

Pray Against the Pandemic in Israel



A Guide from Christian Friends of Leket Israel

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Contents

FOREWORD	3
HOW TO BEGIN YOUR INTERCESSORY PRAYER	4
PRAY WITH THANKFULNESS	5
HAVE AN ATTITUDE OF GRAFTITUDE!	7
PRAY FOR ISRAEL'S WORKING FAMILIES	8
A SOURCE OF DIRE STRESS AND ANXIETY	
PRAY FOR ISRAEL'S ELDERLY	10
PRAY AGAINST THEIR ISOLATION	11
ONE IN THREE BELOW THE POVERTY LINE	
PRAY FOR ISRAEL'S FARMERS	13
PRAY GOD BLESSES THEIR GIVING	
PRAY FOR ISRAEL'S DOCTORS	16
PRAY FOR GENERAL HEALTH	17
PRAY THEY WILL PRACTICE SELF CARE	18
PRAY FOR THE IDF	19
IDF ARE SAFELY DELIVERING FOOD	
PRAY THE WORLD HONORS ISRAEL	21
PRAY CHRISTIANS WILL PRAY FOR ISRAEL	22
LEKET	23

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Foreword

Many of us feel isolated during this quarantine but we know our friends and family still have needs which must be met. Fortunately we can always reach out to them by the internet or phone, come to understand their needs and reach out to God in prayer to work on their behalf.

We know as Bible believing Christians that we have a duty to pray for Israel as well and many of us do, praying especially for its security.

My husband and I have spent twenty years doing advocacy for Israel in the name of Jesus and have prayed fervently for them during droughts, terrorist attacks and other tragedies.

This pandemic, however, is the greatest humanitarian crisis in modern Israel's history.

The COVID-19 Crisis is more severe in Israel than in America, an Israeli is 11.7% more likely to be infected. 70% of businesses have closed and the government is struggling to meet the needs of those who are elderly, poor or sick with other illnesses.

The God of Israel has given us the tool of prayer to intercede on their behalf. Even though we are physically distant from them, when we connect with the God of Israel through prayer, He bridges the gap.

But the pandemic has overshadowed everything else in the media, how can we know Israel's specific prayer needs during the COVID-19 crisis?

What does God say in His Word about how to pray for these needs?

It is our hope this guide will provide you with a complete understanding of the Israeli people's condition at this time. Their needs, anxieties and fears which we can lift up to God.

It is also our hope this guide will allow you to become a better intercessor for Israel when this pandemic is over.

As you read this guide, please allow it to become part of your prayers for Israel.

Rosalind MacDonald

April 3, 2020

Intercession

HOW TO BEGIN YOUR INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Before praying it is essential our heart is in the right place.

Know that in the end it is God who controls all that is in the world and in our lives,

“Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come.” Ephesians 1:21

He has given us the gift of intercessory prayer to enter His presence,

“So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.”

Hebrews 4:16

Feel empowered by the fact that our prayers have the power to change lives around the world,

“If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.” John 15:7

But it is only by aligning ourselves to the will of God our prayers will be effective,

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Romans 12:2



Thankfulness

PRAY WITH THANKFULNESS AS ISRAEL HAS A SPECIAL PLACE IN GOD'S HEART

To intercede on their behalf it is important we remember those scriptures that show God's focus is on Israel. Before you pray consider the full meaning of these verses so you can be aligned with God's Heart for His people.

"For the Lord has chosen Jacob for Himself, Israel for His special treasure." Psalm 135:4

God's love for Israel reminds us of His role as loving father in our lives,

"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt" Hosea 11:1

His love of Israel is also unconditional, this is the love He has for us as well

"For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt." Deuteronomy 7:6-8

God's love and protection for the Jewish people endures today. He preserved the Jews through Antisemitism and the Holocaust, and gave them redemption in Israel against all rational odds.

Why should Christians be thankful, especially in this pandemic, that Israel is especially beloved by God?

Because Israel is the evidence God gives us of His miraculous love for each of us!

Pray thanks for this evidence! Let it reassure us and pray God keeps us as surely as He keeps the Jewish people



Graftitude

HAVE AN ATTITUDE OF GRAFTITUDE!

