



# Day of Prayer

## **Rebuilding the Altar: Praying for an Undivided Heart**

Handbook and Resources

1st Quarter 2023

Sabbath, January 7

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 Melody Mason for the Day of Prayer global initiative. Visit [www.revivalandreformation.org](http://www.revivalandreformation.org) for more information.

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## A Special Invitation to Pray

### Rebuilding the Altar: Praying for an Undivided Heart

We invite you to join us for the first quarterly Day of Prayer for 2023! Let's pray for a deeper walk with Jesus for ourselves, our families, and our loved ones.

We read in 2 Timothy 3:5 that many believers in the last days will have a "form of godliness" without the power. We don't want that to be us! That's why we've chosen the theme "Rebuilding the Altar: Praying for an Undivided Heart."

Ellen White offers these convicting words: "Of His people the Lord said, 'Ye are the salt of the earth.' That is, you are the element that will preserve the earth from utter corruption of principle. The Saviour continued, 'But if the salt have lost its savor wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men' (Matthew 5:13). In the illustration of the savorless salt, Christ gives a picture of those who profess to know the truth, yet in their words deny the truth. While they have a form of godliness, they know not its saving power. Salt that has not the elements by which to preserve from corruption, retains its form, and has the appearance of salt; but it is valueless. So it is with those who preserve the form of godliness, but do not manifest the living principles of truth in their life practices" (*Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 10, ms. 11, 1895).

Elsewhere she writes, "It is of great consequence to those who are striving for the crown of immortal life to know that they have the power, and not merely the form of godliness" (*Experiences in Australia*, p. 150).

And yet we are helpless to gain this power by ourselves; it comes only as we look to Jesus and seek His face in daily prayer. During this Day of Prayer we plan to join together as a church family worshiping God, praising Him, and especially asking Him to take us deeper and fill us with His Holy Spirit so we can be effective witnesses for Him. It's time to say no to mere "forms of godliness" in our lives. We want to be ready for Jesus to come!

Please join us for this sacred, beautiful time of pressing together as God has called us to do. Previous Day of Prayer participants say it's one of the most meaningful experiences they've ever had as a church family.

To make the Day of Prayer even more special personally, you might consider fasting in some way.

Fasting is more than just skipping meals. The main point of fasting is removing distractions so we can seek Jesus more wholeheartedly. As one pastor likes to say, "We fast from the world so we can feast on Jesus."

We are told, "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, emphasis supplied).

If you feel inspired to fast, we encourage you to pray and ask God what type of fast He wants you to do. You might choose to eat more simply, or you might choose to fast from social media, television, or other time-consuming habits. Whatever you do, it's important to remember that fasting isn't about earning a heavenly reward or answers to prayer but about decluttering our hearts and minds so we can more clearly hear God's voice speaking to us. However, whether you choose to fast or not, we believe God has a special blessing in store for you.

In *Messages to Young People*, Ellen White writes, "There is nothing that Satan fears so much as that the people of God shall clear the way by removing every hindrance, so that the Lord can pour out His Spirit on a languishing church and an impenitent congregation" (p. 133).

Now is the time, rather than pulling apart, to be pressing together in prayer, seeking to prepare our hearts for the outpouring of the latter rain (Hos. 6:3, KJV).

Hebrews 10:24, 25 says, "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching."

The Day *is* approaching. Let's ask God to search our hearts and cleanse us from every defilement. Let's ask Him to give us undivided hearts. We must not delay. Jesus *is* coming soon!

