Prayer Begins With Me: Seeking God for Illinois

Delbra Pratt on Repentance, Praying for Leaders, and Sharing Christ’s Love Through Relationships

Delbra Pratt | Thursday, November 5, 2026 | Host: Donna Leland

Program Summary

Donna Leland welcomes Delbra Pratt, a leader with the Illinois Prayer Caucus Network and co-state director of the Nehemiah Alliance in Illinois, for a conversation about personal repentance and prayer for public officials. Delbra recounts the 52-day Nehemiah prayer initiative, September 10–November 1, and an October 2 Illinois gathering in Springfield. Rather than focusing on blame, she calls Christians to begin with their own hearts. She explains how she sends brief Scripture-based encouragement to legislators and staff, receives prayer requests, and distributes those requests anonymously to approximately 35 prayer partners. The conversation includes a shared prayer for Illinois leaders, an invitation for listeners to participate, and information about prayer gatherings and other Capitol ministries. The program closes with a musical selection and Donna's invitation to visit the Mark & Friends resources page.

Key Takeaways

• Repentance begins with an honest examination of my own heart, not accusations against others.

• Prayer for elected officials can be offered across party lines, with respect and compassion.

• Leaders and their staff are people with families, griefs, health concerns, and spiritual needs.

• Confidentiality matters when others entrust personal prayer requests to us.

• Short, sincere encouragement can open doors for lasting relationships.

• The Nehemiah Alliance's 52-day initiative used rebuilding the walls as a metaphor for spiritual renewal beginning personally and extending outward.

• Christians can seek the good of their communities without expecting government to take the place of God.

• Prayer, service, and personal relationships are ways to demonstrate Christ's love.

• Churches and individual believers can participate in intercession for their communities and leaders.

• A life of repentance and prayer is a continuing practice rather than a one-time event.

Scripture References

• Nehemiah 1:4–11

• Nehemiah 2:17–18

• 1 Timothy 2:1–4

• 2 Chronicles 7:14

• Proverbs 21:1

• Ezekiel 36:26

• Matthew 5:44

• James 5:16

• John 13:34–35

Quote of the Day

“His desire is that we begin to look at our own hearts.” — Delbra Pratt

Broadcast Notes

Donna introduces Delbra Pratt as a WLUJ ministry friend and participant in the Illinois Prayer Caucus Network. Delbra discusses the Nehemiah Alliance's 52-day effort and an Illinois prayer-and-repentance gathering on October 2. She describes the shift from blaming officials to seeking personal repentance. Her ministry sends weekly Scripture and encouragement to Illinois legislators and staff when the legislature is in session, inviting confidential prayer requests and circulating them anonymously to approximately 35 prayer partners. Donna and Delbra pray for leaders and staff, including those who do not share their beliefs. Delbra describes proposed Wednesday morning prayer gatherings at the Capitol on November 18 and December 2, and mentions Civil Servant Ministries. Her account of specific legislators and events is retained as reported in the interview; details should be confirmed with organizers before being used as current event listings. The broadcast includes an extended song before Donna's closing words; that portion remains in the transcript. The original interview refers to November 1 as 'this Sunday,' suggesting it may have been recorded before its November 5 airdate.

❤■ Practical Applications

• Read 1 Timothy 2:1–4 and pray for people in authority, whether or not I agree with them.

• Ask God to reveal one attitude or action in my own life that needs repentance.

• Pray for a legislator or public servant by name without making the prayer partisan.

• Send a respectful note of encouragement to someone serving the public.

• Keep another person's prayer request confidential unless given permission to share it.

• Ask a friend or family member how I can pray for them and follow up later.

• Pray for public employees and staff who serve behind the scenes.

• Seek to listen before criticizing a person whose views differ from mine.

• Find a regular time to pray for my city, state, and nation.

• Look for one practical way to demonstrate Christ's love to someone in my community.

Today's Challenge

For seven days, begin each morning with two prayers: 'Lord, search my heart' and 'Lord, bless those entrusted with public responsibility.' Read 1 Timothy 2:1–4, choose one Illinois leader or public servant to pray for each day, and offer one sincere word of encouragement without political argument. Keep a brief record of how God is teaching me to pray with humility and love.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, I come before You with humility. Before I ask You to change my community or its leaders, search my own heart and show me where I need to repent. Forgive me for the times I have been quick to criticize and slow to pray. Teach me to love people, including those with whom I disagree, as people made in Your image. I lift up elected officials, their families, and their staff. Give them wisdom, integrity, and compassion, and surround them with people who encourage what is good. Help me guard the confidences others share with me and follow through when I promise to pray. Use my words and actions to reflect the love of Jesus. Make me faithful in prayer, patient in relationships, and willing to serve. In Jesus' name, Amen.

