

Praying For Prodigals – Strategies For Prayer (WNOP)

Luke 15:11-32 (MSG) ¹¹ Then he said, "There was once a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger said to his father, 'Father, I want right now what's coming to me.'" So the father divided the property between them. ¹³ It wasn't long before the younger son packed his bags and left for a distant country. There, undisciplined and dissipated, he wasted everything he had. ¹⁴ After he had gone through all his money, there was a bad famine all through that country and he began to hurt. ¹⁵ He signed on with a citizen there who assigned him to his fields to slop the pigs. ¹⁶ He was so hungry he would have eaten the corncocks in the pig slop, but no one would give him any. ¹⁷ "That brought him to his senses. He said, 'All those farmhands working for my father sit down to three meals a day, and here I am starving to death. ¹⁸ I'm going back to my father. I'll say to him, Father, I've sinned against God, I've sinned before you; ¹⁹ I don't deserve to be called your son. Take me on as a hired hand.' ²⁰ He got right up and went home to his father. "When he was still a long way off, his father saw him. His heart pounding, he ran out, embraced him, and kissed him. ²¹ The son started his speech: 'Father, I've sinned against God, I've sinned before you; I don't deserve to be called your son ever again.' ²² "But the father wasn't listening. He was calling to the servants, 'Quick. Bring a clean set of clothes and dress him. Put the family ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Then get a grain-fed heifer and roast it. We're going to feast! We're going to have a wonderful time! ²⁴ My son is here—given up for dead and now alive! Given up for lost and now found!' And they began to have a wonderful time. ²⁵ "All this time his older son was out in the field. When the day's work was done he came in. As he approached the house, he heard the music and dancing. ²⁶ Calling over one of the houseboys, he asked what was going on. ²⁷ He told him, 'Your brother came home. Your father has ordered a feast—barbecued beef!—because he has him home safe and sound.' ²⁸ "The older brother stalked off in an angry sulk and refused to join in. His father came out and tried to talk to him, but he wouldn't listen. ²⁹ The son said, 'Look how many years I've stayed here serving you, never giving you one moment of grief, but have you ever thrown a party for me and my friends? ³⁰ Then this son of yours who has thrown away your money on whores shows up and you go all out with a feast!' ³¹ "His father said, 'Son, you don't understand. You're with me all the time, and everything that is mine is yours— ³² but this is a wonderful time, and we had to celebrate. This brother of yours was dead, and he's alive! He was lost, and he's found!'

The Bible is a textbook on prayer. It teaches us the need to pray, the nature of prayer, and the rewards of prayer. But we have forgotten that the words of the Bible can become the very prayer that we need to pray! The important thing to remember as we pray through this story is that when we pray the WORD of God, we are praying the WILL of God.

Remind the Father of the covenant the prodigal once had with Him. Ask the Lord to go rescue him as a shepherd rescues a stray lamb.

Pray for supernatural love. Pray for love that will be open and warm to the prodigal even while they are still in sin. Love doesn't mean condoning their actions. Pray from a position of love, not of judgment and anger.

Pray for grace to let go of the prodigal. The prodigal's father let the son go, and didn't lay a religious guilt trip on him. Pray for grace to keep our mouths closed and our hearts open with love and compassion.

Pray for endurance to intercede for our prodigals. It can take months or even years to see the fruit of intercession for prodigals.

Pray for famine. Pray that whatever or whoever the prodigal is placing their trust in outside of Jesus would dry up. Pray for disillusionment towards the very things that draw them and hold them captive. Pray that what once brought them pleasure would become dry and barren to them.

Pray for holy hunger and holy homesickness. Pray that they would begin to remember what it was like to be in fellowship with God and His church, and start to long for it even in the midst of their sin.

Pray he would come to himself. Pray that he would realize something is wrong. Pray for his eyes to open to the truth of his situation, and pray against the delusion the enemy has trapped him in.

Pray for a spirit of repentance. "I will arise and go to my Father." Repentance brings life, freedom, breakthrough and deliverance.

Pray that the prodigal will be able to receive God's forgiveness. Some prodigals may have lived very immoral lives and they can't imagine the Father ever wanting them back. They feel they have crossed some sort of line that the Lord would not be able to bless them again.

Pray for the Lord to pour out his riches when the prodigal returns. Pray that the Lord would lavish His love and blessings on the prodigal.

Pray for the elder brother. Pray that the church will be prepared to receive prodigals back. Pray that when they come home, judgmental attitudes toward them will be gone. Pray against jealousy and envy as God pours His blessings on the prodigal. Pray that the church will have the grace to accept those who are not quite so "experienced" in our ways. Pray that prodigals who have literally lived in the pigpen of sin would be loved back into total wholeness – despite the "awkwardness" of their return to the Father's house after living in sin.