

A Prayerful Response to Terrorism



By Dave Butts

There is no doubt that we live in an age of terror. The threat of terrorism affects us every time we go to an airport, or cast a vote. It affects the policies of nations and the daily lives of individuals. Nations are mobilizing to face this increasingly dangerous threat.

What is the Church's response to terrorism? It certainly affects us. In some places, the Church has been the target of terror attacks. In order for the Church to fully engage this threat, we must see the spiritual aspect of what is happening. Read the following passage of Scripture from Isaiah, and see whether or not it is able to be applied to terrorists today.

"...Their deeds are evil deeds, and acts of violence are in their hands. Their feet rush into sin; they are swift to shed innocent blood. Their thoughts are evil thoughts; ruin and destruction mark their ways. The way of peace they do not know; there is no justice in their paths. They have turned

them into crooked roads; no one who walks in them will know peace" (Isaiah 59:6-8).

Terrorism is not merely a matter of physical struggle. It is a spiritual battle as well. This type of blind violence is indicative of Satan's handiwork. Jesus said of Satan in John 8 and 10 that he is a liar, a thief and a murderer. His intent is to steal, kill and destroy. In Revelation chapter 12, the devil is described as he who leads the whole world astray. He is filled with fury because he knows his time is short.

While in Thailand recently, I heard British prayer leader, Brian Mills, say, "Satan undermines truth, is full of self-importance, has revealed that children are a legitimate target, is vehemently anti-Jewish and anti-Christian, and seeks to interrupt our communication with God, and with one another. In short, Satan is a terrorist! We see a spirit of violence, intrinsic within radical Islam, being turned outwards."

Because the struggle against terrorism is one aspect of the cosmic war between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of the prince of this world, Christians must step to the forefront of the battle. As in all of our warfare, prayer becomes a major weapon in our arsenal.

In World War II, Rees Howells and a group of English intercessors gathered together regularly to watch and pray over the major battles and events of the day. There were numerous occasions where God stepped in to show them what must happen even in advance of the events themselves. These faithful intercessors prayed strategic prayers that changed the direction of military events.

It is time today, in our current warfare against terrorism, for the watchmen to again rise up. The Old Testament uses the term watchmen on several occasions to define and describe the actions of intercessors such as Rees Howells and those who

prayed with him. The prophet Isaiah cries out, *"I have posted watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night"* (Isaiah 62:6).

What do watchmen do?

- They watch and pray.
- They are to be on guard constantly and so provide protection. *"Arise, cry out in the night, as the watches of the night begin"* (Lamentations 2:19).
- They are to listen. Jeremiah 6:17 says, *"I appointed watchmen over you and said, 'Listen to the sound of the trumpet.'"*
- They are to warn. *"Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from Me"* (Ezekiel 3:17).
- They are to call on the Lord. *"I have posted watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the Lord, give yourselves no rest"* (Isaiah 62:6).

God has called His people to be watchmen. We are not to be passive observers or victims in the war against terror. We are to watch and pray. When we read news, we pray. As we watch television news, we pray. As we engage social media, we pray.

In this kind of battlefield mentality, our prayers must be militant as well. We must pray for a hedge of protection for those on the frontline of battle. We ask God to protect the innocent. It is at times like this that we ask the Lord of the Hosts of Heaven to move out against the enemies of God. We pray that the purposes of God would be fulfilled in the midst of these threats.

Every nation needs watchmen. God is calling us to the walls to watch and pray. Our prayers will make the difference in the

fight against terrorism. In the darkness of our current situation, God is calling His people to be light. Through our watchful prayer, we release the powerful light of Christ into the battle. Truly, the battle is the Lord's: *"...This is what the Lord says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's'"* (2 Chronicles 20:15).

Additional Reading: [Praying for Our Enemies](#) and [Prayers for First Responders](#)

–Dave Butts (1953-2022) was the president of Harvest Prayer Ministries, and the author of multiple books, articles and resources on prayer. Some of his books are [Prayer, Peace and the Presence of God](#), [The Giving Church](#), and [Prayer Ministry Volunteer Handbook](#) co-authored with his wife, Kim.

