

the national prayer  
day of task force  
Resource  
Manual

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Dear Friend,

Thank you so much for your interest in becoming a volunteer for the National Day of Prayer Task Force. Knowing that you are busy and have many pressures that impinge upon your time, we deeply appreciate your willingness to consider "pitching your tent" with us. God has assembled an elite force for this endeavor. Our team is made up of extremely dedicated men and women who love and serve Jesus Christ and who have a heartfelt belief that prayer is the only hope for our country. Through their efforts, a covering of intercession blankets our entire culture - a "prayer shield" that is critical at this juncture when America faces turmoil within and grave threats from without. As our Task Force works to achieve the divine purposes to which we are called, we'd be encouraged to have you join us.



To determine your personal and spiritual qualifications for this service, we would ask that you fill out the enclosed questionnaire. This process will help us, as well as you, decide if this commitment is right for you. May The lord lead you as you prayerfully reply - and may God bless America!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shirley".

Mrs. James C. Dobson (Shirley)  
Chairman, NDP Task Force

# The History of National Day of Prayer



Because of the faith of many of our founding fathers, public prayer and national days of prayer have a long-standing and significant history in American tradition. The Supreme Court affirmed the right of state legislatures to open their sessions with prayer in *Marsh vs. Chambers* (1983).

The National Day of Prayer is a vital part of our heritage. Since the first call to prayer in 1775, when the Continental Congress asked the colonies to pray for wisdom in forming a nation, the call to prayer has continued through our history, including President Lincoln's proclamation of a day of "humiliation, fasting, and prayer" in 1863. In 1952, a joint resolution by Congress, signed by President Truman, declared an annual, national day of prayer. In 1988, the law was amended and signed by President Reagan, permanently setting the day as the first Thursday of every May. Each year, the president signs a proclamation, encouraging all Americans to pray on this day. Last year, all 50 state governors plus the governors of several U.S. territories signed similar proclamations.

## **The National Day of Prayer is Significant**

The National Day of Prayer has great significance for us as a nation. It enables us to recall and to teach the way in which our founding fathers sought the wisdom of God when faced with critical decisions. It stands as a call to us to humbly come before God, seeking His guidance for our leaders and His grace upon us as a people. The unanimous passage of the bill establishing the National Day of Prayer as an annual event, signifies that prayer is as important to our nation today as it was in the beginning.

Like Thanksgiving or Christmas, this day has become a national observance placed on all Hallmark calendars and observed annually across the nation and in Washington, D.C. Last year, local, state and federal observances were held from sunrise in Maine to sunset in Hawaii, uniting Americans from all socio-economic, political and ethnic backgrounds in prayer for our nation. It is estimated that more than two million people attended more than 40,000 observances organized by approximately 40,000 volunteers. At state capitols, county court houses, on the steps of city halls, and in schools, businesses, churches and homes, people stopped their activities and gathered for prayer.

## **The National Day of Prayer is Ours**

The National Day of Prayer belongs to all Americans. It is a day that transcends differences, bringing together citizens from all backgrounds. Mrs. Shirley Dobson, NDP chairman, reminds us: "We have lost many of our freedoms in America because we have been asleep. I feel if we do not become involved and support the annual National Day of Prayer, we could end up forfeiting this freedom, too."

## **History Summary**

**1775** - The first Continental Congress called for a National Day of Prayer

**1863** - Abraham Lincoln called for such a day.

**1952** - Congress established NDP as an annual event by a joint resolution, signed into law by President Truman.

**1988** - The law was amended and signed by President Reagan, designating the NDP as the first Thursday in May.

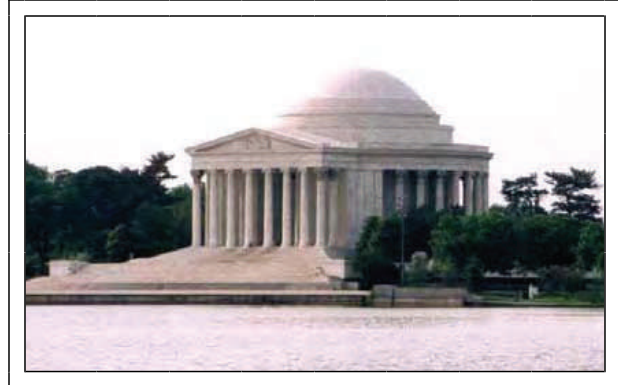
# Who We Are

## Mission

The National Day of Prayer Task Force's mission is to communicate with every individual the need for personal repentance and prayer, mobilizing the Christian community to intercede for America and its leadership in the seven centers of power: Government, Military, Media, Business, Education, Church and Family.

## Our Vision and Values

In accordance with Biblical truth, the National Day of Prayer Task Force seeks to:  
Foster unity within the Christian Church  
Protect America's Constitutional Freedoms to gather, worship, pray and speak freely.  
Publicize and preserve America's Christian heritage  
Encourage and emphasize prayer, regardless of current issues and positions  
Respect all people, regardless of denomination or creed  
Be wise stewards of God's resources and provision  
Glorify the Lord in word and deed



## Who We Are and What We Do

The National Day of Prayer is an annual observance held on the first Thursday of May, inviting people of all faiths to pray for the nation. It was created in 1952 by a joint resolution of the United States Congress, and signed into law by President Harry S. Truman. Our Task Force is a privately funded organization whose purpose is to encourage participation on the National Day of Prayer. It exists to communicate with every individual the need for personal repentance and prayer, to create appropriate materials, and to mobilize the Christian community to intercede for America's leaders and its families. The Task Force represents a Judeo-Christian expression of the national observance, based on our understanding that this country was birthed in prayer and in reverence for the God of the Bible.

## Official Policy Statement on Participation of "Non-Judeo-Christian" groups in the National Day of Prayer:

The National Day of Prayer Task Force was a creation of the National Prayer Committee for the expressed purpose of organizing and promoting prayer observances conforming to a Judeo-Christian system of values. People with other theological and philosophical views are, of course, free to organize and participate in activities that are consistent with their own beliefs. This diversity is what Congress intended when it designated the Day of Prayer, not that every faith and creed would be homogenized, but that all who sought to pray for this nation would be encouraged to do so in any way deemed appropriate. It is that broad invitation to the American people that led, in our case, to the creation of the Task Force and the Judeo-Christian principles on which it is based.

# Answers to Common Questions

## What is the National Day of Prayer?

The National Day of Prayer was established as an annual event in 1952 by a joint resolution of the United States Congress and signed into law by President Harry S. Truman. The observance of the National Day of Prayer is founded on the constitutional rights of freedom of speech and freedom of religion and can be celebrated by all Americans.

## What is the NDP Task Force and what is its purpose?

The NDP Task Force concentrates on the need to pray for the well-being of America and for those in leadership on all levels of national, church and educational areas of influence. The National Day of Prayer is observed on the first Thursday of May

each year.

### **When did the NDP begin?**

Days of prayer have been called for since 1775, when the Continental Congress designated a time for prayer in forming a new nation. In 1863, Abraham Lincoln called for such a day. Officially, the NDP was established as an annual event by an act of Congress in 1952 and was signed into law by President Truman. President Reagan amended the law in 1988, designating the first Thursday of May each year as the NDP.

### **Is the NDP exclusively a Christian event?**

No. This government-proclaimed day is offered to all Americans, regardless of religion, to celebrate their faith through prayer. However, the efforts of the NDP Task Force are executed specifically in accordance with its Judeo-Christian beliefs.

### **Is the NDP a political event?**

No. The National Day of Prayer, as designated by our government, belongs to all Americans. It is not sponsored or owned by any one group. Every American can observe the NDP in his or her own way. Each year, the President issues a proclamation in support of this significant day.

### **Who is behind the NDP Task Force?**

The Chairman is Mrs. Shirley Dobson, who has held the position since 1991. Mrs. Dobson volunteers her time and does not receive a salary. The NDP Task Force consists of a full-time staff and a network of thousands of grassroots volunteers nationwide. Prior to Mrs. Dobson's involvement, the Task Force was led by Mrs. Vonette Bright, wife of former Campus Crusade for Christ president and founder Bill Bright.