## Instructions for Leaders

**This Day of Prayer guide includes the following sections:**

- **A Special Invitation to Pray:** Print out this invitation and distribute to church members at least 1-2 weeks before the Day of Prayer so members can plan to join in.
- **Sabbath Morning Program Ideas:** Inspire members to join your afternoon prayer time by holding a Sabbath morning church service that focuses on this quarter's prayer theme. We've provided possible sermon titles, scriptures to help with sermon preparation, and suggested hymns. We encourage each pastor/speaker to make the message personal and genuine.
- **Suggested Children's Story:** This story highlights the theme of having an undivided heart for Jesus. Take time to learn the story ahead so you don't need to read it.
- **Suggested Afternoon Prayer Program:** For the afternoon prayer program, you can meet in the church sanctuary, outside under some trees, or, if your group is small, in a comfortable room in someone's home that offers privacy and no distractions. If meeting in person is not possible, you might use a video service such as Zoom or meet by telephone.
- **Afternoon Devotional:** This devotional reading is focused on our theme for the quarter. The prayer leader may read this devotional to the group or ask someone else to do so.
- **Transition to Prayer Time:** Just before starting your prayer time, share these thoughts and inspired passages with the group.
- **Handout 1: Prayer Focus & Outline:** This outline is designed to lead your group into praying for an undivided heart. It is only a suggestion; allow the Holy Spirit to guide your afternoon prayer time.
- **Handout 2: Powerful Prayer Promises:** These promises can deepen your prayer experience and make your time with God more meaningful. You might use them during your afternoon prayer time or send them home for members to use in personal devotions.

**Suggestions for planning a Day of Prayer:**

- We recommend scheduling a minimum of 2 – 5 hours for your afternoon prayer program. Many enjoy praying together for a full afternoon, followed by a special agape supper and testimony time in the evening. Allow the Holy Spirit to lead your plans.
- Most of the time will be spent in corporate prayer, but if time allows you may break into smaller groups for more personal prayer requests. You can do "breakout rooms" in Zoom if you're meeting online. Bring the group back together to close with a time of thanksgiving.
- If possible, print or email the two handouts to participants ahead of the afternoon prayer time (Prayer Focus & Outline and Powerful Prayer Promises).

## Sabbath Morning Program Ideas

**1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Day of Prayer Theme:** Rebuilding the Altar—Praying for An Undivided Heart

### **Possible Sermon Titles:**

*Rebuilding the Altar—Praying for an Undivided Heart*

*Choose You this Day*

*All in for the Kingdom— A Good Kind of Salty*

*The Call of Elijah—Turning the Hearts of the Fathers Back to the Children*

*Loving God with Heart, Body, Mind, and Soul*

### **Possible Scriptures to Build a Sermon On:**

- Josh. 24:15—Choose you this day whom you will serve
- Matt. 6:24—You cannot serve God and mammon
- 2 Tim. 3:1-7—Flee a “form of godliness” and live by God’s power
- Joel 2:12-32—Rend your heart and not your garments
- Luke 1:17—Turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children
- Jer. 29:13—Seek the Lord with all your heart
- Isa. 55:6-13—Seek the Lord while He may be found
- James 4:8—Purify your hearts, you double-minded
- Rom. 2:28-29—Be a Christian on the inside
- Luke 11:39—Hypocrisy of the Pharisees: outside clean, inside dirty
- Ps. 51:6—God desires truth on the inside
- Matt. 5:13—What happens when the salt loses its flavor
- Matt. 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27—Love God with all heart, soul, mind

### **Suggested Story Tips for Sermon:**

Share a personal conversion testimony or tell about a time when you realized you didn’t want to live a double-standard Christian life any longer. (Be real and vulnerable. Personal stories engage the heart and change the listener’s practical life.)

### **Possible Hymns to Choose From:**

“Fill My Cup, Lord” (SDA Hymnal #493)

“Have Thine Own Way, Lord” (SDA Hymnal #567)

“I Surrender All” (SDA Hymnal #309)

“Lord, I’m Coming Home” (SDA Hymnal #296)

“All that Thrills My Soul” (SDA Hymnal #189)

“O Worship the Lord” (SDA Hymnal #6)

**Children’s Story:** “Singing from an Undivided Heart” (included with these materials)

## Suggested Children's Story

### Singing from an Undivided Heart

Some famous singers became passionate about music in their childhood, but this was not the case with Gabriela. She grew up in the country of Bolivia with a passion for Jesus. From birth, her mother taught her about the love of Jesus and about the Bible.

When she was 9 years old, she gave her heart to Jesus in baptism.

But as the years passed, she began to feel drawn to the delights of the world, and the door to those delights was music.

