

A Practical Prayer List

by Jeannie St. John Taylor

This idea for simplifying your prayer list will make it easy for you to keep track of the people and problems you need to pray for.

You'll need a card file, and 3 x 5 cards in several different colors. There are all sorts of wonderful cards in the stores now. You can find pastel colors, psychedelic colors in hot pink and electric yellow, marbled blues and greens, as well as darker colors. I like as much variety as I can find. I prefer the lined ones, but unlined cards work, too, and I've used them on occasion.

On the top line of each card I write one name. Underneath it, I write the names of that person's family: Their parents, spouse, children, stepchildren, or siblings. I may also include ages. I briefly write out the reason that prompted me to pray. Sometimes I end up with a long list of problems, other times a single ongoing concern. Then on the back, I write information the person shared with me that I don't want to forget.

When I pray, I hold a stack of cards and flip through them, reading the names and praying as I go. That way I don't forget anyone. I make out a new card every time someone's information becomes obsolete. When a prayer for is answered, even with a seemingly insignificant answer, I file it in card file labeled "answered prayers" and start a new card for that person.

Since my list is too long to pray through every day, I organize the stack of cards according to color. Friends are on yellow; extended family on blue. I jot difficult marriages on pink, and people who need salvation on green. Lavender takes care of government leaders and world problems. White is for the new people I meet and promise to pray for. And orange reminds me to pray for my family and a few friends every day.

I use hot pink when critical situations arise, because that color screams emergency. I switch the name of the person who needs extra prayer to the hot pink until the crisis passes. That way, I remember to pray for them more often.

Those are my basic categories, but sometimes they change. I might add a stack for the elderly or lonely people. You'll figure out what works for you. Decide on your own categories and colors, then start praying.

Kneel with your list in the evenings. Wrap a stack of cards with a rubber band and slip it in your pocket so you can pray as you wait in line or when you're stuck in traffic. Keep blank cards with you at all times so you can add names as the Lord sends them.

Try to pray through your entire stack of cards once a week. I think you will find yourself becoming more consistent in your prayers once you are organized. And, hopefully, you'll find your "answered prayer" file bulging.