

## **Encouragements to pray for people to become Christians and to prompt your prayers!**

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1. Every time we pray the Lord's Prayer, we pray for God to make more people to become Christians all over the world! The first prayer is 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name', or 'make your name holy'. Only God can make his own name holy, that is make all nations know that he is the LORD, the holy God [See Ezekiel 36:16-23]. And, as we know from the New Testament, God has done this in and through his Son [Philippians 2:8-11, and Acts 4:12 'no other name {than Jesus Christ} ... be which we may be saved'].  
So first pray for God's global gospel mission, for world evangelisation!  
And then pray for the particular people who are the focus of your love, prayers and witness.
2. One of the great glories of Christ is that he died for people of all, nations, ethnicities and languages. We read of his glorious praise in the book of Revelation. '*You were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation*' [Revelation 5:9]. Christ is glorified every time someone trust in him for salvation. And Christ is glorified because people from every part of humanity in every age will worship him. What a wonderful certainty! What a wonderful promise! What a wonderful hope! What a wonderful glory! We glorify Christ when we pray and encourage others to believe in him.
3. We celebrate the day of Pentecost, that wonderful day that was promised by the prophet Joel, when God would pour his Spirit on all people, so that anyone who called on the name of the Lord would be saved [Joel 2]. As Peter preached on that day, God did this through Jesus Christ: '*God raised this Jesus to life ... and exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit*' [Acts

32,33]. After Peter preached, 3000 people were converted, as they called on the Lord Jesus!

Let us pray that our Lord Jesus would continue to pour out his Spirit on Australia, on Melbourne, and on all the congregations, ministries, and people of St Jude's: and on the people he wants to come to faith in Christ through our prayers, our conversations, and the life and sermons of St Jude's; and through the ministries of our Overseas Mission Partners.

4. One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: *"Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you ... because I have many people in this city."* So Paul stayed in Corinth... [Acts 18:9-11]. Pray for the many people whom God has in Melbourne, that they would hear the gospel, and be converted to Christ. Pray for everyone who speaks the gospel message in public or in private, for evangelists, chaplain in Aged Care, chaplains in prisons, in schools, for people doing ministry with university students, for people doing cross-cultural ministry, for ministers and pastoral workers, for those working with children and youth, for sports chaplains, for writers, for brave believers, etc! Pray for some of these 'many people in this city' to come to Christ here at St Jude's.
5. *Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your heart, and with all your strength. Love your neighbour as yourself.* These two 'great commandments' are familiar to us all [Mark 12:29-31].

There are many ways to love God, and many ways to love our neighbour. And no love is ever wasted in God's kingdom! One way to love God, is to help other people to love him, and learn to love him for his greatest gift, the gift of his Son for our salvation. One way to love our neighbours, is to tell them about God's greatest gift of love, and pray that they will come to know and trust in the Lord Jesus. Love God! Love your neighbour!  
Keep praying!

6. How wonderful to know that our God draws people to Jesus, and that Jesus draws people to himself! Listen to Jesus' words: *'No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them'* [John 6:44]. *'I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself'* [John 12:32]. [He was lifted up on the cross: then he was lifted up in his resurrection and ascension to heaven.]

We pray that people will turn to God and trust in Christ. Very good! But how will they do this, unless God the Father draws them to Jesus, unless Jesus draws them to himself? Pray that our gracious heavenly Father would draw people to trust in Jesus, and pray that Jesus would draw people to himself.

Pray that Jesus would do that through our prayers and conversations, through the 6 congregations of St Jude's in Carlton, the Estates and Parkville, and through all St Jude's ministries; and through the ministries of our Australasian Mission Partners.

7. Do you remember these words from Hebrews 13:15. *Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name.* We rightly praise God when we meet together, in word and song. Here we learn that we offer a sacrifice of praise to God when we openly profess the name of Jesus in everyday conversation, with believers and with unbelievers. Let us pray for ourselves; for every member of St Jude's, from the very young to the very old; for Christians in Australia; and for Christians around the world, that we would offer God a sacrifice of praise as we openly and freely profess the name of Jesus.

8. I hope you love reading the book of Acts! Such a ripping yarn [!], and so wonderful to read of the growth of the early church around the Mediterranean world.

The constant refrain is the growth of the word of God, the gospel, the word of the Lord: that is, that more people heard the gospel of Jesus and responded with faith in him. [Please read this aloud and loudly!!! *'And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly' [4:31]; 'So the word of God spread' [6:7]; 'Philip proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God' [8:9]; 'Samaria accepted the word of God' [8:14]; 'After they had further proclaimed the word of the Lord and testified about Jesus, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages' [8:25]; 'The Gentiles had received the word of God' [11:1]; 'They proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues' [13:4]; 'The word of the Lord spread through the whole region' [13:49]; 'They continued to preach the gospel' [14:7]; 'They preached the gospel in that city and won a large number of disciples... and when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia' [14:21,25]; 'God had called us to preach the gospel to them'*

*[16:10]; 'Then they spoke the word of the Lord to them' [16:32]; 'Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea' [17:13]; 'Paul stayed in Corinth, teaching them the word of God' [18:11]; 'Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God' [19:8]; 'all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord. ... In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power' [19:10,20]; 'I [Paul] have gone about preaching the kingdom' [19:25]; 'He [Paul] witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the kingdom of God ... he tried to persuade them about Jesus' [28:23].*

Pray that the word of God, the word of the Lord, the gospel, would spread widely and grow in power in our world, in Australia, through St Jude's, through our Overseas Mission Partners, and through each one of us.