### **Is the Task Force affiliated with Focus on the Family?**

No. Though Mrs. Dobson is married to Focus on the Family board chairman and founder Dr. James Dobson, the NDP Task Force is a separate organization. It is housed in the Focus on the Family headquarters for convenience, so long as Mrs. Dobson remains the Chairman. Its business affairs are separate and Focus on the Family is compensated for services rendered. However, between 1990 and 1993, Focus on the Family did provide grants in support of the NDP Task Force. Since then, the Task Force has been completely self-supported.

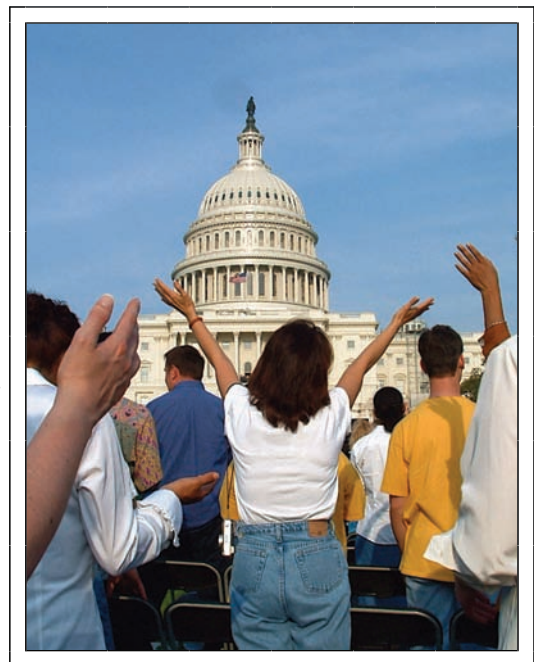
### **What kinds of events are planned?**

The most visible gathering has been held historically at our nation's Capitol in Washington, D.C. on the first Thursday of May. The executive, legislative and judicial branches of government are represented, as well as the military. In addition, Christian leaders address the current year's theme and other areas of interest (i.e. education, youth, families, etc.).

In 2008, approximately 40,000 events were held nationwide. Local volunteers and coordinators held a variety of activities ranging from prayer breakfasts, Bible reading marathons, concerts of prayer, rallies, church prayer vigils, student flagpole gatherings and observances held in sports stadiums. In addition, Christian leaders address the current year's theme and other areas of interest (i.e. education, youth, families, etc.).

### **What is the National Day of Prayer Sunday?**

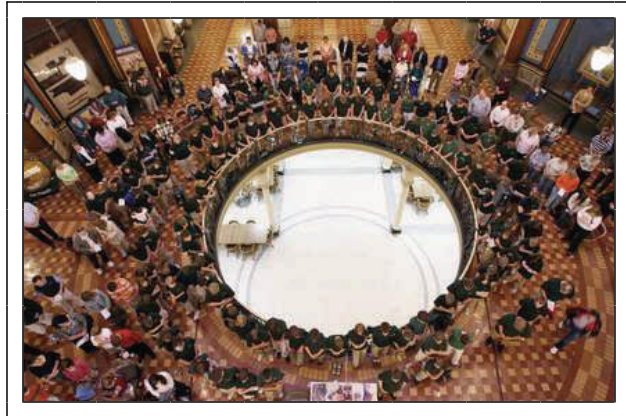
The Sunday before NDP, in Churches around the nation, when 40 million Christians come together to worship, the Task Force is encouraging groups to take seven minutes to pray for the Seven Centers of Power (pray one minute each for these 7 centers of influence: government, military, media, business, education, church and family). Pray for renewal in our hearts and repentance to come to America. Why not claim this Sunday as NDP Sunday, forever, in your church! This can kick off whatever the churches and NDP coordinators want to do during the week, on up to the day of celebration and declaration on NDP Thursday.



# Answers to Common Legal Questions

**Q: Can we meet in a public area such as courthouse steps, public libraries or office buildings?**

A: If public meeting rooms are available to citizens for discussion of public issues, then they are available for religious activity. In the case of *Lamb's Chapel vs. Center Moriches Union Free School District*, June 7, 1993, a unanimous decision overturned a ruling by the Second U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. A New York school district had disallowed the use of the school district's facilities for the showing of a Christian film. The Supreme Court upheld the right of freedom of speech in a public arena.



**Q: Can my child organize a prayer event at his/her school?**

A: Yes. In *Tinker vs. Des Moines Independent School District*, 393 U.S. 503, 506, 512, 513 (1969) the United States Supreme Court stated, "It can hardly be argued that either students or teachers shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate. [Students' rights apply] in the cafeteria, or on the playing field, or on campus during authorized hours . . ." The following excerpt written by John W Whitehead in his book *The Rights of Religious Persons in Public Schools* adds even more clarification to the issue of prayer in school:

1. Children may pray as they walk to and from school, before they actually reach school property.
2. Children may pray on school buses to the extent that they are not disruptive.
3. Students may pray in their vehicles when they have parked in the school parking lot.
4. If students are allowed to gather and talk informally in the parking lot when arriving at or leaving from the school, then they may pray together.
5. Before actual class times and during recesses, students may pray both individually and in groups insofar as other expression among students is allowed. However, if the school has a rule against all fraternization in the hallways, then group prayer would be susceptible to regulations.
6. If students generally are permitted to gather with their friends during lunch and converse in a non-disruptive manner, then students may gather and pray during lunch.
7. School athletes and participants in other extra-curricular activities, may gather and pray together prior to the official start of practice or other activities.

**Q: During our event, those other than of the Judeo-Christian beliefs want to participate in our NDP event. What are our legal obligations?**

A: Our official policy states: "The National Day of Prayer was created by an act of Congress and is therefore intended for all peoples of faith to pray to the God of their understanding. However, our expression of that involvement is specifically limited to the Judeo-Christian heritage and to those who share that conviction. If peoples of other faith wish to celebrate in their own tradition, they are welcome to do so, but we must be true to those who have supported this effort and volunteered their time to promote it. National Day of Prayer is not a function of the government and therefore, a particular expression of it can be defined by those who choose to organize it. It is not a church/state issue."

**Q: What is the NDP Task Force's affiliation with Focus on the Family?**

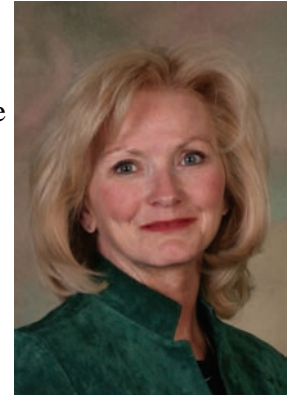
A: The NDP Task Force is a separate organization from Focus on the Family. It is housed at Focus on the Family for convenience as long as Mrs. Dobson remains the Chairman. Its business affairs are separate.

## A Note from the Director of Prayer Mobilization

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Dear Prayer Coordinators,

Our nation has seen great advancements in the world of science. We have found cures for many illnesses that were fatal in previous centuries. We have flown men to the moon and back. We can communicate with nearly every corner of this world. Great change has also happened during this century to our schools and to our government. We have more abundance than any nation has ever had financially, physically and in opportunities for education. However, in all our advances, we must remember to whom we owe these blessings. We must never forget that it is God who has blessed this great country.



Each year, after the National Day of Prayer, we hear of many people who have accepted the Lord and recommitted their lives to the only hope that can truly transform and change us, Jesus Christ. Youth prayer events have become effective in giving our future leaders the vision of what the Lord would have them do and the life He would have them lead. Pastors and racial communities have gathered as one nation of people under God and, in this time of humility and prayer, put aside their differences and committed to join hands as co-laborers in a unified cause.

It is, therefore, my deepest desire to see each of you make a difference through the powerful impact of prayer for our clergy leaders, national leaders, neighbors and for every person the Lord puts in our paths. Our nation has a church on almost every corner, and yet many do not know their Lord. Even though we may be discouraged by the events that have been great wounds in the pages of America's history, we must not and cannot neglect to pray for the people of this country. We have lost too many young people to violence in the past few years. We have lost too many babies due to legislation that permits legal abortions. We have allowed bills that are ungodly to be passed. God's people must awake and reclaim this country for Him.

We must pray for the Lord, who inspired and led our early leaders, to again place that passion in our hearts to reclaim the land that God has given us. In this next century, may we Americans be bold in our faith and our prayers. Let us pray earnestly to see His will accomplished for the people of this nation.

Galatians 6:9 tells us, *“And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.”* Let us not be discouraged, but instead remember the One we serve. His desire is for us to be a light to this world.

