7 Prayers for Guidance in Times of Uncertainty

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We have all been told to pray for guidance when we are unsure of what to do. But, how many of us actually know how to do this in a powerful and effective way? God's word offers us the key to approach the Father with the confidence we are looking for when we face times of uncertainty.

God clearly tells us that He desires the best for us. *His* best! "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11). Stepping into our future apart from seeking the Father's guidance can derail, delay or completely disrupt His best for us.

Scripture also teaches us that it is not up to our plans and our ideas to figure out what we should do in times when we need guidance. Instead, we are to: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5). There is no way to figure out what is best for us to do as we make decisions apart from our God who created us and designed us for His purposes. If we put our faith in His abilities instead of our own, guidance will come with more certainty in the best outcome. Lack of trust in the Father can lead to poor decisions and to fear.

Here are 7 prayers you can simply pray just as they have been written for you and prayed by others throughout the centuries. Use them as a jumping off place for your prayers asking God

for His guidance:

1. “Make me know Your ways, O LORD; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; for You I wait all the day” (Psalm 25:4-5).
2. “Let me hear Your lovingkindness in the morning; for I trust in You; teach me the way in which I should walk; for to You I lift up my soul” (Psalm 143:8).
3. “Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; let Your good Spirit lead me on level ground” (Psalm 143:10).
4. “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105).
5. “For You are my rock and my fortress; for Your name’s sake You will lead me and guide me” (Psalm 31:3).
6. O send out Your light and Your truth, let them lead me; let them bring me to Your holy hill and to Your dwelling places” (Psalm 43:3).
7. Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer; from the end of the earth I call to You when my heart is faint; Lead me to the rock that is higher than I” (Psalm 61:1-2).

Hopefully these scriptural prayers have given you a deeper confidence in the Father’s ability to guide and direct you! Remember, apart from Him we can do nothing: “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

If we will take to heart these powerful, scriptural petitions, we can know that God will hear and answer because the prayers we are offering up to Him are in His perfect purposes and will for us!

