

FREEDOM FROM ADDICTION

■ THE
■ RECOVERY
■ COURSE



PRAYER GUIDELINES



THE RECOVERY COURSE

SAMPLE PRAYERS SENT AS EMAILS TO INTERCESSORS ON RECOVERY FROM ADDICTION COURSE

It is good to send out weekly prayer letters to all those who have agreed to support your particular Recovery Course in prayer. Many of the prayer requests will be specific to your course and you can include these according to your need - more people to give practical help, more money for food, a more peaceful atmosphere or a more lively atmosphere etc. etc.

Some prayer requests are common to all courses. Before the course, the need to pray that the people God wants on the course will come and that any opposition to the very idea of attending a course will melt away, for example. Many of these will be obvious to you and you will be prompted by the Holy Spirit too.

What will be more difficult for you, particularly in the first few courses, is understanding the progress of the course itself and what the teaching is in any particular week. It is very helpful for your intercessors [or you may want to call them pray-ers as some people self-exclude themselves by refusing to think of themselves as up to being intercessors] to understand the issues the participants [or guests] in the course are undergoing at any particular time. What issues are they facing in their work on the course at home that week? They all have a coursework book and they are expected to be continuing the work of the course at home during the week and this is where the most important work in their lives take place. Compassionate, understanding prayer is needed to help them with this process as the course often brings difficult issues from the past to the surface.

So below I have tried to give you a brief summary of the main thrust of each week's teaching and by using this digitally you can 'cut and paste' and send out whatever is relevant each week and add it to your own prayer requests for your course. You will see that for the first few sessions I have added some of the important general prayers too, just to get you started.

Please note that there is a workshop session that can be fitted in at any part of the course according to your leader's choice. I have put the prayers for this at the end of this paper.

Session 1

Everyone receiving this email has offered to pray for any current Recovery from Addiction Course held locally and we are so grateful for this - thank you so much. Many of you will not be personally familiar with addictions or even have any understanding of causes, so it is useful to quote a couple of celebrities who have had problems with addiction, as they help explain that many people embark on an addictive course of action to 'medicate' troubled feelings.

The comedian and actor Russell Brand, who was a heroin and crack addict for many years, was asked what he was looking for in his addiction and he replied, "To anaesthetise the pain. I always felt desperately unhappy. When I first started taking drugs I thought, 'Oh thank God, something that makes you feel less miserable.' The reason you take drugs is to prevent yourself from confronting what you actually are". He also said, "Drugs and alcohol are not my problem - reality is my problem. Drugs and alcohol are my solution. I looked to drugs and booze to fill a hole in me".

Nigella Lawson speaking about her cocaine and marijuana usage said, "I don't have a drug problem, I have a life problem.'

These comments demonstrate that it is not enough to go through a period of detoxification and then be convinced that the problem is resolved. A personal transformation is required.

So this first week's session is looking at people's willingness to change and suggesting ways that may help this process.

Please pray that everyone on the course will want to be transformed more than they want to remain in their addictive lifestyle.

You will understand it is very difficult, however, to make that first step and actually walk into the building and the unknown.

Please pray that everyone will overcome their fears and anxieties and make that step and no external factors - illness, family illness, work pressures, travel problems etc. etc. - will prevent anyone from attending.

Pray for a welcoming atmosphere with all on the team alert and enabled by the Holy Spirit to make the transition into the course as easy and as unthreatening as possible.

Pray for the team leader that s/he makes the right decision in placing each person into an appropriate small group - very important prayer.

Pray for those providing the meal that they will have the right amount of food for those who arrive.

Everyone on the team is likely to experience a very severe heightening of the spiritual battle in their lives as the course starts and progresses. **Please pray protection for everyone on the team and their families; the team leader, the group leaders and assistant group leaders, the people praying and those providing food.**

Session 2

Maybe start by giving details of last week's attendance. If there was a good atmosphere give thanks to God for that, pray for good atmosphere this week. Pray that more new guests will come and that no-one will be prevented from coming by external circumstances such as travel, work or sickness.

Last week the session was looking at people's willingness to change and suggesting ways that may help that process. This week we start **Step 1: *We admitted we were powerless over our addiction - that our lives had become unmanageable.*** We spend two weeks on this first step which is crucial to the success of the whole course for an individual. This week the course concentrates on the words '***we admitted***' as people cannot move forward until they truly admit they have a problem. Naturally there is always a tendency to deny that there is a problem, or that it is really serious, or that it is in any way out of control.