Praying for Unity



By Dave Butts

You can tell a lot about a person by listening to him or her pray. The passions of the heart flow out through prayer and give us a glimpse into the soul. What is really important to a person will find its way into the prayer life of that one. So it was for Jesus as He prayed in John 17. The entire chapter is often referred to as “The great high priestly prayer” of Jesus.

As you study this powerful prayer of our Lord, you can find five basic petitions:

1. Restore Me to the glory I had in heaven.
2. Protect My followers from the evil one.
3. Sanctify them by the truth.
4. May they be one.
5. May they be with Me forever.

I’d like to focus on a point of passion with Jesus. It concerns the fourth petition, “May they be one.” It seems to me that Jesus is most passionate about this request. It is this part of the prayer that seems to identify the believer most with both Father and Son. The practical, lived-out unity of the Body of Christ is literally the most powerful apologetic to the world that God had sent Jesus into the world and demonstrated for all eternity the Father’s great love for mankind.

New Testament scholar Merrill Tenney writes, “The unity

mentioned here is not simply a unity achieved by legislation. It is a unity of nature because it is comparable to that of the Son and the Father. The unity of the Church must spring from the common life that is imparted to all believers by the new birth; and it is manifested in their common love for Christ and for one another as they face a hostile world. The unity of the Son and the Father was manifested in the deep love that each sustained for the other and by the perfect obedience of the Son to the Father and the perfect response of the Father to the Son." (The Gospel of John, Merrill C. Tenney, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Zondervan Publishing, 1981, p.164).

Our passion needs to come alongside that of our Lord's. Should we not join our prayers with Jesus for the unity of all believers? We can discuss the implications and obstacles to unity forever, but the most powerful force toward unity is the same used by Jesus...prayer! How can we pray in an effective way concerning this essential issue in God's kingdom?

Praying Scripture is always my first impulse. It is in praying the Word of God that we most line up with His thoughts and intents. Would it be possible for us to take Jesus' prayer for unity that we find in John 17:20-23 and make it an integral part of our prayer life? I've taken the words of Jesus and adapted them to our own situation. May they be a blessing to you as you regularly pray back to the Father a similar prayer to the one He heard 2,000 years ago from His only begotten Son.

Holy Father, I lift before You today the scattered followers of Jesus Christ. In the same way that Jesus prayed, not just for the disciples who stood in front of Him as He prayed, but for all who would believe in Him through their message, so I too, do not limit my prayers just to the Christians around me. Lord, there are millions of us now...divided by language, creed, and customs. Our divisions have brought us shame and have hindered the advance of the Gospel.

Father...make us one. In the same way that You and Your Son are one, would You make us one? I don't understand Your unity...how two can be one, and how the Holy Spirit added to that makes the three still one. But in some ways that is reassuring, because I also don't understand how You can make all of us one. It's obvious though, Lord, that our unity is somehow rooted in Your very unity as God. That gives me hope.

Father, in a way that is beyond our comprehension, You dwell in Jesus and Jesus dwells in You. That astonishing unity is what You desire for us by inviting us as believers in Jesus to come to dwell in You. We confess our desire for that as well. We want to live in You. We want to continually experience Your presence...Your oneness.

We are beginning to see that dwelling in You in unity is so amazing that it literally declares to a watching world that You truly did send Jesus into the world. We need a supernatural work of Your Holy Spirit to break down our divisions and to bring us together into Your presence. We long to see the day when the world wakes up to the realization of Your awesome love that prompted You to send Jesus into the world. Father, make us one that this day might come soon.

Father, as You and Your Son are one, Your presence in Him and His presence in You, we pray the presence of Your Spirit in us will make us one with You and Your Son. And if we are one with You and Your Son, then we certainly become one with each other. You are not divided, Lord. Forgive us for our actions and attitudes that have appeared to divide the Body of Christ.