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Biography

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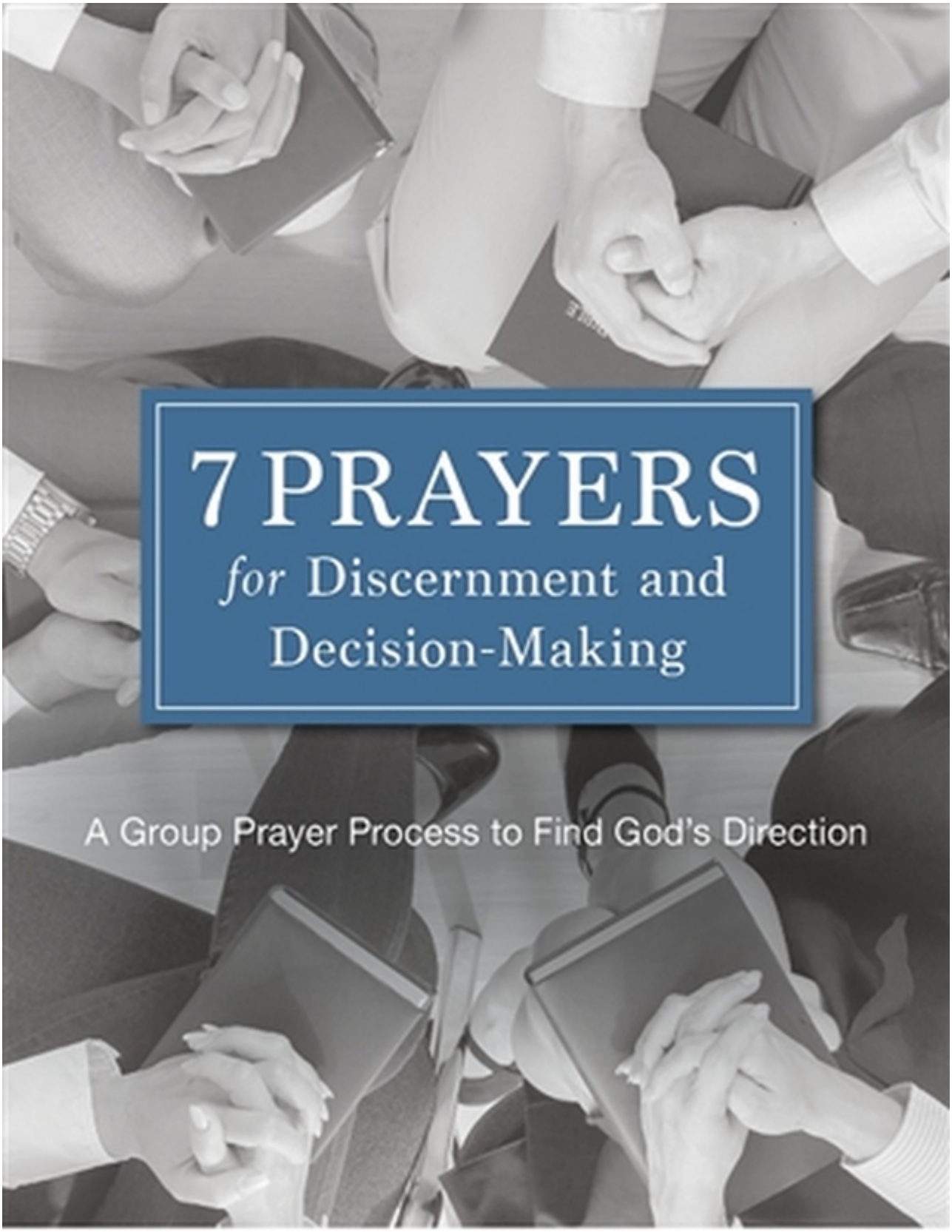
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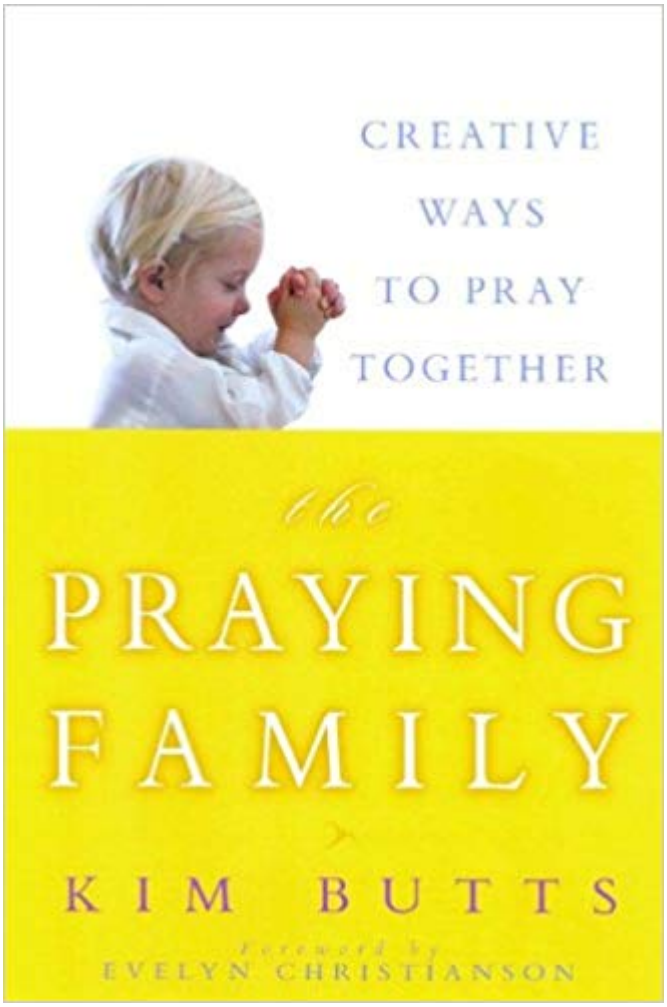
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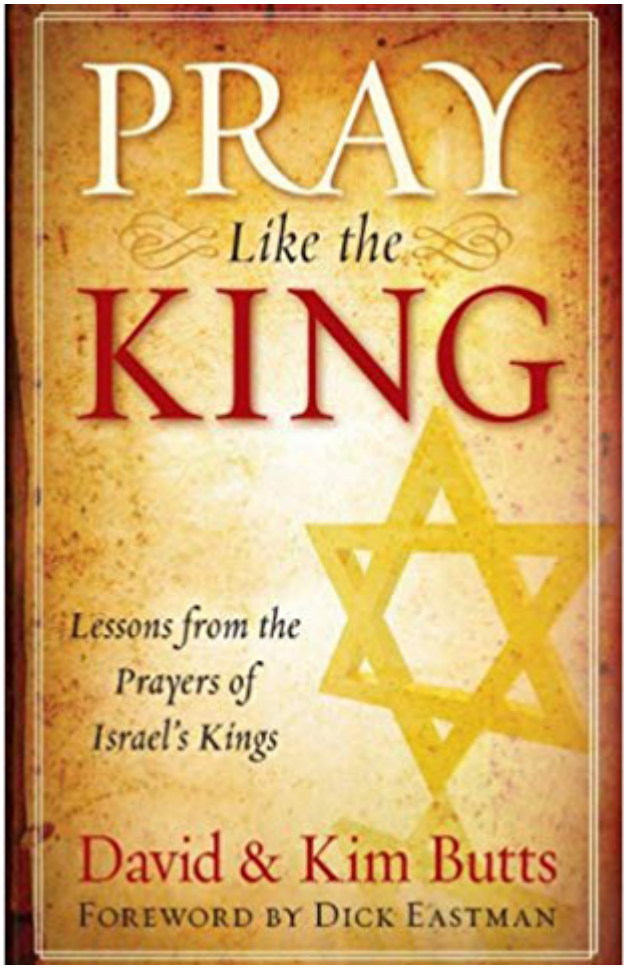
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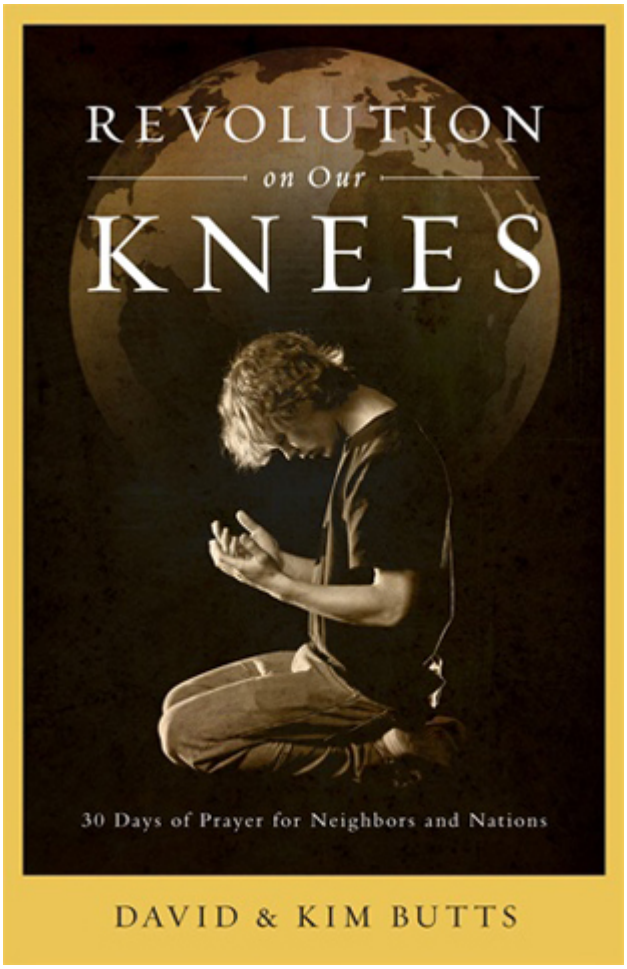
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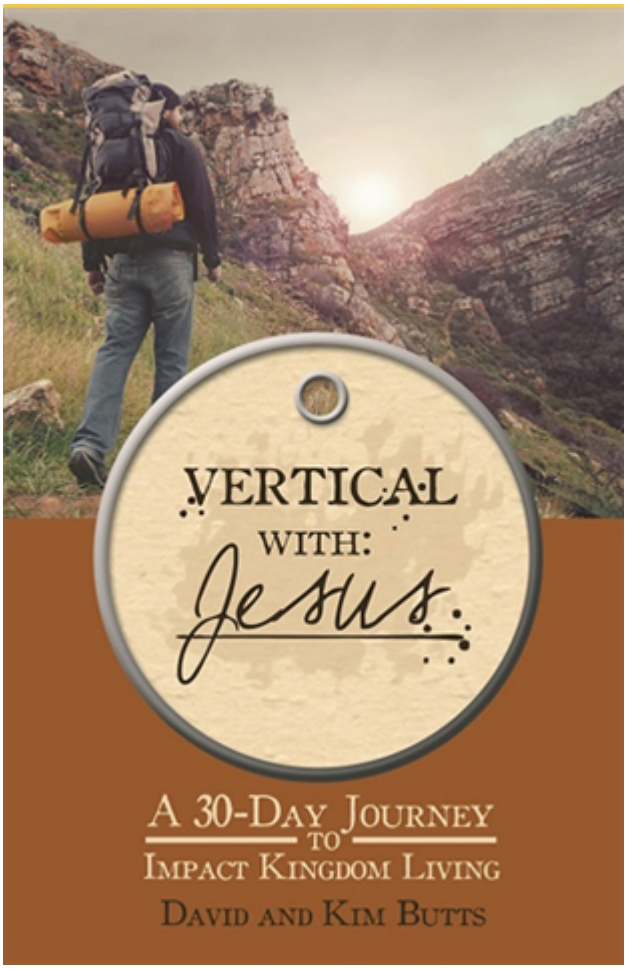
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4 Prayers to Line Up with God's Purposes

7 Prayers for Guidance in Times of Uncertainty

Then Job answered the LORD and said, "I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted" (Job 42:1-2).

Studying Job during this difficult season has been very enlightening and convicting! Job kept saying that he trusted God, all the while whining and complaining about his circumstances…until God reminded Job that ultimately, He was the Almighty Creator of all things and the Overseer of all of our situations, good or bad. Job, with a repentant heart, confessed his lack of understanding and renewed his belief in God's complete power and supremacy. For Job, the choice was easy after his eyes were opened – God's purposes could not be thwarted – even if it meant physical and emotional suffering for him. He just needed to be reminded.

