



## **Prayer Night – January 14, 2024**

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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references are from the *Christian Standard Bible* (CSB Text Edition: 2020).

# Demonstrating God's Love

Welcome to UPwords CBC Family Prayer Night. Thank you for joining us as we lift our praises and petitions *upwards* to God. Our theme for this evening is *Demonstrating God's Love*. The Bible says:

*The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 1 John 4:8*

This verse is straightforward . . . *and* sobering. Try reading it again more slowly. It's definitely one of those "wake up call" verses that begs for a little soul-searching and introspection.

If you are here tonight, or reading this commentary, loving others and demonstrating God's love is likely one of your deepest desires as you live out your Christian walk. Yet as we all realize, *desiring* to live this way and actually *living it* are vastly different things.

The Apostle John stresses in 2 John 6, *"This is love: that we walk according to His commands. This is the command as you have heard it from the beginning: that you walk in love."*

The greatest act of love we can show God is to obey Him and His commands. One of His most important commands is to *"walk in love."* As we begin *faithfully and intentionally* walking in love each day, a beautiful and supernatural thing begins to happen. Demonstrating Christ's love to others will become a more joyful and natural outpouring of the love God has bestowed on us!

The word *demonstrate* is often defined as *"to make clear by outward action or display of feeling."* Other definitions include:

- to show by one's behavior, attitude, or external attributes.
- to prove by reasoning or evidence, especially with many examples.
- to show or prove the value of something (*maybe even a life!*)

As you pray and share ideas in small groups tonight, we believe you will discover there are limitless possibilities of how you can show God's love.

We can all learn much from the life of George Mueller, a great man of prayer and faith who founded orphanages in 19th-century England. Mueller said his ministry goal was to:

*"Live a life in a way that proves:  
God is real, God is trustworthy, God answers prayer."*

One way we can help accomplish this is by letting everything we think, say, or do be done *in love*. This is especially important in a world full of anger, unfairness, loneliness, and hostility. When we show Christ's love to those living in darkness, they can see evidence of God's existence, and that His love is real. This is where HOPE begins.

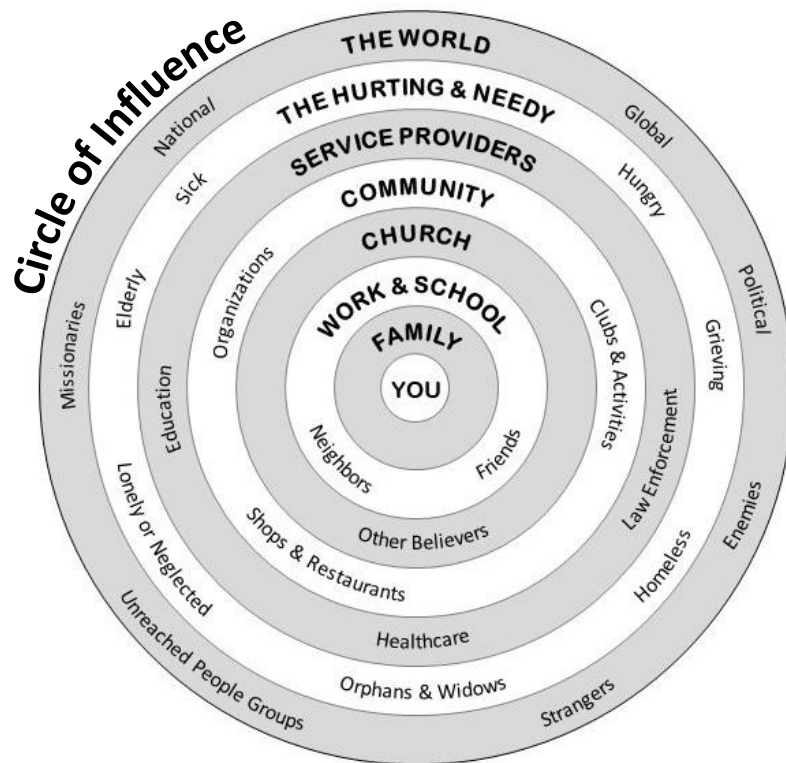
*God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.  
1 John 1:5b*

# People and Places

*This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. John 15:12 ESV*

Each of us has a circle of influence – the people we cross paths with in all the places we go. God loves these people, and He commands us to love them too. We can only demonstrate God's love if we have accepted His love, have His Spirit living within us, and choose every day to walk in God's love.

*Lord, help us demonstrate your love to everyone we meet.*



*Ask God to show you if there is a new area He may want you to reach out to and demonstrate God's love.*

## Prayer Points for Reaching Out

- Pray for God to help you shower those in your household with the grace Jesus demonstrated – especially when they are hard to love.
- Help us, Lord, to have compassion for our neighbors. That through our example, words, and actions, our neighbors will come to faith in You.
- Ask God to give you the opportunity with a fellow coworker (or student) to be an example of one who has been transformed by the love of Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Lord, help me lift up other followers of Jesus! Empower me to serve my church in large and small groups. Increase the love and unity in our CBC family and the church universal.
- Father, please lead me to those in my community who hunger for the knowledge of your truth in Christ Jesus. Give me courage to outwardly demonstrate God's love to them.
- May we humble ourselves to pray for our enemies and be kind to strangers, pleasing and honoring God.
- Enlarge my heart, Lord, to remember those who are suffering and desperate. Help me go outside of my comfort zone to help meet their needs.

*Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done.*

Proverbs 19:17 NIV

# Possessions

*However, since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to use them properly.*

Romans 12:6 (NASB)

It's normal to feel a bit inadequate when we are trying to imitate the ways of Jesus. We're commanded to show His love through generosity and acts of service, but what do we have that's worth sharing? Each of us possess unique abilities, talents, strengths, and gifts because that is how God designed us. Spend some time getting to know who you are in the eyes of your Heavenly Father. The world needs what you have to give.

*Open our eyes to who you are God, and who we are in You. Help us listen when You ask us to share what we have with others.*



## Prayer Points for Sharing

- Lord, help us to be less selfish and controlling with our time. Enable us to make helping others a priority in our weekly schedule.
- Please help us to hold with loose hands everything we own. For we know “God loves a cheerful giver” and “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”
- Father, open my spiritual eyes to see that all I have belongs to you. Help me find joy in sharing what you have given me with others.
- Help us develop the habit of not just saying “I will pray for you,” but to ask, **“May I pray with you? Today!”** For praying and interceding for others is a cornerstone of being a Christian.
- Father, thank you for giving us the ability to speak a kind word, listen attentively, and smile. These three simple actions demonstrate Your love and have even been known to save lives. Please help me intentionally put up my phone, be less self-absorbed, and wake up to those around me.
- Humble me, Lord. Whatever it is I am good at, help me to see it and to discipline myself to do it to the best of my ability. Give me the courage to surrender it to You so you may use it in the lives of others – *for your glory.*

*And the King will answer... “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” Matthew 25:40*

# Practice

*"...Love the LORD your GOD with all you mind and with all your strength. Love HIM with all that you are. Think about these commands that I am giving you today. Teach them to your children at all times. Talk about them when you sit together at home. Talk about them as you walk along the road, when you lie down, and when you get up.*

Deuteronomy 6:4-7 (Easy English Version)

Every day provides plenty of opportunities to demonstrate God's love. Deuteronomy reminds us that this kind of life begins by dedicating our whole self *at all times* for the Lord's use. In the Bible, both Joseph and Daniel found themselves in cultures that were in opposition to their religion, yet they confidently lived out courageous lives of faith. This impacted the nations and even future generations. Look around at where God has placed you. He has you in this time and this location. You have unique God-given talents and life experiences to share. Take one small step. It gets easier with practice!

***Open our hearts to recognize that each person you put in our path each day is foreordained by you.***



## Prayer Points to Help Practice

- Father, we all have heard that practice makes perfect. Please help me commit to showing God's love to at least one person every single day.
- The hardest place for demonstrating God's love can be our own homes. Lord, show us how to better demonstrate love through our prayers, words, and actions to those in our homes.
- Lord, you created us, and we are meant to serve others for you. Reveal to me the experiences and talents that are a part of my life that can be of service to our church and our community.
- Give us the courage to be a beacon of hope and truth to those who have lost faith. Give us a desire and willingness to pray and reach out to them in an intentional way.
- Help us to be mindful and compassionate to those around us, regardless of their beliefs or backgrounds. Respect for one another is a powerful way to demonstrate God's love.
- God, please give us favor with others as you give us these opportunities to share the reason for our peace and joy.
- Show us tangible and practical ways we can express who YOU are to the people we meet – whether providing a meal or ride, fixing a flat tire, helping someone get an item from the top shelf in a store, or just as simple as a smile.

# Possibilities

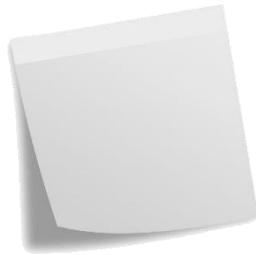
*And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works. Hebrews 10:24 (NKJV)*

We hope this time has inspired a greater commitment to make showing God's love a daily lifestyle. As parents and adults, we have the great privilege and responsibility to teach the next generation to *walk in love*. We do this by modeling this mindset and including children and young people in our acts of service!

## Groups Brainstorming Activity

Showing God's love is as easy as a smile or as involved as providing aid to people in war zones. But there are limitless possibilities in between these extremes. This activity will help *stir up love and good works* among our brothers and sisters in Christ!

1. Work quickly in your small group to think of as many specific, tangible ways (big or small!) to demonstrate God's love to the people around us.
2. Capture as many ideas as you can on the sticky notes provided.
3. Have someone zip up to the spots on the side walls and stick the notes under the word "Possibilities."



