

Day of Prayer and Fasting

Handbook and Resources

Pioneer Prayer: Forgotten Passwords

Fourth Quarter 2020

Sabbath, October 3

Revival
& REFORMATION

Prepared for church group and individual use by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in coordination with the Revival and Reformation Committee. Written by Richard Constantinescu for the Day of Prayer and Fasting global initiative.

Visit www.revivalandreformation.org for information.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture is quoted from the New King James Version, copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982, Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers.

Contents

Why a Day of Prayer and Fasting?	4
Suggested Planning Guide	5
Suggested Program Format	6
Appendix	8
Sermon/Devotional: "Forgotten Passwords"	9
Testimony Handout for Prayer Time	12
Prayer Outline: "Pioneer Prayer"	14
An Invitation to Fast and Pray (print and share with members the week before)	16

Why a Day of Prayer and Fasting?

Imagine you are a parent about to leave your children, knowing you will not see them again until the Kingdom of Heaven. What is the most important thing you could say to them?

Jesus had that dilemma as He prepared to return to heaven after His crucifixion. What was the burden of His last words to His disciples? As we read through His last prayers and counsel in John 15-17, we discover repeating themes: unity, love, and seeking God through prayer. Jesus longed for His fledgling church to come together in purpose, harmony, and mission. Today, amid perhaps unprecedented polarization in the world, our nations, and our church, we too need to heed Jesus' counsel to seek His Spirit and come together for mission. The task seems daunting and impossible in our humanity. That's why we need to pray as never before for the miracle of reconciliation that only God can bring.

We invite you to pray "in your closet." We invite you to pray with your local church family. And we invite you to the global Revival and Reformation initiative of prayer and fasting. Perhaps you will not choose to fast totally from food. Perhaps you will fast from desserts or social media, or eat sparingly of plant-based food for a time.

"Now and onward till the close of time the people of God should be more earnest, more wideawake, not trusting in their own wisdom, but in the wisdom of their Leader. They should set aside days for fasting and prayer" (Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Feb. 11, 1904).

As you choose to focus more deeply on prayer, God will bless you and strengthen your heart for the challenging days ahead.

Cindy Tutsch

For Revival and Reformation Committee

Suggested Planning Guide

Program for the Day:

- A devotional/sermon, "Forgotten Passwords," is included in the appendix of this resource. It can be used for the morning worship program or as a devotional before the prayer time. If it is used for the morning worship service, a scripture reading and children's story are suggested below.
- A suggested afternoon prayer program is provided. We recommend scheduling 1-2 hours for this time; however, many plan to pray together for a full afternoon. Allow the Holy Spirit to lead.
- Copy and share the information on fasting at least a week before so that members understand fasting and prayer and can choose how they want to be involved in fasting during the day. A handout is provided in the appendix.
- Make copies of the handouts "Prayer Outline: Pioneer Prayer" and "Testimony Handout for Prayer Time" for attendees.

Scripture Reading: John 15:7

Suggested Children's Story: *Tell how garden fruits and vegetables or grapevines grow.*

Points to emphasize:

- *Ask the children if they've ever tasted fresh, ripe tomatoes or juicy, purple grapes right off the vine. Give them an opportunity to describe the experience.*
- *The branch does not have power to form delicious fruit.*
- *The branch can only form fruit through the vine.*
- *Explain that we can see the fruit of the Holy Spirit's power in our lives by loving, joyful, peaceful actions (Galatians 5:22, 23).*
- *When we are joyful and loving, we show our connection to God, the Source of joy and love.*
- *We connect to Jesus through the teachings in His Word, the Bible.*
- *Ask the children if they want to grow the good fruit of happiness and love in their hearts and ask them how that fruit grows.*
- *Remind them to connect with Jesus by daily studying His teachings in the Bible and by talking to Him as a friend. Pray briefly for them. Ask God to give them His good fruit through time spent with Him.*

Suggested Program Format

Place: Gather in the sanctuary, outside under some trees, or, if your group is small, meet in a comfortable room that offers privacy and no distractions.

Opening: Music always sets the mood for worship, so begin with a few songs of worship to inspire reverence and encourage seeking after God. Invite group members to share short 30-second testimonies of answered prayers or praises to God between songs.

