



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: An Invitation to Prayer

Guest(s): Kathy Branzell

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Dr. James Dobson: Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.

Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to another edition of Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh, and we are almost at the end of another year. Many of us, amidst the festivities, take this time to reflect upon the past 12 months. How did we handle tough situations? What changed for the positive or negative? And where are we in our relationship with God? Well, one of the best ways to prepare for a new year is through prayer. So for the final installment of our 2022 Best of Broadcast Collection, you're about to hear a program on the power and importance of prayer, which originally aired in June of this year. Dr. Tim Clinton, who is our co-host and JDFI resident authority on relationships and mental health, attended the National Day of Prayer in Washington D.C. this past May. He sat down with Kathy Branzell, who serves as president of the National Day of Prayer Task Force, before she presided over the official ceremony that kicked off the two days of prayer-filled events in our nation's capitol. As you may know, Dr. Dobson's wife Shirley served at the helm of the task force for 25 years before stepping down in 2016.

Now, before we jump into today's program, I want to remind you that all month long we've been talking about the matching grant that we have in place just for December. Well, guess what? Tomorrow will be the last day to take advantage of this opportunity. If you make a donation today or tomorrow, it will automatically be doubled for twice the impact. Please prayerfully consider making a gift to the JDFI. Your contribution will help our ministries continue to reach families and people in need with biblical truth. If you'd like to make a tax deductible donation, visit us online at drjamesdobson.org or call us at 877-732-6825. Now, let's join Dr. Tim Clinton for today's edition of Family Talk.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Here at Family Talk, the National Day of Prayer holds a special place in our heart. Dr. Dobson's wife Shirley, Shirley Dobson led the National Day of Prayer Task Force for 25 years, from 1991 until 2016 when she stepped down from her post. The baton was passed to Anne Graham Lotz on to Dr. Ronnie Floyd, and ultimately to our guest today here on the broadcast. Her name, Kathy Branzell. Let me tell you, this woman has a true heart and zeal for the Lord and for

prayer. Let me tell you a little bit more about her. Kathy Branzell serves as president of the National Day of Prayer Task Force. She also served as longtime member of the board of directors, having led and served alongside of Vonette Bright, Shirley Dobson, Anne Graham Lotz and Dr. Ronnie Floyd.

Along with her work with the National Day of Prayer Task Force, she was the founder and president of Fellowship and Christian Encouragement for Educators, where she authored 17 years of weekly Scripture reading, prayer prompts and devotionals for educators to use in their weekly prayer meetings throughout the school year. Kathy is the author and co-author of five books, including *An Invitation to Prayer*, *Prayer Warrior*, *40 Days of Love*, and *A Prayer Warrior's Guide to Spiritual Battle*. Kathy earned her bachelor's degree in education and human development from the University of Georgia, her master's degree in biblical studies from, I know this university, Liberty University. Kathy is married to her childhood sweetheart, Russ, mom of two grown kids, son Chandler and a daughter Emily. Kathy, welcome onto Family Talk. We're delighted to have you. Dr. Dobson and his wife Shirley have such love and high regard for you. They wish they could be here. They wanted you to know of their prayers for all that God's doing in and through you and the National Day of Prayer.

Kathy Branzell: Oh, what an honor. I love them so much and they've been such a big part of my life now for 22 years.

Dr. Tim Clinton: We know that prayer is powerful. Nothing of eternal significance, Dr. Jerry Falwell used to say, happens apart from prayer.

Kathy Branzell: That's right.

Dr. Tim Clinton: It transcends race, political division, so much more. By the way, 2 Chronicles 7:14 says that prayer changes nations.

Kathy Branzell: Right, before we start asking Him, first we want to fill the throne room of Heaven with praise. We just want to adore the Lord. Scripture says, "From the overflow of our heart, the mouth speaks." And I had to spend some time with the Lord convicted and then in repentance for what has come out of my mouth maybe in not such a loving way and not such a God-glorifying way and not such a God-exalting way over the last few years and retrain my brain to know if I have time to complain about it, I have time to pray about it. But God is still on His throne. He has not left the building. He's not dead.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Amen.

Kathy Branzell: So we want to praise God, adore Him and build up our hope again in Him first and foremost, and then come to Him with God-size prayers for America and for this world.

Dr. Tim Clinton: For such a time as this.

Kathy Branzell: Absolutely.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Kathy, I wanted to ask you before we go too much further, a little bit about your relationship with Shirley Dobson. I know you mentioned her briefly, but you guys have quite a history. I hear you guys talk, text quite a bit, stay in touch. I know she's been a mentor, but there's a special bond there between the two of you.

