

A STRATEGY, NOT A JOURNAL

The Prayer Strategy for Men

Named people. Specific requests. A date on each one, and a written record of what happened.

Most prayer resources aimed at men are either a blank journal or a war-room kit written for someone else and re-labelled. This is a strategy: four lists that cover the whole of a man's responsibility, requests specific enough to be answered or not answered, a date on every one, and a log with a column for what actually happened - including the ones where the answer was no or nothing.

- Four lists: the house, the men, the work, and the one you cannot fix
- A request log with a date opened, a date closed, and what happened
- Wall cards to cut out and put where you actually pray
- A page on the unanswered ones, which is the part most resources skip
- A monthly review that produces a number rather than an impression

Print the log pages as many times as you need them.

Break the cycle. Build the system. Be the man.

bethemansystem.com

For personal and small-group use.

Why most men's prayer is unmeasurable

Ask a man what he prayed for last month and he will tell you a category. His family. His job. The church. All of it sincere, none of it specific enough to be answered in a way he could notice - which means that whatever God does, the man's prayer life produces no evidence and therefore no faith that compounds.

A general request has a second problem. It cannot be prayed twice in a way that means anything, so it gets restated rather than pressed. Six months of praying about your marriage is not six months of anything - it is one prayer repeated in different weather.

What this changes

- SPECIFIC. Not "my son" but the actual thing about him, this month.
- NAMED. A person, by name, on a list you look at rather than one you remember.
- DATED. When you started asking. Without a date there is no such thing as persistence - only a vague sense of having prayed about it for a while.
- RECORDED. What actually happened, written down, including nothing and including no. That column is what separates this from a notebook.

The thing this is not

This is not a machine for getting outcomes. A log with a what-happened column will produce entries that say nothing changed, and some that say it got worse. That is the honest shape of it, and a resource that implies otherwise is selling you something. What the record does is stop you rewriting the history of your own prayer life in either direction - neither remembering only the answers, nor concluding after a hard year that nothing is ever answered.

Where and when

It needs a place and a clock time. A closet, a car before you go in, a chair at 5:40am. The place matters less than its fixedness - a practice attached to a location survives disruption far better than one attached to an intention.

WHERE I PRAY

THE TIME, EVERY DAY

WHAT HAPPENS ON THE DAYS IT GETS MISSED

The four lists

Between them these cover the whole of a man's responsibility. Fill each one in pencil - they should change monthly.

THE HOUSE

The house

Your wife, your children, and anyone under your roof or in your care.

- Name each person separately. A single prayer for "the family" is the general request in its most common form.
- One specific thing per person per month, not a permanent list of their faults with your name on it.
- Include what you are asking God to change in you toward each of them. If that line is empty every month, the list has become a way of managing them at a distance.

THE MEN

The men

The men you are responsible to, responsible for, or standing beside.

- The man who can tell you no. Pray for him by name and pray that you keep listening to him.
- Any man you are three steps ahead of, whether or not he knows it.
- One man who is currently in something. Not in general - the actual thing, and ask him for the specific request rather than guessing at it.

THE WORK

The work

Money, employment, calling, and whatever you are building.

- The actual number, where there is one. A figure prayed over is a figure you have had to look at.
- The decision you are avoiding. Most men's work prayer is about outcomes and almost never about the decision they already know they need to make.
- The people the work touches. It is the fastest way to find out whether you are praying about work or about yourself.

THE ONE I CANNOT FIX

The one I cannot fix

The single thing you have no move on. Every man has one.

- Write it plainly, even if only in a word you will understand.
- This list has one entry at a time. More than one and it becomes a place to put everything difficult, which turns it into a way of not dealing with any of it.
- This is the entry most likely to sit open for years. Leave it open. A log with an entry that has been open for three years is telling you something true, and closing it early to tidy the page is a small lie you would be telling yourself.

The request log

One line per request. Opened is the date you first asked. Closed is the date something resolved it, in any direction. What happened is the column that makes this worth keeping - and it gets filled in honestly or not at all.

OPENED	WHO / WHAT	THE SPECIFIC ASK	WHAT HAPPENED	CLOSED

The request log, continued

OPENED	WHO / WHAT	THE SPECIFIC ASK	WHAT HAPPENED	CLOSED

The ones that did not get answered

Any honest log develops a group of entries that stay open. This page is for them, because a prayer resource that has no place to put them is teaching you by omission that they are not supposed to happen.

Three things worth holding at once

- A request that stayed open is not proof that you prayed wrongly. The instinct to look for the technical fault in your own asking is understandable and it is not in the text - it is a way of keeping the situation under your own control, because a fault you caused is a fault you could correct.
- It is also not proof of nothing. The honest position is that you do not know yet, and men are extremely bad at sitting in that, which is why we resolve it prematurely in one direction or the other.
- The open entries change what you ask for. Over a year, most of them shift from asking for the situation to change to asking to be a particular kind of man inside it. Do not force that shift and do not resist it when it happens - just write the new version underneath the old one and leave both.

THE OLDEST OPEN ENTRY IN MY LOG

HOW THE WAY I ASK FOR IT HAS CHANGED

Do not close an entry to tidy the page. An entry open for years is one of the few genuinely honest records a man keeps about his own life.

The monthly review

Ten minutes, last day of the month. Numbers first, then the reading back. In the other order the reading edits the numbers.

DAYS PRAYED AT THE FIXED TIME, OUT OF THE MONTH

REQUESTS OPENED THIS MONTH

REQUESTS CLOSED THIS MONTH

ENTRIES STILL OPEN FROM OVER A YEAR AGO

Read the what-happened column back

Not the whole log - just that column, for the last three months, out loud if you are alone. It takes two minutes and it is the single most useful thing in this document. Men forget answered prayer at a rate that would be comic if it were not so consistent, and the forgetting is what makes a hard month feel like a verdict on the whole thing.

ONE THING FROM THAT COLUMN WORTH TELLING SOMEBODY

The 70% line

Twenty-one days out of thirty is 70%. Above it, the slot is real. Below it, do not resolve to pray more - move the time. A man who has missed the same 5:00am for four consecutive months does not have a discipline problem, he has a scheduling problem, and the fix is a different hour rather than more shame about the same one.

The wall cards

The last page is eight cards. Cut them out and put them where you actually pray - inside a closet door, on a dashboard, on the inside of a desk drawer. Four are the lists. Four are how the asking works. They exist because the log lives in a folder and the folder is not where you are at 5:40 in the morning.

Break the cycle. Build the system. Be the man.

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LIST ONE

THE HOUSE

Each person by name. One specific thing. And what I am asking God to change in me toward them.

BE THE MAN

LIST TWO

THE MEN

The man who can tell me no. The man I am three steps ahead of. The man currently in something.

BE THE MAN

LIST THREE

THE WORK

The actual number. The decision I am avoiding. The people it touches.

BE THE MAN

LIST FOUR

THE ONE I CANNOT FIX

One entry at a time. Leave it open as long as it is open.

BE THE MAN

HOW TO ASK

SPECIFIC

Not the category. The actual thing, this month, in words that could be answered or not answered.

BE THE MAN

HOW TO ASK

DATED

Write when you started asking. Without a date there is no persistence, only a vague sense of a while.

BE THE MAN

HOW TO ASK

RECORDED

What actually happened, including nothing and including no. That column is the whole point.

BE THE MAN

HOW TO ASK

READ IT BACK

Three months of the what-happened column, out loud, once a month. Men forget answers at a comic rate.

BE THE MAN