Remember that our faith does not waver in the wind on its own but is grafted into the strong root of God's covenants with Israel.

Romans 11:17-18 reads, *“And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.”* And: *“For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches.”*
Romans 11:16

God commands Christians to support the people of Israel,

It was Paul's custom to take an offering from Gentile believers for the poor in Jerusalem. What was their reaction? *“They [Gentiles] were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them [Jews]. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings.”* Romans 15:27

An understanding of this will make you pray more fervently for the Peace of Jerusalem, the State of Israel and its leaders and the people of Israel, all of which is crucial in this time!



Working Families

PRAY FOR ISRAEL'S WORKING FAMILIES

The family is an institution ordained by God as the foundation of society but in Israel families have a hard time:

- Israelis work on average 10 hours more than Americans
- But one quarter of Israeli families are not receiving the daily nutrition they need
- They must raise their children in an atmosphere of conflict and the threat of terror

This is worsened by the quarantine which prevents families from bonding by being active outside and from seeing their extended families.

There are also added stresses associated with being with the same people day in, day out.

Pray their homes will be places of peace rather than strife:

“A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention.” Proverbs 15:18

Pray families will have patience and forgiveness for one another:

“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant.”
1 Corinthians 13:4

Pray they will experience peace rather than anxiety:

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”
Philippians 4:6

A source of dire stress and anxiety is hunger. Shockingly 12% of Israeli families on food stamps report having to rummage through garbage cans to feed their children. This puts a much greater burden on them.

Please when you pray remember the words of Isaiah 58:10 that they will find help from those who can give it,

“If you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday.”

The Elderly

PRAY FOR ISRAEL'S ELDERLY

The elderly are the hardest hit by the pandemic.

Coronavirus is most lethal to those with preexisting medical conditions. The first fatalities in Israel were four patients at a nursing home whose younger caregiver did not wear protective equipment because she was not showing symptoms.

Many of those who care for the elderly are much younger, when their infections will not show any symptoms.

Pray that those who care for them take all the steps and precautions they should to prevent the illness from spreading to them.

They are often unable to be physically active as well, senior's recreation centers have shut down, fear of contracting the virus makes them shut-ins.

This causes dangerous health complications as well. With so little activity their muscles, bones and organs begin to atrophy which in turn worsens a number of common conditions among the elderly.

God says regarding the righteous as they age:

"They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green"

Psalm 92:14

Pray that God will preserve their bodies, that they will stay mobile and active, even while home-bound.

Isolation

PRAY AGAINST THEIR ISOLATION

The worst part of all of this for Israel's elderly is the loneliness. In Israel families tend to be much larger than in North America, and the bonds between grandparents, their children and grandchildren are much stronger. They enjoy coming together at Sabbath and other occasions. With social distancing however they become much more isolated.

And many medical experts see loneliness as a very serious health risk in itself. Causing depression, anxiety and other maladies to worsen as their televisions offer nothing but bad news about the pandemic.

Pray they will remember the words of the Psalmist:

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me” Psalm 23:4



We all know now just how scarce food can be, but for many Israelis hunger is a fact of life made worse by the shut down.

One in three elderly Israelis are below the poverty line. Their government stipend is not enough to live on.

The soup kitchens and family support they rely on is not available during the Coronavirus crisis and social distancing.

Malnutrition puts the aged at extreme risk for COVID-19. Their immune systems become weaker so pre-existing illnesses become fatal.

God's Word is quite clear about how we should think about the elderly,

***“Do not cast me off in the time of old age;
forsake me not when my strength is spent.”***

Psalm 71:9

Farmers

PRAY FOR ISRAEL'S FARMERS

Israel's farmers must bare the burden of feeding Israel's poor on their own. Food imports have been cut dramatically to make sure Israel is self sufficient during this crisis.

Pray for the farmers. The average age of an Israeli farmer is 60 years old!

These are the men who made the desert bloom but their strength can only go so far.

Pray they will have the strength to till the fields at their advanced age:

“And I will still be carrying you when you are old. Your hair will turn gray, and I will still carry you. I made you, and I will carry you to safety.”