I thank the Lord for each one of you. I pray His richest blessings upon you for your unselfish efforts for the kingdom. God bless you!

In Christ,

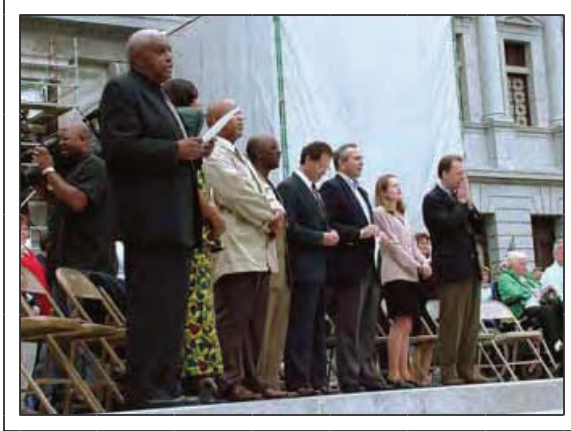
Lisa Crump

*Director of Prayer Mobilization*

# Volunteers and Coordinators

## The Impact of Prayer

Each year we hear reports from all over the country of what God has accomplished through the prayers of His people. In jails, reports have come in telling about hundreds of men and women repenting and turning their hearts toward God. In elementary schools around the United States, lonely children and busy teachers have been touched by the healing power of prayer— some for the first time in their lives. One prayer event united 27 different churches together under one roof. We even know of a hospital chaplain who prayed for every hurting patient, one by one. From coast to coast, racial barriers and denominational differences have been overcome by the transforming hope in our Creator.



Each state has success stories. NDPTF coordinators believe they are seeing growth in unity among churches and races and a budding revival in our nation. Reports of spiritual awakening are arriving from coast to coast. As people prayed on bridges, from airplanes, in council chambers, from courthouse steps,

and in businesses, schools, parks and other public places, people's hearts were unmistakably changed.

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## National Day of Prayer Volunteer Coordinator Program Commitment

- I. We would hope that each coordinator would maintain active involvement in a local church body as we believe this should be a person's first ministry priority.
- II. In both public and private life, we ask that you demonstrate the commitment you have made to Jesus Christ in the following areas: spiritual maturity, emotional stability, healthy personal relationships, financial responsibility, and a stable living situation.
- III. We would request that coordinators adhere to the guidelines and philosophy that undergirds the National Day of Prayer Task Force. As a Judeo-Christian expression of the National Day of Prayer, our mission is to provide support and resources that enable the planning of and participation in events that reflect these beliefs. If other people of other faiths wish to celebrate in their own traditions, they are welcome to do so.
- IV. We would ask that you set aside sufficient time for the work of the NDP Task Force in your state. This commitment varies greatly depending upon the number of our volunteers who report to you the activities planned.
- V. It is our desire that each volunteer would be dedicated to the teamwork model of the NDP Task Force and to the completion of their assigned duties. Our Task Force staff provides ongoing support and information and in return requests that volunteers agree to specific tasks and time schedules so that we can ensure successful events in May.
- VI. We would hope that the new volunteers joining us would share in the legacy of those before them who would have shown a passionate devotion to advancing Christ's Kingdom and the cause of prayer in our nation. As true volunteers, those who partner with us have earned our great admiration for their sacrificial

work. They are the backbone of our ministry and labor diligently for God's glory, without any expectation of early pay, recognition, or compensation.

VII. Volunteer Coordinators agree to utilize and follow copyright usage of the NDP Task Force promotional materials to 1) perpetuate the annual theme and national media opportunities and 2) ensure a strong, consistent Christian message throughout the nation and 3) ensure that NDP activities will be conducted solely by Christians while those with differing beliefs are welcome to attend.

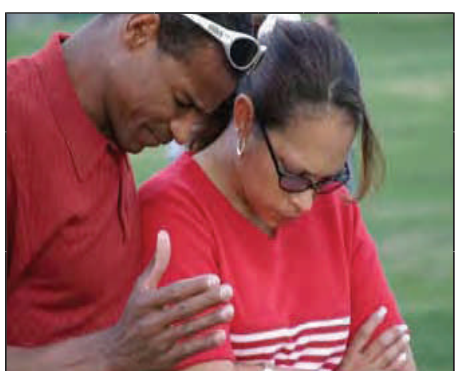
VIII. The National Day of Prayer Task Force regards this volunteer relationship as a mutual one that can be terminated at any time by either party without notice and without cause.

## Voluntary Resignation

If you plan to discontinue your involvement with NDP, you are requested to notify the your State Coordinator and the National NDP Task Force office as far in advance as possible.

### Pray Through the Scriptures

Often we can't see any change in our nation—some say it is growing darker. The political rhetoric continues on and on. As volunteer coordinators it's easy to get discouraged and wonder if our prayers make a difference at all. Pray all volunteers will:



- Trust in God for their results of their efforts and always ask for His leading - Proverbs 3:5-6
- Be glad in their work for God - Psalm 92:4
- Not be discouraged by the evil of the world but press on - Proverbs 24:19
- Focus on the peace of God and do not be anxious about anything - Philippians 4:6-8

Themed resources encourage national consistency of message and also assist in media efforts directed toward theme (brand) recognition. We encourage you to check out the NDPTF Store at [www.NationalDayofPrayer.org](http://www.NationalDayofPrayer.org)

As a volunteer representative of the National Day of Prayer Task Force, you need to be a positive witness in every way by being courteous and considerate of others, professional in your dress and prayerful in your presentation of the program.

### Working together as a team strengthens everyone's efforts and success.

**Your State Coordinator** appoints the area, county, city and coordinator positions to give structure and local support to coordinators as they work to call their communities to prayer. If you don't know your State Coordinator, you can get contact information by calling our office.

To see job descriptions for those positions please review the updated "NDPTF Coordinator Responsibilities" on Coordinator web page at [www.ndptf.org/coordinators/updates](http://www.ndptf.org/coordinators/updates).

Your state coordinator is your first line of information, training, and encouragement and has oversight of all coordinators in your state. Your State Coordinator will pray with you, support your efforts, and put you in contact with other coordinators near you.

We encourage you to consider attending the Annual NDPTF Prayer Summit held the third weekend of October each year on the beautiful Focus on the Family campus in Colorado Springs, CO. It is an opportunity to pray with fellow volunteers, network and be encouraged and refreshed.

Additionally, resource material with the current year's theme material will be available on the Web site as soon as Jan. 1 each year.

## Answering the Call

National Day of Prayer coordinators are expected to have a basic knowledge of the organization, its ministry, its history and its purposes.

- as an NDP coordinator, you have been called as a representative of Judeo-Christian beliefs. This embraces:
- a daily place of quiet intimacy with God
- a recognition that your calling will be confirmed by the ones God has placed in authority over you (your pastor and spouse)
- a call upon faithful friends to be a prayer shield for you as you step out in the ministry of prayer
- a willingness to allow God to reveal His creative plan for your observance
- confidence that “whom God has called, God equips”

Additionally, as an NDP coordinator, you have been called as a representative of the national ministry.

## Values

We are committed to building a volunteer program which:

- exemplifies God-like service in pursuit of our purpose and mission.
- Operates with integrity.
- Demonstrates a servant's heart.
- Upholds a high standard of performance.
- Represents God to a watching world.

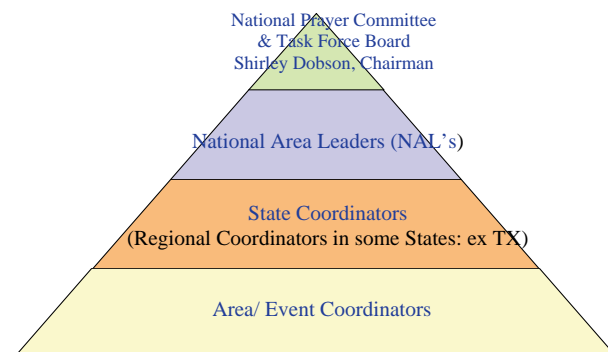


## Our Commitment to Coordinators

The National Day of Prayer Task Force understands that there are a variety of levels of public contact and opportunities for speaking on behalf of the ministry. Such contacts can range from a casual media inquiry to a formal request for a press release or a position paper on a particular topic. Coordinators are encouraged to remain sensitive to misconceptions which can be formed by the public, who may not discern when an individual associated with NDP is merely expressing a personal opinion rather than a corporate policy. The Task Force provides this ministry spokesperson policy: the official “clearinghouse” for position statements and press releases is the NDP Task Force. Any question regarding the wisdom or protocol of discussing an issue with an outside contact should be directed to NDP national office.