Please pray that everyone will be completely honest with themselves and not try to deny the serious effect their addiction is having on their lives and those around them. Pray also that they will be given hope that change is possible.

Pray for whoever is giving the talk or testimony; for the group leaders as they help their groups to settle together; for the groups to 'gel', to become mutually supportive and to provide a safe space to share with one another.

Particularly pray continually for protection for all involved in leading the course, including the small group leaders, the on-site prayer support team, those providing food and all their families.

Session 3

This week we are continuing with **Step 1: *We admitted we were powerless over our addiction - that our lives had become unmanageable,*** and we are concentrating on the aspect of our

own powerlessness. Participants are asked to accept that they are experiencing pain; that they are powerless over their addiction and that their lives have become unmanageable.

The idea that ultimately the power to change only comes from God is introduced in this session.

Please pray specifically for those who have no concept of a powerful, loving God.

Continue to pray for whoever is giving talk or testimony and pray for protection for group leaders and all involved in the leadership team and their families.

Session 4

At the beginning of the talk this week the idea is introduced that addiction is like a **sleeping tiger** within each addict. This tiger cub relies on a constant supply of the addiction of choice if it is to remain active. If the supply is cut off, the tiger cub goes to sleep, but it does not stop growing. People can abstain for years without any problems until in a mad moment they relent and instantly the tiger wakes up but it is no longer a relatively harmless cub. It is now a famished ruthless greedy beast that devours them.

Please pray that everyone can keep this image at the front of their minds for the rest of their lives because it is tragic to see reformed addicts' lives destroyed again by just one lapse, even years later.

This week we cover **Step 2 of the course: 'we came to believe that a greater power than ourselves could restore us to sanity.'** At the centre of this course is the belief that God exists, that we matter to Him and He has the power to help recovery and give everyone a new empowered life.

Please pray that God's Holy Spirit will hover around every participant on the course and convict them of the truth that there is a living God who cares for them.

Please pray that participants will return week by week and that those who missed last week will be there this week.

Please pray that group cohesion is very good with everyone feeling supported and encouraged by other group members and understanding that the group is a very safe place.

It is also not too late yet for new people to join, so **pray that more people will start the course.**

As always, please continue to pray for **whoever is giving the talk or testimony** and pray for **protection for group leaders and all involved in the leadership** and every aspect of provision of the course including those praying and those preparing the meal.

Add any prayers specific to your course.

Session 5

This week we look at Step 3: ***We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God.***

Please pray that each person will make this decision and that they really understand that they are turning their problem over to God and not turning their back on it.

In this session we try to dispel five commonly held distortions of who God is and encourage course participants to trust Him. **The only way that they will know if God is who He says He is, is to reach out to Him.**

Please pray that they will all do this.

The teaching explains that we do not have to have a perfect understanding of God to ask Him into our lives; that He is not disgusted with us, **He will not reject us and He is merciful and forgiving.** The concept of **repentance** is introduced together with the blessing of 'new beginnings'

that repentance brings.

Please pray that participants will begin to grasp the importance of repentance.

Please also continue to pray that everyone will attend this week and every week.

Pray that within the groups everyone will be mutually supportive and bound together by love and care for one another.

Pray for protection for group leaders and all involved in the leadership and every aspect of provision of the course.

Again any prayers specific to your needs.

Session 6

This week's session is called '**Opening Pandora's Box**' and we start **Step 4; *We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.***

The intention of this session is to **bring into the light issues hindering the healing process.** Participants are to explore whether they are seeking revenge in any relationships and the Recovery Course begins to deal, in a constructive manner, with any resentments they may hold.

The first three steps have been getting them right with God. This week is about starting the process to **get right with themselves with the help of God.** It is also this week that the work at home during the week becomes as important as attending on an evening.

Please pray that everyone will diligently undertake the homework and do it honestly.

Pray for the help of the Holy Spirit in this - encouraging them to answer the questions and prompting them to remember everything that God wants them to start to deal with in their past lives.

It would be wonderful if you could pray for them each day.