Gabriela liked to sing for fun on school vacations. Then she was invited to join a musical group, and she gladly agreed, thinking that she could start a musical career and become famous. By the age of 19, she was sure that singing was her life.

While studying at a university, Gabriela sang with several music groups. Then she and several friends created a new musical group that met with instant success. The group performed at numerous events, and Gabriela enjoyed going to parties and spending money on fancy things.

She liked singing, and she especially liked spending money. But when she wasn't singing or spending money, she felt empty inside. Life didn't seem to have any meaning.

Gabriela didn't stop going to the Adventist church completely. She tried to be a Christian on some Sabbath mornings, but she returned to her other life after the worship services.

One Sabbath morning, she listened to the special music in the church and a desire formed in her heart to sing for God.

"I would like to sing in church," she thought. "My mother would be so proud of her daughter singing in church."

Soon Gabriela was attending church regularly, not only for the morning worship service but also for the afternoon program. She started listening to Adventist singers. She realized that she wanted to leave the music of the world, but she still struggled with a desire to become famous.

She prayed to God for help.

Then the COVID-19 pandemic shut everything down. Gabriela could no longer perform on the stage. Rather than despair, she felt an enormous sense of relief. Now it would be easier to cut all ties with the empty, meaningless part of her life.

She soon started Bible studies. When she finished Bible studies, she decided to rededicate her heart to God through rebaptism. She felt that God was giving her a new opportunity to live for Him.

Gabriela entered the waters of baptism less than a year into the pandemic. In a prayer at her baptism, she declared that everything she had belonged to God. She wanted to give Him her whole heart.

"I give my life, gifts, and talents to Your service," she prayed.

Now she sings for the glory of God and gives seminars and Bible studies to those in need. Through her influence, four people have already been baptized.

Gabriela has a special message for young people who might, like her, be tempted to go after the attractions of the world. "Do not waste your time in the world," she says. "Every person has gifts and talents, and you only need to find them and use them for God's glory."

Gabriela learned that it truly pays to give Jesus our talents. Let's ask Jesus to help us to give Him our talents because we will never find happiness following after the world. The best joy comes from serving Jesus with a full, undivided heart.

(By Andrew McChesney, Adventist Mission. Adapted with permission.)

## Suggested Afternoon Prayer Program

### Welcome and Announcements

### Opening Prayer

**Praise and Worship:** Take 10 – 15 minutes to sing and praise God with your whole heart!

**Afternoon Devotional:** Read the included devotional to the group.

**Transition to Prayer Time:** Share the included thoughts and quotes with the group.

### Prayer Time

- Begin by distributing **Handout 1: Prayer Focus & Outline**.
- Also, briefly offer these **guidelines** for united prayer:
  - **We won't be taking prayer requests ahead of time.** The devil loves it when we talk about our requests instead of praying about them.
  - **Follow the leader.** First, we will praise God before moving forward to other themes, so save your requests and burdens until I lead us to that part of the prayer time.
  - **Speak up so we can hear you when you pray.** If you're on Zoom, keep your microphone muted unless you are praying.
  - When possible, **claim scripture and pray God's promises back to Him.** Use the provided promise sheet (**Handout 2**) or open your Bible to Psalms.
  - **Claim the righteous life and sacrifice of Jesus in prayer.** It is His life that makes our prayers acceptable to God (John 14:14; Rev. 8:3).
  - **Keep each prayer brief** (one thought, or 1– 2 sentences). Save lengthy prayers for your personal prayer closet. Long prayers weary the saints, and angels too (*Prayer*, p. 258).
  - You can pray multiple times (briefly) during corporate prayer times, but please **allow others an opportunity to pray** so everyone can enjoy the blessing!
  - Please **stay comfortable** during the prayer time. Feel free to sit, kneel, stand, change positions. If on Zoom, you might consider turning off the camera during prayer.
- **Time to Pray:** Use **Handout 1: Prayer Focus & Outline** to lead the group in praising God and praying for an undivided heart. Let the Holy Spirit lead. This time of prayer may take anywhere from 2 – 5 hours. See a suggested time plan below.

