

# Raise them up, Lord! Raise them up!

By Penny Lee

"I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness." 1 Timothy 2:1-2

The Lord has been talking to me a lot lately about praying for our nation and He gave me a visual, if you will. When we pray for our nation and our leaders we are, in essence, building a wall around our country. Just like the days of old when cities would build a wall around their city for protection, prayer acts in the same way.

We have all seen and deal with the sharp turn to the left our country has taken and the simple fact that this irrational mindset is running our country. It is taking over our military, our educational system, and is running amuck in our federal government and in a number of states. We are a nation that is being torn to pieces by people who hate our country and everything we stand for. This is no secret. All we have to do is watch the news and we will see it for ourselves – live.

God has called us to pray and pray fervently according to His Word. I know that many of us have become very discouraged by all we see and hear. We talk about the Lord returning soon and point at all that is happening. I'm right there with you. But God has been speaking to me about this.

When was the last time you read the book of Ezekiel. Most people don't like to read it because it's FULL of imagery and prophecy and things we don't understand. But I want to encourage you to at least read Ezekiel 33. God has appointed Ezekiel to be a Watchman. The job of a watchman was to be on the wall of the city and watch for riders, visitor, and/or invaders and let the others know what they see – warn them of impending attack.

Well, the attack happened in the 80s and 90s and apparently, we weren't paying enough attention. The enemy is no longer at the gates – he's running the country – running it into total destruction.

I hate turning on the news because of all the corruption and double standard that I see. But God calls us to pray – to be watchmen. Read what Ezekiel 33:1-20 says:

*Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Son of man, speak to the sons of your people and say to them, 'If I bring a sword upon a land, and the people of the land take one man from among them and make him their watchman, <sup>3</sup> and he sees the sword coming upon the land and blows the horn and warns the people, <sup>4</sup> then someone who hears the sound of the horn but does not take warning, and a sword comes and takes him away, his blood will be on his own head. <sup>5</sup> He heard the sound of the horn but did not take warning; his blood will be on himself. But had he taken warning, he would have saved his life. <sup>6</sup> But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the horn and the people are not warned, and a sword comes and takes a person from them, he is taken away for his wrongdoing; but I will require his blood from the watchman's hand.'*

<sup>7</sup> “Now as for you, son of man, I have appointed you as a watchman for the house of Israel; so you will hear a message from My mouth and give them a warning from Me. <sup>8</sup> When I say to the wicked, ‘You wicked person, you will certainly die,’ and you do not speak to warn the wicked about his way, that wicked person shall die for his wrongdoing, but I will require his blood from your hand. <sup>9</sup> But if you on your part warn a wicked person to turn from his way and he does not turn from his way, he will die for his wrongdoing, but you have saved your life.

<sup>10</sup> “Now as for you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, ‘This is what you have said: “Surely our offenses and our sins are upon us, and we are rotting away in them; how then can we survive?”’ <sup>11</sup> Say to them, ‘As I live!’ declares the Lord GOD, ‘I take no pleasure at all in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then should you die, house of Israel?’ <sup>12</sup> And you, son of man, say to your fellow citizens, ‘The righteousness of a righteous one will not save him on the day of his offense, and as for the wickedness of a wicked one, he will not stumble because of it on the day when he turns from his wickedness; whereas a righteous one will not be able to live by his righteousness on the day when he commits sin.’ <sup>13</sup> When I say to the righteous that he will certainly live, and he so trusts in his righteousness that he commits injustice, none of his righteous deeds will be remembered; but for that same injustice of his which he has committed he will die. <sup>14</sup> But when I say to the wicked, ‘You will certainly die,’ and he turns from his sin and practices justice and righteousness, <sup>15</sup> if a wicked person returns a pledge, pays back what he has taken by robbery, walks by the statutes which ensure life without committing injustice, he shall certainly live; he shall not die. <sup>16</sup> None of his sins that he has committed will be remembered against him. He has practiced justice and righteousness; he shall certainly live.

<sup>17</sup> “Yet your fellow citizens say, ‘The way of the Lord is not right,’ when it is their own way that is not right. <sup>18</sup> When the righteous turns from his righteousness and commits injustice, then he shall die in it. <sup>19</sup> But when the wicked turns from his wickedness and practices justice and righteousness, he will live by them. <sup>20</sup> Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not right.’ I will judge each of you according to his ways, house of Israel.”

While God is speaking to Ezekiel, He’s also speaking to us. We have a responsibility. We no longer have a national “prophet” like we did in Billy Graham, Billy Sunday, Jonathan Edwards and so forth. It’s especially important now since we don’t have a national spiritual advisor. Read what God says about having a national “Watchman.” <sup>30</sup> I searched for a man among them who would build up a wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one. (Ezekiel 22:30). God takes our praying for our nation quite seriously! I wonder, do you get up each day and at some point pray for our nation? I mean to earnestly pray – not just watching or hearing the news and offering up a token, “Oh, God, help – are we in trouble.” Or something like that.

