

HOW CAN YOUR CITY PREPARE?

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“They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat” (Neh 4:8).

With the rising tide of violence in cities across America, now is the time for Christ-followers to rise up and work together within their own communities to guard the spiritual gates of their city. Based on numerous testimonies from cities which have already faced violence, rioting, and threats of attack in recent days, here are a few principles that leaders and intercessors have learned in seeing violence overturned, order restored, and God’s peace established.

1. **Establish a consistent (preferably weekly) time of prayer with a core group of believers with a heart for the city.** *“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Heb 10:24).*
 - a. It’s not the size of the group that matters as much as a firm commitment to consistently and faithfully pray for the city.
 - b. To be a true “community” prayer group with corporate authority in prayer, seek participation with believers from across the city and not just one fellowship.
2. **Build your unity around the person of Jesus Christ, the truth of His Word, and the power and leading of the Holy Spirit.** *“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Eph 4:3-6).*
 - a. As believers, our unity must be based around the Person of Jesus Christ, not a doctrine, ideology, or ministry agenda.
 - b. Choose your battles. Don’t get distracted by side issues but keep your focus on becoming a community where God’s tangible peace and presence can dwell.
3. **Focus on what God is doing more than what the enemy is doing.** *“Come and see what God has done, His awesome deeds for mankind” (Ps 66:5)!*
 - a. Look for indicators of God’s blessing and favor, and bless that which He is already doing in the city. Come into agreement with what God has spoken through His Word.
 - b. Keep praise central. The high praises of God’s people has power to bring down strongholds. *“As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated” (2 Chron 20:22).*
4. **As issues arise, deal with them through repentance and forgiveness.** *“Then he said to me, “Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words” (Dan 10:12).*
 - a. Unresolved sin issues become open doors for the enemy. As the Holy Spirit reveals root issues on the land, ask the Lord for wisdom and take steps to clear the land of any sin,

- immorality, bloodshed, broken covenants, or idolatry through prayers of repentance, both personally and corporately.
- b. When appropriate, go on-site to the places where the Lord has revealed any defilement and take communion, pray, and worship in order to cleanse the land.
5. **Maintain a heart of humility and walk in the fear of the Lord.** *“But the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear Him, on those whose hope is in His unfailing love” (Ps 33:18).*
 - a. Honor those in spiritual authority; bless them and pray for them, even those you disagree with (1 Tim 2:2).
 - b. Determine to walk “offense-free” and practice forgiveness and forbearance towards others.
 6. **Build trusted relationships with other catalytic leaders** *“Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken” (Ecc 4:12).*
 - a. These leaders may not be in the church, but in business, education, entertainment, government and other sectors of your city. Strive to work together towards kingdom-centered values and presence-based community transformation.
 - b. Seek to establish an atmosphere in the city where all believers are inspired to be a bold witness for Christ.
 7. **Establish prayer altars throughout the city.** *“David built an altar to the Lord there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then the Lord answered his prayer in behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped” (2 Sam 24:25).*
 - a. Prayer altars help to establish a wall of prayer around a city. *“I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city” (Acts 18:10).*
 - b. Whether they are in schools, work places, offices, city streets, or churches, intercessory groups become living altars where the incense of their prayers and worship ascend to heaven on behalf of the city. *“The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; it must not go out” (Lev 6:13).*
 8. **Look for opportunities to be a corporate witness to the power of Christ.** *“May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 15:5).*
 - a. When appropriate, demonstrate the oneness of Christ in the public square. A corporate witness and testimony has authority in the spirit to thwart any scheme of the enemy.
 - b. Pray for spiritual leaders to speak with one voice in the city and give godly wisdom when faced with threats of danger.
 9. **Speak well of your city and bless it with your words and your works.** *“They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations” (Is 61:4).*
 - a. Speaking blessings on a city releases favor, especially to those who lead it. Determine to nullify any curses spoken by speaking the opposite, declaring God’s Word and promises.
 - b. Put your prayers into action and look for ways to demonstrate the kindness of God through acts of compassion.

“Violence will not be heard again in your land, nor devastation or destruction within your borders; But you will call your walls salvation, and your gates praise” (Is 60:18).