J. Vernon McGee has a quote I love that can help us to relate to Job's (and our own) situations: "This is God's universe, and He is doing things His way. You may think you have a better way, but you don't have a universe."

It's amazing how little we, the people of God, trust His purposes to be accomplished in the midst of uncertain times. We try to do everything in our own strength to "fix" our circumstances. We have difficulty resting in His promises and having faith that He is in control of our situations, finances, jobs, schooling, celebrations, relationships and everything else that concerns our minds and hearts.

God is grieving with those who are grieving, just as He was very present in the midst of Job's suffering. If we are His, we should also be grieving with and for those who have lost loved ones, friends, coworkers, classmates and neighbors, for those who have lost jobs, for kids who can't go to school, for healthcare workers who are afraid to bring sickness home with them, for those who can't see and hug their loved ones…and so much more. If we are only mourning for ourselves and our inconveniences, we are lost in our selfishness rather than coming alongside of the Living Jesus to be His hands, feet and heart to others. And, to lift one another up in deep, heartfelt prayer!

God is watching us…His eye is upon His Church. Are we asking Him to search us and cleanse us? Are we a repentant people, allowing the Father to make us holy as He is holy? Or, are we wishing we could go where we want to go and do what we want to do? Are we filled with anger and frustration against our leaders, our families, the grocery store who can't deliver our orders fast enough, and the people who bought up all of the sanitizer and toilet paper?

If His eye is upon us, what is He expecting? He is looking for those who will know that God can do all things and that His purposes will not be thwarted. Perhaps this season is more

about watching to see what God will do with a people who keeps their eyes focused upon Him, trusting Him to accomplish something so big and deep and powerful in His Church that the world will never be the same. He has stripped away all of the traditional patterns of our gatherings and moved us to engage in new ways and to look at people we haven't spent much time with before…to meet needs and to think outside the box creatively about how to care for the least of these and the lost. Can we have great faith to believe that God is at work in and through us?

Jason Meyer said, "Faith doesn't just bring your soul to heaven; it brings heaven to your soul." So – how do we pray in such a way that we are changed by God and not by our circumstances? Prayer that brings heaven to our souls? Here are four simple prayers to help our hearts shift toward remembering that God can do all things and that His plans cannot be thwarted:

1. **The Prayer of Confession**: Father, I confess my lack of faith in Your ability to work in the midst of everything I am facing. I confess that I haven't trusted You for _____. I confess that I have depended upon my own ability to _____ rather than release it into Your care. Thank You, Father, that You are faithful and righteous to forgive my sins and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness when I confess those sins to You (1 John 1:9).
2. **The Prayer of Repentance:** Lord, I have confessed to You those sins that separate my heart from Yours. I am Your child, called by Your name. Your word declares that if I humble myself in repentance and seek Your face and turn away from my sinful ways, that You will hear from heaven, forgive my sin and heal my land (2 Chronicles 7:14). Now I declare that I will turn away from these things, and turn toward You once again! Your word says that if I do this, my sins will be wiped out and that

times of refreshing will come from You once again (Acts 3:19). And, Lord Jesus, please help me to produce fruit in keeping with repentance (Matthew 3:8)…fruit that will last (John 15:16), not only in this season, but throughout the rest of my days. May I emerge from these days changed in ways that will bring glory to You alone!

3. **The Prayer of Submission:** Lord Jesus, when the outcomes of life are hidden, uncertain, or unclear, give me the humility and the strength to simply submit to Your purposes and plans. Help me to remember that You humbled Yourself before the Father and submitted Yourself to death on a cross (Philippians 2:8) for me! That humbles me and creates a deep desire in me to be obedient to Your will forever. Your word says that these troubles and sufferings of mine are small and won't last very long, and You promise that this short time of distress will result in God's richest blessings forever and ever (2 Corinthians 4:17 TLB). Surely, I can submit myself to inconveniences and troubles without whining and complaining!
4. **The Prayer of Acknowledgment:** Almighty God, I acknowledge that my adequacy comes not from myself or my own abilities, but only from You (2 Corinthians 3:5). I acknowledge that I can do all things through You, because You are the One who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13). And, Lord, in all of my ways I will acknowledge You, for You have promised that if I will do this, You will make my paths straight (Proverbs 3:6).

May the God who is everywhere, and who created everything, be very present in your life in this season, and from this moment forward! May your faith swell to heights you never imagined as you dwell with Him in the midst of hard times, but also allow Him to lead you to a much deeper understanding of His ability to create calm in your storm, peace in your uncertainties and joy along your journey of life with a Father who, as Job acknowledged, is not only the Creator of the Universe, but the

One who can do ALL things…and whose plans can never be thwarted!