When I earnestly pray – I spend a few minutes reading God’s Word out loud back to Him. I will find a praise from Scripture; the last 5 Psalms are perfect for this – or some wonderful praise songs from a hymnal or something like that. Then I reverently confess my sins as I remember them and then I bring my requests before Him. I take my time and pour out my heart to Him. (It’s not like it’s a secret. He already knows what’s in your heart – but there’s something really special about expressing it.)

God also doesn’t mind if you bring a list. Do you remember when Hezekiah brought the letter that was written to him from Sennacherib (2 Kings 18:13 – 19:37). I do this. I also use God’s Word to pray for those on my prayer list. Find a situation that applies to that persona and use the verses straight from Scripture. Just pour out your heart and speak clearly to Him. God knows but

wants to meet with you in prayer – in private and listen to you. Then He will also speak back to you. Not in an audible voice, but in the peace that settles over your heart.

All this does take time, so you must set that time aside for Him. You might wonder, where are you going to find the time. I can't answer that for you. I just know it is so well worth the time and energy.

If you watched the movie *War Room* that came out a few years ago, I'd like to Echo Ms. Clara's cry at the end to the movie – "Raise them up, Lord! Raise them up!" speaking of prayer warriors.

## Four Ideas for Prayer and Fasting

Fasting is the spiritual discipline of intentionally going without something for a time to focus on your relationship with God. Even Jesus fasted for 40 days before beginning His ministry. Recognizing your appetites – what fuels you – and how they draw you toward or away from God is one way to practice this spiritual discipline.

"Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, 'How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?' Jesus answered, '**How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have Him with them.**'" (Mark 2:18-19 NIV)

**FUEL:** (**F**ood; **U**se of Time; **E**ntertainment; **L**isten To). Take inventory of *your fuel* through one of the four fasting ideas described below.

Before you start a fast, invited a friend to join you. You can encourage each other through the fast and share about your journey.

### FOOD

**PRACTICE:** Do you ever use food as a comfort when you're sad or as a reward when you're happy? Try fasting from one type of food or even one meal a day for a certain period of time and see how your cravings change. How does this require deeper dependence on the Lord?

**PONDER:** What can you learn from Daniel as he fasted from certain types of food, (Daniel 1:8-16)?

"Please test your servants for 10 days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food and treat your servants in accordance with what you see.' So he agreed to this and tested them for 10 days" (Daniel 1:12-14 NIV)

**PRAY:** *Father, deepen my hunger and thirst for You.*

### USE OF TIME

**PRACTICE:** How often do you describe your day as "busy?" How does your schedule make you feel? What fills most of your time? Take inventory of your time by writing down everything you do for a week. Then ask God to show you what activities you could fast from to commit to time for Him.

**PONDER:** Learn from Nehemiah as he fasted and prayed after hearing about the destruction of the city walls of Jerusalem. He was willing to offer whatever time necessary to help.

"When I hear these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven." Nehemiah 1:4 (NIV)

**PRAY:** *Father, teach me how to best honor You with how I spend my time.*

### ENTERTAINMENT

**PRACTICE:** How does it feel to have someone like your post or have someone unfollow you on social media? How are your entertainment choices influencing you? Talk with the Lord about what you watch and listen to – music, movies, TV, social media, podcasts, etc. Decide how you might fast from entertainment.

PONDER: Learn from the early church how fasting and pray coincided with worship. This led them to commission more believers to go and share the gospel.

"While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off" Acts 13:2-3 (NIV).

PRAY: *Father, make me more aware of who You are and therefore increase my worship.*

LISTENT TO

PRACTICE: Who do you look to for encouragement? Does some's approval matter most? Whose voice is the loudest in your life? Try fasting fro noise and use it as an opportunity to embrace silence and more clearly hear God's voice.

PONDER: Learn from the churches in Galatia, (Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch) as Paul and Barnabas used prayer and fasting to make leadership decisions (Acts 14:21-23). In Paul's letter to the Galatians he emphasized the importance of God's approval.

"Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I try to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ." Galatians 1:10 (NIV).

PRAY: *Father, transform me to desire Your approval above all others.*

From [navlink.org/4-fasting-ideas](http://navlink.org/4-fasting-ideas).



## Lutherans for Life

**September 3 – Pentecost XIV (Proper 17A)** – Our bodies and lives are on loan from Almighty God. He creates us in His image, redeems us with His Son, and calls us by His name (Jeremiah 15:16) from fertilization to forever. So He does not abandon us in our frailties and mistakes. Shall we not extend this Gospel also to neighbors facing surprise pregnancy and terminal diagnosis?