About Today's Speaker

Delbra Pratt is involved with the Illinois Prayer Caucus Network and serves alongside Maria Slattery as a co-state director of the Nehemiah Alliance in Illinois. Her work encourages prayer for legislators and staff, confidential intercession, and personal repentance as a foundation for spiritual renewal. She is a longtime friend of the WLUJ ministry.

About Today's Host

Donna Leland is a regular Thursday host of Mark & Friends and serves in the WLUJ and Great News Media radio ministries. Through conversations with ministry leaders and guests, she encourages listeners to grow in Scripture, prayer, and practical Christian service.

Additional Ministry Resources

Illinois Prayer Caucus Network (email): mailto:IllinoisPrayerCaucusNetwork@gmail.com

Contact Delbra Pratt (phone): tel:+12172732156

Moody Bible / WLUJ: https://wluj.org/

Great News Radio: https://greatnewsradio.org/

Proofread Broadcast Transcript

Welcome to Mark & Friends. I'm your host, Donna Leland, and today we're going to be talking with Delbra Pratt, and she is a dear friend of the ministry at WLUJ. Delbra is a part of the Illinois Prayer Caucus Network, and she is so involved in bringing people together, wanting them to pray about the condition of our United States.

Thank you so much, Delbra, for joining us on Mark & Friends. Donna, thank you so much for inviting me to be on today. It's a privilege, it's an honor.

I really appreciate WLUJ and the efforts of just keeping the name of the Lord before everyone and lifting Him up so that He has the opportunity to draw men unto Himself. Now, I did not know, but you also were heading up that Nehemiah Prayer effort, which is now coming to a close. Can you tell us some of the highlights of that wonderful event? Yes.

Along with Maria Slattery, we serve as co-state directors for the Nehemiah Alliance here in Illinois. The Nehemiah Alliance, of course, is a national movement began by Barbara Ann Jeter, and it began September 10th at sundown, and it concludes at sundown on November 1st, this Sunday. We've been involved in just bringing the issue of God's heart for repentance and we, His people, before the folks here in Illinois.

And one of the things that we did, each state was given a day requested by the national group to host a day for prayer and repentance. And the day was assigned according to how that state came into the union. And our day for Illinois was October 2nd, and we did host an Illinois state prayer and repentance gathering here in Springfield, Illinois, and we had about 100 in attendance that day.

Turned out to be really a good time before the Lord in the sense that we believe true repentance came. You know, God doesn't want us pointing the finger at legislators or media or educators. His desire is that we begin to look at our own hearts.

And honestly, Donna, that's what drew me to the Nehemiah Alliance. When I was asked if I would consider being a state director, I looked at the website and their vision was to, just like Nehemiah took 52 days to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem, their heart is that the nation, people in every state, would take these 52 days from September 10th through November 1st to first rebuild the walls around our own lives, and then rebuild the wall of salvation around our family, then our church, then our community where we live, then our state and nation. And so many times we want to start with the state and nation, and it just grabbed my heart personally that it began with me, that I needed to seek the Lord.

Where do I need to repent? How have I been complicit in just the downward spiral into paganism in my own area, my own state? And so, yeah, it's been exciting. We're hoping that we continue as a people to understand that repentance isn't something that can be just done once, that it's a lifestyle that we repent and believe God every day of our lives as Holy Spirit convicts us and leads us in righteousness. So like I said, along with Maria, we were blessed to be able to lead that effort here in Illinois.

I love your emphasis. It's so great. It's us.

Let's talk about our own heart, where we're at, what we are not doing, what the Lord maybe is calling us to do. And things change whenever we as individuals really go back in and do some repenting. I think it also goes back to the lukewarmness.

And then there's just so much conversation concerning our legislators, our leaders, and people being so angry at them. And yet, they're humans, they're elected, and there's a lot we can be doing. We shouldn't be looking to the government to be our all-in-all, right, Delbra? That's it exactly, Donna.

You know, years ago, I'm talking lots of years ago, probably 30 years ago, one of my best friends served as the legislative liaison for Concerned Women for America. And at that time, we were trying to get the, I might not have the name of the law, but the Infant Born Alive Act passed. And because there were babies that were being born after an abortion, and they were just being left to die.

