some ideas on how we can lift our “Pray for 5” initiative to the next level. Perhaps you have others?



What to pray for yourself

We are learning as we go, so there are things we should pray for ourselves to help us grow in understanding and fruitfulness.

That we would be gripped by the same love that God has for the lost: 2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

For help knowing how to pray: John 14:26 “the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” And even if we struggle to find the words... Romans 8:26 “the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.”

For an ear to hear how you can help: Sometimes we just need to be listeners and allow the Holy Spirit to prompt us. There maybe words or actions that God can work through you that will move those you are praying for closer to following Jesus. Ask God to increase your sensitivity to these prompts and opportunities.

To be ready when the opportunity arises: Ephesians 6:19 “Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel”

To be able to pray consistently and persistently: Colossians 4:2 “Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful” and see also the parable of the persistent widow in Luke 18:1-8.

It may be tempting to give up when we see no immediate results, but God calls us to persevere – his timing is often very different from ours.

What to pray for your 5

While no prayer for our friends is wasted, using words and thoughts from scripture will help us pray with greater faith having confidence that we are in line with God's will. Here are verses that might inspire you when prayer seems difficult – but don't try and pray them all in one go!

That God will draw them to Himself: John 6:44 “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them”

That their eyes would be opened: Acts 26:18 “to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins”

That God would open their hearts to believe: Acts 16:14 “The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message”

That mental barriers will be destroyed: 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 “The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

That Satan will be unable to blind them to the truth: Matthew 13:19 “when anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart.” and 2 Corinthians 4:4 “The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

That they would seek to know God: Acts 17:27 “God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.”

That the Holy Spirit works in them: John 16:8 “When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment:” and John 16:13 “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth.”

That God sends someone to lead them towards Jesus: Matthew 9:37-38 “Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

That they hear the gospel and believe God's word: Romans 10:17 “Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ” and 1 Thessalonians 2:13 “And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.”

That they come to believe in Jesus as saviour: John 1:12 “Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” and John 5:24 “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.”