**September 10 – Pentecost XV (Proper 18A)** – Abortion doesn't just end unborn lives. It also breaks hearts with grief and guilt. So the Lord doesn't exempt it from condemnation. He commands us to warn our brothers and sisters about its sinfulness (Ezekiel 33:7-8). Nor does He exclude abortion from His forgiveness. He would have us apply His absolution as explicitly to this iniquity as to our own (Psalm 32:5).

**September 17 – Pentecost XVI (Proper 19A)** – Surprise pregnancy often comes with complications and difficulties. Terminal diagnosis can involve suffering and sorrow. But our God brought Jesus back from the dead. He makes it His way to wring blessings out of burdens (Genesis 50:19-20). Are we in the place of God, to let abortion or assisted suicide judge (Romans 14:4) someone else's life as hopeless?

**September 24 – Pentecost XVII (Proper 20A)** – Abortion and euthanasia begrudge God's generosity (Matthew 20:15) by regarding one life as less than another. Thank the Lord that His ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:8), for none of us deserves to survive! Yet He preserves and protects us still, just as much as our every neighbor. O Lord, make us bold to speak Your Word of Life without fear (Philippians 1:14)!

**October 1 – Pentecost XVIII (Proper 21A)** – Remaining silent about the sanctity of life enslaves us to selfishness just like abortion does. But God’s grace and forgiveness in Christ Jesus free us from looking out only for ourselves. We get to speak His truth and show His love to every one of our neighbors—not out of “selfish ambition or conceit,” but in service to “the interests of others” (Philippians 2:3-4).

**October 8 – Pentecost XIX (Proper 22A)** – The psalmist openly rejoices that Almighty God cherishes every human life He creates. “Let your hand be on ... the son of man whom you have made strong for yourself” (Psalm 80:17). The same Lord invites us to delight in receiving one another as gifts and privileges—no matter what size, skills, or circumstances. Why settle for bloodshed when we can have justice (Isaiah 5:7)?

**October 15 – Pentecost XX (Proper 23A)** – Abortion and physician-assisted suicide represent a surrender to death brought about by fear. We need not be afraid of enduring terminal illness, because our Heavenly Father protects us even in the darkest places (Psalm 23:4). And we need not be afraid of carrying surprise pregnancy, because our dear Savior Jesus provides all we need even in the most difficult times (Philippians 4:12-13).

**October 22 – Pentecost XXI (Proper 24A)** – Taxes and politics may belong to Caesar, but every human life belongs to God from fertilization to forever. He made our bodies—and those of our neighbors—in His own image (Matthew 22:19-21). And since He retains responsibility for deciding the manner of our life and the timing of our death, abortion and euthanasia are choices no one needs to make.

**October 29 – Pentecost XXII (Proper 25A)/Reformation Day** – Our Reformation heritage includes boldly and gladly confessing God’s Word. The Scriptures speak frequently and forcefully of taking care of children (1 Thessalonians 2:7) and standing up for a neighbor’s life (Leviticus 19:16). Christians cannot promote or even permit putting people to death by abortion, assisted suicide, and embryo experimentation. Love for our Father means love for each other!

*You make known to me the path of life;  
in your presence there is fullness of joy;  
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

# September, 2023

Date	Lay Reader	Date	Usher
3	Gary Jo Lee	3	Penny Lee
10	Chuck Gray	10	Carol Gray
17	Joe Glass	17	Jim Wackerly
24	Bill Heierding	24	Joan Heierding



## Happy Birthday! September, 2023



2	Tony Sellars	10	Kayley Brennan
11	Tracy Billeg	14	Penny Lee
16	Brian Wackerly	19	Lily Johnston
21	Suzy White	21	Dana Chandler
22	Mya Wright	25	David Forsberg
28	Sue Wackerly	28	Chuck Gray
30	Skylar Mathis	30	Mary Forsberg
30	Olivia Forsberg		

# October, 2023

Date	Lay Reader	Date	Usher
1	Chuck Gray	1	Carol Gray
8	Joe Glass	8	Jim Wackerly
15	Gary Jo Lee	15	Penny Lee
22	Sue Wackerly	22	Jim Wackerly
29	<b>Bill Heierding</b> (Reformation Sunday)	29	<b>Joan Heierding</b> (Reformation Sunday)



## Happy Birthday! October, 2023

3	Angela Glass	6	Zackary Forsberg
8	Brian White	8	Penelope Griffin
11	John Brennan	16	Gary Jo Lee
22	Betty Ray	25	Will Griffin

**HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY**