

## Prayers to Pray During This Pandemic:

As COVID-19 sends the globe into crisis, it also sends us to our knees.

In recent days, as COVID-19 has been declared a global pandemic and countries have taken urgent measures to stem the spread of infection, I wish I could say that my first impulse has been to pray. It's probably more honest to say that I've obsessively refreshed my feeds.

The crisis is urgent, and I feel powerless. But perhaps feeling small is the best reminder to pray. Prayer is how we actively practice believing, so simply, so confidently, that God has the whole world in his hands. It's where we **“let petitions and praises shape our worries into prayers, letting God know our concerns”** (Phil. 4:6–7, The Message). Prayer is never the last resort of God's people. It is our first point of action.

With that in mind, I've put together a list of 20 prayers to pray during this pandemic. Each one addresses the specific needs of a specific community. I'm fortunate to be a part of a church with many medical professionals, some of whom gave me advice on how best to pray for them at this time. I've included their responses here. I've also tried to think broadly about how the rest of us are impacted by the current crisis.

This list isn't comprehensive, of course, but it's a good place to start. My hope is that it can provide words for us as we pray collectively (if also virtually!) as a church body. We believe there is a God who bends his ear to listen, and so we pray:

1. For the sick and infected: God, heal and help. Sustain bodies and spirits. Contain the spread of infection.
2. For our vulnerable populations: God, protect our elderly and those suffering from chronic disease. Provide for the poor, especially the uninsured.
3. For the young and the strong: God, give them the necessary caution to keep them from unwittingly spreading this disease. Inspire them to help.
4. For our local, state, and federal governments: God, help our elected officials as they allocate the necessary resources for combatting this pandemic. Help them to provide more tests.
5. For our scientific community, leading the charge to understand the disease and communicate its gravity: God, give them knowledge, wisdom, and a persuasive voice.

6. For the media, committed to providing up-to-date information: God, help them to communicate with appropriate seriousness without causing panic.
7. For consumers of media, looking to be well-informed: God, help us find the most helpful local information to equip us to be good neighbors. Keep us from anxiety and panic, and enable us to implement the recommended strategies, even at a cost to ourselves.
8. For those with mental health challenges who feel isolated, anxious, and helpless: God, provide them every necessary support.
9. For the homeless, unable to practice the protocols of social distancing in the shelter system: Protect them from disease, and provide isolation shelters in every city.
10. For international travelers stuck in foreign countries: God, help them return home safely and quickly.
11. For Christian missionaries throughout the world, especially in areas with high rates of infection: God, provide them with words of hope, and equip them to love and serve those around them.
12. For workers in a variety of industries facing layoffs and financial hardship: God, keep them from panic, and inspire your church to generously support them.
13. For families with young children at home for the foreseeable future: God, help mothers and fathers to partner together creatively for the care and flourishing of their children. For single mothers and fathers, grow their networks of support.
14. For parents who cannot stay home from work but must find care for their children: God, present them with creative solutions.
15. For those in need of regular therapies and treatments that must now be postponed: God, help them to stay patient and positive.
16. For business leaders making difficult decisions that affect the lives of their employees: God, give these women and men wisdom, and help them to lead self-sacrificially.
17. For pastors and church leaders faced with the challenges of social distancing: God, help them to creatively imagine how to pastor their congregants and love their cities well.

18. For college and university students, whose courses of study are changing, whose placements are cancelled, whose graduation is uncertain: God, show them that while life is uncertain, their trust is in you.

19. For Christians in every neighborhood, community, and city: May your Holy Spirit inspire us to pray, to give, to love, to serve, and to proclaim the gospel, that the name of Jesus Christ might be glorified around the world.

20. For frontline health care workers, we thank you for their vocational call to serve us.

We also pray:

- God, keep them safe and healthy. Keep their families safe and healthy.
- God, help them to be knowledgeable about the diagnosis and treatment of this disease, as well as the changing protocols.
- God, help them to stay clear-minded in the midst of the surrounding panic.
- God, deliver them from anxiety for their own loved ones (aging parents, children, spouses, roommates).
- God, give them compassion for every patient in their care.
- God, provide for them financially, especially if they fall ill and are unable to work.
- God, help Christians in health care to exhibit extraordinary peace, so that that many would ask about the reason for their hope. Give them opportunities to proclaim the gospel.

God, we trust that you are good and do good. Teach us to be your faithful people in this time of global crisis. Help us to follow in the footsteps of our faithful shepherd, Jesus, who laid down his life for the sake of love. Glorify his name as you equip us with everything needed for doing your will. Amen.

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