

Prayer Points for the Month of January

These prayer points for the month of January are for anyone who wants to begin the year on their knees: individuals, families, prayer meetings and churches, many of which open January with a season of prayer and fasting. They cover seeking God first, prayer and fasting, a fresh devotion to God's Word, plans and habits surrendered to Him, and the worth of every human life. Every point pairs a Bible verse with a short prayer drawn from it.

Behold, I am about to do something new; even now it is coming. Do you not see it? Indeed, I will make a way in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

Isaiah 43:19 (BSB)

Pray one section a week through January, or one point a day. In a fasting season, pray a point at the hour you would usually eat. When a prayer group meets, let one person read the verse, pray the short prayer together, then leave a few minutes for open prayer before moving on. Come back to the plans section when February arrives.

Seeking God first

1 His kingdom before everything else

Father, before the calendar fills up, we choose to seek first Your kingdom and Your righteousness. You know every need we carry into this month. Keep our worries in their place, and let our first thoughts each day be of You.

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.

Matthew 6:33 (BSB) ·

2 A heart that seeks His face

LORD, our hearts tell us to seek Your face, and we answer that we will. Not only Your help or Your gifts, but You. Draw us near in these first weeks of the year, and keep us near when the newness wears off.

My heart said, "Seek His face." Your face, O LORD, I will seek.

Psalms 27:8 (BSB) ·

3 His love heard in the morning

Lord, let us hear of Your loving devotion in the morning, before the news and the inbox. We have put our trust in You. Teach us the way we should walk this January, for to You we lift up our souls.

Let me hear Your loving devotion in the morning, for I have put my trust in You. Teach me the way I should walk, for to You I lift up my soul.

Psalms 143:8 (BSB) ·

4 New creations, not just new resolutions

Lord Jesus, a new year cannot make us new, but You can. Thank You that anyone in Christ is a new creation; the old has passed away. When we are tempted back toward old sins and old shame, remind us who we are in You.

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come!

2 Corinthians 5:17 (BSB)

Prayer and fasting

5 Living on every word from God

Lord Jesus, when You were hungry in the wilderness, You answered with Scripture: we do not live on bread alone. As we fast this month, let every hunger pang send us to Your word and to prayer, not to irritation or pride.

But Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Matthew 4:4 (BSB)

6 Weeping and praying like Nehemiah

God of heaven, when Nehemiah heard that Jerusalem's wall was broken down, he sat down and wept, fasting and praying for days. Break our hearts over what breaks Yours: the broken walls in our families, our church and our city. Then show us what to rebuild.

When I heard these words, I sat down and wept. I mourned for days, fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

Nehemiah 1:4 (BSB)

7 Heard from the first day

Father, Daniel's words were heard from the first day he set his heart to understand and to humble himself before You. Give us humble, teachable hearts as we pray and fast, and patience when Your answers take longer than we hoped.

"Do not be afraid, Daniel," he said, "for from the first day that you purposed to understand and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them."

Daniel 10:12 (BSB)

8 The fast God has chosen

Lord, keep our fasting from being only about food. Let it break chains and lift burdens. Help us share our bread with the hungry, open our homes to those with nowhere to go, and never turn away from our own families this winter.

Isn't this the fast that I have chosen: to break the chains of wickedness, to untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and tear off every yoke? Isn't it to share your bread with the hungry, to bring the poor and homeless into your home, to clothe the naked when you see him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Isaiah 58:6-7 (BSB)

A fresh devotion to the Word

9 Searching the Scriptures every day

Lord, as many of us start a Bible reading plan this January, give us the eagerness of the Bereans, who examined the Scriptures every day. When the reading gets hard and the weeks get busy, keep us opening Your word.

Now the Bereans were more noble-minded than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if these teachings were true.

Acts 17:11 (BSB)

10 From duty to delight

LORD, the psalmist loved Your law and thought about it all day long. Turn our Bible reading from a duty into a delight, so that a verse from the morning keeps coming back to us at work, in the car and before we sleep.

Oh, how I love Your law! All day long it is my meditation.

Psalms 119:97 (BSB)

11 Hearers who become doers

God, You told Joshua to keep Your book on his lips and meditate on it day and night, so that he would do everything written in it. Help us not only to read Your word but to obey it, in the small choices of ordinary days.

This Book of the Law must not depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in all you do.

Joshua 1:8 (BSB)

12 Your words, our joy

LORD God of Hosts, when Jeremiah found Your words, he took them in, and they became his joy and his heart's delight. Give us that appetite for Scripture this year. We bear Your name; let Your word fill us.

Your words were found, and I ate them. Your words became my joy and my heart's delight. For I bear Your name, O LORD God of Hosts.

Jeremiah 15:16 (BSB)

Plans, goals and habits

13 Trusting Him more than our planning

LORD, we have goals for this year, but we choose to trust You with all our hearts and not lean on our own understanding. In all our ways we acknowledge You. Make our paths straight, even where we cannot yet see the road.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (BSB) ·

14 He determines our steps

Lord, our hearts plan our course, but You determine our steps. Write what You want on our calendars, and give us grace when You change our plans. Keep us from holding any goal more tightly than we hold You.

A man's heart plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps.

Proverbs 16:9 (BSB)

15 Counting the cost wisely

Lord Jesus, You said a wise builder sits down first and counts the cost. As we set budgets and make plans this month, give us honest numbers, contentment with what You have given, and the self-control to finish what we start.

Which of you, wishing to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost to see if he has the resources to complete it?

Luke 14:28 (BSB)

16 Training for godliness

Father, many of us start new routines for our bodies in January. Physical exercise is of limited value, but godliness is valuable in every way. Help us build habits of prayer, Scripture and kindness with the same discipline we give to the gym.

But reject irreverent, silly myths. Instead, train yourself for godliness. For physical exercise is of limited value, but godliness is valuable in every way, holding promise for the present life and for the one to come.

1 Timothy 4:7-8 (BSB)

Every life precious to God

17 Every person made in His image

God our Creator, You made every person in Your image, male and female. Teach us to see that image in the unborn and the elderly, the disabled and the stranger, the neighbor who agrees with us and the one who does not.

So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Genesis 1:27 (BSB)

18 Children not yet born

Lord, David's frame was not hidden from You when he was formed in secret; Your eyes saw his unformed body. You see every unborn child the same way. On Sanctity of Human Life Sunday and every day, we pray for these little ones and their mothers.

My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in secret, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all my days were written in Your book and ordained for me before one of them came to be.

Psalms 139:15-16 (BSB) ·

19 A voice for those with no voice

Father, give us courage to open our mouths for those who have no voice. Bless pregnancy centers, foster families and everyone who stands beside a frightened mother, and help us speak up with truth and kindness together.

Open your mouth for those with no voice, for the cause of all the dispossessed.

Proverbs 31:8 (BSB)

Neighbors without warmth this winter

Lord, in the coldest weeks of the year some of our neighbors lack coats, heat or a meal. Keep us from wishing them well and walking away. Show us the shelter, food pantry or neighbor we can help this month, and move us to act.

Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you tells him, "Go in peace; stay warm and well fed," but does not provide for his physical needs, what good is that?

James 2:15-16 (BSB)

A closing prayer

Father, we give You the month of January. Thank You for a new beginning in Christ. Teach us to seek You first, to love Your word, and to hold our plans with open hands. Meet us in our fasting and our prayers. Bless the unborn, the vulnerable and the cold, and make us quick to help them. Whatever this year holds, keep our hearts set on You. In Jesus' name, Amen.