



## “19 DAYS OF PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE FROM COVID-19”

### COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE: MARCH 22, 2020

*“Nothing disciplines the inordinate desires of the flesh like service,  
and nothing transforms the desires of the flesh like serving in hiddenness.”*

- Richard Foster, [Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth](#)

If our good friend Richard Foster is correct in his assertion that “nothing transforms the desires of the flesh like serving in hiddenness,” and I believe he is, then how might such a realization change the way that we approach Christian life and ministry in the midst of a global pandemic that requires us to limit public gatherings and practice social distancing?

During this season of Lent, as we make intentional efforts to more fully embrace the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, it would be good to remember that Jesus’ public ministry was inextricably tethered to his prayer closet. It was in the “hidden” places that he did some of his very best work. Over and over again, the gospel writers testify that it was “as he was praying” that Jesus was empowered to reveal the redemptive heart of God for this broken world. This may help explain the fact that, as far as we can tell, Jesus never taught his disciples how to preach, but he did teach them how to pray (cf. Lk 11:1-4).

So, we may ask, how might Jesus teach us to pray during this current COVID-19 crisis? In the model prayer that Jesus gave to his disciples, what we commonly refer to as “The Lord’s Prayer,” one of the central themes was a prayer for deliverance (“deliver us from evil”). Jesus clearly prayed this prayer on a regular basis, based on the fact that he continually devoted himself to delivering people from every manifestation of evil in our world, including demons, disease and death.

Call me crazy, but it seems self-evident that a virus which has already infected over 300,000 people worldwide, killing over 13,000 and leaving millions of others trapped in isolation and/or paralyzed by fear and anxiety, would tend to qualify as a legitimate form of evil. As one prominent epidemiologist recently declared, “This means war!”

Therefore, with the help of our friends and colleagues from [SIM \(Sudan Inland Mission\) International](#), I would like to offer the following recommended prayer points:

1. Heavenly Father, we pray for you to **intervene to stop the spread of the coronavirus**. We pray in Jesus’ name that the virus would recede and diminish from this day forward, and that the numbers of those infected would decline rapidly. We trust you, Lord, to intervene today with your loving care. (cf. [1 John 5:14](#))
2. We pray for those who are **sick**, that they will have access to the care and treatment they need. We pray peace and perseverance for them amidst suffering. We pray for those in isolation who are cut off from their normal routines and support systems, that they would seek their strength from you, Lord. We pray encouragement over the thousands in quarantine, waiting to find out if they have the virus or not. (cf. [Psalm 46:1](#))

3. We pray for the **health workers** who are caring for those with COVID-19. We pray for their protection from the virus, for stamina during long or intense work hours, and for safe protocols to be observed in healthcare institutions in order to keep them protected. We pray for health workers to seek you during this crisis. (cf. [Psalm 107:28](#))
4. We pray for **grieving families** who have lost loved ones to the coronavirus. Even as their hearts are breaking, we pray they would know your nearness and comfort. We pray that your compassion, Lord, would be felt through the Holy Spirit's ministry and through the ministry of friends and neighbors who come around them. We pray against despair; we pray new mercies every morning. (cf. [Philippians 4:6-7](#))
5. We pray for **pastors and elders** serving their churches and communities affected and infected by COVID-19. We pray that the Holy Spirit would give these shepherd leaders the right words for the right time and the right actions for the right situation. We pray they would speak your gospel in heart, word and deed to each person they are called to minister to. (cf. [James 5:14-16](#))
6. We pray for your **church** to be a light on a hill in the neighborhoods, hospitals, communities, and cities where you have placed them. We pray for an outpouring of love, compassion and service, in your name. (cf. [1 Corinthians 12:24-27](#))
7. We pray for **government officials and decision makers** who are leading countries and organizations through the crisis. We acknowledge you have allowed each one to be in a place of influence during this time. We pray they would mobilize resources quickly and effectively to where they are most urgently needed. We pray for all those working behind the scenes; we pray for the good administration and execution of response efforts worldwide. (cf. [Jeremiah 29:7](#))
8. We pray for **those waking up each day to fallout** caused by COVID-19, that they would reach out to you, Lord. We pray they would look earnestly for you, because we know their desire to seek you will have come from you, and we know you will meet them. We pray for those whose businesses and livelihoods are ruined by the halt in many sectors of the economy. We pray for those who may lose jobs and salaries. For each one, we pray new beginnings with you walking by their side. (cf. [Jeremiah 29:11-12](#))
9. We pray for **our missional co-workers worldwide** today, especially those serving in areas acutely impacted by COVID-19. We pray for wisdom for each ministry team to know how to carry out their responsibilities. We pray that ministries would not have to shut down, but that you would see fit that they are carried on through this difficult time, for your glory. (cf. [2 Corinthians 4:7-9](#))
10. We pray for **all those who live and die without the knowledge of Jesus** to hear about you through this crisis and respond to your love. We pray the gift of salvation for every man, woman and child around the world today, so that they will become our brothers and sisters in Christ. We are asking in your name for this gift to come out of this crisis. (cf. [2 Peter 3:9](#))

During these final days of Lent, as we prepare to celebrate the glorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday, an event which represents the ultimate answer to every prayer of deliverance throughout human history, I am inviting every member of our extended family of Friends here in Mid America to join me in a focused season of prayer by committing to pray for at least 19 minutes per day for a period of 19 days (March 24-April 12). Those who find value in practicing fixed hours of prayer throughout the day may want to add these prayer points to their daily office. Others may find benefit in incorporating the discipline of fasting as well. And many of our churches may want to make a practice of praying through these prayer points during small group gatherings throughout the week.

However we may be led to participate, may our "service of hiddenness" bring glory to God and healing to the nations as we engage together in **19 days of Prayer for Deliverance from COVID-19**.

- David O. Williams, Lead Superintendent