### Tips for Ideas:

- Remember your **Circle of Influence** (p. 4).
- Think morning, noon, afternoon, evenings, and nights.
- Share with the group a time you showed God's love.
- Share about a missed opportunity to show God's love you regret.
- Think outside your comfort zone (a difficult situation, strangers, an enemy; the lost, hungry, sick, grieving, homeless, elderly, or outcast).

After the evening's closing prayer, take the opportunity to look at all the examples posted.

You can even pick an idea to take home if you like!

**You will also be able to find a list of all the posted ideas tomorrow (Monday, January 15) at:**

***[cbcfamily.net/prayer](http://cbcfamily.net/prayer)***



## On Your Own – Personal Reflections

Can you think of obstacles in your life that may keep you from demonstrating God's love to others?

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Have you ever had a very real need or felt desperate?

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Has anyone ever been kind or caring to you when you really needed it?

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How might you possibly be the answer to someone's prayer?

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## Moving forward

Where do you most want to make a change regarding demonstrating God's love?

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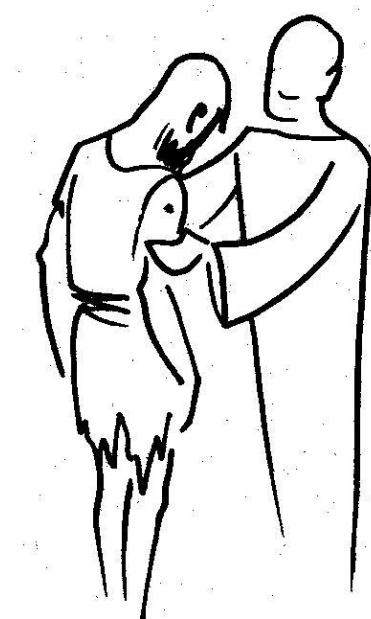
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What is the next most important area where you desire to show God's love?

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## Prayerfully Complete the Two Statements

Consider using these statements each day or week to help you commit to showing God's love to the world!

1. *I will take one small step this week to walk in love more fully by...*

\_\_\_\_\_.

2. *With God's help I will demonstrate His love to*

\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_  
(who) (place)

*when I* \_\_\_\_\_  
(situation)

*on/at* \_\_\_\_\_  
(day/week/time)

Share the results with your group and do it again:

1. *I will take one small step this week to walk in love more fully by...*

\_\_\_\_\_.

2. *With God's help I will demonstrate His love to*

\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_  
(who) (place)

*when I* \_\_\_\_\_  
(situation)

*on/at* \_\_\_\_\_  
(day/week/time)

## Demonstrating God's Love – Encouraging Scriptures

*By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. John 13:35*

*Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially those who are of the household of faith. Galatians 6:10*

*You are living among people who do not know God. So be very careful that you always live in a good way. Sometimes these people may wrongly say that you do bad things. But if you continue to live in a good way, they will see that you really do good things. As a result, on the day when God comes as judge, they will give honor to Him. 1 Peter 2:12, EASY*

*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do. Ephesians 2:10*

*First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 1 Timothy 2:1-2, ESV*



*Pure and undefiled religion before God the Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained from the world. James 1:27*

*So, we are to use our different gifts in accordance with the grace that God has given us. If our gift is to speak God's message, we should do it according to the faith that we have; if it is to serve, we should serve; if it is to teach, we should teach; if it is to encourage others, we should do so. Whoever shares with others should do it generously; whoever has authority should work hard; whoever shows kindness to others should do it cheerfully. Romans 12:6-8, GNT*

*Anxiety in a person's heart weighs it down, but a good word cheers it up. Proverbs 12:25*

*Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. Colossians 3:12-14, NLT*

*When they were discouraged, I smiled at them. My look of approval was precious to them. Job 29:24, NLT*

*Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace. 1 Peter 4:8-10, ESV*

*Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7, NIV*

*But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Matthew 5:44*

*But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where [the injured man] was and when he saw him, he had compassion. Luke 10:33*

*If you oppress poor people, you insult the God who made them; but kindness shown to the poor is an act of worship. Proverbs 14:31, GNT*

*Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done. Proverbs 19:17, NIV*

*Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it! Hebrews 13:2, NLT*

*You yourself must always do good things too. In that way, you will show the young men how they should live. Titus 2:7a, EASY*

*Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints. Ephesians 6:18*

*Provide justice for the needy and the fatherless; uphold the rights of the oppressed and the destitute. Psalms 82:3*

*Your prayer has been heard, and your acts of charity have been remembered in God's sight. Acts 10:31b*

*Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love— and the greatest of these is love. 1 Corinthians 13:13*



## Jesus' Words on The Final Judgment

Matthew 25: 31-40, ESV

<sup>31</sup>When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. <sup>32</sup>Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup>And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. <sup>34</sup>Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. <sup>35</sup>For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup>I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me." <sup>37</sup>Then the righteous will answer him, saying, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? <sup>38</sup>And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? <sup>39</sup>And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?" <sup>40</sup>And the King will answer them, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me."

## Notes

Names of those in your Prayer Group Today:

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Prayer Points on your heart:

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