**Closing Songs:** Finish with more praise!

**Closing Prayer:** Give all glory to Jesus!

**Encourage Members to Continue Praying Together:** After the prayer time ends, encourage people to keep praying for one another or start small prayer groups in their homes. If members would like to pray daily with Adventist believers from around the world, encourage them to join *24/7 United Prayer*. (This is a united prayer ministry happening online 24 hours a day. Multiple languages are available. Share the following website address: <https://247unitedprayer.org>.)

**Optional Evening Meal:** Some churches may choose to hold an agape feast and testimony time after the prayer time. If you do this, keep the meal simple but make the food and atmosphere special. If you're meeting online, do a "praise picnic." Take turns sharing praises and more testimonies of answered prayer, even if it's over Zoom.

## SUGGESTED TIME PLAN FOR 2 – 5 HOURS OF UNITED PRAYER

<b>Time of Praise:</b>	Corporate Prayer (15 – 30 minutes)
<b>Confession:</b>	Private and Corporate Prayer (15 – 30 minutes)
<b>Supplication:</b>	Corporate and Small-Group Prayer (30 – 60 minutes)
<b>Circle of Blessings:</b>	Corporate Prayer (1 – 3 hours)
<b>Closing Praise:</b>	Corporate (10 – 15 minutes)

## PERSONAL NOTE TO PRAYER LEADERS

Heart preparation as a prayer leader is vital. If you go into the afternoon prayer time rushed and with your soul's lamp untrimmed, the prayer time may not go as well as you hoped. But if you've personally taken time to pray, search your own heart, confess your own sins, and seek for the Lord's blessing, you will be amazed how He will work.

If you are concerned because you've never led united prayer before, you can learn more by reading *Praying for Rain: A Mini-Handbook for United Prayer*. Download it online here:

<https://www.revivalandreformation.org/resources/all/praying-for-rain>.

## Afternoon Devotional

### Rebuilding the Altar: Praying for an Undivided Heart

The Old Testament tells of a prophet named Elijah whom God sent to call Israel back to His heart. At that time, the worship of Baal, a Canaanite god, was supported and promoted from the top down in Israel, and most Israelites had traded in the living God for Baal. The countryside was strewn with altars to Baal.

Elijah gathered his countrymen at the top of Mount Carmel. Eyeing the crowd, he boldly challenged the entire throng: "How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him" (1 Kings 18:21, NASB). No one in the entire crowd said a word.

Later that same day, Elijah gathered the crowd around the broken-down altar to the living God. Quietly, he rebuilt the altar from the scattered stones. With the altar completed, he set the wood and the sacrifice in place.

Elijah risked everything to cry out to the God whom the crowd no longer worshiped. He prayed, "O Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, today let it be known that You are God in Israel and that I am Your servant and I have done all these things at Your word. Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that You, Lord, are God, and that You have turned their heart back again" (1 Kings 18:36, 37, NASB).

The second Elijah finished his prayer, God sent fire to consume the sacrifice and the altar itself. The people were in awe. They shouted, "The Lord, He is God; the Lord, He is God" (1 Kings 18:39, NASB).

The work of Elijah was repeated centuries later in the mission of John, son of Zacharias. Scripture says of John, "It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of fathers back to their children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17, NASB).

In 1999, on a cold winter night in Michigan, I heard Elijah's call to turn my heart back to our children. I did not hear this call through the preaching of a sermon or from a chapter in a book. I heard Elijah's call through the cries of our children.

I was gathering my papers and briefcase so that I could run out the door to an important meeting to plan the building of a larger church. I was in a rush. Jason and Julie were 6 and 3 years old. They heard me getting ready to leave. They ran up to me questioning, "Where are you going, Daddy?"

"I am going to a meeting," I replied factually.

“Daddy, stay home tonight!” they pleaded. “You are always gone! Daddy, you never play with us anymore!”

I leaned over to give our son and daughter quick hugs and kisses. Their little arms wrapped around me tightly. When I tried to stand up, they would not let me go! They clung to me with desperation. They were trying to keep their overcommitted daddy home.