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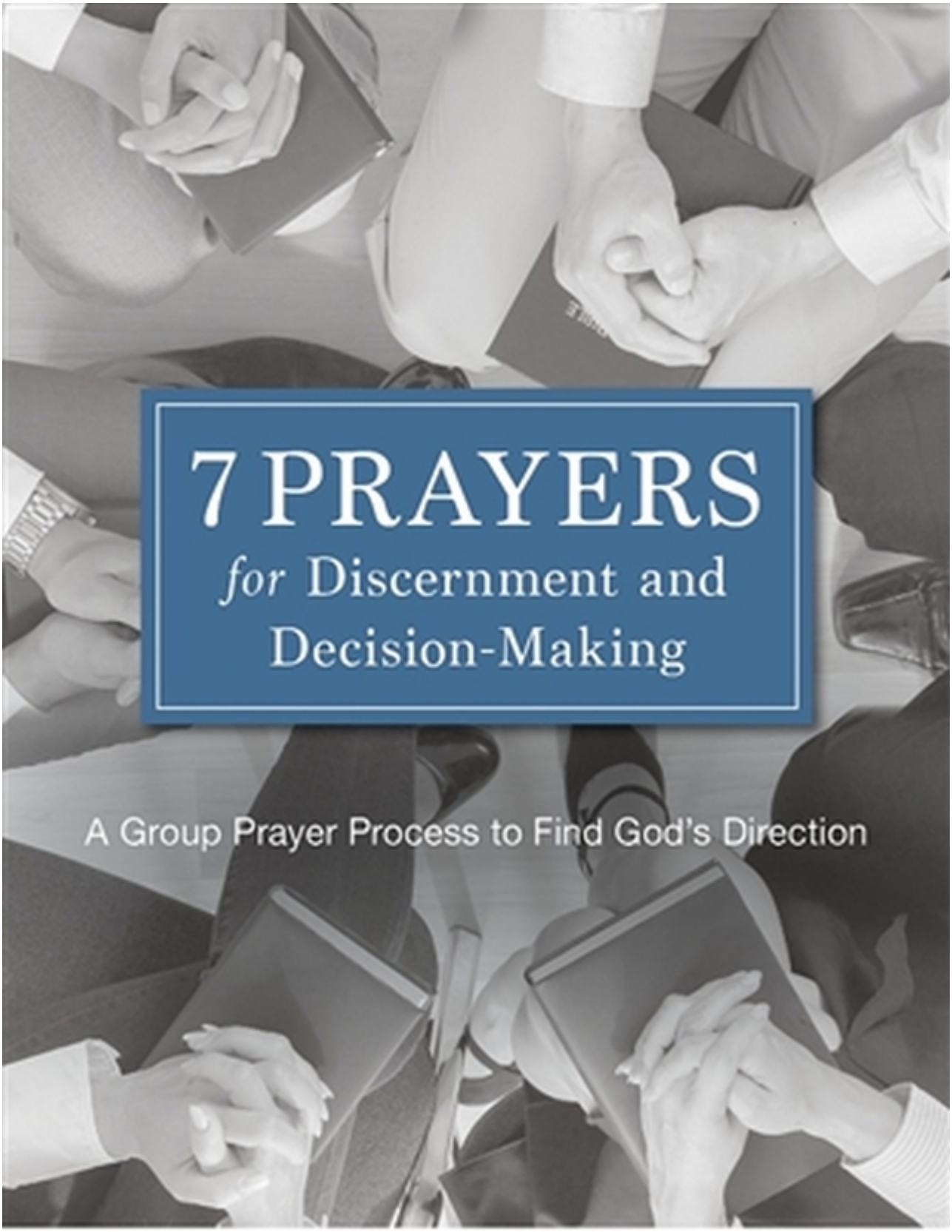
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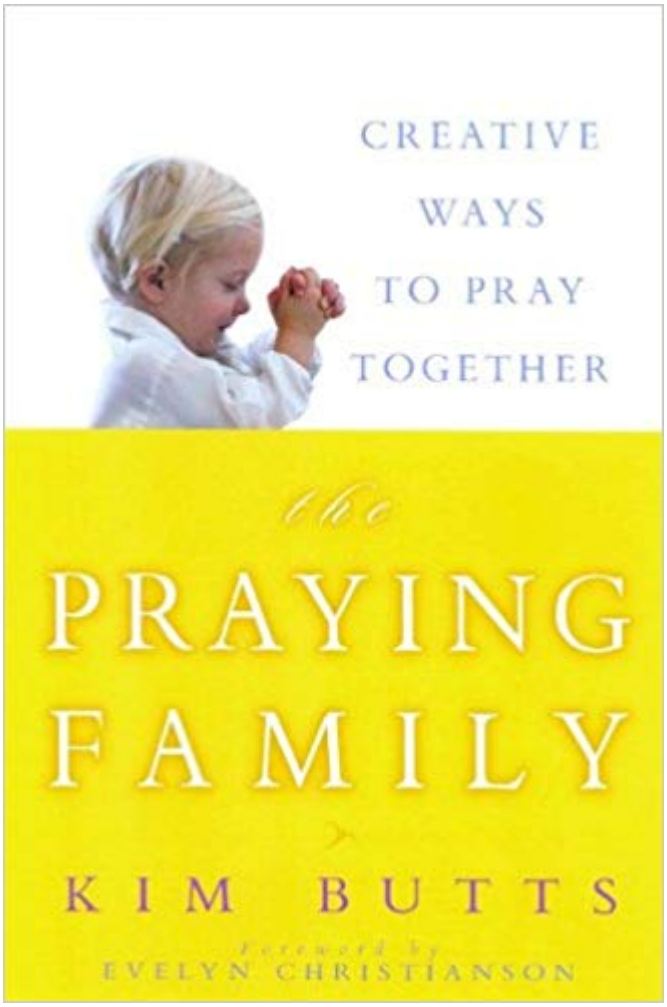
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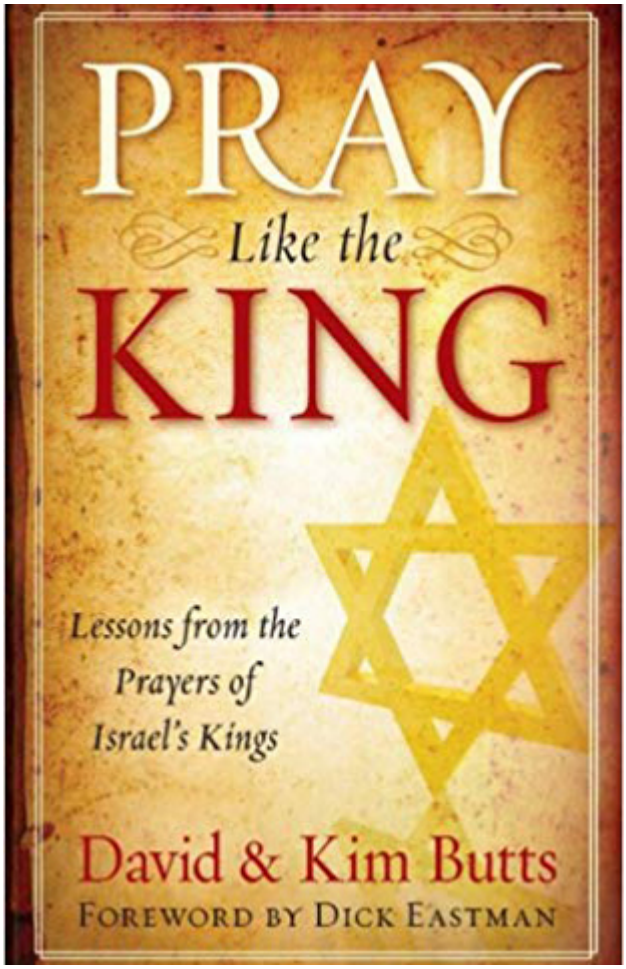
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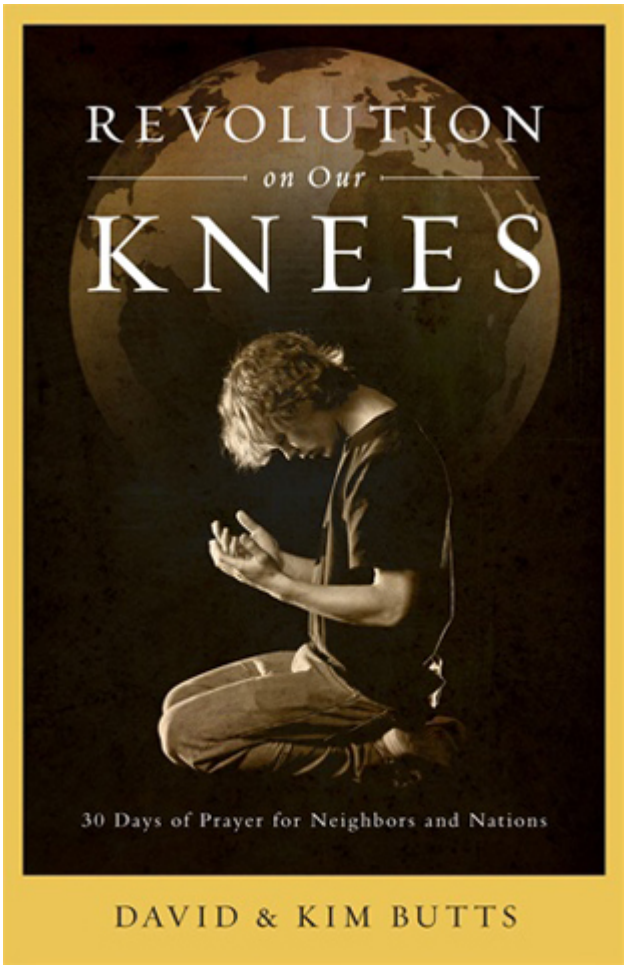
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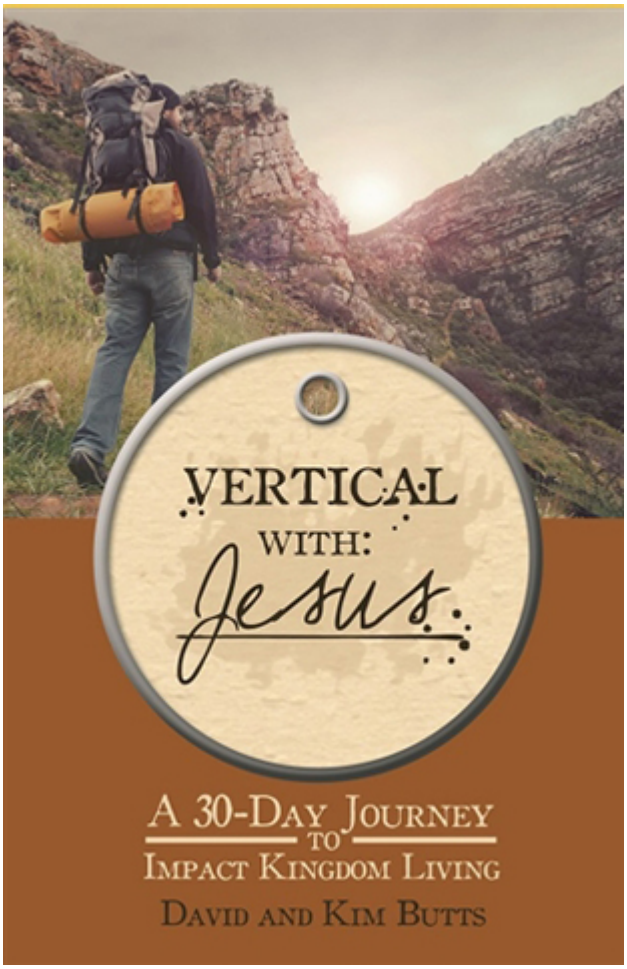
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7 Ways to Pray in Difficult Times