Would You give us the passion for unity that You and Your Son have? Help us to see how important this issue is to the proclamation of the Gospel. You have loved us as You love Your Son. Please teach us to love each other in that way...people who are different from us in so many ways...yet who are still a part of Your Body. Bring us to complete unity that the world may know of Your astounding love. We ask in Jesus' name.

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6 Simple Ways to Deeper Intimacy with God through Prayer

“Prayer is both conversation and encounter with God . . . We must know the awe of praising His glory, the intimacy of finding His grace and the struggle of asking His help, all of which can lead us to know the spiritual reality of His presence.” –Tim Keller

When I was getting to know my husband, I wanted to spend as much time with him as possible. I loved having conversations with him about so many different things! Sometimes when we were together, it was enough just to sit, walk or drive somewhere without saying a word.

Amazingly, this is exactly how God feels about us and wants us to feel even more so about Him. Prayer is the key to awakening and strengthening such a deep relationship and desire for the Father.

Here are some simple ways to practice intimacy in prayer as both a conversation and an encounter with God:

Scripture – as you read your Bible, ask God to show Himself to

you. Spend some time writing down what God teaches you about Himself as you read/study His word. Know that the God who is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8) wants to have relationship with you also! Make God's word your personal "tent of meeting" (Exodus 33:7) with Him!

Creation – spend time looking around you and paying attention to all that God has created. Pay attention to small things like flowers and birds as well as extraordinary things like mountains, oceans, stars, rainbows and babies! Creation gives us confidence that God is who He says He is. Give Him thanks and praise His glory!

Worship – when you truly worship God, sometimes you can forget why you came to Him. You are able to lay down your list of needs and wants and just enjoy being in His presence. Simple times of sharing with Him how wonderful and amazing He is will allow your heart to grow closer to His. Find worship music that honors and glorifies the Father and join in!

Listening – most of us want to talk to or at God. Take time to say, as young Samuel did, "Speak Lord, Your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:9)! Write down anything you think you hear. Maybe it will be as simple as "I love you." Other times it may be something He wants you to do, or something He wants to share with you about Himself. If you aren't sure if He is speaking to your heart, show a trusted, mature believer what you have written to get confirmation. If it agrees with Scripture and if it is something that is like the character of Jesus, likely you have heard something from the Father.

Silence – there are times when just simply sitting quietly in His presence with no expectations other than just enjoying being with Him can be the most intimate way of developing your relationship with God. No agenda, no wants or needs expressed . . . just being alone with no distractions. Sometimes you can use some quiet worship music. But getting used to sitting with God in silence just as you would with another person you love

dearly is a great practice. It's okay to just be.

Asking – there are times when we have needs—our own, or those of others—that we want to express to God. It's like saying, "Please, Daddy, I need your help." In these times, there is no need for flowery language. Just talk to Him as a child sitting in a Father's lap.

God is continually present in each moment of your life. He has come to live within you always (John 14:23)! Cultivate nearness and affection for Him in prayer. When you draw near to God, He will draw near to you (James 4:8).

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Help from “So That” Prayers

One of the problems that most of us have with praying is that we instinctively know that prayer isn't about getting what I want from God. It's about God's will being accomplished. Yet, there are things we want God to do that are very important to us. How do we reconcile these things?

The Bible demonstrates for us a fascinating way to pray that brings together our needs and the purposes of God. I call it “so that” praying. In many places throughout Scripture you will find someone making a request of the Lord for something that is very important to him or her. Then that person closes out his or her prayer by including a “so that” addition. Almost without exception, the “so that” portion takes the prayer and focuses it on God and His purposes. It often has to

do with bringing additional honor and glory to God and expanding His kingdom.