Kathy Branzell: There is. I honor her so much, but I have such a sweet affection for her and for Doctor. As they prayed for my children, they prayed me through cancer. But Shirley used to call me her Nancy Drew, and that was such a compliment. If she needed something researched or she needed more information or she wanted a peripheral perspective or some big administration feat that was outside even the parameters of the very limited, but wonderful staff of the National Day of Prayer Task Force, she would ask me. So I had the privilege of helping with the summits, the four Pray for America bus tours that we did. I got to travel with Shirley. We've played golf with her and Doctor and traveled with them and we have prayed hundreds of prayers together. I just love her so much.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Now, some of the history, go back, I believe that President Ronald Reagan is the one who actually signed into law, if you will, the National Day of Prayer piece.

Kathy Branzell: Okay, so I'm going to take you back even further to in the beginning. Of course we know that prayer helped establish this nation, that when the Continental Congress couldn't agree, they said, "Stop everything, we're going to go pray." But in 1952, this is really where the National Day of Prayer began, Dr. Billy Graham stood just steps away from where you and I are today and he challenged Congress to call for a National Day of Prayer. And so Congress took him seriously, they took that challenge seriously. And within weeks, a unanimous vote in Congress for a resolution to establish a National Day of Prayer, and then President Truman signed it into law. So this is our 71st observance of having a National Day of Prayer. And then we know Vonette Bright began to knock on doors of Congress in 1986 and '87. We knew we needed a day, the same day every year. And in 1988, President Reagan signed a resolution to give us the first Thursday of May, every year by law the president must proclaim a day of prayer for our nation.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Every president.

Kathy Branzell: Yes, by law.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Interesting and so meaningful. Kathy, I wanted to connect the dots a little bit deeper with you for a moment. You have been asked through the years to be a part of leading this and you've turned it down, turned it down type thing. But somewhere all this comes together and you make a decision to go ahead and

head this National Day of Prayer Task Force and now serve as president over this entity. Tell us a little bit about what led up to, I think you turned it down like three times or something?

Kathy Branzell:

I did. After Dr. Ronnie Floyd let us know that he was going to be going back to the Southern Baptist Convention on the executive team, our chairman told the board of directors, "Just pray. Do not talk to each other. Just pray and ask the Lord where we should go and who should be the next president of National Day of Prayer." So we all went into a time of prayer and he said, "If you get a name, call me." And so four days later he called and he said, "Kathy, do you have a name?" And I said, "No, not yet." And he said, "Well, everybody else does." And I think, "Oh gosh, God's not talking to me. What have I done?" And so I said, "Oh, well, who are some of the names?" He goes, "No, just one name." And I said, "The board is in agreement over one person? Well, tell me who it is." And he goes, "You." And I said, "Tell the board to go back and pray again."

Did that twice. And so Dick Eastman from Every Home for Christ, he is on our board of directors, on the third time he rebuked me and he said, "Kathy, are you praying about this?" And I said, "Of course I am." And he goes, "No, no. Are you asking God to give us another name or are you asking God if it's you?" And so I went back and I prayed and fasted. And on the third day I'm on the floor saying, "Lord, I'm not a Bright, I'm not a Dobson, I'm not a Graham, I'm not a Floyd. Nobody knows my name." And in my spirit, I just heard the Lord say, "I know your name."

Dr. Tim Clinton:

I know your name.

Kathy Branzell:

And I said, "Then I don't care if anybody ever knows my name as long as they know yours." And so with the fear of the Lord and knowing that we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for the good works He's already prepared, I humbly said yes and rely on Him every day. I'm a glory story waiting to happen because He chooses the weak and the foolish. And here I am getting to do such an amazing, amazing thing to gather millions of people throughout the year and every year to love Jesus and pray.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

Kathy, I've heard nothing but amazing stories about you and how God's working in your heart and what He's doing through this. And I celebrate that with you. I go back a little bit on my own history. My dad was a real man of prayer. My dad was a pastor for almost 60 years. And as a secondary income to the ministry as a pastor, he would drive school bus and pick kids up on the dirt roads and bring them to the main roads, the paved roads to meet the big yellow bus. And there was this one place called George's Corner that he would meet. It was the last stop. And oftentimes when we'd come through, my dad would be seated there. And I would notice my dad was sitting and he had a book on the steering wheel. And I would ask my dad, "Dad, what do you do every morning when you're sitting there?" And he said, "Oh, Tim, I just spend time with the Lord." And then he said, "I pray for you guys."

And as a kid, I remember that image. All the way through to my dad, even in his later years, up to the time God took him home, we would pray together on the phone or anytime when we'd get... He'd never let you leave the room without praying together. My mother was like that too, Kathy. And when those seeds get sewn in your heart, it's something special. As you have stepped into this role, you've been called by God to this moment, to this hour, and I wonder what you think as you canvas the country, everybody's up on social media, this is an insane time and a lot of people are crying out to God and we're praying that God would hear the prayers of his people, what do you see? What's in your heart as you look at the nation in this hour?