By Kim Butts

We all know that in good times, it seems easier to pray. Our prayers flow from a place of gratitude and peace, thankfulness and joy. Yet, in difficult or painful times, it is much harder to press into the Lord in prayer. We know in our heads that God is the place we should go whether our circumstances are good or bad; however, sometimes we can feel paralyzed with fear, doubt, anger, disbelief, sadness, uncertainty, and a wide range of other emotions depending upon the situation.

Sometimes, it is only out of the absolute desperation of our heart that we overcome the paralysis and run to the Father…even if that running involves no words at all. There are times when it is all we can do to come into His presence and just sit in our pain, loneliness, fear, or whatever emotion is overtaking us. But one amazing truth about God is that our hearts can cry out in the silence…and God still hears. This is a key principle of prayer that we must always remember: God is always there! He is present with us continually.

Be assured, His word says that He will never leave us or forsake us (Deuteronomy 31:6). He will not leave us in this difficult place unless *we* insist on staying there. If we seek Him with all of our heart, we will find Him (Jeremiah 29:13). He longs to comfort us and sit with us in the midst of our trial. His will, plan and purposes are unfolding in His perfect timing even when it doesn't seem this way to us.

Here are some specific ways to pray during difficult times, as

well as when any trial comes your way, and they will:

1. **Pray that God will be honored and glorified, whatever your circumstance, even if you have to suffer or go through a difficult time:** "…and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me" (Psalm 50:15). "In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed" (1 Peter 1:6-7).
2. **Love and pray for people who cause harm or suffering to you, or to others:** "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you'" (Matthew 5:43-44).
3. **Pray for God to show you what He needs you to learn in the midst of difficult times:** "He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way" (Psalm 25:9).
4. **Give thanks to God in the midst of whatever you are walking through:** "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). **Important note:** He does not say to give thanks *for* your circumstances, but to give thanks *in the midst* of them!
5. **Pray that God will help you to be faithful instead of fearful when trials come:** "Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him" (James 1:12).
6. **Pray that God will help you to be a light in the darkness to those who don't yet know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior:** "In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). When people see

the way you walk through difficulty, they will want to know where you draw your strength from!

7. **Give thanks to God because He has overcome the trials and troubles of the world:** "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

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A Prayer to Emmanuel – God with Us!

7 Prayers for Guidance in Times of Uncertainty

Father, the day of celebration is upon Your people! As we anticipate Your Son's birth, we ask that you would stop our rushing around, and our frantic preparation to help us consider that Jesus the Christ, our Lord and Savior…is already here among us! He is God with Us – Jesus, our Emmanuel.

E – Expectation

Emmanuel, show me how each one of my days, not just Christmas, should and can be filled with the expectation of all You want to do in and through my life. May I be filled with the anticipation of Anna and Simeon when they first laid eyes on

the infant, Jesus! Restore to my heart the constant wonder and anticipation of Your life living in me!

Luke 2:22-38

M – Mercy

Emmanuel, the Father's great gift of mercy, was given to me through Your birth, life, death and resurrection! I am no longer living as a condemned person, but as one who has been fully forgiven and redeemed! How thankful I am for the sacrifice You made so that I might live in freedom and victory every day of my life on this earth!

Romans 8:1-4

M – Mindfulness

Emmanuel, I want to be intensely aware of Your presence each and every moment! Help me to sense Your nearness at all times and in every circumstance whether good or bad! May my ears be attentive to hear Your voice alone so that I don't fall for the lies of the enemy who would like nothing better than to distract me or cause me to fall into sin. Draw me close, Emmanuel! I will fix my eyes upon You!

Isaiah 30:21

Hebrews 12:2

A – Adoration

Emmanuel, You are the One my heart longs for and I give You praise and honor and glory and offer up my whole self as a living sacrifice. My lips will sing Your praise every day…not just this day. "Yours is the mighty power and glory and

victory and majesty. Everything in the heavens and earth is Yours, O Lord, and this is Your kingdom. I adore You as being in control of everything!

1 Chronicles 29:11

N – Nations

Emmanuel, You are the King! You rule the nations of the earth! You came for every single person on this earth, and God promised You in **Psalm 2** the ends of the earth as Your inheritance – every nation on this planet! You have commissioned me to be a conduit for Your gospel to go throughout the nations! Use me for Your purposes to seek and save those who are lost and without hope so that I might be part of the fulfilling of God's promise to You, Lord Jesus!

Psalm 22:28

U – Understanding

Emmanuel, I long for an even deeper understanding of all that You are! Show me how to dig more deeply into Your heart and to long to know You more intimately than ever before. Help me to more fully grasp the love of the Father! I want to have a greater awareness of Your character, and to be more yielded to the working of Your Spirit within me as You mold and shape my heart for Your purposes.

2 Thessalonians 3:5

E – Eternity

Emmanuel, because You have set eternity in my heart, I am already living in eternity and will live with You forever and

ever! What an amazing gift. Help me to live today in the light of eternity! May I continually be praying and acting so that "on earth as it is in heaven" becomes a reality in the midst of those who interact with me. May Your kingdom come and Your will be done here on earth, and in my life, as it is in heaven…and throughout eternity!