The Task Force is also committed to:

- Recruiting state/regional, area coordinators and event sponsors to plan and facilitate local events
- Hosting an annual Coordinator’s Conference with additional training to better equip coordinators
- Providing resources for religious or community groups wishing to participate in events related to the National Day of Prayer
- Coordinating a national media campaign leading up to the day, which helps raise awareness of the benefits of uniting together in prayer.
- Maintaining an “open door” policy by hearing new ideas, observations and suggestions from coordinators
- Providing organizational structure to meet the needs of a growing coordinator network. Coordinators will be working with a State Coordinator, National Area Leader, and National Coordinator Manager who all help to provide clarification of what is expected in coordinator roles.



# First Steps for a New Coordinator



**Step 1** Determine the type of event you intend to coordinate: Review event planning sections in this Resource Manual to find the one specific to your interest.

- Pray about your decision.
- Consider pulling a team together to help you. (Read Building an NDP team)

**Step 2** Contact your State Coordinator (if you haven't already) if you have any questions after your reviewed this resource manual. They may also put you in touch with others in your area.

**Step 3** Plan and Promote your event

- Consider writing letters to local public officials inviting them to your community observance, listing time, location and speakers. Let them know someone will personally be praying for them. Include both NDP and Adopt A Leader with your correspondence.
- Promote your event, see the Media section of this manual or the Media/Marketing tools on the Web site for more info.
- Consider having a Bible Reading Marathon, or using the Adopt-a-Leader kit in conjunction with your event.
- Compile a list to distribute during your event of national, state, and local public officials. NDP Prayer Guides are helpful for this effort.

**Step 4** Submit your Event Report

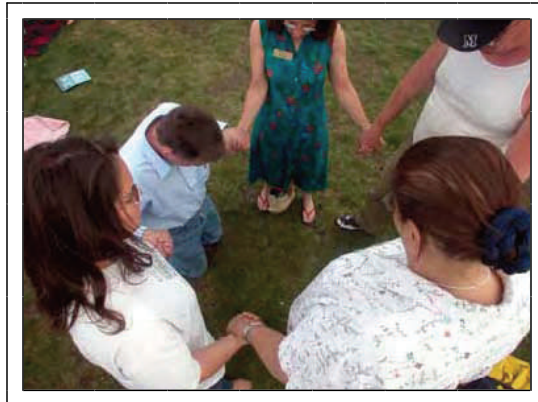
- Submit your report to the National Day of Prayer Task Force, **online at** [www.NationalDayofPrayer.org](http://www.NationalDayofPrayer.org). Information about your events and stories about God's impact resulting from prayer are important for broadcasts and for other coordinators' use.

# Building an NDP Team

Prayer is the key to building your National Day of Prayer Event team. Since your goal is to find committed praying Christians, ask the Lord to bring divine appointments with others that share this common passion.

- Identify who you will need for your NDP event –For example... you will need someone to promote your event in the local media, call, visit and invite local churches to participate, display posters throughout your town, head up speaker and music recruitment, be responsible for invitation letters, thank you notes to speakers, arrange for audio-visual equipment and someone to operate it, etc.
- Another great way to find support for your event is by speaking to local prayer and church groups about the National Day of Prayer and its importance. There may be an opportunity for you to present the vision of NDP at Christian conferences in your city. You may want to ask if you can have an NDP information booth and provide brochures, information and a Coordinator Signup Sheet to recruit new prayer Coordinators. This is a great way to increase prayer in your state.
- Write up a specific job description for positions needed. The more clearly you can identify your candidate and the talents you are looking for, the more likely you will be to get the right person to head up this task.
- Look within your church first. Often your church prayer ministry will yield those who already have a heart and passion for the importance of prayer for our nation. You may also want to contact other prayer groups from local churches to add to your team.

**Encourage and lead your team.**



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## Financial Info

### Donations

The National Day of Prayer Task Force is a project of the National Prayer Committee. We operate under their 501 (c) (3) non-profit status. We cannot allow other groups and/or individuals which are not under our direct, day-to-day control to use that designation.

When you accept donations for NDP related to expenses in your area you must make certain the donors are aware the money is to be used locally and not for the NDP Task Force office in Colorado Springs, Colo. Checks need to be made out accordingly, (e.g. Alabama NDP Task Force) not to the National Day of Prayer

(NDP) Task Force.

1. Contact your State Coordinator to determine if there is a State or local committee that can accept donations for you.

2. Ask your own church for permission to have donations given to them, with specific instructions that the money would be used to promote the National Day of Prayer in your area. The organization would then write you a check for the designated amount and receipt the donor for you. Of course, the decision to do this is at their discretion.

3. An additional alternative would be to apply for a 501 (c) (3) status for your organization. You may wish to check with your local IRS office to learn of the steps required. Remember you would need your organization name to be something other than the National Day of Prayer or NDP Task Force to eliminate confusion for the donor.

Prayerfully consider the alternatives to handling money donated for your use in promoting the National Day of Prayer in your area of responsibility.



## Insurance Info

You may be asked to provide liability insurance for your event, especially if it's a public event where you are required to get a permit to have an event. Please note, the National Day of Prayer Task Force cannot provide this insurance for you. Should you need to obtain insurance you may want to see if you can put your event under the umbrella of a local church or ministry organization that can provide insurance for you. Event insurance can be expensive, however you can check with insurers in your area for event insurance or even with your homeowners insurance if you have a home business.

If obtaining insurance is a problem, consider finding an alternative site for your event.

As always your State Coordinator may be a resource for you in matters of fund raising, donations and event insurance.

## Incorporation and 501 (c) (3) status

Setting up a nonprofit organization is fairly complex. If after consideration, you believe incorporation best suits your needs we strongly suggest you consult with a local attorney who specializes in the formation of nonprofit ministry organizations, an accounting firm which specializes in nonprofit ministries and you put yourself under the authority of a local church or board (which you will have to establish) for accountability in all spiritual and business matters. You may wish to contact the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (EFCA) for further guidance.

# Events Planning Section

## Sample of Event Types:

- **Community (planning guide pg. 15-16)**
  - ⇒ Examples of Community Events include:
    - Observances in homes
    - Offices/ workplace
    - the local YMCA
    - Prayer Breakfasts with local officials
    - Observances at the County Courthouse, City Hall, Town Plaza or Park, Sports Stadium or amphitheater
    - Prayer walk
    - Children's event
  
- **Church (planning guide page 17-18)**
  - ⇒ Examples of Church Events include:
    - Concert of Prayer
    - Prayer Meeting
    - Prayer Walk
    - Solemn Assembly
    - 24 hour open church/prayer time
    - Multiple churches participating in single event
    - Pray over civil servants/fire fighters etc.
  
- **Schools -See Separate School Resource Guide available on the Web site.**  
[\(http://www.ndptf.org/coordinators/venues/\)](http://www.ndptf.org/coordinators/venues/)

Plan on attending your state/regional training meeting hosted by your State Coordinator and/or National Area Leader to network.

Check out the Web site for events already posted around the country or use the Coordinator Blog and review the online Guides.

Look for the detailed event report available in June on the Web site for creative ideas and suggestions for what worked well.

# Sample Community Event Planning Timeline

## January

- Review and purchase needed **NDP Event Materials**. Gather a group to begin planning event and delegate responsibilities. Decide on who you would like for keynote speakers. You may want to ask your mayor, governor, senators or local officials if they would be available. Invite representatives of local denominations to take part in your event. Make reservations for your public event which should include location, time, date and length of program. You should also let them know your expected electrical needs.
- Once you have decided on your keynote speakers, first make your request and invitation by phone, then follow up with a letter which would give them date, time and location for your event. Pray for each other daily and for God to move in this event. Form a phone tree.

## February

- Meet with your team to review program progress and responsibilities. Think out your presentation and your possible needs for: a video player, overhead projector with transparencies, television, tape or CD player, speakers, podium, microphones, etc. Ask your mayor for a proclamation for the National Day of Prayer.
- Invite the media to have a public signing if possible. Call your local VFW, Scouts, American Legion or military and invite them to participate in presenting the colors.