Please continue to pray for the group leaders and everyone involved in the leadership of the course, asking particularly **for protection for them and their loved ones.**

Session 7

This week's session is entitled '**Dig for Victory**' and we continue to explore **Step 4: *We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.***

Before a gardener plants seeds s/he digs the ground removing weeds and stones; that is the analogy for the process being undertaken. The purpose of the inventory is to **candidly scrutinise and confess sins to God.**

Please pray that as our people make this moral inventory of their past, they understand that this is **not a personal demolition job**; they remember they have done many good things; they are made in the image of God and that Jesus will forgive our sins and free us from guilt.

As well as continuing to uncover longstanding resentments and grudges, the homework this week also looks at an individual's priorities in life - where is God in our priority list? Are we trustworthy? What is the state of our mind and do we respect our body? There is actually a list of **144 questions to consider at home this week!**

Please pray that every individual will diligently do the work at home and the **Holy Spirit will direct each individual to those questions most relevant to him or her at this time** and that they will have the courage to answer each question honestly.

Thank you for praying protection for the group leaders and the leadership team including intercessors and chefs. This is so very important as has been discovered in previous Recovery Courses so please keep this prayer ongoing.

Session 8

This week is session 8 and it is entitled 'Time to confess' when we tackle **Step 5: *we admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.*** This is the step that begins to free people from the things in their lives that enslave them. When these things are brought into the light they lose their power.

Please pray that everyone will discover that confession works!

Please pray that course participants will truly understand that they are stating to God and to another person that wrong is wrong and that they take responsibility for their own shortcomings and failures.

Pray that they cease to blame others for their problems but take responsibility for themselves. As they do this any barrier between them and God is removed.

As you will appreciate this is the **heart of the course** and it is difficult but if people grasp this, it is life changing and they **need the help of God's Holy Spirit every step of the way**, which is why your prayers are so important.

Please pray that they will all persevere through this especially difficult and deep part and that they will truly experience God's help.

Please continue to pray protection for all the group leaders and those in the leadership team including our chefs and intercessors.

Session 9

This week we start **Step 6: *we were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character,*** or another way of putting this is; 'I am ready to submit to God and let Him make any changes in my character that He wishes to make'.

Please pray that people are willing to submit to God and to expect, permit, even desire, changes.

Please pray that everyone can believe 2 Corinthians 5:11 "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone the new has come."

The key to this step is **willingness**. To make progress this week the course participants have to be willing to allow God into their lives to make changes. God never forces His will on us and so this week is a week of preparation for the next step, Step 7.

It is also a week of beginning to **understand the character defects that God might want to remove**; fear, selfishness, resentment, envy, self-will, dishonesty, excessive pride or self-importance, self-pity, insecurity and an unwillingness to take responsibility for our own lives.

[When I pray this week I always pray God will deal with me too!]

As you can understand, this part of the course is very hard work for everyone.

Please pray people will persevere and God's Holy Spirit will sustain, strengthen and enable them in every way.

Also prayers of protection.

Session 10

Having undertaken last week, the preparatory work of **Step 6: *We were entirely ready to have God remove all those defects of character***, this week we come to **Step 7: *We humbly asked God to remove all our shortcomings***.

Everyone has been identifying **specific defects in their character** [and who does not have these!] that God needs to deal with.

Please pray that God's Holy Spirit will continue to help each individual to focus on what is important in this area and not feel overwhelmed.

Please pray too that everyone will accept that to succeed in recovery there will be a need to change, otherwise they will be back in addiction.

Change only comes if we are willing to change and God will do it but only with our permission.

Please pray against any pride within individuals that prevents them asking for God's help.

We want everyone to have the humility to place their confidence in God and not in themselves.

Pray also that what God has started in the individuals on the course He will carry through to completion so that the end result gives them joy in their lives.

Prayers of protection too.

Session 11

This week we cover **Step 8: *We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all***.

So far the course has been focussed on the participant him/herself, now the course shifts to restoring relationships with others. Being under the influence of addiction can make people increasingly isolated. Making amends could lead to the joy of forgiveness and even reconciliation.

This is a very challenging step. The participants are probably beginning to feel they have got past the most difficult issues, facing up to the addiction, getting right with God and sharing the issues with another person and now suddenly they face making a list of people they have hurt and thinking about what they could do to make amends.

Please pray that God will give everyone the desire and courage to face up to another hurdle!