Kathy Branzell:

Oh, so many things, but mostly that God is a jealous God and He doesn't share His glory. And so He has told us time and time and again, "First you will have no other gods before me." Let's get back to praising Him and remembering He is our hope. And then secondly, he said, "Be anxious for nothing. Don't worry." And so all of the emotional things that we've gotten wrapped up in, we have to unplug our heart from our feelings. That is when your heart is plugged into your flesh, to culture, and we need to re-plug our hearts into the Holy Spirit so that we start experiencing fruitfulness, love, joy, peace, all those things people are hunting for and can't find. And as I look out at the nation and I meet every day people who are hurtful, hopeless, hateful, I just pray for them. They are missing our Lord Jesus Christ. Every fruit has a root. As you know as a counselor, you have to get to the root of whatever good or bad fruit they're exhibiting. In our nation, there is a harvest of fruitfulness coming, there is a harvest of souls coming, and we are called to run to the frontline as followers of Jesus Christ, lock our shields together, run to the frontline and contend for the soul of this nation in prayer. And that's what I see right now across America.

Dr. Tim Clinton:

I have in my hand a devotional that you put together called *An Invitation to Prayer*. On the cover, peace, love, wisdom, happiness, purpose, and so much more. Ronnie Floyd, by the way, who I love, wrote the forward to it. But Kathy, in that book, you challenge people to get beyond the insanity, to come into the presence of God and then to journey with God in an intimate way, getting to know Him. Because when we press into God's heart, when we are with Him, when we abide with Him, it begins to calm things, and by the way, reorient our minds. It re-calibrates the way we see the world. He is who He says He is. And it's like, "God, we need your protection. We need your provision. We need your power. We need your presence like never before." That's the substance that's driving what's behind this National Day of Prayer Task Force team, what's in your heart and so much more. Take us back to where those seeds got sewn because those go deep into your past and how you grew up.

Kathy Branzell:

Absolutely. I grew up a military brat. By the time I was 15, we had lived 18 different places. And so when Scripture talks about being firmly rooted, our roots, we were just in little pots and we got carried all around the world. We never had deep roots except in the Lord. And I was so grateful. It didn't matter if we were going to be somewhere for six weeks, the first thing my parents did

was we went to church. We established church membership and got involved in our community even if we were going to be there for six weeks because God established us there for such a time as this. And so that's where those seeds were so deeply rooted in me, and then in the trials and the triumphs of life.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And Kathy, you've had a few by the way.

Kathy Branzell: Just a few. Yeah. I fought a brain tumor for 14 years and then a year after I was healed, our son who was in high school was diagnosed with a very rare blood cancer. And we got to glorify God through two years of infusions of chemo and that with him. And I'll tell you, when my 16 year old was diagnosed with cancer, he said, "Doc, either way I win." And the doctor at Children's Hospital in Denver had no idea how to respond to him. And he said, "Let me explain to you, sir." He said, "If by the miracle of medication Jesus allows you to cure me, then great. I live longer and I am not done with my destiny." He goes, "But Doc, if the Lord calls me home and I get to go be in Heaven with Jesus, that's a bigger win." So he said, "Doc, just so you know, no guilt for you if I die, but no glory for you if I live." That was something else for a young doctor who did not know Jesus at the time to hear from a 16 year old. But I was so grateful that he knew through 14 years of my experience that this was an opportunity to talk to people about Jesus in infusion rooms and labs and radiology and hospitals around all over our neighborhoods.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Kathy, we're pressing a little bit with time here, wanted to ask you, for those who are out there who struggle with prayer, sometimes they wonder whether or not it matters, what do you say to that person right now encouraging them? You guys are out mobilizing millions of people to stand united in prayer.

Kathy Branzell: Year round.

Dr. Tim Clinton: And why is it important that they get this piece right?

Kathy Branzell: Well, E.M. Bounds, the great writer says-

Dr. Tim Clinton: I like Bounds.

Kathy Branzell: I love E.M. Bounds. But one of my favorite quotes is, "Our prayers project our faith on God and God on the world." And there is nothing I can give the world greater than to project God on them. But it happens in relationship, and so if you struggle in prayer, I just need to remind you that you have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, or I pray that you do. And if you don't, find out how you can. Then I just want to encourage you to have a conversation and to listen for God to speak to your spirit, but just let it be sweet and intimate. And the other thing is to find other people to pray with because prayer is caught not taught. Notice that when they said, "Lord, teach us to pray," Jesus prays. He doesn't sit down and go, "Okay, let me explain praise to you. Let me explain thanks to you. Let me explain intercession to you." Although those are great

things. But if you want a more intense and intimate prayer life, start listening to the prayers of others. And I just want to encourage you every single day to talk to our Lord Jesus Christ who loves you more than you could ever understand, whose thoughts towards you outnumber the grains of sand on this planet and who inclines his ear to hear your voice.

