



2015 National Stop Predatory Gambling Week of Prayer September 20-27, 2015

The following is a suggested prayer guide for churches and ideas on how to organize a prayer event...

Why we're taking action

Tens of millions of American lives have been changed forever when their lives intersected with a certain government program that is unlike any other. It is a government program that exists only to extract as much money as possible from its own citizens. This program has been called “government-sponsored gambling” but a growing number of Americans today refer to it more accurately as “predatory gambling.” Predatory gambling is when government uses gambling to cheat and exploit its citizens.

No issue lies more at the crossroads of most of the major challenges we face today in our society than government-sponsored gambling. It impacts our economy, our politics, our ethics and our collective spirit as a nation. It is a defining issue about who we are as a people. The political establishment has transformed gambling from a private and local activity into the public voice of American government, such that ever-increasing appeals to gamble, and ever-expanding opportunities to gamble, now constitute the main ways that our government communicates with us on a daily basis. And what government incentivizes, shapes our national character.

Prayer guide for churches

The following guide is designed to direct houses of worship and individuals through a “season of prayer” concerning the issue of predatory gambling. It also includes suggestions on how to organize a prayer event.

The national organization, [Stop Predatory Gambling](http://StopPredatoryGambling.org), is asking people of faith to spend time during the week of **September 20-27, 2015** (with September 27 being designated as “National Stop Predatory Gambling Day of Prayer”), asking God to give us wisdom and courage to speak out and to do everything possible to end the scourge of predatory gambling that is currently infecting our society.

Feel free to use the following guide as a way to lead your congregation in prayer corporately, in small groups, as families or as individuals. We also ask that you share your experiences with us via email, Twitter, Facebook or Instagram (ccorley@alcap.com and/or mail@stoppredatorygambling.org). Send pictures, tell stories and/or share the number of people participating in your prayer event.

Pray for the following:

1. **Victims of gambling and their families**—Bobby Hafemann from Oregon took his life because he became addicted to electronic gambling machines. Melynda Litchfield, a Registered Nurse from Illinois, had her life permanently and profoundly ravaged by an addiction to slot machines. Sadly, these are only a few examples of the hundreds of thousands who have been damaged by state run gambling.
 - a. Isaiah 51:12
 - b. Isaiah 66:13
 - c. 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

2. **The citizens of local communities, our state and the nation**—Pray that people will come to realize that materialism (the worship of money and material possessions) never satisfies. Predatory gambling has helped advance the mistaken belief that a person can serve two masters, but the Bible says a person cannot serve both God and money.
 - a. Ecclesiastes 5:10
 - b. 1 Timothy 6:10
 - c. Luke 12:15
 - d. Luke 4:18-19

3. **Government leaders and lawmakers (politicians)**—Political leaders often become addicted to gambling, not as individuals, but to the revenue stream that is promised by gambling advocates. Government officials often “buy in” to the false claims that gambling is going to provide unrealistic streams of revenue that rarely materialize. When those promised amounts of income do not meet the levels that were projected, government leaders will often seek to expand the reach of gambling through more promotion and more types of gambling. Pray that God will give these political leaders the wisdom and the courage to oppose the expansion of gambling and outlaw government-sponsored gambling all together.
 - a. Psalm 22:28
 - b. 1 Chronicles 29:12
 - c. 2 Chronicles 7:14
 - d. 1 Timothy 2:1-2

4. **Business and community leaders**—Chambers of Commerce, corporations, small business owners and civic organizations wield a great deal of influence in our culture. Pray that they will partner with the faith community, government leaders and predatory gambling opponents to stop and reverse the expansion of gambling in local communities. Businesses often suffer great losses when gambling is legalized due to increases in embezzlement, foreclosures, bankruptcies, government corruption and the general crime rates in various categories. Statistics show that gambling hurts the local, state and national economies over time, which is bad for business.
 - a. 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12
 - b. James 4:13-17

5. **New leaders and anti-gambling advocates who may grow weary**—Whether government, civic or church leaders, pray that individuals will see the needs of people who have been victimized by government-sponsored gambling and sense a call to minister to those individuals and speak out against the gambling enterprise which is taking advantage of people. Pray, too, for those who have been engaged in ministry and anti-gambling efforts to remain energized and faithful to the cause of stopping predatory gambling.
 - a. Isaiah 40:28
 - b. Matthew 9:37-38
 - c. Galatians 6:9
 - d. 2 Thessalonians 3:13

6. **Communities of faith**—Churches, synagogues and other houses of worship often suffer when members of their congregations become addicted to gambling. Not only do donations go down because members are gambling away their assets, but those individuals and families will often come to the same faith communities seeking financial assistance. Pray that faith communities will have the courage to speak out against predatory, government-sponsored gambling, while simultaneously showing compassion to and having the resources to help individuals and families that have fallen victim to predatory, government-sponsored gambling.
 - a. Psalm 12
 - b. Matthew 7:12

Tips on Organizing a Prayer Event

Desired outcome

What do you want to happen as a result of this event? Be as specific as you can (for example: “We want the mayor to issue a statement on predatory gambling,” or, “We want 30 people or more to sign a postcard to their Congressperson, state officials and/or local officials.”)

Leadership and recruitment

- 1) Consider inviting prominent faith leaders in your community who could attend and offer prayer. Which leaders best represent the faith communities you are aiming to engage? Will there be a leader/emcee to get the event started and lead in prayer?

- 2) What natural networks in your community or place of worship can you tap into? Who leads those networks?

- 3) Do you want people in policy-making positions to come? If you invite your political leaders and they decline the invitation to attend, make sure they receive any press releases and/or press coverage from the event as follow-up.

Publicity

- 1) Flyers, newspaper ads/articles and/or radio/TV announcements—What best reaches your audience? Consider placing an op-ed or “letter to the editor” of your local paper to promote the event.
- 2) Take pictures and video/audio recordings. Send your pictures and video to local and national offices and place on social media. Collect blog posts, other pictures, and articles about the event from every source possible. We hope to compile stories and statistics from all national events for distribution after the **National Stop Predatory Gambling Week of Prayer**.