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**PRAYING WITH EYES**  
**WIDE OPEN**

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**SINGLE SERMON RESOURCE**

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**BY SHERRY HARNEY**



# Praying with Eyes Wide Open

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## Single Sermon Resource

Dear Friend,

*I am so excited and honored that you are preaching a message on Praying with Eyes Wide Open with your congregation. My husband Kevin and I have developed and gathered materials to help as you put this sermon/message together.*

*Of course, no pastor or teacher plans to take someone else's sermon and simply repeat it. That is why we are not offering a manuscript to read, but a resource for you to use as you shape the unique message God wants you to bring to your congregation for this sermon. Please use what works for you, drop out what does not fit, and add your own content as you develop a Spirit-directed message that will connect for the unique needs of the congregation you serve.*

*As you prepare your message, here is a simple process that will help integrate the resources provided:*

- **Pray** for God's leading and the infusing power of the Spirit as you write a message that helps people in your church go deeper in prayer.
- **Read the primary biblical passage(s)** provided for this message and ask God to speak to you through the truth of his Word. God wants to speak to us first, so keep your heart open as you prepare.
- **Read sections of Praying with Eyes Wide Open** and contextualize the lessons from these chapters of the book for your ministry setting.
- **Watch the small group videos.** This will give additional ideas, stories, and biblical input.
- **Review the sermon/teaching materials** provided below. Kevin and I have been intentional about giving you lots of ideas to get your heart and mind engaging in the message preparation process.
- **Add your own study** and ideas. God will be speaking to you as you prepare. We trust that you will have a unique word from the Lord and ideas to communicate to the congregation you serve.
- **Write your message and deliver it** with passion and joy. As we prepared these resources we prayed for God to give you a life-impacting and message.

*May the God of all grace lead you in your preparation and delivery of your message.*

*With you in His service,*

**Sherry Harney**



## Preparation Suggestions:

- Pray for God's leading as you develop your message.
- Read the biblical passages contained in the daily reading guide, particularly week one.
- Read the first four chapters of *Praying with Eyes Wide Open* and more if time allows.
- Watch the video for session one of the small group material (on the sherryharney.co website).
- Review the resources below.
- Write your sermon/message.
- Pray again for God to fill you to overflowing as you present the message He has placed on your heart.

## Preaching Resources

**Introduction Idea: *Light and Funny*...** Give a list of ten situations you definitely want to keep your eyes open when you pray (i.e.- When you are driving, when you are in a tense spot during a meeting at work, when you are walking around your campus or neighborhood...). Be clear that we all understand that if we are going to pray in the flow of life, we will need to keep our eyes open at certain times.

**Introduction Idea: *Personal Testimony*...** Tell about how you learned to pray, who taught you and what was helpful. Also talk about some misunderstandings you have had about prayer.

**Introduction Idea: *Video*...** Show the portion of the video on the website in the session one video for small groups of Sherry telling the story of walking with her dad on a snowy Michigan day and praying as they were walking.

### Scripture Reading:

- Read Scriptures as you feel they fit your message. Give exposition of texts you choose. You will find many passages in the book, in the daily ready guide, and in the outline below.

**Prayer:** Pray for God to bless this sermon series and grow each person in his or her prayer life. Invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to the presence of God through each day and to help you talk with God in fresh and life-changing ways.



**Key Idea: *The Bible does not command or even suggest that we close our eyes or fold our hands when we pray.*** Expound on the passages and teaching on this topic found on pages 18-21 of the book.

- Genesis 24- Abraham's servant.
- 1 Chronicles 5:18-22- The people of Israel
- John 17- Jesus

**Key Idea: *There are many postures for prayer.*** Look at the biblical passages that teach us a variety of postures for prayer found on pages 21-22.

- 2 Samuel 7:18
- 1 Kings 8:22
- 1 Kings 8:54
- Daniel 6:10; Acts 20:36; Luke 22:41

**Key Idea: *We don't have to pray continually, we get to!*** Look at 1 Thesalonians 5:17 and teach on the heartbeat of this key passage. Emphasize that the God of all creation invites you to talk with him and hear from him any time, any place, and all the time!

**Illustration:** Tell a story from your life about a time you prayed with eyes wide open. Share how this grew your prayer life and connection with God (see story on page 24).

**Key Idea: *Prayer lessons from Jesus.*** Teach on the example of Jesus in his prayer life. Use the passages and teaching ideas found on pages 30-32.

**Key Idea: *God's Glory and Our Good.*** Teach about how prayer glorifies God and also brings blessing to us. Use the passages and teaching on pages 28-29 as you develop this teaching.

**Key Idea: *Jesus Our Perfect Example.*** Teach about how Jesus prayed and how his example should inspire and guide us:

- John 11:41-43
- Luke 6:12-13
- Matthew 14:19
- Mark 7:34-35
- Luke 9:28-29



**Key Idea: *The God to Whom We Pray.*** Teach about God as Creator, Father, and Shepherd. Expound on how knowing these three images of God help us in our prayer and engagement with God (Pages 40-48).

**Creator:** Psalm 139 and Isaiah 46:3-4

**Father:** Matthew 6:9; Romans 8:15 and Matthew 7:9-11

**Shepherd:** Isaiah 40:11; Psalm 95:6-7 and Psalm 23

**Prayer Challenge:** Invite people to try praying in private with the following posture...eyes open turned toward heaven, standing, hands lifted, praying out loud.

**Illustration:** Tell about the T-Shirt Ken Davis made with the little lamb and Jesus as his shepherd (pages 49-50). You might even find a picture of this online or you could show the T-Shirt that can be found on Ken Davis' website: [store.kendavis.com](http://store.kendavis.com)



**Life Application...Pray With Open Eyes:** Challenge each person to try praying with their eyes in a situation when they would normally close their eyes.

**Closing Prayer:** Invite the congregation to do three things as you pray at the end of your sermon. 1) Ask them to keep their eyes open. 2) Encourage them to turn their hands upward on their lap or even raise their hands as you pray (if they are comfortable doing so). 3) Ask them to join you in prayer and fully engage their heart as you all pray with eyes wide open. Then, you pray with your eyes open, looking at the congregation, making eye contact, and pray with passion!