



Quarterly Day of Prayer and Fasting

Rebuilding the Altar:

Praying to Be Disciples and Disciple-Makers for Jesus

Handbook and Resources

4th Quarter 2023

Sabbath, October 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 for more information.

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An Invitation to Pray

We invite you and your church to join us for the 4th quarter Day of Prayer and Fasting. For 2023 our theme has been “Rebuilding the Altar.” In previous quarters we prayed for an undivided heart (1st quarter); for power to love the Word, live the Word, and share the Word (2nd quarter); and for God to make us intercessors for a world in need (3rd quarter). This quarter we will focus our prayers on **living as true disciples and disciple-makers for Jesus**.

This packet shares a few ideas, themes, and scriptures to help you plan. However, we encourage you to download our full discipleship booklet (*The Way Back to the Altar*) to get more ideas, especially as you prepare to share Back to the Altar (BTTA) Principle 1 and Principle 2 during this special day of prayer. These beautiful intergenerational principles, about walking with and sharing Jesus daily, are already being implemented by many members of the world church. These discipleship principles are key to experiencing a true Back to the Altar revival—a revival that can be sustained and passed along the generations until Jesus comes.

This quarter’s Day of Prayer includes an emphasis on small-group Bible study, but please allow adequate time to pray over each topic as it is studied, for only the Holy Spirit can bring the Word to life in our hearts. And only the Holy Spirit can make our Bible study lasting and effective.

Inspiration tells us, “Could we see all the activity of human instrumentality, as it appears before God, we would see that only the work accomplished by much prayer, which is sanctified by the merit of Christ, will stand the test of the judgment” (*Christian Service*, p. 263).

Sabbath Theme and Prayer Program Suggestions

Theme: Rebuilding the Altar: Praying to be Disciples and Disciple-Makers for Jesus

Jesus calls us to become fishers of men. But first, “Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me’” (Matt. 16:24).

Those who seek to make disciples for Jesus are invited to follow His timeless approach: “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me’” (*Gospel Workers*, p. 363).

Goal: We hope members will take the Back to the Altar survey and recognize afresh the need to daily build their altars of worship. May we all come to Jesus just as we are and surrender fully to Him as Lord. As we continue our discipleship journey (with the booklet *The Way Back to the Altar*), may we become active disciple-makers and pass these principles on to others.

Sabbath Morning: We suggest you build your entire Sabbath service based on the theme, including your song selections, children’s story, sermon focus, study questions, personal testimonies, and invitations to prayer. The following scriptures may be helpful in planning.

Scriptures exploring what it means to be a true disciple of Jesus:

- Matt. 4:18–20; John 8:31, 32; John 13:35; John 15:7, 8
- Matt. 16:24; Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 1:5, 8

Back to the Altar Discipleship Survey: We encourage giving the anonymous survey when the majority of church members are present. Taking the survey brings fresh clarity to the need to rebuild our daily altars of worship. (See survey link on the following page.)

Afternoon Prayer and Bible Study Program: We recommend 4–7 hours for this afternoon program of prayer and Bible study. Follow the Holy Spirit's leading.

Time Breakdown for Afternoon Program (with suggested times):

- **Time for Worship** Singing together (15 min.)
- **Afternoon Focus** Share results of the survey and pray over results (10–15 min.)
- **Time of Praise** Praise via united prayer as a group (15–30 min.)
- **Confession** Private time, then small groups pray together (15–30 min.)
- **Praying the Word*** Pray together for an open heart to receive the Word (30 min.)
- **Small-Group Study[†]** Study BTTA Principles 1 & 2 in small groups (1–3 hours)
- **Praying the Word*** In same small groups, pray to become true disciples (1 hour)
- **Closing Praise** All together again, give praise and thanksgiving (5–15 min.)
- **Thanksgiving Supper** Enjoy a special fellowship meal to end the Sabbath (1–2 hours)

***Praying the Word:** (1) Pray for a heart receptive to the Word as you ask God to make you disciples and disciple-makers: Ezek. 36:26; 2 Cor. 5:17; Deut. 30:6. (2) Ask God to make you true disciples for the Kingdom. Dare to ask for more: Jer. 24:7; Matt. 4:19; Phil. 4:13; Eph. 3:20; Jer. 33:3; Matt. 28:19, 20; Ps. 2:8.

†Small-Group Study: Divide into groups of 6–8 and lead the groups in a study of Principles 1 and 2 from *The Way Back to the Altar* discipleship handbook (download link on following page). Allow plenty of time. Encourage the groups to engage with each other, answer questions, look up key Bible texts, and discuss and pray over their discoveries. Avoid preaching. Follow the instructions to keep the time engaging and interactive but also prayerful. All age groups can take part.

“There should be less preaching, and more teaching. . . . As we approach the end, I have seen that in these meetings there will be less preaching, and more Bible study. There will be little groups all over the grounds, with their Bibles in their hands, and different ones leading out in a free, conversational study of the Scriptures. This was the method that Christ taught His disciples” (*Gospel Workers*, p. 407).

Share the following links and QR codes with members who want to go deeper in prayer and study. Join us in making disciples for God's kingdom!



**The Way Back to the Altar
(Full Discipleship Handbook)**

<https://bit.ly/TheWayBackToTheAltar>



**Back to the Altar
Discipleship Survey**

<https://bit.ly/BTTA-Survey>



**Praying the Word
Prayer Promise Cards**

<https://bit.ly/PrayingThePromises>



**Powerful Promises
For a Day of Prayer**

<https://bit.ly/PowerfulPrayerPromises>



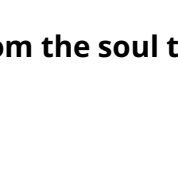
**Quick Guidelines for
Leading United Prayer**

<https://bit.ly/QuickGuide-UnitedPrayer>



**Praying for Rain:
Full Handbook for United Prayer**

<https://bit.ly/PrayingForRain7>



**Growing a Prayer Ministry
(Resource for Prayer Ministry leaders)**

<https://www.ministerialassociation.org/prayer/>



"From the soul that feels his need, nothing is withheld." (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 300)