9. I love reading God's promises in the Bible. God not only makes promises, he puts them in writing!

Remember Joshua's words to God's people? *'Not one of all the good promises the LORD your God gave you has failed'* [Joshua 23:14]. And Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 1? *'No matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ'* [1:20].

And think how decisive the following two promises are. They really summarise the Old Testament and the New Testament. God not only makes promises, he puts them in writing!

God said to Abraham: *'I will make you into a great nation'* [Genesis 12:2]. Jesus said: *'I will build my church'* [Matthew 16:18].

Here is a prayer to pray:

*'Lord Jesus, you promised to build your church. Please do this now, by bringing many people to faith in yourself as they hear your gospel, and especially here at St Jude's, and all our ministries. Please do this for the sake of your glory. Amen.'*

10. Two prayer prompts from Colossians.

*Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may*

*proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. [Colossians 4:2-4].*

*'Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.'* This prompts us to devote ourselves to prayerfulness: to being watchful and alert to the significance of our prayers in the saving economy of God; and thankful for God's grace in Christ, and that he uses our prayers and the preaching of the gospel to bring people to faith in Christ. *'Pray that I may proclaim in clearly, as I should'.* Pray for those who speak and teach people the gospel of Christ, especially that their words will be clearly understood by those who hear.

11. In the book of Revelation, we meet *'... another angel flying in midair, and he had the everlasting gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people'* [Revelation 14:6].

We have an *'everlasting gospel'*, because we have an *'everlasting God'* [Isaiah 40:28]; with an *'everlasting kingdom'* [Psalm 145:13]; an *'everlasting covenant'* [Hebrews 13:20]; because of his *'everlasting love'* [Jeremiah 31:3]; and so his *'everlasting arms'* constantly providing protection and care [Deuteronomy 33:27]

This is the gospel we believe. This is the gospel we speak and preach. This is the gospel we want others to know.

*'Gracious and everlasting God, may your everlasting gospel of your everlasting kingdom and everlasting covenant and everlasting love be heard, received and believed everywhere in this world, In Jesus' name, Amen.'*

12. Psalm 96 is a wonderful combination of a call to do evangelism, and an act of evangelism!

Here is the call to declare God, his salvation, and his glory:

<sup>1</sup> *Sing to the LORD a new song;  
sing to the LORD, all the earth.*

<sup>2</sup> *Sing to the LORD, praise his name;  
proclaim his salvation day after day.*

<sup>3</sup> *Declare his glory among the nations,  
his marvellous deeds among all peoples.*

<sup>4</sup> *For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise;  
he is to be feared above all gods.*

<sup>5</sup> *For all the gods of the nations are idols,  
but the LORD made the heavens.*

<sup>6</sup> *Splendour and majesty are before him;  
strength and glory are in his sanctuary.*

Here are some evangelistic verses!

*Ascribe to the LORD, all you families of nations,  
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;  
bring an offering and come into his courts.*

<sup>9</sup> *Worship the LORD in the splendour of his holiness;  
tremble before him, all the earth.*

*Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;  
let the sea resound, and all that is in it.*

<sup>12</sup> *Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them;  
let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.*

<sup>13</sup> *Let all creation rejoice before the LORD, for he comes,  
he comes to judge the earth.*

*He will judge the world in righteousness  
and the peoples in his faithfulness.*

Why not use these wonderful words in your prayers?

13. Paul writes wonderful words in Romans: let's turn them into prayers, as we pray God's thoughts and words back to him!

*"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

'We praise and thank you, Lord Jesus, that you save anyone and everyone who calls on you.'

*How can they call on the one they have not believed in?*

'Please bring many to believe in you, and so call on you and be saved.'

*How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?*

'Please bring many to hear of you, so that they may believe in you.'

*How can they hear without someone preaching to them?*

'Please may many speak and preach of you, that many more may hear of you.'

*How can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" [Romans 10:13-15].*

'Please send preachers and speakers to many people at the right time all around this world, that many may hear of you, believe in you, call on you, and be saved. Jesus, our Saviour and Lord, we pray these requests through you, and for your glory. Amen.'

14. Jesus describes his ministry, and the ministry of evangelists and preachers today [ourselves included!], in these words, *'A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown" [Luke 8: 5-8].* Notice: much seed sown; some seed finally ineffective; yet a certain and productive harvest.

Let us pray that the word of the gospel of Christ would find good soil in those who hear in these days: *'The seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop'* [Luke 8:15].

We pray: 'May all who hear the word of Jesus, retain it, and persevere in it. In his name, Amen.'

15. Jesus describes his ministry, and the ministry of evangelists and preachers today [ourselves included!], in these words, *'A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown" [Luke 8: 5-8].* And he explains: *'The seed is the word of God. Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved'* [Luke 8:11,12].

Let us be alert, and pray...

‘Gracious God, protect those who hear, that the devil may not take your word out of their hearts. We pray this, in the strong name of Jesus, and through the power of his blood, death and resurrection, and for your glory. Amen.’

16. Jesus described his ministry, and the ministry of evangelists and preachers today [ourselves included!], in these words,  
*‘A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown’* [Luke 8: 5-8].  
And he explained: *‘Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away...  
The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature’* [Luke 8:13,14].

Let us be alert, and pray...

‘Gracious God, we pray for those who hear your word and respond with faith, that they may not fall away in times of testing, nor be choked by life’s worries, riches, and pleasures. We pray these things, in the strong name of Jesus, and through the power of his death and resurrection, and for your glory. Amen.’