I had to gently pry their arms off my neck so I could go. They started crying. “Daddy, just tonight! Please stay home!”

I backed out of the house and closed the door. As I walked out into the snow, the picture of our children crying and reaching out to me lingered heavily on my heart. As I trudged through the snow, God spoke to my heart. He called me by name. I stopped in my tracks. On that night, as the snow silently fell around me, God called me back to our children. He had first spoken through the cries and the love of our children: “Daddy, stay home!”

That was a very difficult call for me. I was out often seven nights a week, helping others while neglecting our own children. It was a painful call, yet a call of mercy that led to healing between me and our children.

From that day forward, I began to say no to many requests so I could say yes to my family. It was not easy! God helped me to begin safeguarding time with each child just as my wife April and I had prioritized our time together.

At first, our kids were not always interested in spending time with me. I had said no to their requests to play with them too many times. Often, I felt like a failure. But the call of Elijah comes with the healing power of the Lord. The Lord helped our children to forgive me. He literally turned my heart to them and their little hearts back to me! Praise God!

John, with the same Holy Spirit power of Elijah, prepared the people for the coming of the Messiah. John, like Elijah, called for revival. He preached, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2, NASB). Elijah called the hearts of the fathers back to their children. John did the same. Today, we are commissioned to do likewise. John prepared the people of the first century to receive Jesus as the Messiah. Today, we are called to prepare people to receive Jesus as the King of kings who will come in the clouds!

The healing of the family is a pivotal part of revival. Revival must be the daily heartbeat of our homes. As our families experience a daily revival with Jesus through His written Word and prayer, the Spirit of God prepares us to meet Jesus soon! Now is the time to live the message of Elijah for these last days!

(By Don MacLafferty, from his book *Come Home*, accessible here: <http://bit.ly/comehome2023>)

## Transition to Prayer Time

We've just been challenged by the testimony of Pastor MacLafferty and the call of Elijah, calling fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, and all people back to Jesus, back to their homes, and back to the heart of true worship. We've also been challenged by our need to call people to prepare for Jesus' soon coming. However, before we can effectively minister to our own families or call others to Him, something has to change inside of us. We need to put away all compromise and all forms of superficial Christianity. We need a genuine experience with Jesus and a deeper outpouring of His Holy Spirit.

That's why we are taking this day to pray specifically that God will help us rebuild our altars of worship and give us an "undivided heart" for Jesus, for when we truly worship Him and our heart is wholly His, His Spirit will fill us.

In 2 Timothy we read that there will be great trouble in the last days. What is the cause of this trouble? The Bible says, "For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power" (3:2-5).

Unfortunately, this just about perfectly describes today's generation, doesn't it?

We're going to spend some time in prayer asking God to deliver us from all spiritual pretense and mere "forms of godliness," but first let's take a few minutes to contemplate some sobering paragraphs written by Ellen White about the wise and foolish virgins. Reading her words, we feel convicted that the time to put away these powerless "forms of godliness" is *today*. Listen to the following:

In the parable of the virgins, five are represented as wise and five as foolish. The name "foolish virgins" represents the character of those **who have not the genuine heart-work wrought by the Spirit of God**. The coming of Christ does not change the foolish virgins into wise ones. When Christ comes, the balances of Heaven will weigh the character, and decide whether it is pure, sanctified, and holy, or whether it is unclean, and unfit for the kingdom of heaven. Those who have despised the divine grace that is at their command, that would have qualified them to be the inhabitants of heaven, will be the foolish virgins. **They had all the light, all the knowledge, but they failed to obtain the oil of grace; they did not receive the truth in its sanctifying power.** (*The Review and Herald*, Aug. 19, 1890, emphasis supplied)

In the parable, all the ten virgins went out to meet the bridegroom. All had lamps and vessels for oil. For a time there was seen no difference between them. **So with the church that lives just before Christ's second coming.** All have a knowledge of the Scriptures. All

have heard the message of Christ's near approach, and confidently expect His appearing. But as in the parable, so it is now. A time of waiting intervenes, faith is tried; and when the cry is heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him," **many are unready. They have no oil in their vessels with their lamps. They are destitute of the Holy Spirit.**

**Without the Spirit of God a knowledge of His word is of no avail.** The theory of truth, unaccompanied by the Holy Spirit, cannot quicken the soul or sanctify the heart. One may be familiar with the commands and promises of the Bible; but unless the Spirit of God sets the truth home, the character will not be transformed. Without the enlightenment of the Spirit, men will not be able to distinguish truth from error, and they will fall under the masterful temptations of Satan.

