

ISRAEL PRAYER GUIDE



Has anyone ever asked you to pray for or about something, but you didn't know how?

That's happened to us before when we were asked to pray for Israel. *Why do you pray? What? When?*

At Gateway Church, we've found that discovering God's enduring love for Israel and the Jewish people often starts with a simple commitment to prayer. When you pray for something, you get a burden for it. And when you get a burden for something, you care about it.

Prayer for Israel joins your heart with God's heart.

WHY PRAY?

Because the Jewish people are a "special treasure" to God

God calls the Jewish people His "special treasure" (Deuteronomy 7:6), His "portion," and "the apple of His eye" (Deuteronomy 32:9-10). Israel is even called God's "wife" (Hosea 2:19) and "bride" (Isaiah 62:5) with whom He has entered a marriage-like covenant (Ezekiel 16:8-14). In the New Testament, Paul builds on this by calling the Jewish people "beloved" of God, and possessing an irrevocable calling (Romans 11:28-29).

Because the Bible tells me so

King David is just as direct in the Psalms: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! May those who love you prosper" (Psalm 122:6). The Hebrew word used here for "pray" (or sha'alu) is in the imperative form, much like a command, directing every believer to engage. These exhortations were not just "for then" but continue to be "for now," too!

Because you will be blessed

When God made an eternal covenant with Abraham and his descendants (the Jewish people), He introduced the idea of mutual blessing: "I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you; and all families of the earth will be blessed through you" (Genesis 12:3).

As you bless the Jewish people, God Himself blesses you. Not just materialistically, but in an enriching way. Like a husband and wife, God planned for Jews and Gentiles to bless, love, and serve one another. He knew this would be enriching for both groups. Prayer opens this door!

WHAT TO PRAY?

Pray for Peace

Yes – it's that simple! "Pray for peace in Jerusalem. May all who love this city prosper. O Jerusalem, may there be peace within your walls!" (Psalm 122:6-7) It might seem too basic or cliché, but this is the best gift God could give all citizens (Jew and Arab) of Israel!

Pray for relationships

The Jewish people descended from Isaac, and the Arab people from Ishmael (Genesis 25:12-18). In God's Father heart is a deep desire to restore loving relationship to these two "brothers." Isaiah 19 also prophesies the day when there will be a "highway" in Israel, when the Arab nations to the north and south of Israel will come together in unity to worship the God of Israel. Let's believe for this miraculous re-uniting to happen in our lifetime!

Pray for forgiveness

Modern Israel is far from being "holy" in its behavior before the Lord. Israelis commit similar sins as all modern nations—abortion, abuse, injustice, and sexual immorality. In Ezekiel 36, just before God promises to bring the Jewish people back to the Land of Israel, He says: "I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you" (Ezekiel 36:25-26). Join with this promise in praying for forgiveness and repentance in Israel.

Pray for leadership

The Bible contains numerous stories about righteous and unrighteous leaders of ancient Israel. The same is true today, as Israel's leaders have a mixed record of following God's instruction in office. To lead a diverse and complex society, Israel's leaders need wisdom. Pray the words of Proverbs 21:1, "The king's heart is like a stream of water directed by the Lord; He guides it wherever He pleases."

Pray for influence

God told the Jewish people: "I will give you as a light to the nations, that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (Isaiah 49:6). Israel's "irrevocable calling" (Romans 11:29) is to lead the nations into a knowledge of the God of Israel. Pray that Israel would mature in her calling to influence all nations to honor the Lord.

Pray for provision

When Israel was reborn in 1948, there were less than 200 Messianic Jewish believers in Israel. Today, there are an estimated 20,000 in the Messianic community!

Though miraculous, these believers suffer frequent persecution, discrediting, and discrimination in Israeli society. Pray God will provide every need for these individuals, congregations, and ministries, and that He would protect them and their families from injustice.

Pray for the Church's heart

For almost 2,000 years, the global Church has devalued and disregarded Jewish identity. But in recent decades, Christians around the world have been rediscovering the Jewish foundations of faith in Jesus.

- Pray that more churches and pastors would step into an active love for the Jewish people.
- Pray that they would repent of any anti-Jewish theologies in their congregations.
- Pray that they would welcome and affirm Jewish believers in Jesus, modeling Paul's vision for the "one new man" in Ephesians 2:15.

WHEN TO PRAY?

Pray daily

At Gateway Church, Pastor Robert Morris has frequently urged us to pray for Israel every day, teaching how the Bible calls believers to pray "day and night" (Isaiah 62:6). It doesn't have to be complex, but a daily prayer for Israel is powerful. And it is also a daily reminder to our hearts to be concerned for the Jewish people.

Pray on Jewish holidays

Many Christians have learned to celebrate Shabbat (Sabbath) in connection with the Jewish community around the world, starting at sundown on Friday evening. Before you eat, simply pray for all Jewish people who are dedicating themselves to the Lord for Shabbat. Pray, also, during Jewish holidays throughout the year (Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Passover, etc.). Locate these dates and set quick calendar reminders throughout the year. These are all specific days where Jewish people present themselves before the Lord and are excellent times to pray for God's love to fill Jewish hearts.

Pray publicly

According to a Barna study we commissioned, 63% of Protestant senior pastors pray for Israel "never or less than once per month." Wow. If you're a pastor or leader, take your prayers for the Jewish people public. Make it a priority to pray the "why, what, and when" model as you regularly lead your congregation in prayer for Israel from the stage.