Welcome: The leader should welcome people and share a few words of instruction:

- This is a time of prayer and seeking God.
- Anything shared is confidential and should not be shared outside the room.
- Don't take prayer requests ahead of time. Explain that this is a time to pray, not talk, so prayer needs will be prayed about during the prayer time, not talked about first.
- Get comfortable. Feel free to change positions—sitting, kneeling, etc.
- Raise your head when you pray. Pray loud enough for others to hear.
- Prayer is more than just our words. Claim scripture and pray God's promises back to Him. Sing a verse or two of a song, with others joining in.
- When someone prays for a need or person, others are invited to add their own prayers and lift up the need or person aloud. There is power in hearing others pray for the needs and people on your heart (Matthew 18:19).
- Claim the righteous life, sacrifice, and ministry of Christ in prayer (John 14:14; Revelation 8:3).
- When possible use inclusive pronouns "we," "us," and "our," instead of "I," "me," and "my" (Matthew 6:9-13) in prayer.
- The theme of the afternoon is "Pioneer Prayer." Take turns reading the Testimony Handout together. Then pray for family, friends, each other, and the world.

Notes for the Leader:

- *Remember that silence in prayer time is fine. Don't feel the need to fill every silence or end the prayer time prematurely. While some people jump in and pray quickly, others take longer to feel comfortable praying aloud. When silence happens, let it linger. Just count a few seconds—even just 30 seconds if you're uncomfortable with silence—to give the Holy Spirit an opportunity to nudge people.*
- *If your congregation isn't used to praying together in groups and including scripture and singing during the prayer time, you may need to lead by example. Or you*

might ask others ahead of time to lead, intentionally praying a request from the Testimony Handout or starting a song during the prayer time. While taking time to pray is the priority, this is also an opportunity to teach people how to pray corporately.

Devotional: If the sermon/devotional reading has not already been shared, the coordinator or a designated leader may read it before the prayer time.

Prayer time: An outline, "Pioneer Prayer," is provided for the prayer time. The leader should walk participants through prayer, beginning with the Testimony Handout and using the outline as a guide.

Closing: Close the prayer time with praise and thanksgiving. Choose perhaps one or two praise songs to end the program.

Some churches may choose to have a meal together after the prayer time to break the fast. Keep the meal simple, but make the tables attractive to create a special atmosphere.

APPENDIX

Forgotten Passwords

By Richard Constantinescu, pastor and Revival and Reformation Committee member

Have you forgotten a password? Forgetting a password can have lasting consequences. The United Kingdom-based British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) reports, “One in seven people have lost track of their money sitting in savings accounts or pensions—with half blaming lost passwords.”¹ The article reports that £2.8 billion (\$3.5 million) in assets sits unclaimed in the government-backed National Savings and Investments (NS&I). Remembering passwords in this digital age is essential to resource management.

Even greater treasure lies unclaimed because of forgotten passwords. God promises to supply all our needs (Psalm 23:1; Philippians 4:19), strength to overcome temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13), and dynamic power to witness for Christ (Acts 1:8). If we forget to claim these treasures in prayer, we will not receive them. We must ask, seek, and knock (Matthew 7:7) according to His Word, if we would receive, find, and enter in. Jesus Christ “always lives to make intercession” (Hebrews 7:25) for those who, remembering God’s promise, claim this treasure.

The great and precious promises are the passwords by which we access God’s blessings, and we must remember—not forget—them! The apostle Peter assures us that Christ’s “divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises” (2 Peter 1:3-4a).

Prayer is sweeter when we see God answer. Jesus gives us the key to answered prayer in the Gospel of John: “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you” (John 15:7). Glorious truth! There is power in God’s Word to accomplish what He desires when we ask according to His will (Isaiah 55:11; 1 John 5:14). “The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in the word of God. This word imparts power; it begets life. Every command is a promise” (*Education*, p. 126). God’s Word is creative (Psalm 33:6, 9), and nothing is too hard for Him (Jeremiah 32:17).

