



**FOR YOUR
CITY**

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5 things to pray for your city

Prayers that change things for your church, community and culture

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INTRODUCTION

BY TIMOTHY KELLER

The Jewish exiles in Babylon were told to pray for their city (Jeremiah 29 v 7) although and because it was a very pagan place. They were not merely to pray that the city would turn from its idols but for its entire “peace and prosperity.” Peter calls all Christians “exiles,” and James even calls us “the twelve tribes scattered among the nations” (1 Peter 1 v 1; James 1 v 1). It is reasonable to conclude that God wants Christians everywhere to pray for their cities. They should pray not only for the flourishing of their city’s churches and evangelistic witness, but also for the very life of the city—for the health of its economy, the justice of its governance, and the relationships between its racial groups and cultures.

If this is what God wants for us, how do we carry it out? There is no better help and guide I know for this task than the book you have before you.

There are basically two purposes for petitionary prayer—to change the world’s status quo (“thy kingdom come”) and to align our hearts with God’s heart (“thy will be done”). If we let one or the other of

these purposes become too dominant, our prayers become too shrill and manipulative or too passive and defeatist.

If, rather, you keep these two purposes in balance as you follow this guide, you will not only see changes in the city but in yourself. Your prayers against injustice will make you the kind of person who lives justly yourself. Your prayers for holiness in the church will make you long more for holiness in yourself. Your prayers for witness in the city will make you more willing to testify to God's grace yourself.

Let's pray for our cities. Who can tell what will happen when we pray to the God who says we cannot even begin to imagine the things he has prepared for those who love him (1 Corinthians 2 v 9) and who earnestly seek him (Hebrews 11 v 6).

Timothy Keller

Chairman and Co-Founder | Redeemer City to City

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide will help you to pray for your city in 21 different areas and situations. There are five different things to pray for each of the 21 areas, so you can use this book in a variety of ways.

- ▶ *You can pray through a set of “five things” each day, over the course of three weeks, and then start again.*
- ▶ *You can take one of the prayer themes for the week and pray one point every day from Monday to Friday.*
- ▶ *Or you can dip in and out of it, as and when you want and need to pray for a particular aspect of city life.*
- ▶ *There’s also a space on each page for you to write in the names of specific situations, concerns or people that you intend to remember in prayer.*

Each prayer suggestion is based on a passage of the Bible, so you can be confident as you use it that you are praying great prayers—prayers that God wants you to pray, because they’re based on his word.



THE CITY: PRAYING FOR
THE GOOD,
THE BAD AND
THE UGLY
GENESIS 4 v 16-26

PRAYER POINTS:

Sovereign Lord, I bring before you...

1 THE GOOD OF THE CITY

"[Jabal] was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock ... [Jubal] was the father of all who play stringed instruments and pipes [Tubal-Cain] forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron" (v 19-22).

Cities buzz with the excitement of people, productivity and creativity. From the very first, they have been places where people fulfil God's plan to "be fruitful and increase in number" (Genesis 1 v 28). Give thanks for the people of your city and its unique culture.

2 THE GOSPEL IN THE CITY

"At that time people began to call on the name of the LORD" (v 26).

According to the United Nations, over half the world's population lives in cities, and that figure is predicted to rise to 70% by 2050. Thank God for the wonderful gospel opportunities this creates. Pray that many in your city would "call on the name of the LORD".

3 THE BAD OF THE CITY

"So Cain went out from the LORD's presence ... Cain was then building a city" (v 16-17).

Lament that so many people in your city live like Cain—rejecting God and seeking shelter in the city and all the opportunities it offers, rather than in Jesus. Cry out for a work of the Spirit to turn their hearts back to him.

4 THE UGLY OF THE CITY

"Lamech said to his wives ... I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for injuring me" (v 23).

Bring before God the sin of your city. Confess to God the ways in which you have contributed to this over the past week. Pray for God's restraining hand over all forms of violence, corruption and oppression.

5 HOPE IN THE CITY

"[Eve] gave birth to a son and named him Seth, saying, 'God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him'" (v 25).

Praise God for Jesus Christ, the promised descendant of Eve, who crushed Satan's head when he was crucified outside the city walls—so that now we can be part of God's heavenly city. Pray that this message of hope would ring out and transform your city.