

Mobilizing People to Pray for Your Ministry



Writing Effective Prayer Updates

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Writing updates for our supporters is one of the valuable ways we help them to support us. Because there are various reasons why we write these updates, I am focusing on writing *prayer* updates, either within our general newsletters or as their own letter, and finding effective ways to motivate people to pray for our work and our people.



Focused

Research shows that the average reader will give 51 seconds to an email newsletter. People are more likely to pray when they know what you are asking for from the start and when it's limited to a few select things.

Tips for keeping focus:

- **Be clear** in what you are needing prayer for.
- **Be simple** in what you communicate.
- **Be consistent.** Set an achievable goal in how often you will update and stick with it.

What not to include:

- Lengthy descriptions or long stories packed with details.
- Sensitive or compromising information for you or nationals you work with.



Understandable

The easier your letter is to read and understand, the more likely it will be used for prayer. Remember that the people you are writing to may not have an understanding of your people and lifestyle or remember from month-to-month what is going on.

Tips for making it user-friendly:

- **Briefly remind** people of on-going stories or prayer needs.
Example: *"Pray for Abraham, our language tutor, to be saved"* instead of *"Pray for Abraham's salvation."*
- **Short crafted prayers** to help people lift up situations they are removed from.
- **Ministry tagline** that helps people remember quickly your vision.
Example: *"**Smith Newsletter** To build and to plant in Madagascar, Africa (Jer 1:10)"*
- **Avoid a "sea of words."** The less words it takes, the easier it is for the reader.



Motivating

Look at the style and the content of your communication to determine if it's helpful in motivating someone to pray.

Tips for providing motivation for prayer:

- **Acknowledge answers to prayer** and that they are making a difference by praying for you.
- Include 'snapshot' statements to **help people understand the need.**
Example: *"The average wage men receive in our city is \$1.00 per day."*
- **Stay on topic.** Before sending, ask yourself, "Does every sentence support the topic?" and "Are any repetitive?" Cut out the ones that are unnecessary.



Evaluation Exercise

Look through your prayer updates from this past year and evaluate:

1. Focus: What are the dominant themes* of your updates?
2. Focus: What is one thing you can do to make the communication clearer?
3. Understandability: Are the updates understandable from a supporters' point of view?
4. Motivation: What were things you included that would help motivate people to pray? What can you incorporate the next time you write?
5. Feedback: Ask a few of your supporters for suggestions on making the updates better.

* Tip: If the dominant themes have more to do with personal struggles you face, consider forming an 'inner circle' of intercessors to share personal needs with and revise your style of updates to be balanced between ministry and personal needs.

Update example:

Smith Prayer Update

To Build and to Plant in Madagascar, Africa (Jer 1:10)

The average wage men receive in our city is \$1.00 per day. Last month, we highlighted our believing friend "Peter" and his struggle to pay his rent. God has provided him with a job this month and he is paying off the money due! His family is amazed at the turn of events and "Peter" has had many fruitful conversations about the faithfulness of Father to his unbelieving family. **Your prayers mattered in Peter's life – thank you.**

As a team, we will be doing a training for believers on discipleship and how to develop leaders on Tuesday, April 12. Please pray:

- **Wisdom for us to develop relevant material using Bible parables.**
- **Our leaders will be envisioned for growth and will determine their next steps to make it happen.**
- **The salvation of Peter's family! (mentioned above)**
- **Our son is having his wisdom teeth pulled this week. Pray for a smooth procedure.**