This is also a time to consider all the loved ones around the person with the addiction.

Please pray that this step will lead to forgiveness, reconciliation and new beginnings in stronger relationships.

And prayers for protection.

Session 12

Having made preparations for this last week, we move on to **Step 9: *We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others***.

Step 9 is about trying in some way to put right any wrongs inflicted on others; it is about restoring relationships. It is another very difficult step.

Please pray that everyone will have the courage to take this step.

The over-riding blessing of this step is that everyone starts to become the people that deep down they have always wanted to be. People with addictions often have very low self esteem and often dislike themselves. The Bible tells us to “Love your neighbour as yourself” but what if you hate yourself?

Please pray into that issue of low self-esteem.

Pray too that The Holy Spirit will help everyone to stop doing the things that make them feel bad about themselves and start doing some things that make them feel good about themselves.

Please also continue prayers for protection

Session 13

We have now reached the last three steps of the Recovery Course and these are the **maintenance steps** which are used and practised in order to maintain the recovery that has been achieved. If people have worked diligently through the first 9 steps they find themselves owners of a structurally sound life with solid foundations. Daily clearing is all that is needed from now on.

Please pray that everyone will understand that when they are spiritually well they will have no desire to ‘use’ again.

It is when they are spiritually ‘out of sorts’ that problems arise, as most of us know. Relapse is a poor spiritual state that allows them to consider something destructive to be sensible.

As I suggested above, everyone needs to consider **Step 10** on a daily basis: ***We continued to take a personal inventory and when we were wrong we promptly admitted it.*** This is the way to avoid moral and emotional junk that makes people sick in the first place. It is the keeping of a ‘clean slate’ and the keeping a short account with God that we all need to do.

Please pray that everyone will accept that this sort of discipline in their lives will make such a difference and be such a blessing to them.

Continue prayers of protection.

Session 14

This week is we tackle **Step 11: *We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out.*** Just as step 10 is best tackled at the end of the day, Step 11 is a great way to start the day.

Please pray that these daily disciplines will become part of the daily life of everyone on the course.

Pray that they will establish a quiet time with God at the beginning of each day, however short, and they will soon see the benefit of this and realise how essential it is in bringing peace and joy into their lives.

Continue to pray for protection

Session 15

This is the last session of the course which considers **Step 12: *Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to those still in active addiction, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*** This is the ‘giving back’ step.

Please pray that those who have successfully made this journey of 12 steps will be willing to help others and that some may be group leaders of the future.

Pray that everyone will keep these 12 steps in mind always and that they will understand they give a pattern for living that is always there for them.

Pray too that when temptation comes to 'use' again they go back to Step 1 and work their way through to Step 12.

Please keep these people in your prayers.

Pray too that wherever they live they will find lively and accepting churches that they can be part of and where they can continue to grow spiritually with courses such as 'Alpha', 'Emmaus' or similar.

Please continue **prayers of protection** for everyone involved in the leadership of the courses.

Everyone on the course knows that a group of people have been praying for them and I **cannot thank you enough for your faithful prayers**. We do see lives transformed by our Lord Jesus Christ and that is so encouraging to us who know them. Be encouraged yourselves that your prayers have made a difference; they have been so essential.

I do hope that as you have read the very brief synopsis of the Recovery Course I have given you, you may see that in so many ways it is beneficial to us all. **Indeed I think all Christians should do it!**

N.B. There is also a **workshop** that is part of the course and which can be fitted in at any stage of the course. I have put the prayers for that below.

Session 16

This week we cover a special workshop that is fitted in at different parts of the course.

The workshop concentrates on the daily struggle against succumbing to temptation. All of us can be aware of a **'voice' in our head which tempts us**, and for those on the course this 'voice' aims at actually encouraging them in their addiction; taunts them or hurls accusations at them.

Please pray that everyone will recognise this voice as the voice of satan; that they will have no difficulty in recognising this power of darkness and evil in the world.

Pray too that they will learn how to deal with this voice and leave it powerless. Ask that they will recognise that it is not their own voice, even though satan frequently uses the pronoun 'I' - they may hear the voice say, 'I want a drink...[or whatever]'.

Please pray that they can all learn that the answer to that question is, 'you do, I don't, clear off!'

As ever please continue to pray protection for everyone involved in leading or administering the course.