Knowledge and faith in God’s Word are essential to receiving the answers to prayer we desire. Jesus longs to bless us more than we can imagine (Ephesians 3:20, 21), and we must believe that! Jesus offered to visit the home of a Roman officer, but the soldier believed that Jesus could just speak His Word and his servant would be healed (Matthew 8:8). The centurion had

¹ Peachey, Kevin. “Lost passwords ‘lead to lost savings.’” *BBC News*, 16 Oct. 2018. Retrieved July 2020 from <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-45874695>.

faith in God's Word! Jesus "marveled, and said to those who followed, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!'" (Matthew 8:10). If you believe His promises and ask Him for what He has promised, it will make Jesus happy! Do not wait to feel or see results before you believe what God has promised. Ask God for blessings according to His Word and thank Him for promising and doing it.

Often, when we are not abiding in His Word and meditating day and night, our requests are not saturated with His Spirit. When we abide in Christ and His Word abides in us, our requests will be those He will naturally answer affirmatively. "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him" (1 John 5:14, 15). Amazing promise!

Learning God's Word has always been necessary for Christians. Bible memorization offers so many benefits: victory over temptation, knowledge in witnessing, and hope in difficulty. The ability to pray in faith, knowing God's will and pressing requests fervently to His throne until He answers, is best had by those who abide in His Word. Those who are mightiest in prayer have hearts saturated and transformed by His promises. And one of the most useful weapons of a true Christian is the ability to recall Scripture when darkness brings discouragement.

In fact, God prescribes Bible memorization and meditation to prosper and bless us. Psalms 1:2, 3 says of the blessed man, "His delight is in the law [teaching] of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper." God commanded Joshua, "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success" (Joshua 1:8). Decide to saturate your mind with the Word and begin with a prayer to do so, quoting the before-mentioned texts!

Here are seven basic keys to successful Bible memorization.

First, understand that the brain is a living organ requiring proper circulation in order to function properly. The health laws that God gave in the Bible should be observed for our mental and physical benefit. The diet recommended in Genesis 1 and Daniel 1, where possible, should be followed. This is the most conducive to healthful intelligence. Avoidance of unnecessary and recreational drugs, including caffeine and nicotine, will increase oxygenated blood flow to the brain. Generously supplying the body with water between meals will likewise thin the blood and provide health to the brain. Nutrition, exercise, sunshine, rest, purity, and temperance all play important roles in enhanced brain function.

Second, never despair of learning God's Word. Trees continue to grow through their lifetimes, and likewise the human brain continues to make new connections throughout its life. Just as

water, a seemingly weak substance, will eventually wear through stone with persistent dripping, so the Bible can be written on your heart.

Third, choose meaningful verses. Make a list of 10-15 verses that have changed your life—which make your heart “burn within” you (Luke 24:32). Choose promises to talk to God about and claim in your prayers.

Fourth, eliminate competing media that would cause the Word of God to lose its flavor to you. This includes media that is impure, fictional, or misleading, according to God’s Word (Philippians 4:8; Psalm 101:3). As donuts and ice cream for breakfast cause a child to lose appetite for healthy fruits, grains, nuts, and vegetables, the junk food of this world lessens our desire for God’s eternal Word (Psalm 19:10; Job 23:10-12).

Fifth, write a verse on a small card (with reference on one side, and reference, verse, then reference on the other) and put it in a plastic packet. Place the packet in your pocket wherever you go. While you are waiting for someone, standing in line, pumping fuel, walking, or using public transportation, use your time wisely and repeat God’s Word, praying for inspiration. Say the reference before and after to remember its address. Consistently say small portions without looking. Perfectly learn one or two a week.

Sixth, once you memorize a verse and can recall it perfectly, repeat it at least once daily, looking at the reference to start, for two to three months. The verses will begin to be as sweet as honey, but only if you are consistent in your review.

Seventh, meditate on them, use them in prayer, and share them often with others. They will burn more deeply into your heart whenever God brings them to your mind or speaks through you to bless others.

Remember your “passwords.” Don’t leave heavenly treasure unclaimed. Fill your heart with God’s promises and prayerfully align your heart with His Word for a powerful life of prayer.

For resources on Bible memorization and Pioneer Prayer, see www.RevivalPlan.com.