Isaiah 46:4

Their number has also been greatly reduced. There were once hundreds of thousands of farmers eager to transform and cultivate the desert. But now only 40,000 are left to feed all eight million Israelis.

One reason is farming is simply not the profitable trade it once was and so, fleeing increasing debt, many have moved overseas.

Pray that Israel's farmers will find encouragement through prosperity,

“I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for.” Jeremiah 29:11

Younger Israelis have become enamored with the cutting edges of the technological and financial industries. They yearn to be the next billionaires in “the Start Up Nation” as Israel has come to be known.

Each year these farmers are forced to work harder on less land. The housing market seemed more profitable and so farmland was converted into suburbs.

Now the housing market has plummeted and farmers are left with less to work with.

Pray that the Israeli people again see that farming is as vital as military security:

“Be sure you know the conditions of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds; for riches do not endure forever, and a crown is not secure for all generations.” Proverbs 27:23-24

The land has also fallen on hard times. Until this year, most of the last couple of decades was marked by drought and water levels have yet to recover.

Please pray against drought and that the climate will be good for farming.

“The threshing places will be full of grain; the pits beside the presses will overflow with wine and olive oil. I will give you back what you lost in the years when swarms of locusts ate your crops.” Joel 2:24-25

Pray some of these young men take up farming to ease the burden on their fathers. And relieve the hunger of Israelis.

“Hear, my son, your father’s instruction, and forsake not your mother’s teaching, for they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck.” Proverbs 1:8-9



Pray God blesses their giving to the poor

These farmers are not just working for pay, or for a verdant Israel, but for the poor and needy. Each season these farmers give thousands of tonnes of produce to soup kitchens, senior's homes and food banks through Leket Israel.

Pray that God will reward their generosity,

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

Luke 6:38

Doctors

PRAY FOR ISRAEL'S DOCTORS

Understand our prayers have been empowered by God to help heal the sick, even as far away as in Israel

“Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.” James 5:14-15

As you pray, know that these prayers will have an impact as stated by God in His scriptures.

Pray they remember it is God who heals, and that He has promised to do so:

“Heal me, Lord, and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved, for you are the one I praise.” Jeremiah 17:14



General Health

PRAY FOR THE GENERAL HEALTH OF ISRAEL'S PEOPLE

Medical experts say the real danger of Coronavirus is that, by taxing the healthcare system, those with serious illnesses cannot find treatment. In Israel right now, medical resources have been stretched in an effort to test new patients, even for life threatening conditions. The highest risk population are also those with pre-existing conditions. As such the first step in praying for Israel's front line physicians to be successful is to pray for the health of the general population.

Please pray God will keep most Israelis in otherwise good health. Pray that those who might be sick are in fact otherwise healthy.

God has promised the people of Israel conditional good health:

“But you shall serve the LORD your God, and He will bless your bread and your water; and I will remove sickness from your midst.” Exodus 23:25



Self Care

PRAY THEY WILL PRACTICE SELF CARE

Physicians in Israel are now working 14-16 hour days, because those in the medical field have a strong spirit of service they often neglect their own needs such as sleeping or eating. While their commitment is admirable this causes them harm and can reduce their abilities to help heal those in need.

Pray they still take their health seriously and practice self care as they can. May they rely on strength provided by God!

“The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, ‘Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.’ So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.” 1 Kings 19:7-8

God will provide what we need to do His work, but He gives us the choice to take it.

Pray that Israel will also have the skills to help defeat the pandemic.

There are thirty Israeli technologies in development to fight the pandemic.

BATM is developing a home test kit which can identify the virus quickly, which is better than the current system which takes much longer.

VocalZoom is working on anon invasive skin scanner which can detect symptoms faster than a swab test, these scanners can be placed in high risk areas like mass transit or hospitals.

The MIGAL Galilee Research Institute is working to apply treatments which tested successfully on human volunteers, their hopes are high.

PRAY FOR THE IDF

How to pray for Israel's defense forces.

As of this writing, 3697 soldiers are under quarantine, 58 have been infected with Coronavirus and the IDF Chief of Staff is under quarantine.