## March

- Begin Advertising your local event. Consider getting permission to display **NDP theme art/posters** with time and location in public places such as supermarkets, bus stops and public buildings.
- **Post your Event details on the NDPTF Web Site Map**

## April

- Early in April, begin displaying **NDP posters** and notices. Early in April, mail your speakers, participants and musicians a program with scheduled appearances noted. Meet with your team to verify program plans for NDP event. Review who is responsible for what and assign jobs for those needs not yet filled.
- Mid April, call and reconfirm your keynote speakers with date, time and location of your event and when they will be speaking. Review audiovisual needs with those who are supplying them and confirm time needed.
- *Review the Media Section in the **NDP Resource Manual and Media Resources on the Web Site** (in News and Information) and inform media of your event date, time and location.*

## May

### Before NDP

- Meet with your team for a last-minute review of needs and who will be filling those needs.
- Reconfirm the area you reserved for your event.

### After NDP

- Send thank-you notes to your team, keynotes speakers, public officials, volunteers and anyone who assisted in making your NDP event a success.
- Submit your event report online at [www.ndptf.org/coordinators](http://www.ndptf.org/coordinators) and send a short email report to your State Coordinator about your event.

Note– this timeline is for guidance only. Events can take longer to plan or come together more quickly. If you are reading this in March– or even April it’s still possible to pull together a community prayer event.

## More Suggestions for your Community Events

- Host a neighborhood dessert potluck at your home and enjoy a time of prayer for the community.
  - Have a prayer station at the YMCA.
  - Encourage local residents to tie red, white and blue ribbons on car antennas beginning in late April to announce NDP.
  - Get local bankers to advertise NDP on their marquee signs. Ask for permission to hang NDP banners from main street light poles (local businessmen may help cover the costs if asked).
  - Bring fresh flower arrangements to the offices of local officials with a card commemorating NDP.
  - For an inexpensive large banner, obtain a photographer's backdrop. After you have finished painting and decorating it, put clear contact paper over it, fold the top edge down for a rope channel and you're all set to hang it in a prominent place.
  - In March or April, have an NDP information booth at a community fair. Give away prizes, such as an NDP Stickers, NDP Bookmark, etc. Also, have a sign-up list for anyone willing to help on your local organizing committee.
  - At your local observance, have a senior citizen give testimony of a long life spent walking with the Lord and how prayer has affected his or her life.
  - Ask local cable access TV stations to provide coverage of your event and notify nursing homes, hospitals and other places where people are "shut in" of how they can view that coverage.
  - Use Chicago's "Prayer Points" idea in large cities for people who can't attend a group prayer event. They stationed people at downtown intersections with an NDP sign and invited them to stop for a moment to pray for the country and our leaders.
  - Have someone recite the Pledge of Allegiance in Spanish or other appropriate languages depending on the people groups in your area. This may be particularly effective with a naturalized citizen, especially when combined with a testimony from that person about the blessings of living in America.
  - Begin your observance with a rabbi or cantor from your local synagogue sounding the shofar, the traditional Jewish ram's horn used to call the people to prayer.
  - Hold observances at state capitols, the steps of county courthouses and city halls, major plazas and parks, sports stadiums or outdoor amphitheatres. Gather a committee to help with all the details such as sound equipment, program and advertising/promotion. Remember to obtain the necessary permission and permits well in advance of the first Thursday in May. Use the NDP Program Covers (and ask a local printer to donate the printing).
  - Organize a "ring around the (courthouse, city hall)" event. Completely encircle the building with participants holding hands to pray for God's direction and blessing on all that goes on within the building.
  - Organize a candlelight vigil at the state capitol and march around the entire state complex. The prayer walk can be led by various intercessors who pray at different locations throughout the walk.
  - Use the NDP Adopt-a-Leader program to "adopt" a city, county, state or federal official and commit to praying for that person for one year. Send a note to the official stating that you'll be keeping them in prayer on a regular basis throughout the coming year. Communicate regularly with your official to remind him/her of your commitment and ask for specific prayer requests.
  - Ask local businesses to sponsor an ad for the National Day of Prayer on grocery or shopping bags.
  - Contact an area printer for a donation of posters and programs for your event. Ask restaurants to use NDP place mats on their tables during the week of National Day of Prayer.
  - Invite a local high school band to perform at your National Day of Prayer observance. A color guard, composed of area military personnel or Boy/Girl Scouts, could present the colors at your community event. Let the Scouts know that their participation in the event will help fulfill the requirements for the "God and Country" badge.
  - Invite local veterans and active duty military personnel in your community to an observance honoring them specifically. This could be held at the community's veterans' memorial. Chaplains, military bands and honor guards can be included in the program.
  - Write a letter to local public officials inviting them to your community observance, listing time, location and speakers. Let them know they will personally be prayed for. If they are unable to attend, ask for specific prayer requests. Include both an NDP History Sheet and an Adopt-a-Leader Brochure with your correspondence.
  - Contact advertising companies for a donation of space on city bus advertisements.
  - Call your local cable television or newspaper and ask that a notice of your local National Day of Prayer observance be included in their community calendar. Generally, this is a free service.
  - Contact nearby prison chaplains and encourage them to plan a National Day of Prayer observance for the inmates. Better yet, ask the chaplains to encourage the inmates to organize the observance themselves. Make NDP Posters available for them to post on bulletin boards.
  - Ask if an NDP observance can be held at a local juvenile home. Bring a group to the home to pray for God's will in the lives of these young people, for reconciliation with their families and for His direction in their futures. Pass out NDP Bookmarks to the residents.
  - Put together small groups at the rest stops along interstate and major highways in your state. Create signs to direct anyone wishing to join the group to pray while they stop. Hand out NDP Stickers.
- Contact hospitals in your city and request that a small card be placed on patient trays at lunchtime on the National Day of Prayer. Create table tents.

# Church Event Planning Timeline

## January or February

- Pray for God to direct your pastor and cover you and all those involved as a team is selected.
- Call a meeting to review and plan your event with your coordinators and assistants. Check out church resources on the Web site.
- Review and determine responsibilities of each person and assign tasks.
- Review service and create an event outline.
- Contact and book guest speakers, religious leaders, civic leaders, Boy Scouts, etc. Arrange a good mix of ethnic speakers and pastors from various denominations.
- Order/create any NDP Event Resources from the Web Store or Catalog.
- Post your church event on the Web Site event map.

## March or Early April

- Pray for workers, speakers and souls to be changed.
- Contact local media, TV, radio and newspapers and provide them with a news release or public service announcement of your event date, time, and location. Review the Media section of this guide and check out resources on the media page of the Web site.
- Print the National Day of Prayer Program outline for your event.
- Invite the media to attend.
- Use bulletin inserts and program covers to promote your event.
- Provide weekly announcement in bulletin of upcoming event.
- Review everyone's duties.
- Be in prayer for everyone involved.

## May and June

- Pray God's blessing on the event and everyone involved.
- Celebrate your National Day of Prayer event.
- Thank everyone who helped plan/implement the event
- Submit your event report [online at www.ndptf.org/coordinators](http://www.ndptf.org/coordinators)

### A Believer's Responsibility

Our nation was founded on godly principals by men and women who were seeking freedom from religious persecution. Because of their commitment to establish a nation under God, and their dedication to follow His leading, our Lord has blessed this nation for more than 200 years. As we look around us today we find that we are rapidly losing our religious freedoms and, in many instances, we are being governed by ungodly men and women. Sin, perversion and rejection of God's Word are leading this nation down the path to destruction. It is time we see revival in our land!

We must remember that revival begins in the heart of every individual through prayer, fasting, repentance and restoration. Then, as we gather together in unity in our local communities and congregations, that the spirit of revival grows stronger and spreads.