Testimony Handout for Prayer Time

Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, pp. 345-346

The word of God is plain. It is a straight chain of truth, and will prove an anchor to those who are willing to receive it, even if they have to sacrifice their cherished fables. It will save them from the terrible delusions of these perilous times. Satan has led the minds of the ministers of different churches to cling tenaciously to their popular errors, as he led the Jews in their blindness to cling to their sacrifices, and crucify Christ. The rejection of light and truth leaves men captives, the subjects of Satan's deception. The greater the light they reject, the greater will be the power of deception and darkness which will come upon them.

I was shown that God's true people are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. God requires of them continual advancement in the knowledge of the truth, and in the way of holiness. Then will they understand the coming in of Satan, and in the strength of Jesus will resist him. Satan will call to his aid legions of his angels to oppose the advance of even one soul, and, if possible, wrest it from the hand of Christ.

I saw evil angels contending for souls, and angels of God resisting them. The conflict was severe. Evil angels were corrupting the atmosphere with their poisonous influence, and crowding about these souls to stupefy their sensibilities. Holy angels were anxiously watching and waiting to drive back Satan's host. But it is not the work of good angels to control the minds of men against their will. If they yield to the enemy, and make no effort to resist him, then the angels of God can do but little more than hold in check the host of Satan, that they shall not destroy, until further light be given to those in peril, to move them to arouse and look to heaven for help. Jesus will not commission holy angels to extricate those who make no effort to help themselves.

If Satan sees that he is in danger of losing one soul, he will exert himself to the utmost to keep that one. And when the individual is aroused to his danger, and, with distress and fervor, looks to Jesus for strength, Satan fears that he will lose a captive, and he calls a reinforcement of his angels to hedge in the poor soul, and form a wall of darkness around him, that heaven's light may not reach him. But if the one in danger perseveres, and in his helplessness casts himself upon the merits of the blood of Christ, our Saviour listens to the earnest prayer of faith, and sends a reinforcement of those angels that excel in strength to deliver him. Satan cannot endure to have his powerful rival appealed to, for he fears and trembles before His strength and majesty. At the sound of fervent prayer, Satan's whole host trembles. He continues to call legions of evil angels to accomplish his object. And when angels, all-powerful, clothed with the armory of heaven, come to the help of the fainting, pursued soul, Satan and his host fall back, well knowing that their battle is lost. The willing subjects of Satan are faithful, active, and united in one object. And although they hate and war with one another, yet they improve every

opportunity to advance their common interest. But the great Commander in heaven and earth has limited Satan's power.

Prayer Outline: Pioneer Prayer

Opening: The prayer topics below are from the Testimony Handout, which the group should read either together or individually. The leader will divide the prayer topics among the group, or ask individuals which topics they would like to pray about. Volunteers should write their initials on the blanks by their topics, and the group leader should note them too. The leader may open prayer by thanking God for every person in the room and asking that each heart will be blessed. Before someone prays for a new topic, they should try to agree aloud with the previous one. Please keep individual prayers short, under one or two minutes.

1. ____ Thank God for His Word of truth, which sanctifies us (John 17:17).
2. ____ Pray that we live by every Word which proceeds out of God's mouth (Matt. 4:4).
3. ____ Pray for a knowledge of God's Word to shield us from delusions of Satan (Isa. 8:20).
4. ____ Pray that we will be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt. 5:13, 14).
5. ____ Pray that we advance in the knowledge of truth and the way of holiness (1 Tim. 2:4).
6. ____ Thank God for His holy angels, who deliver us from evil angels (Psalm 34:7).

10-Minute Open Prayer Time: When the last volunteer finishes, a time of open prayer begins. This is the time to uplift other prayer requests. Have a song leader sing one verse to end the open prayer time.

7. ____ Pray that we understand Satan's approach and resist Him in the strength of Jesus (James 4:7).
8. ____ Pray for clear, sensible minds (1 Pet. 5:8).
9. ____ Pray that God would deliver us in our troubles and that we glorify Him (Ps. 50:15).
10. ____ Pray for the blood of Jesus to cleanse all our sins (1 John 1:7).
11. ____ Pray for deliverance from diseases and the snares of Satan (Ps. 91:3, 4).
12. ____ Pray that God would draw near to us (James 4:8).