And during that period, I remember I asked my friend about, I said, how can you deal with all the darkness? These legislators, you know, they don't understand the issue of life begins at conception. They are just for death. And I went on and on.

And she just, you know, calmly looked at me and she said, Delbra, they don't have Christ. They don't have the Holy Spirit. Why would I expect anything less from them? My job is to inform the right way to think about things according to the Bible.

And she said to me, you know, the ones I get frustrated with are the ones in the church who sit back, don't say a word, but yet point a finger. And so I've never forgotten that, Donna. It was a real lesson to me that we are to bring the light of Christ into these areas of government and elected officials.

And they are human, just like we are. And they need a Savior, just like we did. We were blessed to find Him, and we can be a blessing to bring Him to others.

Absolutely. We should vote. We should pray.

We should do what we can to just be bringing awareness to God's heart and His love for people. But yet always, I think, go back in in my brain is to say, Lord God, You have the King's heart in Your hand, and You can move it like a watercourse. And that's how I pray for our legislators.

Amen. Amen. We want those hearts to change.

We want that heart of stone to be taken out and God to put in a heart of flesh so that He can lead them and guide them in the right way. And so, yeah, we look at it as a privilege, especially with the Illinois Prayer Caucus network that I lead. You know, the biggest work that we do with that, Donna, is when our legislators are in session, once a week, I send them a scripture and a short little exhortation.

And to the staff as well. I like to emphasize that. I always address it.

Dear state legislators and staff, because they need our encouragement and our prayers as well. And it's very short and sweet. I mean, they're not going to read a sermon, but they need encouragement.

And somewhere along the way, I decided I would just put in my email, if you have any prayer requests, please email, call, or text, and we will be sure and cover those things in prayer. Well, woman of faith that I am, I really didn't expect to get prayer requests back. But guess what? We do.

We get prayer requests back from our legislators and staff. And what I do is I take those requests. I remove the names.

I like to keep, you know, confidentiality. But then I send those prayer requests out to about 35, a group of about 35 prayer warriors, and we cover those things in prayer. And both the staff and the legislators who have sent prayer requests are just so

appreciative.

And I'm always, I always, in the email, I do say that members of the Illinois Prayer Caucus Network are praying with you, but I add, along with other prayer groups, other Bible studies, other individuals, other churches all across Illinois, because the truth is, there is a lot of prayer going on for our elected officials. And it encourages, especially the ones who are Christians, but it lets the ones who know that are not Christians, that we are praying for them. And there aren't too many people that don't, there aren't too many people who actually would refuse prayer.

So it's been a blessing. That is so true. Now, are there any, like, examples of answers to prayer? Maybe you could look back in your prayer journal and share with us.

You know, we've been asked to pray when there's been death in the families. We've been asked to pray when marriages are in trouble. We've been asked to pray when there's health issues.

We've been asked to pray about particular incidents that have happened that affect the state of Illinois, whether it's a, you know, a natural disaster or something along those lines. So it varies, you know, from week to week of what we get asked to pray for. And I usually try to get back in touch with the ones who have asked, particularly if there's health issues, you know, just keep tabs on them and see how the recovery is going or how we can pray further for them.

And as you probably know, Donna, relationship is everything. And so I think just the fact that somebody cares makes such an impact. You already said it.

You talked about the love of God and we're to be a display of that love. And when we reach out and can touch lives of people, both in the kingdom and outside the kingdom, I know that that gives glory to God and gives Holy Spirit an opportunity to move in lives. Now, Delbra, I know that you want to involve people in this prayer ministry.

What can they do to connect with you? And then what would their part be? Actually, the easiest way to connect is either to send me an email, IllinoisPrayerCaucusNetwork@gmail.com, or I don't mind if people give me a call. My phone number is 217-273-2156. I'm always open to hear from anybody who's interested in praying for our elected officials or, you know, other areas of government that might need our attention.

Well, you're all about the prayer. So I think we should pray together, Deborah. And let's bring these requests up to the Lord.

You pray for our legislators when they're in session. You say that coming up in November, there's going to be some veto sessions. So let's just cover them in prayer when they're in session and out of session.

Why don't you go first, and then I will follow up. Thank you, Donna. Oh, Father, we do bring our elected officials before you, Lord God, especially in this upcoming veto session.