The class represented by the foolish virgins are not hypocrites. They have a regard for the truth, they have advocated the truth, they are attracted to those who believe the truth; **but they have not yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit's working. They have not fallen upon the Rock, Christ Jesus, and permitted their old nature to be broken up.** This class are represented also by the stony-ground hearers. They receive the word with readiness, but they fail of assimilating its principles. Its influence is not abiding. **The Spirit works upon man's heart, according to his desire and consent implanting in him a new nature; but the class represented by the foolish virgins have been content with a superficial work. They do not know God. They have not studied His character; they have not held communion with Him; therefore they do not know how to trust, how to look and live. Their service to God degenerates into a form.** "They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as My people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness" (Ezekiel 33:31). The apostle Paul points out that this will be the special characteristic of those who live just before Christ's second coming. He says, "In the last days perilous times shall come: for men shall be lovers of their own selves; . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (2 Timothy 3:1-5). (*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 408, 411)

Let's pray this afternoon that God will change our hearts and the hearts of our children. May we forever put away artificial "forms" of godliness and claim His power as we prepare for His soon coming!

## Handout 1: Prayer Focus & Outline

(This outline is just to get you started. Don't rush or feel that your group must follow it exactly. Pray as the Holy Spirit leads and be sensitive to one another.)

### **A Time of Praise—Corporate Prayer Time**

(Note: If you have a hard time thinking of what to praise God for, open your Bible and start praying the Psalms. No matter your trials, you have many reasons for which to praise God!)

- Thank God that He is a God who hears and answers prayer. (Matt. 7:7)
- Thank God that He cannot lie and that His Word does not return to Him void. (Isa. 55:11)
- Thank God that when we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. (1 John 5:14)
- Thank God for His exceedingly great and precious promises. (2 Pet. 1:4)
- Thank God that we don't have to be Bible scholars to understand truth. (2 Tim. 3:15)
- Thank God for the forgiveness of sin and victory in Jesus. (1 John 1:9; 1 Cor. 15:57)
- Thank God for the beautiful message of righteousness by faith. (Rom. 3:26)
- Thank God for the gift of the Holy Spirit and the coming latter rain. (Joel 2:28; Hos. 6:3)
- Thank God that He is on the throne and He rules/overrules all for His glory. (Rev. 4:2, 3)
- Thank God for small blessings you take for granted.
- Thank God for anything else that He brings to your mind or heart. Let the praises flow!

### **A Time of Confession—Private and Corporate Prayer Time**

(Note: Private sins should be confessed only to God or those injured, but we are all guilty of many sins—such as those listed below—which are appropriate to confess as a body. Put away pride and allow the Holy Spirit to speak and challenge you to new levels of surrender and repentance.)

- Confess the ways your spiritual altar has been weakened or broken down.
- Confess the times you've created a breach rather than being a "repairer of the breach."
- Confess the sins of pride and apathy, or the times you've lived a mere "form of godliness."
- Confess the ways you've been lukewarm or double-minded, not living your profession.
- Confess your selfishness and self-centeredness.
- Confess the ways you've wounded Jesus afresh.
- Confess the ways you've not allowed Jesus to be LORD.
- Confess the ways you've not obeyed the convictions of the Holy Spirit.
- Confess the way you've wounded family members/your church body/or others.
- Confess your idols, or anything that has stood between you and God.
- Confess the times you've failed to be a true witness.
- Confess anything else the Holy Spirit brings to your mind.

