



When someone has lost their job

Hearing the words "You are fired" or "We are laying off personnel" is no easy matter. However, it does not have to be the end of the world. It can actually mark a new beginning. Still, one has to face the practical implications when this happens. Following are some guidelines on how to pray for someone (or yourself), who has lost their job and has not yet found new employment.

Remember, these are some guidelines to guide you through the process. Be mindful of the fact that people and circumstances differ.

1. Acceptance

Give them time to adjust to the fact that they have lost their job. The shock and trauma usually hit home only a few days after they were informed by their employer. Sympathise, saying, "I am so sorry to hear this. I am praying for you right now." Do not give advice immediately.

Prayer: Cover them in prayer in the days and weeks after getting the news of losing their job. Pray for God's protection over their hearts and minds and that they would take every thought captive in obedience to Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). Ask that they will experience God's love and power and have a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7). Pray that they will be honest about their feelings and able to explain to their families what has happened, how it might influence their immediate circumstances and not hide the truth from them. Pray that their families will be supportive.

2. Evaluate

After perhaps one week, ask whether you can spend a bit of friend-time with that individual. It is important for them to evaluate, as unemotionally as possible, the facts of the situation they find themselves in. What are their monthly responsibilities, etc.? They might experience feelings of worthlessness regardless of their true capabilities, qualifications and output they delivered. You can be of great assistance by asking some questions that will help them process what has happened and think of what to do next.

Prayer: Pray for their ability to do a realistic evaluation. Ask for God to show them their true worth in His eyes. Pray for their protection against the fiery darts of the enemy (Ephesians 6:10-16) and that they will trust in God despite the circumstances of the moment. God is never surprised when something like this happens. Pray that they will spend time with God and be able to hear His voice on the purpose and plans of His heart for them; that He has hope and a future in store for them (Jeremiah 29:11). Pray that they would trust God to do this.

3. Put together a CV/business plan, or consider further study

After assessing the current situation of unemployment and listening to God's voice and plan, it is important for them to write down what He is saying and then begin to walk the road He shows

them. They need to keep learning and studying to stay up to date with developments in their field. You can suggest a professional person who can help them with this. There are also many legitimate and accredited online courses to choose from. You can also suggest that they contact personnel agencies that head-hunt people with their specific qualifications – there are many such agencies.

Prayer: Pray that they will be able to hear God's voice during this time and for wisdom on how to better equip themselves through further study. Ask for friends to pray with them on a regular basis, who will also encourage them in God's plans for their lives. Pray that they will not become involved in money-making schemes or anything requiring large sums of money that may cause unnecessary debts. Ask that God will protect them and arrange for them to meet with those people He has in mind. When they consider starting their own business, pray for wisdom and to tread carefully in spending money to start their business. Encourage them to also get professional advice if possible.

4. Think along entrepreneurial lines

They should not simply search for a regular job where they will earn a salary but consider starting something totally new. You can suggest that they have an analysis done of their personal skills and specific character to determine whether they will flourish in starting, managing and sustaining their own business. Many people lose large amounts of money because they think that starting their own business is easy to do.

Prayer: Ask the Lord for His creative Spirit to guide them before starting a personal business venture. Once they have heard from the Lord that this is what they must do, pray for them to endure and not give up after one or two attempts. Pray for them to persevere, pray and seek God's guidance and not become discouraged by people's negative remarks – to trust God and press onward.

5. Pension/lump sum payouts

Often, when someone is laid off, companies pay out the person's pension and two or three months' salary. It is important for them to find out about their unemployment fund contributions and how to activate the process to receive their unemployment benefits while unemployed. You can mention these thoughts to them for their personal consideration.

Prayer: Do not inquire about their personal matters if they do not tell you. More importantly, do not disclose their personal circumstances to others. Pray for them to spend their money wisely and immediately pay off any outstanding debt, so they will not have the worry of monthly payments. Also pray for them to consider investing some of the money and not spend everything at once or waste it on get-rich-quick schemes. Ask the Lord for favour so they will receive money owed to them when leaving the company.

6. Quality time

They need to work on relationships that are important such as relationships with their spouse,

children and family. Losing your job has a huge impact on a person's emotional state, which can influence relationships with a spouse, children, friends etc. Feelings of inadequacy, failure, despondency and many more, can overwhelm people. Some cannot face the loss and shame and may contemplate suicide. They need a friend to be there for them.

Prayer: Pray for them not to withdraw from healthy personal relationships, but rather respond to and embrace the love and friendship of friends and family without feeling suspicious of their intentions. Ask God to connect them with good friends who will pray with them on a regular basis. Also, when needed, that they will be open to see someone who can help them process the trauma of the loss of income and can pray with them so they will not consider committing suicide.

7. Right decisions

Going for an interview for the first time after you have been retrenched, can be a daunting thought! When invited for an interview, they will have to prepare themselves for the possibility that a new job will present different requirements from those they were used to.

Prayer: Pray for them to have courage and self-confidence when attending interviews. Pray for favour with those interviewing them and to be at peace with the outcome of their interviews, trusting God for the right position at the right time.

8. The family

Family members feel sorry for the one who lost a job. Children might draw back, feel angry or ashamed when this happens. A spouse will feel the responsibility to carry the family emotionally and financially if possible. This might once more influence the self-worth of the spouse who has lost their job.

Prayer: Pray for each family member. Especially where couples are divorced and a loss of income influences monthly allowances and school fees for the children. Ask the Lord to show you how to reach out to them in practical ways without letting them think you feel sorry for them. Just be their friend, listen to their stories. Apart from praying *for* them, take time and opportunity to pray *with* them, often!

9. Celebrate

There will come a time when they find a job again, or start a business and get back on track. Make sure to make a special occasion of it, giving thanks to the Lord for carrying them through and for answering so many prayers!

Prayer: Pray for them to remember how the Lord carried them through such a difficult season and always to give thanks to Him for His provision.

Prayers to pray

Here are a few examples of prayers that someone who has lost their job may consider praying, calling on the 'name of the Lord'.

God of peace, please flood my heart and mind with Your peace that passes all understanding. Release me from all the stress affecting my heart, mind and actions while searching for employment. Help me focus on You, for You alone are my strength.

Faithful Teacher, help me to learn what I need to learn, sharpening the skills necessary in my field, and to learn important information about my industry so I can present myself as an expert in this area.

Ancient of Days, please guide me in preparing and submitting applications for a new job with excellence. Give me favour in the right places and divine connections that You allow to cross my path.

Oh God, you alone are my Fortress! I really feel overwhelmed. I find myself doubting my ability, second-guessing my actions, and wondering if I will ever find any employment again. Father, have mercy on me, help me know who I am in and through the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit living within me.

Lord of Hosts, I confess every instance where I have indulged in self-pity rather than being proactive and preparing myself to reenter the job market. I pray for Your grace to strengthen me with might in the inner man for the purpose You have placed me on earth. Help me overcome and rule over every negative emotion.

Wonderful Lord, I thank You that losing my job does not change the way You look at me. I continue to pray for Your favour on my life in this process of looking for employment. I pray for a deepening in my personal relationship with You, that I will seek Your face, do Your will and fulfill Your purpose for my life.