

Interactive Guide for Citywide Prayer Vigils



City by City, Church by Church, Child by Child

Praying Together for Children in Foster Care

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”

—Matthew 7: 7-8 NASB

Introduction

They number more than half a million. Some are babies. Some are nearly adults. Every city has them. They aren't obvious by the way they look, or even necessarily by the way they talk or act. You may very well have walked by one today without even suspecting it. They are our nation's foster children.

Children come into the United States foster care system for various reasons, including neglect, abuse, abandonment, and substance abuse by their primary caretakers. They are most often placed with complete strangers, and nearly every aspect of their lives is decided by adults who don't really know them.

The bottom line is this: these children are hurting deeply and they need prayer. Not only do they need prayer, but so do the adults in their lives—their birth families, their foster families, and their social workers.

Historically, the church has cared for children such as these out of obedience to God's repeated mandate to care for the marginalized. However, many Christians today are simply unsure of what they can do to make a difference. Perhaps the best place to start is on our knees, crying out to a Holy God on behalf of these precious little ones.

Why pray? Will praying really change anything for these kids? Can't we do more? Yes, of course we can do more than pray, but God can do infinitely more for them than we can ever dream of. When we pray, we find ourselves aligning our desires with His. If we humble ourselves and go before God, and make ourselves available to Him, we can and will see Him use us to reach foster children in ways we could never imagine. That is why we pray—to join God in His mission to redeem the lost and heal the broken.

The Word

Begin by praying through these and any other Scriptures God brings to mind:

Seek the LORD and His strength;

Seek His face continually.

*Remember His wonders which He has done,
His marvels and the judgments uttered
by His mouth. —Psalm 105:4-5 NIV*

Remember God's wonders and praise Him for the things that He has already done: the children you know who have been returned safely to their homes, the children you know who have been adopted, the faithful social workers He has provided, the believers He has gathered to intercede for and love these children as their own, and the growing movement among churches to act on behalf of the children in foster care.

When they had entered the city, they went up to the upper room where they were staying; that is, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. These all with one mind were continually devoting

themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers. —Acts 1:13-14 NASB

Pray that we would be diligent and steadfast in praying now and in the days and months to come for all involved in our foster care system. Pray that our hearts would be aligned with God's heart for our nation's most vulnerable children. Pray that we would be patient and open to whatever God calls us to do in relation to the system and those whom it serves.

My soul, wait in silence for God only,

For my hope is from Him.

He only is my rock and my salvation,

My stronghold; I shall not be shaken.

On God my salvation and my glory rest;

The rock of my strength,

my refuge is in God.

Trust in Him at all times, O people;

Pour out your heart before Him;

God is a refuge for us. —Psalm 62:5-8 NASB

Acknowledge God's sovereignty, His immovable nature, His trustworthiness. Ask Him to help us pour out our hearts to Him and to trust Him.

The Workers

1. Pray that God would raise up laborers to fill every void: judges, attorneys, guardians ad litem, social workers, court appointed special advocates (CASA), support staff, therapists, and others.
2. Pray that God would draw these workers to Himself, that their motivation might be rooted in the gospel and its ability to do the impossible and transform lives.
3. Pray that God would move more Christians to launch careers in the foster care system.
4. Pray that God would encourage our state's social workers and that they would not grow weary in doing good.
5. Pray that God would provide the environment necessary for our state's social workers to do the job to the best of their abilities.
6. Pray for the families of the workers, that the overwhelming realities they experience each day will not prevent them from giving 100 percent at home.
7. Pray that the workers will experience great joy in the midst of their difficult work.
8. Pray that the workers will seek justice for everyone involved.

The Families

1. Pray that God would draw foster children's biological families to Himself and that they would experience the life transformation that will allow them to parent their children well and with great wisdom.
2. Pray that God would intervene in the lives of other at-risk families and provide them with mentors who can help prevent the removal of their children in the first place.
3. Pray that God would raise up an army of godly foster parents who are equally committed to reunification and adoption when necessary, trusting God alone for the outcome He desires.
4. Pray for existing foster parents, that they would not lose heart and that they would be diligent in seeking justice for the children in their care.
5. Pray that potential adoptive families will step forward and not grow discouraged while waiting to become qualified to adopt our state's foster children.
6. Pray that families who have already adopted children from foster care would have wisdom and would experience God's grace as they parent their children.
7. Pray that foster families would have the ability to see these children as they see their own—as gifts from God that must be cared for in the best way they know how.

The Children

1. Pray that the children in the foster care system would come to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.
2. Pray that these children would experience God's love through the love and care given them by all involved in the system.
3. Pray that God would provide each of these children with a "forever family," either through their biological families or through adoption.
4. Pray that God would open doors to keep sibling groups intact or in contact with one another as they grow up.
5. Pray that God would prepare the hearts of these children to be ready for the family He will provide for them.
6. Pray that God would heal the deep hurts these children have experienced.
7. Pray that God would protect these children from future harm.
8. Pray that God would transform the children's lives and hearts and that they would be able to forgive those who have wronged them.
9. Pray for the hundreds of thousands of young adults in our country who have "aged out" of the system, that they might still find a Christian family to forever call theirs and that they would come to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

The Church

1. Pray that God would raise up people in many churches throughout our city to launch ministries for orphans and waiting children.
2. Pray that many of these ministries would, as part of their mission, become engaged with the foster care system.
3. Pray that more and more church leaders would respond to the needs in foster care and would actively engage in the system.
4. Pray that believers all over the state would be consumed with compassion for the children in foster care, and would make themselves available for how God wants to use them.
5. Pray that believers in our state would be unified in Christ and that our unity around this issue would draw others to Him.
6. Ask God what He would have us do in the future in relation to the foster care system and the children it serves.

Going Further

The time of prayer you have just experienced may only be the beginning of how God wants to use you to speak up for a hurting child.

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves ... —Proverbs 31:8a NIV

Visit www.fostercareprayervigil.org to:

- Share your story of how God used this prayer vigil in your city.
- Learn more about caring for hurting children in a variety of ways.
- Download step-by-step instructions on how to host your own foster care prayer vigil.
- Order additional copies of this prayer guide.

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