Father, our greatest desire is they would honor you and honor your word. We know that many of them are not saved. So we pray for the salvation of the legislators and their staff at the Capitol, all that are at the Capitol Complex there in our capital city in Springfield.

Father, we know that your desire is that all men would be saved and come to the knowledge of truth. We ask you to use all of us to invest time with our legislators from our district, Lord God. Father, that they would know that we care, that we love them, and that we're praying for them, and that, Lord, you would have a greater impact that we could see, if not the complete outcasting of all evil, that we could certainly see it lessened and the good increase in our Illinois state government.

Father, you're so gracious, and you're so merciful, Lord. I pray for every individual that is actually going to the Capitol, putting feet on the ground, and praying there in Springfield. I thank you, Lord, for the groups that go and pray at the Capitol.

We thank you, Lord, for every contact that's made between your people and the people who do the business of the state of Illinois. We thank you for them, Lord, and we just pray for your mercy and grace to flood across Illinois that repentance, Lord God, would flow out of your people. It brings such a humbling to us, Lord, when we look at our own sin, and it makes it easier to speak to others, Lord God, and bring the love of Jesus to them.

Father, help us in that, in Jesus' name. Amen. Heavenly Father, I want to thank you, God, so much for Delbra and the other team members of this Prayer Caucus and also the Nehemiah Project.

We just ask, God, that you would continue to put into our brain the need to pray. You told us in Scripture that we are to pray for those in authority. You tell us that we're to pray that we would lead a peaceful life, Lord God, and we just see so much unrest and a lack of peace in some decisions and situations that are currently going on.

We just pray, God, you would bring your peace and your wisdom and your insight to our legislators. We know, God, even if they don't know Christ as their Savior, you can still bring the wisdom, Lord. Pray that they would listen to people who are talking about you and wanting your way and your will.

Lord God, only you can do these things, and we want it your way, God. Help us to get out of our complacency, Lord. Help us to pray, first of all, and then if there is anything else we can do, show us, Lord, and we're willing to do it in order to bring about righteousness and holiness in Illinois.

God, we thank you for the beautiful illustration of Abraham Lincoln, God. We go back to him and his desire for righteousness, and we pray that would be rekindled in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Amen, Donna. You know, one of the things that is really important to know, people are surprised to find that we do have Christian legislators in the Illinois General Assembly.

We've got several that are just doing phenomenal work in keeping the name of the Lord there, and one of those that I would mention in particular is Senator Chris Balcoma. He, this last, during the spring session, January through May this past year, he organized prayer at the Capitol at 8 a.m. every Wednesday morning when they were in session, and it turned out to be a really profitable time together. He would ask churches to come and actually lead that time, and during the veto session coming up in November and December, he has also called for people to come to pray at 8 a.m. on Wednesday morning.

It would be Wednesday, November 18th, and Wednesday, December 2nd. And then, just real quickly, Civil Servant Ministries, which is led by Kurt Fleck, he has Bible studies at the Capitol when they're in session for legislators, and Kurt also has a Bible study at the Illinois Supreme Court, and so there's a lot of prayer going on at the Capitol, and just, it's good to know that we're doing this together. You know, every church that has prayer for the legislators, every individual that prays in their home, all of us together can make a difference.

Storm the gates of heaven with you, Will, on behalf of our elected officials. I always say it like this, Donna, for the glory of God and for the good of all the people that live in the state of Illinois. That absolutely is the heart of the Lord and the heart of your ministry.

Delbra, if people want to contact you and just go deeper, can you give all that contact information? You can either email me at IllinoisPrayerCaucusNetwork@gmail.com or just give me a call or a text. My number is 217-273-2156. Be glad to talk to you and pray with you if you need prayer.

But they don't know you like we do There is power in your name We've heard that there is no way through We've heard the tide will never change They haven't seen what you can do There is power in your name So much power in your name Move the immovable Break the unbreakable God, we believe God, we believe for it From the impossible We'll see a miracle God, we believe God, we believe for it That hope is never lost For there is still an empty grave God, we believe no matter what There is power in your name So much power in your name Move the immovable Break the unbreakable God, we believe From the impossible We'll see a miracle God, we believe God, we believe for it When there seems to be no way Tomorrow may well say There is a way Move the immovable Break from the impossible God, we believe Thanks again for being a part of Mark & Friends. All of this program is available once again on our website and it's got our full program notes as well. Donna Leland here on Mark & Friends.

Have a great day.