### **A Time of Supplication—Corporate and Small-Group Prayer**

(Note: Listen to the Holy Spirit and listen to the others praying. Agree with one another in prayer and, if convicted, add your prayer to theirs. Ask the Holy Spirit what He wants you to pray, claiming Jeremiah 33:3. Before closing this section, the prayer leader may invite you to form groups of two and pray for one another.)

- Based on your confessions, pray for the courage to take action and live a new way.
- Pray for an undivided heart. (James 4:3)
- Pray for a new or renewed heart. (Ps. 51:10; Ezek. 36:26)
- Pray that God would reveal areas where you've lived a mere "form." (Ps. 139:23, 24)
- Pray that God would remove all apathy and give you a passion for Him. (Jer. 24:7)
- Pray for the Holy Spirit—We need much more! (Luke 11:13)
- Pray for the willingness to surrender and follow Jesus all the way. (Matt. 16:24)
- Pray for God to help you be a "doer of the word" and not just a hearer. (James 1:22)
- Pray for healing in any spiritual breaches you may have, so you can help be a repairer of the breach for others. (Isa. 58:12)
- Pray for restoration and healing in your family or for those hurting. (Ps. 147:3)
- Pray for your family members, loved ones, and those who are not saved.
- Pray for the children and youth of your church.
- Pray for your pastor and local church leadership.
- Pray for the ministries of your church and any upcoming projects or outreach plans.
- Pray for anything else that God brings to your mind or heart.

### **Circle of Blessings—Take Turns Surrounding One Another in Prayer**

(Instructions are below. If you are praying with a large group, pray together for about 30 minutes, then break into smaller groups of 10 to finish the prayer time, following the model given below.)

- Form a circle, and while the prayer leader invites each person forward one at a time, come into the center of the circle for specific prayer.
- Share briefly with the group what your spiritual burden/need is. This is *not* the time to share your life testimony. Be specific and right to the point, sharing whatever you feel your need is. Maybe it is a personal spiritual victory you need, healing for a marriage, or strength or faith to go forward. Maybe you need help overcoming an addiction. Maybe it is straying children your heart aches for. Tears are OK. Be vulnerable and real. Put away pride.
- Once you have briefly shared your need, the rest of the group will press close around you. Some may lay hands on you. (Satan tries to keep us apart, but we must press together!)
- Two or three people will pray briefly for the need, then the leader will close the prayer.
- Sing a song (if appropriate) as the person returns to the group. Hugs are also OK.
- Invite another person into the center of the prayer circle—anyone who has a need.
- Repeat this process until everyone who wants special prayer has been prayed over.

### **Closing Time of Praise—Corporate Prayer Time**

## Handout 2: Powerful Prayer Promises

### Bible Promises and Thoughts from Spirit of Prophecy

“For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us” (2 Cor. 1:20).

“Grasp His promises as leaves from the tree of life: ‘Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.’ John 6:37. As you come to Him, believe that He accepts you, because He has promised. You can never perish while you do this—never” (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 66).

“You do not have because you do not ask” (James 4:2). “Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you WILL receive, that your joy may be full” (John 16:24, emphasis supplied).

“It is a part of God's plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not thus ask” (*The Great Controversy*, p. 525).

“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, emphasis supplied).

“If we desire to know and to do God's will, His promises are ours” (*From Heaven With Love*, p. 166).

“With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God ALL THINGS are possible” (Mark 10:27, emphasis supplied).

“Natural impossibilities cannot prevent the work of the Omnipotent One” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 535).

“Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man AVAILS much” (James 5:16, emphasis supplied).

“An appeal to Heaven by the humblest saint is more to be dreaded by Satan than the decrees of cabinets or the mandates of kings” (*In Heavenly Places*, p. 82).

“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have BELIEVED” (John 20:29, emphasis supplied).

“There is no danger that the Lord will neglect the prayers of His people. The danger is that in temptation and trial they will become discouraged, and fail to persevere in prayer” (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 175).

“For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself STRONG on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him” (2 Chron. 16:9, emphasis supplied).

"The honor of His throne is staked for the fulfillment of His word unto us" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 148).

"As His 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, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet. 1:3, 4).