10-Minute Open Prayer Time: Song leader sings one verse to end the open prayer time.

13. ____ Pray that we will be faithful, active, and united with God against Satan (Acts 2:1).

14. _____ Thank God for limiting Satan's power on earth (Job 38:11).
15. _____ Pray for God to hold back the winds of strife until His servants are sealed (Rev. 7:3).
16. _____ Pray for God to bless the General Conference Annual Council (Isa. 11:3).
17. _____ Pray for God's Spirit to bless the remnant church and its leaders (Rev. 12:17).
18. _____ Pray that God blesses the nations of earth (Rev. 14:6).

5- or 10-Minute Open Prayer Time: Take time for thanksgiving and praise, with the prayer leader closing. God bless!

Register for Weekly Pioneer Prayer at www.RevivalPlan.com/pioneerprayer

An Invitation to Fast and Pray

“Now and onward till the close of time the people of God should be more earnest, more wide-awake, not trusting in their own wisdom, but in the wisdom of their Leader. They should set aside days for fasting and prayer. Entire abstinence from food may not be required, but they should eat sparingly of the most simple food” (*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, pp. 188-189).

“In the Bible, fasting is not an option. It’s a given. Matthew 6:17 doesn’t say, ‘If you fast,’ but rather, ‘When you fast.’ Fasting has always been part of the lifestyle of believers, just like praying and studying the Bible. In fact, every major character in the Bible fasted. If you study out all the fasts in the Bible, you will find that every time God’s people prayed *and fasted*, God worked mightily on their behalf. From deliverance from their enemies in battle to supernatural deliverance from prison, to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and on and on, we see a pattern. And this pattern repeats itself all down through Christian history” (Melody Mason, United in Prayer coordinator, General Conference).

We’re inviting members to join us for a day of prayer and fasting for our church and specifically for those we long to see come to know Christ in a real relationship that leads to salvation and a life of commitment to God. Let’s pray together for our children. Friends. Family. Neighbors. Co-workers. Community.

What is Fasting?

Fasting is more than not eating. In fact, the real emphasis of fasting is not skipping meals, but increasing prayer. Fasting is choosing to do without something in order to pray more intentionally and with more focus. Many choose to skip meals, but not everyone can do without food completely, and not everyone chooses that type of fast. You may choose to eat simpler, lighter meals. Or you might fast from an item or two, such as dessert or processed foods. Fasting can also include doing without social media, television, or other time-consuming habits.

If you do choose to fast completely from food (making sure to drink enough water and/or juices), use the time you would typically use for cooking and eating to pray. If you fast from an item or two, every time you’re tempted to eat that item, pray instead. Every time you’re tempted to check out social media, pray.

Remember that fasting does not guarantee that your prayers will be answered in the way you desire. Fasting doesn’t mean God will hear us better or reward us more. Fasting is about what happens in our own hearts and minds. It makes us more aware of our weaknesses and more dependent on God. Fasting creates an intentionality about prayer and reminds us to pray more focused prayers for what is deepest in our hearts.

We invite you to first pray and ask God how you should fast—what is He inviting you to give up in order to spend more time with Him in prayer?

Then we invite you to join us for a day of prayer and fasting together as a church. Even if you

choose not to fast at all, join us for a day of prayer. Spend time before our Sabbath services praying and inviting God to prepare your heart and mind. Invite Him to convict you of any sins that stand between you and Him. Confess those. Ask for cleansing, healing, and forgiveness. Invite Him to show you whom He wants you to pray for. Bring those names to our Sabbath afternoon prayer time, and we will join you in praying for them.

Some are uncomfortable praying aloud, so they avoid times of corporate prayer. We invite you to join us anyway. You can pray with us silently, lifting up the prayer requests of others and praying for the people and things God brings to your heart. And for those who fear their prayers aren't "good enough," know that God hears not only our words but also our hearts. He's not looking for "good enough" prayers but for sincere worshipers seeking Him. He welcomes even faltering prayers where we stumble over our words and may not "say it right." Even if we don't know what to pray, He knows. He hears. And He invites us to pray together.

"Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven" (Matthew 18:19).

We look forward to praying together with you.