

## **AN OPEN LETTER TO PASTORS AND CHURCH LEADERS REGARDING PRAYING AGAINST ACTIVE SHOOTERS IN PUBLIC FORUMS**

It has been said by many through the years that prayer is a barometer of what we really believe. We pray our “theology.” I believe that is true. For those of us who believe God’s Word is inerrant, should we not be among those who outwardly demonstrate our trust in God by acting upon His Word?

The previous 12 months have been a struggle in Texas. We have experienced national tragedies – Harvey’s flood, 26 killed inside FBC Sutherland Springs, plus the shooter’s suicide, and 10 killed at the Santa Fe, TX high school. And, there were other shootings outside Texas.

What are we to do? Certainly we are called to due diligence in everything physically possible to protect our communities and stop these acts of violence. But there is more.

As followers of Jesus Christ and among those who believe the Bible to be the written Word of the Living God, we are offered a higher resource – our God.

In Scripture, God is revealed as a warrior God (Exodus 14:14, 15:3), a protector (Psalm 5:11), a defender (Psalm 31:2), a helper (Hebrews 13:6), a fortress (Psalm 91:2), a hiding place and refuge (Psalm 57:1, Isaiah 51:16), a shield (Deuteronomy 33:29; Ephesians 6:10-18) and a victor (Revelation 2-3, promises to overcoming churches).

My proposal is this. We, the people of God, should be pro-active by praying specifically against the Evil One and his minions who would serve his purpose of violence and destruction in our public gathering places. Jesus said, “The thief comes only to steal, to kill, and to destroy; but I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). I believe if we trust the Lord, He will intervene in the spiritual realm.

I am calling for intentional on-sight prayer for each of the schools in our communities prior to the beginning of school this year. It may be an all-out prayer walk of the perimeter and as much of the school property as possible, or it may be as low key as people driving within sight of the school, parking in a public place and praying from their car. The goal is not location but invocation!

If we believe the biblical record of our God being a warrior God (and I do); and if we believe His Word is inerrant (and it is); then why not trust Him to do what He says He will do in answer to believing prayer?

Anyone can do this. Students, especially at the See You At The Pole rallies; moms and dads as they take their kids to school; Christian teachers, bus drivers, others in the local ISD, and especially Boomers (the typical grandparents and others who are retired). In fact, one prayer ministry could be #OperationBoomer. Why not challenge the Boomers in your congregation to use this Fall season of life (aging but still active) to thrust themselves into an on-sight prayer ministry in their community?

Ask other churches to join you. Cover the community. You might consider notifying the local police so they will be aware and hopefully supportive. Pray for them as well as others.

Here are some suggested “prayer points” from the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 5-7 Jesus spoke to His disciples, then the multitudes as they gathered, regarding the ethos of the Kingdom of God. He also gave them “prayer points,” or as we know it, The Lord’s Prayer. Here are some suggestions from that prayer.

1. WORSHIP GOD

Worship Him in His creation. Each person you see and all others are created by God in His image and loved completely by Him.

2. REPENT

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you sin in your own life. Confess and repent. God uses vessels of clay, but He will not use a dirty one.

3. FORGIVE

One of the great hindrances to the fresh wind of the Holy Spirit is anger. If there are those in your sphere of relationships with whom you are holding a grudge, release them. Forgive them and pray for them. This is a reminder to pray for the families and persons of violence – those in the past and those who may be plotting such as you pray.

4. ASK

Our God is a warrior God. Ask Him to provide Divine protection for the public against the Evil One who would cause destruction – Exodus 14:14, 15:3).

Ask Him to provide Divine wisdom to the authorities as they seek the best solution(s) for the common good.

Ask Him to expose any plot of the Evil One through any person in time and for the authorities to thwart any planned act of violence.

5. TRUST

Trust God to answer prayer – Luke 11:1-13; Matthew 6:9-14. Thank Him for His provision.

6. PRAY FOR GOSPEL ADVANCE

Pray for all who go in and out of the public buildings. Pray that they would hear the Gospel, believe, and be saved.

7. PRAY FOR PEACE

As God instructs us in the Psalms to “pray for the peace of Jerusalem,” we can pray for the peace of Your City. Take time now to pray for the peace of God to encompass your city or rural area.

Pray for your local law enforcement and first responders. They serve well. Ask God to grant wisdom as they seek to curb violence. Pray for their protection --- Romans 13:1-5.

Ted Elmore

[telmore@sbtexas.com](mailto:telmore@sbtexas.com)

[www.sbtexas.com/prayer](http://www.sbtexas.com/prayer)