## Other Ideas for Churches and Messianic Synagogues

- Have children punch holes in the NDP Bookmarks and tie red and blue ribbons on them. Then pass them out to the congregation after the service.
- Have several congregations gather at the city hall flagpole at noon on the National Day of Prayer and pray for your civic leaders and pastors.
- Organize a prayer walk from your church to your city hall and finalize your walk by praying for your mayor and city council.
- Have the youth tie red and blue reminder ribbons on the antenna of each car in the parking lot.
- Have a representative from each denomination lead the prayer for each category in the NDP Prayer Guide.
- Every weekend in April have a representative from each denomination go as a group to a local prison and pray for the salvation of the inmates.
- Have your mayor participate in your National Day of Prayer observance and present a proclamation.
- Have the police department, the fire department, your civic leaders and all the denominations in your city participate in a citywide National Day of Prayer program.
- In the weeks leading up to the National Day of Prayer, include topics of prayer and appropriate Scriptures in your congregational bulletin or newsletter to focus attention on the need to pray for the country. Suggested topics: repentance, civic leaders, schools, law enforcement, etc.
- Promote the National Day of Prayer in denominational magazines and newsletters, congregational bulletins (don't forget the NDP Bulletin Inserts and NDP Program Covers), neighborhood newspapers and community bulletin boards.
- On the Sabbath/Sunday prior to the National Day of Prayer, have interested lay people conduct or assist with the worship service. Some can read historical quotes and information. Others can give testimonies on how God has been worthy of their trust and how prayer has been a part of that trust. During Sunday school, teachers can discuss our forefathers and their beliefs.
- During a National Day of Prayer observance, set aside time to encircle the clergy of your community and pray for wisdom, strength and protection for them and their families.
- Use local military personnel, Boy Scouts and/or veterans to "present the colors" during your National Day of Prayer services.
- Contact your local ministerial association to discuss a citywide church event. Assign a section of your observance to each church to ensure coverage of all prayer requests.
- Host a prayer breakfast or lunch meeting. Feature a speaker on a prayer-related subject. Provide participants with NDP Prayer Guides and NDP Bookmarks.
- Create a "kids' prayer chain" where each link in the chain bears the name of friends they would like to pray for. Use red, white and blue paper for the links. Have the children add names to the chain and help link them together before the prayer time.
- Order NDP Bulletin Inserts or NDP Program Covers to be handed out the Sabbath/Sunday before the National Day of Prayer. Include information of known observances and a slip of paper for the people to write down prayer requests to be deposited in a designated place and prayed for during your observance of the National Day of Prayer.
- Ask your clergy leader to deliver a lesson on prayer each Sabbath/Sunday for the month of April. This will help prepare the congregation for the National Day of Prayer. The final message could be delivered as part of your congregation's National Day of Prayer observance.
- In Sunday school, or even adult worship, present a puppet show with a script designed to emphasize the NDP theme. Get junior high or high school age students to write the script . . . they'll have a great time doing it!
- Dramatize a historical figure's belief in prayer by having them dress as the character and speak in church the Sunday before NDP to generate interest.
- In the weeks leading up to NDP, include topics of prayer and appropriate Scriptures in your church bulletin or newsletter to focus attention on the need to pray for the country. Suggested topics: repentance, schools, law enforcement, etc. Use the Lord's Prayer, phrase by phrase, as a pattern for your order of worship in your National Day of Prayer observance. Organize a 24-hour prayer vigil. Have people sign up for a segment of time to pray at home or at the church. Leave the church door open for those who wish to pray in the solitude of the sanctuary.

# Public Relations

Textbook definition: *The management function which evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or organization with the public interest and plans and executes a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance.* (Source: PR News)

Street definition: *What you are saying about your organization, and what the public is saying about your organization.*

## Steps To P.R. Positive Response

Contrary to popular belief, the media are your friends. They are communications tools consisting of people.

They don't know if you don't tell them. They are businesses consisting of business people. Know the value of Public Relations.

- Pray for the Lord's guidance—from beginning to end.
- Write an in-depth situation analysis: identify your strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities.
- Develop action lines, based upon your analysis. (Know where you're going as an organization, and determine how your efforts will shape public opinion of your organization.)
- Think long-range.
- Write externally only when you have something to say.
- Affirm your commitment to communicating the truth
  - ✦ Fact: "350 churches in Orange County are participating in our event."
  - ✦ Fact: "200 people purchased tickets to the NDP Governor's Prayer Breakfast."
  - ✦ Fiction: "We expect 10,000 people at our event."
  - ✦ Plan ahead
  - ✦ Understand the practical reality, logistics and time-frames of news gathering. (Print, Radio, TV, Internet)
  - ✦ Identify key media outlets and the specific person



you want to see your press materials. (Editor, producer, program director, host etc.)

- ✦ Build a list with specific contact names, phone numbers, addresses and email.
- ✦ Get to know your media outlets and contact people. Read articles by them, listen to their radio programs, and watch their newscasts.
- ✦ Know your target audience. Collect anecdotes and testimonials as you gather information for your public relations writing. (press release, editorial, advertisement)
- ✦ Utilize many media formats. If you have something to say, say it often. Repeat it to as many audiences as possible. (daily newspaper, weekly newspaper, general market radio, Christian radio, cable television, network television, internet, billboards, direct mail)

✦ Think reinforcement, not repetition. The mass media "legitimize" an event, giving it credibility in the eyes of the public. People don't attend an event because the media influenced them. They often come because an interpersonal contact influenced them. The media creates awareness and legitimacy. Personal contact influences

attendance.

- ✦ Follow-up. Be professional as you engage the media. Don't get defensive, combative or flustered when the tough questions are asked. Be persistent, but know when to take "no" for an answer. Sometimes "maybe" is the best they can do.

Be patient. Good media relations takes time. Don't be impulsive and press the panic button. Remember that your relationship with the media is both long-term and short-term. Be a good witness. Understand that you may be bumped at the last minute. (Natural disaster, death of a celebrity, murder mystery, national emergency, etc.). Even a tiny mention can produce results. Procrastination produces anxiety. Perseverance brings forth much fruit.

A special thanks to the Luis Palau Evangelistic Association for their contribution to this section.

# Press Releases

(A press or news release is information sent to the media pertaining to an issue, event or special announcement.)

**Be sure to check out any updated information on the Web site in the News and Information page and for any Media Resources Available.**

- It's critical that your release be formatted to look like news to get the attention of your media contact.
- Basic elements include the name, address, and phone number of your local NDP team (letterhead would suffice), location, current date, and the contact person's name (your media coordinator) and phone number for obtaining additional information.
- Specify the release date or indicate if it is intended for immediate release.
- Make sure your release has an eye-catching headline, reads like a newspaper story and is truly newsworthy.
- Be brief; a one-page release is ideal. For a longer release, type “-more-” centered at the bottom of the first page; then type a one or two word description and the page number at the top of the next page. At the end of your press/news release type “###” or “-30-”, signifying “the end,” on a separate line centered below the last paragraph
- Write your copy in the third person, avoiding the use of such pronouns as “our” and “we.”
- Keep sentences short and to the point. Also keep paragraphs short, using a new paragraph for each of your key points. Also, double space all copies with wide margins, always using upper and lower case both in your headlines and body copies. This makes for readable copies that can be easily edited by the media.
- Proofread your release carefully checking for grammar, misspellings, and typographical errors. Have at least one other person on your NDP committee proof it as well.
- Be aware of media deadlines. Weekly or monthly publications will need your press release much further in advance than daily newspapers or the broadcast media.
- Whenever possible, tailor your release to the media outlet to which it is being sent.
- If photos are acceptable by the particular media outlet you are contacting, include captioned glossy black and white photos expressing emotion or activity from prior NDP events held in your area.
- Important: In keeping with a yearlong approach to promoting prayer and its bearing on our lives, send out a follow-up release to the media, sharing stories that highlight the impact of NDP. This will further enhance the importance of prayer as well as create greater awareness of the National Day of Prayer.
- Keep in mind that NDP headquarters serves as the official “clearinghouse” for all position statements.