Ecclesiastes 3:11

L – Love

Emmanuel, You are the gift of love sent from God, the Father to me and all of humanity. Your greatest commandments are to love God with all of my heart, soul, strength and mind…and to love others as myself. May this be a continual reality in my life as long as I draw breath here on earth. I ask that You would help me to comprehend the love that the Father has for You is also in Your people!

John 17:20-26

May the love and favor of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Emmanuel, rest upon you! (**1 Corinthians 16:23**)

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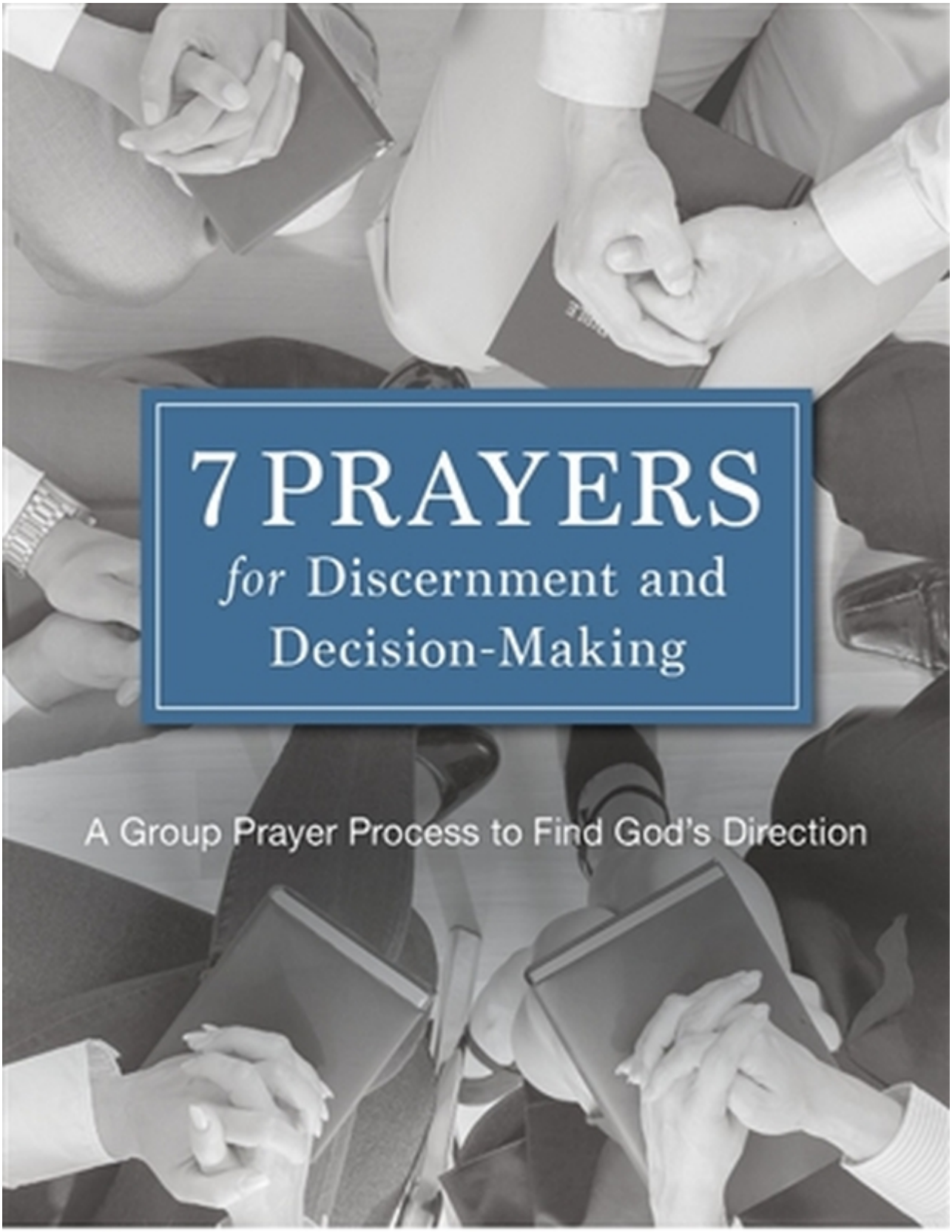
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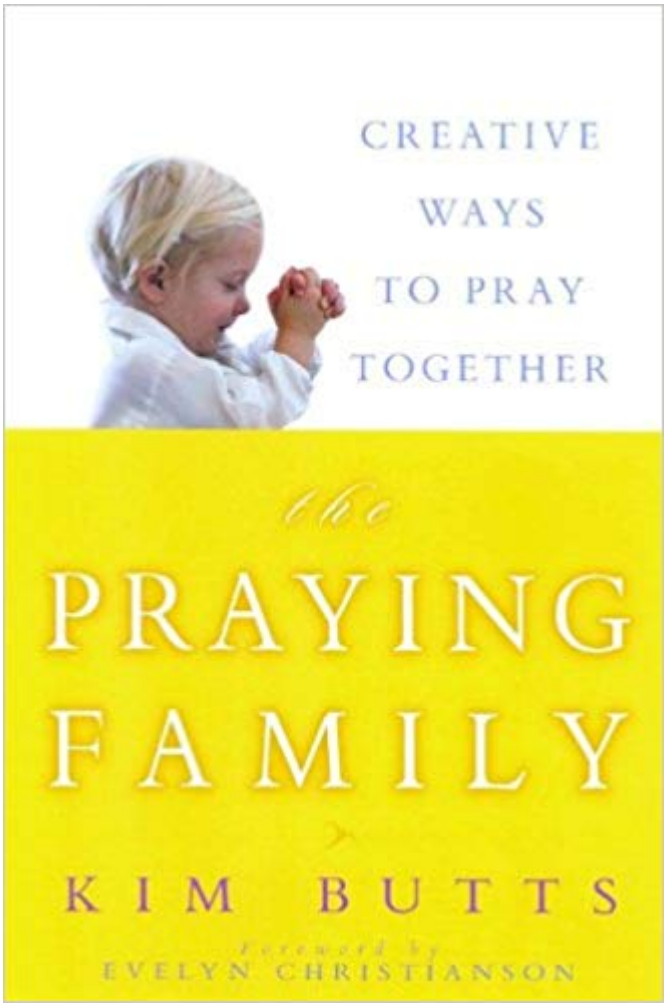
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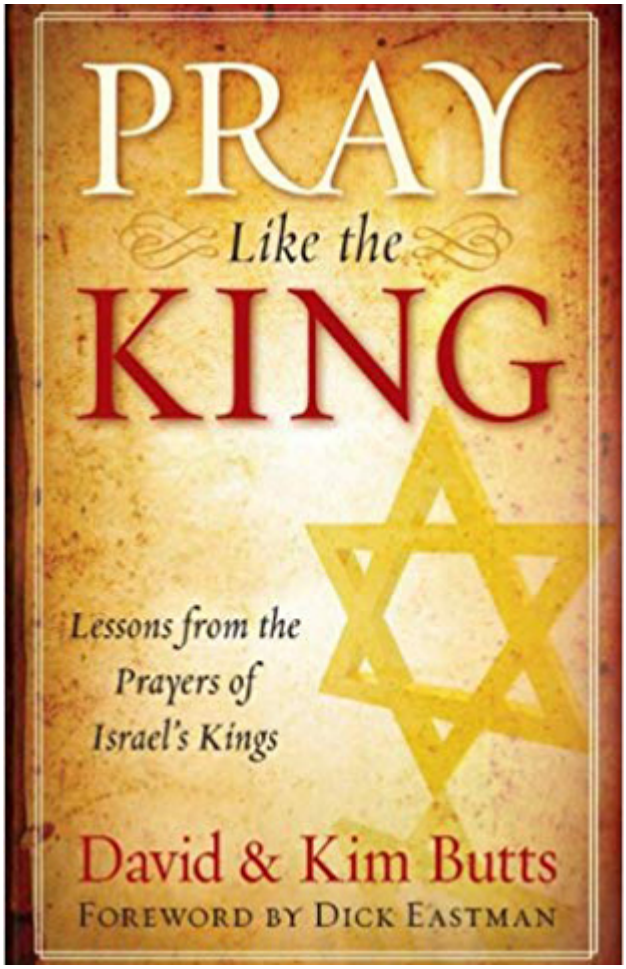
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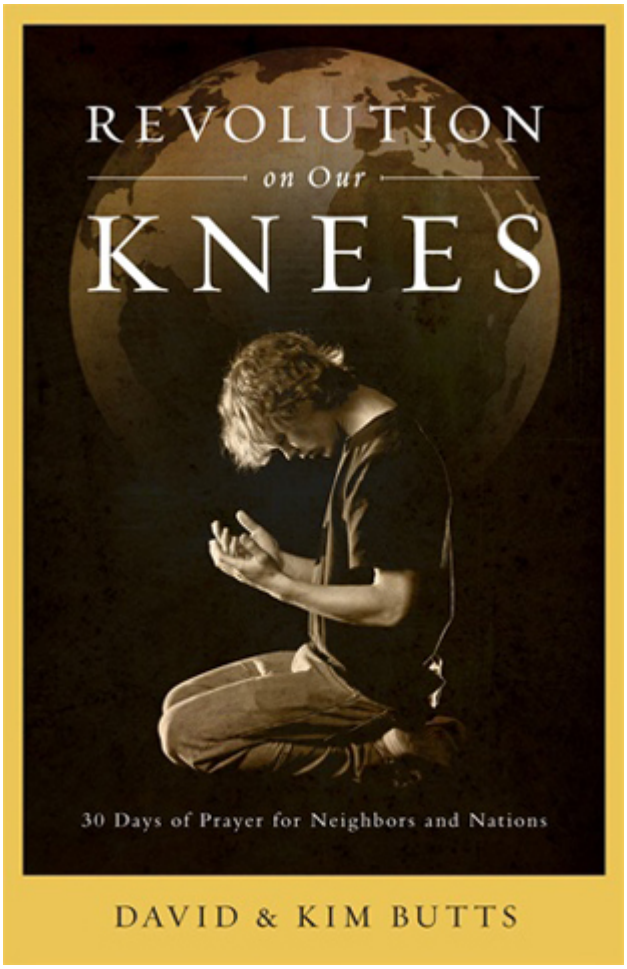
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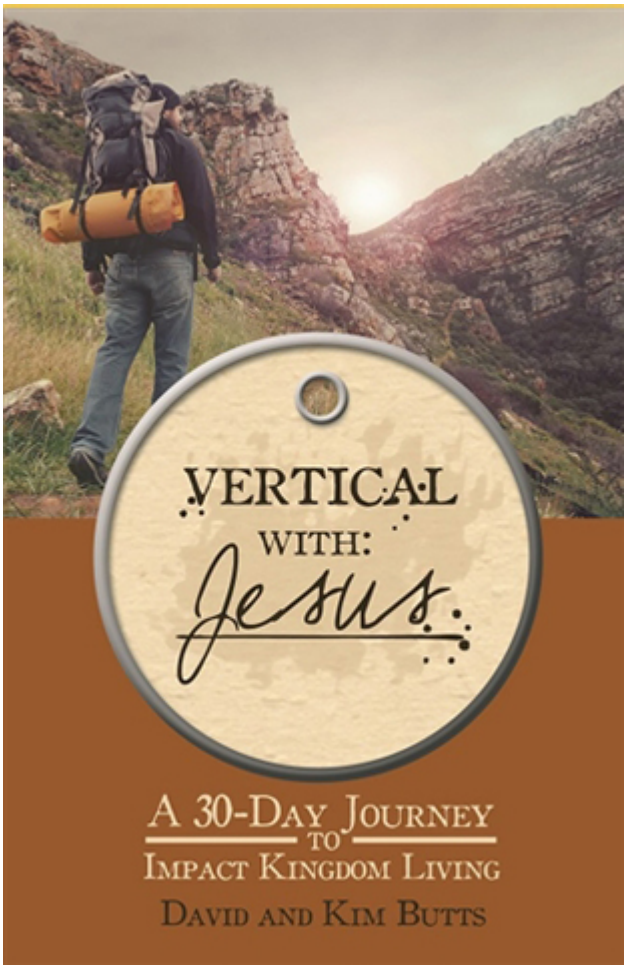
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9 Ideas to Increase Attendance at Your Prayer Meetings!