Dr. Tim Clinton: He loves the prayers of His people and He hears the prayers of His people. And prayer is powerful. I love that Bounds quote, E.M. Bounds, "Little prayer, little power. More prayer, more power. Much prayer, much power." I wanted to ask you in closing, how do you mobilize so many people to prayer? And what are you asking, again, God, to do in our country for such a time as this, with such great division and so much more?

Kathy Branzell: Well, we have over 17,000 volunteer coordinators who week in and week out say, "Kathy, what are we doing this week? Kathy, what are we praying about this week?" And so we have articles. You can go to nationaldayofprayer.org and receive our Thursday articles. I do a Friday Facebook post video. It's all prayer, it's all Scripture. And we are praying that millions of hearts and voices unite in prayer and exalt the Lord. And as their strength returns, as their hope returns, as they remember how great and mighty our God is, that it will not just be on the National Day of Prayer, but that it will launch a lifestyle of exalting the Lord.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Amen. Kathy, if people wanted to learn more or support National Day of Prayer, what would they do?

Kathy Branzell: The best thing to do is go to nationaldayofprayer.org. And you can click on the event finder, you can click on the resources, you can click that donate button. If God has called you to give to Him through the ministry of National Day of Prayer, we appreciate that, but we want to resource you, we want to pray for you and pray with you and look forward to hearing from you.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Philippians 4:6 says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests, your prayers be made known to God." 1 Thessalonians 5:7, "Pray without ceasing." Romans 12:12, "Rejoice in hope. Be patient and tribulation. Be constant in prayer." Probably a fitting way for us to close out this broadcast would be to just maybe ask you to pray for those who are listening and pray for our nation in this hour. Would you do that for us?

Kathy Branzell: Ah, I would love to. Thank you. Oh, Lord Jesus, you are the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, the Alpha and the Omega. Lord, I pray for every person listening right now and beyond, Lord, that they would be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, that they would know your love, that they would know you as creator, sustainer, redeemer, that there is no sin that they have committed that you are not willing to forgive, that they would draw near to you. I pray, Lord, that hope would be restored, that faith would be strengthened, that you and you alone would be exalted in this nation, Lord, that they would know you have

been pursuing them because you are their Creator, their Abba Father, and you love us more than we could ever understand. Lord, I pray America would love and bless you back, that we would be one nation under God. Thank you, Jesus. We love you. Be exalted because it is you who have established us, and it's in your powerful, wonderful, beautiful name we always pray. Amen.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Amen. What a gift and privilege we have to be able to go before Heavenly Father. Kathy, such a delight again to have you. On behalf of Dr. Dobson, his wife Shirley, the team at Family Talk, we salute you and pray that God would go before you, establish your ways, and may the Lord be exalted in through it all. Thank you for joining us.

Kathy Branzell: Thank you.

Roger Marsh: Well, amen. Our Lord and Savior does want to hear from you. Prayer is such a great way to develop our relationship with God. As we read in Philippians chapter four, verse six and seven, Paul writes, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Now, today's conversation featured our co-host, Dr. Tim Clinton and guest Kathy Branzell. Their conversation was recorded this past May before the National Day of Prayer in Washington DC. And this program concludes our 2022 Best of Broadcast Programming Roster. If you enjoyed this past month of insightful and inspiring conversations selected from all of 2022 and you'd like to hear them again and again, you'll enjoy owning the 2022 Best of Broadcast Collection. For a suggested donation of \$50, you can get your own six CD set today. Just visit drjamesdobson.org/bestof2022. That's drjamesdobson.org/bestof2022.

And new this year, we also have a digital download version available of the Best of Broadcast. To order the digital version, click on the link that is featured right on the Best of 2022 page on our website. There you'll see the link in bold shaded in festive holiday green. And remember, you can even order either the CD set or digital download copy by phone. Just call us at 877-732-6825. That's 877-732-6825. One final reminder, we have a matching grant in place, thanks to some special friends of our ministry. With this opportunity, if you choose to make a donation to the JDFI today, it will be doubled. Be sure to make your contribution by midnight on December 31st for your gift to have twice the impact. Again to donate, visit drjamesdobson.org. Don't forget to catch Family Talk Weekend this weekend on many of these same stations, and be sure to join us again Monday for the next edition of Family Talk. Until next time, I'm Roger Marsh. And here on behalf of Dr. James Dobson, Dr. Tim Clinton and all of us here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, we wish you a happy New Year filled with God's richest blessings for you and your family.

Announcer: This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.