# Other Resources

## Legal/Financial

### **Alliance Defense Fund**

**Mailing Address:**

15100 N. 90th Street  
Scottsdale, Arizona 85260  
Phone: 1-800-TELL-ADF  
Fax: 480-444-0025  
Website: [www.alliancedefensefund.org](http://www.alliancedefensefund.org)

### **Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA)**

**TELEPHONE (Toll Free):** 800-323-9473  
**(Local Number):** 540-535-0103  
**FAX:** 1-540-535-0533  
**EMAIL:** [information@ecfa.org](mailto:information@ecfa.org)  
**MAIL:**  
440 West Jubal Early Drive  
Suite 130  
Winchester, VA 22601  
Website: <http://www.ecfa.org/>

## Prayer

### **Concerts of Prayer International**

David Bryant, President  
P.O. Box 770  
New Providence, NY 07974-0770  
908/771-0146  
877-NOW-HOPE (info line)  
[natlprayer@aol.com](mailto:natlprayer@aol.com)

*COPi prepares and equips pastors and lay leaders through vision-casting at mass prayer rallies and national conferences, training and providing resources for local churches and community prayer events. Ministry includes a nationally syndicated daily radio feature.*

### **Every Home for Christ (EHC)**

P.O. Box 64000  
Colorado Springs, CO 80962  
719/260-8888 or 800/423-5054  
<http://www.ehc.org/>  
[info@ehc.org](mailto:info@ehc.org)

*Every Home for Christ equips individuals for effective prayer through the "Change the World School of Prayer" seminar, study courses and devotional books. Services prayer groups with materials on spiritual awakening and world evangelization.*

### **International Bible Reading Association/Bible Pathway Ministries**

Barbara Bivens  
P.O. Box 20123  
Murfreesboro, TN 37129-0123  
615/896-4200  
<http://www.biblepathway.org/>

*The International Bible Reading Association offers a Read through the Bible Devotional Guide which covers the entire word of God in one year.*

## Believers who called on God for their government

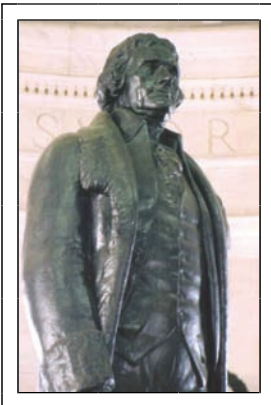
### A National Prayer for Peace offered by President Thomas Jefferson:

Almighty God, Who has given us this good land for our heritage; We humbly beseech Thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of Thy favor and glad to do Thy will. Bless our land with honorable ministry, sound learning, and pure manners.

Save us from violence, discord, and confusion, from pride and arrogance, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties, and fashion into one united people the multitude brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues.

Endow with Thy spirit of wisdom those to whom in Thy name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that through obedience to Thy law, we may show forth Thy praise among the nations of the earth.

In time of prosperity fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in day of trouble, suffer not our trust in Thee to fail;



all of which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

### On the Battlefield

As General Lee led his army of 76,000 men into Pennsylvania, panic took hold of Washington, D.C. In the midst of troubling times, President Lincoln remained strangely confident. He later related to a General wounded at Gettysburg:

When everyone seemed panic-stricken ... I went to my room ... and got down on my knees before Almighty God and prayed... Soon a sweet comfort crept into my soul that God Almighty had taken the whole business into His own hands....

### Grover Cleveland in his inaugural address in 1885:

And let us not trust to human effort alone, but humbly acknowledge the power and goodness of Almighty God who presides over the destiny of nations, and who has at all times been revealed in our country's history, let us invoke His aid and His blessings upon our labors...I know there is a Supreme Being who rules the affairs of men.”

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## Why Pray For Our Leaders?



Our nation has been privileged to witness divine intervention at key points in its history. In reviewing this phenomenon one notices that it has been the governing leadership of a city, region, or area that has called for prayer during a crisis or threat to American liberty and

lives. Political leadership in those times understood that the strength of our nation was grounded in the faith of its founders. In stark contrast the American civic leadership of recent years does not perceive our immorality, greed and disregard for our Founding Fathers' faith to be a threat to our economy or stability. They will sign proclamations out of duty and make public appearances as part of political pragmatism, but not out of a genuine sense of urgency for the future of our nation. In becoming aware of this obligated obligation, I am changing how I pray for the leaders of our nation. That God would give them eyes to see the very real crisis of character that is eroding our nation from within. That they would realize the limitations of any of our `systems.' That they would realize the impoverished state of affairs within the boundaries of our own shores. When they believe the threat is real, then THEY will call for people to pray and then I believe results will accelerate in the wake of their personal commitment to Christ and His kingdom.

*By Pastor Jerry Homme  
Former California State Coordinator*

## How to Pray for People of Influence

### What can you do that will make a difference?

The most important thing you can do is pray. Prayer is the foundation of a godly government. We can pray for our leaders, about legislation or about current issues facing our nation. It's also important to pray for our communities, including our families and our neighborhoods and local government officials.

Next, you can participate in a National Day of Prayer observance. I can think of at least four reasons to participate in this important annual event:

1. **God commands us to pray for our leaders.** "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness" (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

2. **God answers the prayers of His people.** "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

3. **Our leaders are under tremendous pressure.** They need our prayers, and they and their families need to know that they are being supported in prayer.

4. **We will be rewarded with personal spiritual growth.** By coming before our Lord on behalf of our nation with true humility and repentance, we begin to experience a strengthening of our relationship with God.

The National Day of Prayer comes only once a year, but interceding for our government through prayer is a daily discipline. By consistently lifting up our country and its leaders through supplication, we can make difference.

*Shirley Dobson.*



## Pray through Scriptures that these influential people would:

Our government officials are in desperate need of our prayers and encouragement. The pressures they face seem insurmountable and the decisions they make affect not only this generation, but those that will follow. When praying for your leaders, remember the following Scriptures and pray they will:

- Act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God -Micah 6:8
- Hunger and thirst for righteousness -Matthew 5:6
- Recognize that God alone gives wisdom and understanding - Psalm 111:10
- Hate evil, love good and maintain justice in the courts -Amos 5:14
- Maintain an attitude of humility - always mindful of those they are serving -1 Peter 5:5

It's also hard to ignore the crime and human suffering all around us. As these trends increase, so must our love and compassion reach out to our communities. Pray that:

- There would be the recognition that Christ is able to meet every need in each situation -Philippians 4:19
- God's people would clothe themselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience -Colossians 3:12, Hebrews 13:3, Ephesians 4:32
- Those ministering to the persecuted and those in bondage will be a channel for God's comfort -2 Corinthians 1:3-4

# Family

## Pray Through the Scriptures

Both parents and children have been caught in the crossfire of today's politically correct revolution. Fortunately, prayer offers us hope in the midst of cultural chaos. Parents, pray that:

- Children will grow in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men -Luke 2:52
- Parents and children will hunger for the Word of God - Psalm 119:103
- The fruit of the Spirit will be evident in our families - Galatians 5:22-23
- Families will be “salt and light” in neighborhoods and communities -Matthew 5:13-16
- Parents will raise their children, training and instructing them in the ways of the Lord -Ephesians 6:4, Deuteronomy 6:4-7
- Children won't succumb to peer pressure, but rather will set an example in speech, life, love, faith and purity -1 Timothy 4:12



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## Lasting, Loving Lessons of Family Night

Bring the family together and learn about prayer prior to the NDP in a “Family Night.”

Family Night is a time that is set aside to bring your family together and learn a biblical truth using object lessons. The following suggested ideas are designed to help you teach your child about prayer.



### Suggested Approach

Start three weeks prior to the NDP. Pick out a night each week to come together as a family to learn about prayer. Tell them that together you will learn about the power of prayer over the next three weeks. Then, as a family, par-

ticipate in the National Day of Prayer on the first Thursday in May.

### Tips

- Review the suggested family nights which are written for the 4- to 13-year-old level. Read the verses and look at the commentaries making personal notes on points you want to bring out or questions you may want to ask.
- Small children may need activities explained at their level. Object lessons may take more than one night to complete.
- If you have several children, the younger ones may color or do crafts during the discussions and then later participate in the object lessons with the older children. (NDP offers Shirley Dobson's coloring books that can be used for this purpose.)
- You can appoint a “Prayer Warrior” (usually works best to be the youngest since they go to bed the earliest) to bring your family together each night to talk about the day's events that need prayer, thanks or intercession.

# Family Night Lessons #1: Why Pray?

## Suggested Scripture References

Luke 18:1  
Philippians 4:6  
Matthew 7:7-11

## Materials Needed

Empty, short plastic water bottle  
25 pipe cleaners  
Bag of candy  
Bag of stones

### 1. Open in Prayer

### 2. Lesson and Discussion

Ask your children the following question:

**Q:** What things do Mom and Dad want you to do?

**A:** They would like to have us brush our teeth, talk to them, etc.

**Q:** Why do parents want you to do these things?

**A:** Parents ask children to do certain things because these things are good for their children. Brushing your teeth makes healthier teeth and gums and avoids the pain of tooth decay. By not teasing others, you won't hurt people's feelings or even get your own feelings hurt. Talking to parents lets Mom and Dad know when you're hurting so you can be comforted. Good communication with parents also tells them when you are happy so they can help you celebrate.