Though there are many examples, one of my favorite ones is found in Hezekiah's great prayer in Isaiah 37. Surrounded by the Assyrian army, Hezekiah asks the Lord to deliver them. It is in verse 20 that we find the "so that" portion. "Now, Lord, our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, Lord, are the only God" (Isaiah 37:20). That powerful addition turns this prayer from being merely about Hezekiah and his people, to being about God's honor and glory. It makes it a God-focused prayer!

We can use this clearly biblical prayer style in many of our prayers. One of the most common prayer requests I receive has to do with physical healing. I always am delighted to pray for those who are sick and in need of the healing touch of the Lord. But it takes it to a whole new level when I include a "so that" prayer. It might go like this:

"Lord, I pray for Bill that You would bring healing to him. But I ask You to do this Lord so that You would receive honor and glory. Would you touch Bill's family and the doctors and nurses and help them to see how you have stepped in and done a powerful thing in Bill's life. Lord, draw people near to You as You answer this prayer for healing."

Whether you are praying for healing, or salvation, or for a family situation, or for our nation, you can turn the attention off of human needs and make it a God-focused prayer. This is not a "trick" to get things from God, but a heart-felt desire to see God move in such a way that His Kingdom is advanced. This is a biblical way to take human needs and submit them to the Lord in prayer with a desire to see God honored and worshiped.

Ultimately, all prayer should be about "Your Kingdom coming and Your will being done" and the "so that" prayers of

scripture are a clear way for this to be done.

Action Step: Choose one situation from your prayer list and add a “so that” prayer to it. Pray that for a week and see what God does.

Extra Help: A great resource to help you better understand the “so that” method is the short devotional book, [Praying Like Paul](#), by Jonathan Graf. The Apostle Paul used so that praying in almost all of his prayers in Scripture.

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Pray about Prayer

If you are a Christian and you need something, the first place you should turn is to the Lord. Jesus teaches us that we are to ask for anything we need, even for daily bread. That’s how dependent on Him we are to be. It seems to me then, that if I want to grow in prayer, the first place to go is to God. So I suggest praying about prayer.

Isn’t it interesting, and maybe a bit sad, that we struggle so much in prayer, and yet never come to the Lord and ask Him to help us to pray. Do we really believe that we are so spiritual that we can handle this on our own? If we know that God wants us to be a people of prayer, and that is certainly clear in Scriptures, then when we ask believing God to make us a person of prayer, we can expect great results. I pray every day that God would make me a man of prayer. In His way, and in His timing, He will always answer that prayer.

The apostles are a good example of this kind of prayerful dependence on the Lord as we seek to grow in prayer. Realizing how critical prayer was to the ministry of Jesus, they asked Him to teach them to pray (Lk.11:1). The truly amazing thing about this is that as far as we know, this is the only thing the apostles asked Jesus to teach them.

What was Jesus' response to this request? He certainly did not downplay their request or tell them they didn't need to be taught. He gave them a clear outline of what to pray in simple straightforward fashion. We often call this the Lord's Prayer, though it might better be named the Model Prayer, or the Disciples Prayer. Jesus knew that His disciples needed help in their prayer lives, so when they asked, He provided that help for them. He will for you, too!

Make me a person of prayer.

Praying about prayer can have several important aspects. The most basic request is for help to pray. "Make me a person of prayer" is that sort of foundational prayer. You are not so concerned about methods as simply the fact that you need to be praying. Making this sort of foundational request each day will build prayer into your life for the long term.

Ask for help praying about situations.

Building on this, we begin to ask God how to pray about certain issues or situations. This recognizes our own limitations and the need for God to step in, even to the shaping of our prayers.

The great promise of the Lord's help in this area is found in Romans: "In the same way, 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" (Romans 8:26). God does not leave us on our own to flail about. When we ask, He will even show us how to pray in a way that He can bring about the answer that will accomplish His purposes.

Action Step: Begin today with the most basic prayer of all: “Lord, make me a person of prayer.” Pray this every day.

–Dave Butts is the president of [Harvest Prayer Ministries](#) and the author and co-author of many articles and more than 10 books, including *Prayer, Peace and the Presence of God*.