Pray Israel's troops act without fear during this medical crisis as they act without fear during terrorist threats.

Psalm 91:6 instructs the soldiers of Israel not to fear "*the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday*" because they know God will keep them safe.

Pray that Israel's enemies will not use this crisis to cause harm. The last time Israel was invaded was the Yom Kippur War, Israel's enemies struck when the nation was in their synagogues celebrating God.

As verse five of Psalm 91 reads "*You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day*"

Pray they stay vigilant.

1 Peter 5:8 reads "*Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*"

Pray they will have wisdom and compassion during the quarantine.


For several decades the IDF has policed the West Bank and Gaza Strip on the watch for terrorism while being applauded for their restraint and focus.

But now there is a possibility they will be called to enforce the quarantine by force of arms, either on cities or perhaps the whole nation.

Pray they have additional discernment.

The IDF must make snap decisions at checkpoints which save lives and prevent attacks.

Proverbs 2:11 states, "*Discretion will watch over you, understanding will guard you.*"



Pray for the IDF as they help feed the elderly

The IDF is not just concerned with the physical security of the People of Israel, but for their well being as well. For several years the IDF has been providing Leket Israel, the National Food Bank, with hundreds of tonnes of food which we use to help feed 175,000 Israelis in need each week.

Now in this COVID-19 pandemic they are taking to the front lines for the elderly. With Leket Israel's help young men and women in the IDF are safely delivering healthy and nutritious food directly to the homes of the elderly.

Please pray as they honor the words of Collosians 3:12:

“So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.”

Honor Israel

PRAY THE WORLD HONORS ISRAEL AS THE LIGHT UNTO THE NATIONS

God has a purpose for Israel, as He does for us all, one that Satan wants to hinder with this pandemic. Isolation brings fear and tries to alienate us from each other and the plans God has for us. God wants Israel to be a light unto the nations:

“All the nations will praise you, for you will be a Land of delight.”

Malachi 3:12

Pray that God will lift this pandemic so Israel can continue to be God’s light in the Middle East and the world.



Heart of Prayer

PRAY CHRISTIANS WILL HAVE A HEART OF PRAYER FOR ISRAEL

Matthew 18:19-20 states:

“Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

As Christians we must pray not just that our own prayers will be answered, but that other Christians will join us in prayer on these matters as well.

When you close your prayer for Israel, please pray other Christians will also pray for Israel.

This will have an impact on your day to day life as well, it will help you grow as a prayer warrior for Israel, and a better advocate for the nation!



SHALOM ALEICHEM - PEACE BE UNTO YOU!

Thank you for reading this guide, thank you for praying for Israel!

LEKET ISRAEL: THE NATIONAL FOOD BANK

Since our founding in 2003, God has blessed us to be able to feed 175,000 Israelis in need each week. In Israel one in three school kids will go to class hungry and tens of thousands of Holocaust Survivors live on just one meal per day. We address this tragedy by working with farmers, corporations and the IDF to deliver healthy, nutritious food to those who need it most.



One of our beneficiaries, the 86 year old Esti is a Holocaust Survivor and has this to say, comparing her childhood in Europe to being hungry later in life, *“Everyone who was hungry like me, who reached the point when they were no more than skin and bones cannot stand watching food being*

thrown away. It takes me back to that place. It pains me deeply that there are people who throw food away. For that reason, I am so happy to see the work that Leket Israel does- that you bring us food."

Our name, "Leket Israel" comes from the commandment found in Leviticus 23:22: *"When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleanings from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the Lord your God."* Across ancient Israel during the harvest the poor in Israel would have the opportunity to eat whatever fell to the ground, ensuring there was always a portion set aside for them.

This is the same commandment which saved Ruth and Naomi's life in Ruth 2:15-16: *"And when she rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, 'Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. Also let grain from the bundles fall purposely for her; leave it that she may glean, and do not rebuke her.'"*

As the Director of Christian Connections for Leket Israel I am honoured to represent Leket in the Christian community. We have spent the last twenty years doing advocacy for the Jewish People. It seems clear to us that God still holds a place in His heart for the Jewish people and that as Christians it is our responsibility to stand up for them and care for them when they are in need.

Ray MacDonald

