

My Prayer Strategy

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Over the course of my career, I have found the following prayer strategy to work effectively in my devotional life. Following others, I have found the acronym ACTS to be a helpful guide as I begin prayer each morning:

A = Adoration/worship

C = Confession

T = Thanksgiving

S = Supplication/Specific Prayer requests.

In the supplication dimension of prayer, I designate one target area for each day of the week:

Monday: Members of my department at Taylor University. As part of a team of educators with a common mission, the health and effectiveness of my colleagues is critically important to my own mission in making disciples of Jesus Christ.

Tuesday: The USA. On Tuesdays I pray for the President, his cabinet, and the Supreme Court members by name. As other figures surface in the news, I pray for them by name as well. I pray for the corporate integrity and effectiveness of both houses of Congress and for the armed forces.

Wednesday: The World. With the aid of William Johnstone's *Operation World*, I pray for the specific prayer needs of the world on Wednesday. This commitment has been especially meaningful to me over the years as God has softened my heart to the needs of all peoples everywhere. Their information may be found at www.operationworld.org.

Thursday: My students. On Thursdays I pray through my class rosters for the physical and spiritual well-being of my students. I pray for specific needs as they arise through student conversations after class and through emails.

Friday: Former friends and colleagues. On Friday I pray for friends from high school, college, graduate school, and former places of employment. I also pray for colleagues who come to mind in my discipline of Biblical Studies—believers and unbelievers alike.

Saturday: My church. I pray for my pastors, church staff, elders, Sunday school class members, and the spiritual unity and well-being of Upland Community Church. This target is aided through the week by UCC's ongoing "kneemails."

Sunday: Family. I pray specifically for my nuclear and extended family.

Throughout the week, I overlay these prayer targets with prayers of the moment for neighbors, community needs, domestic and international emergencies and the like. I try to pray right then and there when someone asks me to pray for them, and I encourage students to do the same. As one friend once told me, prayer becomes like breathing, so that Paul exhortation to "pray without ceasing" comes fairly close to being literally true.

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