"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14).

"Just as long as the church is satisfied with small things, it is disqualified to receive the great things of God" (*Home Missionary*, Nov. 1, 1893).

"Ask the Lord for rain in the time of the latter rain. The Lord will make flashing clouds; He will give them showers of rain, grass in the field for everyone" (Zech. 10:1).

"The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the church is looked forward to as in the future; but it is the privilege of the church to have it now. Seek for it, pray for it, believe for it. We must have it, and Heaven is waiting to bestow it" (*The Review and Herald*, Mar. 19, 1895).

"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11:13).

"Will we wrestle with God in prayer? Will we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit? This is what we need and may have at this time. . . . If we will walk humbly with God, God will walk with us" (*Prayer*, p. 87).

"If two of you AGREE on earth concerning anything that they ask, IT WILL BE DONE for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:19, 20, emphasis supplied).

"The greatest blessing that God can give to man is the spirit of earnest prayer. All heaven is open before the man of prayer. . . . The ambassadors of Christ will have power with the people after they have, with earnest supplication, come before God" (*Prayer*, p. 83).

"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask ANYTHING according to His WILL, He hears us" (1 John 5:14, emphasis supplied).

"All that Christ received from God we too may have. Then ask and receive. With the persevering faith of Jacob, with the unyielding persistence of Elijah, claim for yourself all that God has promised" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 149).

“And WHATEVER things you ask in prayer, BELIEVING, you will receive” (Matt. 21:22, emphasis supplied).

“Prayer and faith will do what no power on earth can accomplish” (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 509).

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me . . . to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“If you want power you may have it; it is waiting your draft upon it. Only believe in God, take Him at His Word, act by faith, and blessings will come” (*Prayer*, p. 84).

“In whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (Eph. 2:22).

“There is no limit to the usefulness of the one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, and lives a life wholly consecrated to God” (*Christian Service*, p. 254).

“For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones’” (Isa. 57:15).

“From the soul that feels his need, nothing is withheld. He has unrestricted access to Him in whom all fullness dwells” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 300).

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise” (Ps. 51:17).

“The greatest victories to the church of Christ or to the individual Christian are not those that are gained by talent or education, by wealth or the favor of men. They are those victories that are gained in the audience chamber with God, when earnest, agonizing faith lays hold upon the mighty arm of power” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 203).

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly ABOVE all that we ask or think, according to the POWER [*His power*] that works in us” (Eph. 3:20, emphasis supplied).

“The Lord will more than fulfill the highest expectations of those who put their trust in Him” (*My Life Today*, p. 55).

“Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is NOTHING too hard for You” (Jer. 32:17, emphasis supplied).

“It is not the capabilities you now possess or ever will have that will give you success. It is that which the Lord can do for you. We need to have far less confidence in what man can do and far more confidence in what God can do for every believing soul. He longs to have you reach after

Him by faith. He longs to have you expect great things from Him" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 146).

"Ask, and it WILL be given to you; seek, and you WILL find; knock, and it WILL be opened to you" (Matt. 7:7, emphasis supplied).

"In sincerity, in soul hunger, cry after God. Wrestle with the heavenly agencies until you have the victory. Put your whole being into the Lord's hands, soul, body, and spirit, and resolve to be His loving, consecrated agency, moved by His will, controlled by His mind, infused by His Spirit" (*Prayer*, p. 75).

"And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him" (Acts 5:32).

"Our great need is our only claim on God's mercy. . . . He [the Centurion] trusted not to his own goodness; his argument was his great need. . . . It is thus that every sinner may come to Christ" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 317).

"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32).

"We must look to Christ; we must resist as He resisted; we must pray as He prayed; we must agonize as He agonized, if we would conquer as He conquered" (*That I May Know Him*, p. 34).

"God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" (Num. 23:19).

"Just believe and praise God and go forward. We are almost home. . . . Bear your whole weight on the promises of God. Believe it is your privilege to believe" (Letter 31, Jan. 1, 1887).

"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57).

"Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but to Your name give glory, because of Your mercy, because of Your truth" (Ps. 115:1).