### Point

So it is with God: He wants us to pray because it *is good for us*. It's like spiritual breathing, and it sustains our relationship with God.

### Activity

Have the children sit across from each other and have a contest to see who can hold their breath the longest. After a winner has been determined, ask the first child who took a breath *why* they took a breath. Then emphasize the point that we need to breathe spiritually in the same way that we need to breathe air.

## Read

Luke 18:1  
Philippians 4:6

## Discussion

God wants us to pray because He is more interested in our relationship with Him than He is in our circumstances. He wants us to spend time in His presence so He can reveal more of His character to us, and we in turn can become more like Him.

### 3. Activity #1

Divide up the 25 pipe cleaners between the children. Place a short plastic water bottle in the middle of the table. Then have the children name character traits that they can ask God to give them. For example, they might ask for courage concerning a tough situation they are facing. With every mention, have them push a pipe cleaner down into the plastic bottle. Mom or Dad can demonstrate by pushing a pipe cleaner down far enough that the top disappears below the water bottle top. As more pipe cleaners are added, you need to use another object to cram the pipe cleaners into the bottle to ensure the pipe cleaners "mold" to the shape of the bottle.

### Possible Character Traits

- Strength, long-suffering, patience
- Reverence, wisdom, confidence
- Understanding, obedient heart, hope
- Humbleness, salvation, contentment
- Peace, guidance, forgiveness
- Servant's heart, joy, healing
- Mercy, goodness, kindness
- Gentleness, self-control, love

**Q:** What have we just identified?

**A:** These are some of the character qualities that represent God!

### Discussion

Through our prayers, we receive these character qualities. The more time we spend in His presence, the more we become like Christ.

# Suggested Ideas for Families to Celebrate

## Children's Prayer Walk

For our children's event during the National Day of Prayer, we envisioned a walk through a series of stimulating displays and representations of our community that would help children to pray. Wherever possible, we identified Christians who work in these areas of our community who would staff the exhibits and guide the children in prayer.

Because we anticipated an uneven flow of children and parents during the Day of Prayer, we designed an ongoing prayer walk that could be entered and exited at any time from 12 noon until 5:30 p.m.

We encouraged parents to accompany their children as they went to pray at each display. The prayer walk was intended to promote parent-child prayer.

Participants who entered the prayer walk were given a passport at the Ports-o-Call display. Next, they would proceed to various prayer stops where a visual aid (i.e., a vehicle or other display) would help focus their prayers. At each prayer stop they would then pick up visas with specific prayers and Scriptures on them. Each stop would also have a stamp for their passport.

### The visual aids included:

Fire truck

Police car

Silver Key van (services for the elderly)

Ambulance

Care 'n Share van (services for the those in need). We asked children to bring macaroni-and-cheese dinners to donate.

Hay Baler

Olympic Torch

Air Force Academy Stadium Jet

Our last stop was the "Salvation Station" where prayer would be available for salvation and for other needs. We provided helium balloons for children to attach their prayers to. The mass release was held at 5:30 p.m.

Submitted by Charles W. Clark

Children's Ministries

New Life Church, Colorado Springs, CO

The National Day of Prayer is a superb opportunity to focus prayer on the needs of the family, as well as the

country and our leaders. Here are some other ways you can draw your family closer to God! Many ideas have already been successful in other families' NDP observances.

## Other Ideas

- After watching the news on television, turn the set off and spend a few minutes praying for the needs of those whose stories were told that day. Examples might be victims of crime and those who attacked them, whose homes or property were damaged by natural disasters or the restoration of peace to people at war.



- Work together as a family to write your own family prayer for the nation, based on things you're thankful for and the expectations and desires you have for the country. Encourage each family member to include prayer for the nation in their daily personal time with God.

- On the week of NDP, designate a different area of concern to pray for each day. For example: on Monday, pray for the government; Tuesday, pray for the church; Wednesday, pray for schools; Thursday, pray for the family; etc.

- Put an NDP Sticker on each side of your mailbox.

- Help your children decorate their bikes with red, white and blue streamers, balloons and flags. They can ride the bikes to your NDP observance, if possible, or have a parade around your neighborhood.

- When you pack your child's lunch for school, include a prayer for him or her and remind them to pray for someone else in the family before they eat lunch.

- As a family project, decorate the exterior of your house with red, white and blue streamers, balloons and American flags. Display an NDP Poster on your front door, or mount it on cardboard, attach it to a stake and plant it in your front yard. Be prepared to tell anyone who asks why you're proud to observe the National Day of Prayer.

- Have a nightly family devotional time and talk about stories from the Bible where prayer changed peo-

ple's lives. Memorize passages like 1 Timothy 2:1 with your children and discuss the importance of praying for our country and its leaders. Fill in an NDP Prayer Guide and give one to an older child to acquaint him with the names of local and national elected officials and the offices they hold. Emphasize the vast responsibilities these officials carry and their special need for prayer.

- Create a special prayer calendar with your children that builds up to the National Day of Prayer and continues throughout the year. Or, My Family's Prayer Calendar created by Shirley Dobson and Pat Verbal to use as a teaching tool for your children NDP Sticker on the doorsteps with a note telling the family you prayed for them as part of the National Day of Prayer. Invite another neighbor family to join you in your prayer walk.

- Find out if your community is having an NDP observance and organize a special family outing around the event. Parents can take a day off of work, excuse the children from school and attend the event as a family. Then enjoy a picnic lunch together at a park or your own back yard. Invite another family to join in eating an all-American meal, including hot dogs and apple pie. Spend time praying and searching the Scriptures for prayer-related passages.



- Add an NDP Bookmark to all your correspondence before the NDP. Send the NDP Prayer Guide to all your relatives and friends as a reminder to observe the National Day of Prayer. Purchase NDP Stickers for wall and purse calendars as a reminder that the first Thursday in May is the National Day of Prayer.

- Put an NDP Sticker on your car. Offer them to your neighbors, as well.

- Tie red, white and blue ribbons to your car antenna beginning sometime in April. Tell those who ask that you are praying for the country, leading up to NDP.

- Make place mats to use during the week prior to NDP. Children can draw pictures of Bible characters or patriotic themes and use NDP Stickers. Write favorite Scriptures on the place mats to help children memorize them. Cover mats with clear plastic so they can be used several times. Share them with your friends and family members.

- Take the entire family to a local nursing home on

the National Day of Prayer. Spend time praying with the residents, interceding for our nation and its leaders. Be sure to also pray for the needs of the nursing home, its staff, administrators and residents. Present each resident with an NDP Bookmark as a reminder of this important day.

- Have a family contest and award NDP stuff to the children who can:

- 1. Locate all fifty states on a blank map. 2. Name the president, vice president, your congressmen and senators. 3. Identify the original thirteen colonies.

- Research historical figures such as Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Robert E. Lee, Booker T. Washington, William Penn, Squanto, Clara Barton and Abraham Lincoln. Learn how faith and prayer worked in their lives and how their character contributed to our

historical heritage. Have family members dress up as one or more of these figures and act out an event from history.

- Have a neighborhood family potluck. Decorate in a red, white and blue theme. Give each family a prayer topic for after-dinner prayer time.

- Teach young children the importance of prayer

with the My Prayer Coloring Book. This new and exciting resource explains the Lord's Prayer phrase by phrase using illustrations and words children can easily understand.

- Go to the home of a shut-in from your church or neighborhood for a visit on the National Day of Prayer. Present them with an NDP Sticker for their robe or quilt. Spend time in prayer together. Or, film your local National Day of Prayer observance with a video camera and bring copies of the video to a shut-in or nursing home so the elderly won't miss out. A time of prayer with them can be especially powerful.

- As a family project, adopt city, county, state or federal officials and commit to pray for them for a year. Use an NDP Adopt-a-Leader Kit to inform the officials of your commitment and offer encouragement throughout the year.

At the family dinner table, ask each person what his or her burden for prayer is on this important day. This is especially appealing to young children. Pray for each request.

# **The End**

**For more information check out our Web site at  
[www.NationalDayofPrayer.org /Coordinators](http://www.NationalDayofPrayer.org/Coordinators)**

**or**

**Contact your State Coordinator**

**If you don't know who your State Coordinator is call (719) 531-3379**