By Kim Butts

If you have a weekly/regular prayer meeting and it has dwindled down to the "faithful few," it's time to take stock. If you are the organizer(s) of the prayer meetings, it can get discouraging if people are not participating in arguably the most important spiritual act designed by God and so prolifically practiced in the Book of Acts and the rest of Scripture.

First, let's look at the main reasons why people have either stopped coming or have never come to your prayer meeting:

1. **They are afraid.** Most people feel very inadequate about their prayer lives. The last thing they want to do is to be in a situation where they might be asked to pray out loud, or in a group with others. Many of these people would rather focus only on their own prayer closet and devotions rather than step into corporate prayer experiences.

2. **They are intimidated.** When people come to the prayer meeting and feel that there are some people who pray with an authority or eloquence they don't have, they are less likely to feel comfortable praying in such an environment. Because prayer is so natural to the

seasoned intercessors who plan the meetings, they expect the rest of the church to be like them. Clearly this isn't the case, as many believers haven't been trained to pray in the home or by the church.

3. **They are bored.** Many people feel that prayer meetings are always predictable and have a mind-numbing sameness to them. Unfortunately, the default mode of prayer for most churches is to pray the "sick" list. Many of the people on "the list" aren't even known to most of the people who are praying for them – they are friends, relatives or acquaintances of people in the church. It is important to pray for those with health issues; however, when that is all we ever pray about, people rapidly disengage. If people don't have a sense of God's presence, and that Heaven is engaged with their prayers, they aren't motivated or excited about coming to a meeting where "nothing happens" and with a belief that their prayers don't matter.

4. **They are frustrated**. These people know they want something different…something more than the litany of illnesses and personal prayer requests. They feel that prayer should be more than what they have experienced but have no idea what to do to make it better. There are also those who DO know what could be done but don't have a voice in the planning or preparation.

5. **They are ambivalent.** Because many people are not being trained in prayer in their homes or at church, most don't see the point and view prayer as a religious exercise for the super-spiritual. Prayer has never been an important part of their Christian experience, or they

perceive that it really has never “worked” for them.

6. **They don’t see church leadership actively involved**. The engagement of church leadership is also a critical component of the prayer meetings. If your pastor(s) and church leaders are not proponents and participants at some level in your process of planning and engaging others in the practice of a regular corporate prayer rhythm, it will be difficult to get more of the congregation to come to prayer meetings. If leadership is not very involved, begin praying at once for them! Don’t whine, gripe or grumble – pray! Ask God to make your leaders people of prayer who will teach and encourage prayer so that the congregation will follow their lead.

Drawing People to the Prayer Meeting

God created prayer for the purpose of accomplishing His will on this planet through the prayers of His people. It’s a divine mystery, but a compelling truth. Let’s look at some ways to help people grow their passion for the Father and His plans and purposes for prayer that will translate to more people having greater participation in corporate prayer experiences:

1. **Help people to encounter God.** Incorporate worship into your prayer meetings, helping people focus on the One Who sits on the throne in Heaven as the object of your love and devotion. It is important for God’s people to realize that prayer is intimacy with Him and for His

glory! Jesus taught the disciples to pray, “Our Father in Heaven, Holy is Your Name!” People’s attention should always be directed towards God before coming to Him with a prayer list or agenda. Help people to move to a “Not my will but Yours be done” mindset. This will help them to remember that ultimately, His will is more important than our own wants, needs and desires. God still wants to hear us express these, because He loves us…but His purposes are so much bigger! Praying in agreement with God through the power of the Holy Spirit and in the Name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, is ultimately to step into the throneroom of Heaven whenever we pray.

2. **Be welcoming and give people permission to pray at their own level of comfort** – whether out loud or quietly. Don’t put anyone on the spot and don’t have the unrealistic expectation that people are comfortable praying in groups, etc. It’s important that people don’t feel intimidated, but invited!

3. **Plan well!** There should be clear leadership and each person walking in should have a good experience with God in community with others. If no one takes the time to develop a focused prayer time but instead just asks what prayer requests people may have, the prayer meeting is doomed to stay small.

   - **Start and end on time!** If those attending are never sure when the meeting will end, and feel uncomfortable leaving when the stated ending time comes, they won’t put this commitment on their calendar. If you feel the Spirit is keeping you longer than the hour or two you have stated, give those who need to leave a space to do so without guilt! For example, say, “Tonight we are sensing that God may want us to spend more time praying

about…. Those who need to leave, please feel free to do so. If anyone wants to stay longer, you are invited to."

- **When people leave** a prayer meeting or experience, they should feel confident that God is already on the move responding to the prayers of His people. Knowing that our prayers are heard and that Heaven is stirred with activity by our kingdom-focused praying is important.

4. **Be intentional about training people in prayer.** People will not give themselves to something they feel inadequate or uncertain about. Consider offering some training in prayer that will enhance your congregation's growth in communicating and communing with God so that those who feel deficient or poorly equipped to be a part of a corporate experience in prayer can begin to grow in their confidence. Sometimes training can be incorporated into your prayer meetings. A concept of prayer can be taught and then the group can practice the concept in real time.

5. **Talk to God, not one another.** Talking about prayer isn't prayer. Sometimes our prayer meetings involve a lot of offering of requests and very little actual prayer time. Unless some teaching/training is part of your prayer meetings or experiences, keep talking to one another at a minimum.

6. **Be sure to give brief, clear instructions when necessary.** It's very important that people always understand what they are supposed to do. For example, if you are breaking people into groups of 3 or 4 at some point during the prayer meeting, make sure they are clear about when and how that will take place. If you

are using prayer stations, the instructions can be written down and placed at each station. If people come in late, make sure someone is there to welcome them and quickly fill them in so they don't feel left out when everyone else is moving around or getting into groups. Feeling uncomfortable is a recipe for not returning.

7. **Pray kingdom-focused prayers:** Try to move away from the "sick/hospital" list default model as your **only** focus and embrace what God is doing!
   - Take stock of what is happening around you…in the culture.
   - Pray what Scripture shows you is on the heart of God…things like unity in the Body of Christ, that we would love one another, praying for workers to be raised up to spread the Gospel, for our leaders and nation, etc.
   - **NOTE:** It is still very important to pray for those who are sick! We need to get better at it than we are. However, here is a good way to start training people to pray for those who are sick…and add a kingdom component to our prayers.

8. **Mix it up!** Don't do the same thing continually! If what you are doing isn't working, try something new!
   - **Change your theme/topic each meeting** because people are passionate about different things.
   - Variety and creativity engages everyone as God has wired us all differently to meet with Him. Use different postures, different modalities (visual, auditory, tactile, etc.).
   - **Prayer stations** are a very good way to engage people in prayer and is a great way to incorporate the variety and

creativity mentioned above.

- **Pray Scripture!** People need to learn to pray what is on the heart of God. When we pray God's word we are always in His will!
- **Get out of the church building!** Prayerwalking or prayer-driving around schools, businesses, other churches, neighborhoods, etc. Set up a Drive-Through prayer booth in your church parking lot or another place in town where people can drive through and be prayed for!
- **Embrace Youth and Children!** From time to time it is important to bring the younger generations into your times of prayer to learn from and grow with one another in prayer. Make space for the kids and you will be blessed. Plan some prayer meetings that are welcoming for all ages. Prayer stations and prayerwalking are good ways to do this.

9. **Listening and obeying – spend time allowing God to speak to your hearts and DO what He is leading you to do.** People need to learn that prayer isn't all one-sided. We often rush in with our requests and never spend time hearing from God through His Spirit. Perhaps a good way to spend time listening would be to ask at least one question of the Lord. Here are two examples:

- **Lord, thank You for hearing our prayers. Is there anything You want to say to me/us?** Perhaps you will hear God telling you how much He loves you and is pleased with the time you have spent in His throneroom. Maybe He will give you a word of encouragement for the whole group, or a picture of what He might be already doing in response to the prayers you have prayed as a community. Of course, you may not sense God saying anything at all…and that is perfectly okay. Taking time to listen ensures that you will not miss something He does want to tell you.

- **Father, would You help us to be the answer to the prayers we just prayed?** Then spend a few minutes listening together as a group. Before closing, the leader may ask, “Has anyone heard the Lord expressing anything to your heart?” Perhaps God will direct you to meet a need for those you have specifically been praying for. This could be directed to you individually or as a community. If you have a sense this is from the Lord, obey!

One last suggestion – don’t be concerned about the number of people at the prayer meeting. If you worry about who isn’t there, you won’t be focused on those who are. The prayer movement will grow one person at a time until more start hearing what God is doing. When answers come and as people have good experiences with the Father in prayer and tell others, you will see growth.

As you pray through and incorporate some of these ideas, we fervently pray that your congregation will begin to be more receptive to giving the prayer meeting/prayer experience another try, and that others will be drawn to be a part of what God is up to through the prayers of His people.

Suggested Resource: Here is a powerful resource handbook by David and Kim Butts to take you step by step into the nuts and bolts of becoming a house of prayer for all nations! It is for leaders and lay people alike!

PRAYER MINISTRY VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK