



Quarterly Day of Prayer and Fasting

Preparing for the Final Events and Soon Coming of Jesus: Called to Serve

Handbook and Resources

4th Quarter 2024

Sabbath, October 5

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 **Dr. Pavel Goia** for the Day of Prayer global initiative.

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A Call to Serve

Jesus is coming soon, very soon and we must be ready. Are you ready? How can we prepare to be ready?

In each quarter we have looked into one of the four most important principles of preparation: pray, study the Word, watch, and serve. First quarter we focused on prayer. Second, we focused on the Word. Third, we underlined what it means to watch. Now we will focus on service.

The prophecies are being fulfilled in front of our eyes. The final events are upon us. "The world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis. . . . Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones" (*Last Day Events*, p. 11).

There is no more time to procrastinate or have other priorities. Satan tries to keep us busy, stressed, distracted, so we don't prepare or we put it off. God is calling you to be ready today!

How do you prepare?

In Matthew 24; 25; Luke 21; and Mark 13, Jesus talks about some signs of the end. He talks about wars, earthquakes, calamities, epidemics, and so on. But then He says that that's not the end, it's just the pregnancy pangs (Matt. 24:8). That means they will increase continually to the extreme. Then Jesus says that "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matt. 24:14, NKJV).

Once I heard someone praying, "Lord, may the gospel be preached to the whole world." You cannot expect the gospel to preach itself! Jesus asked His church to do that, and the church is you and me. He gave us the great commission and it is not a suggestion, but a command (Matt 28:18-20).

"The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9).

In Matthew 24 and 25 after Jesus gives them the signs of the end, He also tells them how to prepare. And, as usual, He teaches them through parables. You don't prepare for His coming by simply waiting. Jesus gives them **five parables** to show them how to practically get ready: the fig tree, the faithful/unfaithful servant, the 10 virgins, the talents, and the judgment.

The fig tree (Matt. 24:32-35)—When you see leaves on the trees and flowers blooming, you know summer is around the corner. In Luke, Jesus talks about the fig tree expected to produce fruit (13:6-10). If it doesn't, it will be cut off. In Matthew 7:16 Jesus underlines that you will know them by their fruit. To be ready, you will do good works that are overflowing from a heart like God's.

The faithful/unfaithful servant (Matt. 24:45–51)—In this parable, the Master gives the servant a clear responsibility. When the Master returns, if the servant is found at work, that servant is blessed. Interestingly, the servant that doesn't work, starts abusing those that do work. When the Master comes, that abusive servant is punished. To be ready is to be found actively doing what the master said.

The 10 virgins (Matt. 25:1–13)—Each virgin has a lamp and a reserve container, and they are expected to have enough oil to last through the night. Why? So their lamps will burn. Why do they need burning lamps? To go to all of the road intersections to light the way for the wedding guests so that no one gets lost in the dark. The wise ones have their reserve container full with oil, and they light the way. They are let in the wedding room. The foolish ones have some oil in their lamps, but through the night their oil eventually runs out and they have no reserve. So they have no light. They are not allowed to come in. Jesus says that we are the light of the world (Matt. 5:14), and that we must let our light shine so others can benefit from it, too. To be ready is to be filled with oil to the degree that you also light the way for others around you.

The talents (Matt. 25:14–30)—The Master gives each servant at least one or more talents. The test is not related to the number of the talents received, but if they are used. The servants using the talents are rewarded and blessed, and invited inside. The servants that don't use the talents are cast out into the darkness. To be ready is to use the God given talents into His service.

The judgment (Matt. 25:31–46)—Jesus comes and all are gathered before Him. He separates the nations into two groups, the sheep on His right, and the goats on His left. He says to the sheep—“Come and inherit the kingdom because I was in need and you cared for Me.” And they say, “We have never seen you in need.” And He responds, “Every time you did it for those in need around you, you actually did it for Me.” And then He will say to the goats—“Leave Me, because I was in need and you did not care for Me.” “Lord, we have never seen you in need.” The response? “Every time you ignored those around you, you actually ignored Me.” To be ready is to serve, to care physically and spiritually for those around us.

Be Connected, Then Go

In all five parables, to be ready is to actively serve, to be found working, doing what the Master asked you. Jesus sent you to love and care, to serve and save, to produce fruit and be a light. And you cannot wait until the crisis comes, you must serve today. And you cannot wait for others to come to you to learn about the gospel. Jesus said, “GO into all the world and preach the gospel, and I will be with you” (Matt 28:18–20).

“Every follower of Jesus has a work to do as a missionary for Christ, in the family, in the neighborhood, in the town or city where he lives. All who are consecrated to God are channels of light. God makes them instruments of righteousness to communicate to others the light of truth” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 632).

You cannot do that work in your own power, God promised to be with you. In fact, you cannot do anything without Him. Jesus says that separated from Him we can do nothing (John 15:5) but if we remain connected, we will produce much fruit.

“We need to look constantly to Jesus, realizing that it is His power which does the work. While we are to labor earnestly for the salvation of the lost, we must also take time for meditation, for prayer, and for the study of the Word of God. Only the work accomplished with much prayer, and sanctified by the merit of Christ, will in the end prove to have been efficient for good (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 362).

To produce fruit, you need the Holy Spirit, because it is the fruit of the Spirit. To be light, you need oil, so again you must be filled with the Spirit. All the parables pointed out that you must depend on God, you cannot do it alone. You must be connected to Him, filled with His presence. Therefore, prayer is essential. To be ready is to pray and serve.

Sabbath Theme and Prayer Program Suggestions

Instructions for Leaders

- **Sabbath Morning Program Ideas:** Invite and inspire members to make it a special day of prayer and focus on service and mission.
- **The sermon** should be centered in the Great Commission. It should emphasize God’s call for the church to reach the world. It should show the value of a soul in the light of the cross, and the call for each to use God given gifts and reach the neighbor. Members should be encouraged to pray and think about ways to reach those around them and the community.
- **Children’s Story:** Highlight the importance of prayer and service.
- **Afternoon Prayer Program:** Meet either with the whole church, in groups in a comfortable room, or in someone’s home. If meeting in person is not possible, you might use a video service such as Zoom or meet via telephone or some other platform.
- **Prayer Time:** Just before starting your prayer time, share the above thoughts and inspired passages and quotes with the group. Have a few Bible verses emphasizing our responsibility for those around us, God’s call for us to love and save, and God’s promise to go with us. Read the verses in groups or together with the whole congregation. Pray together over them.
- **Call the congregation to a clear commitment to service.**

Suggestions for Planning a Day of Prayer:

- We recommend scheduling a minimum of two hours for your afternoon prayer program. Some may enjoy praying together for a full afternoon.
- 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. Have a few Bible verses and a few quotes that emphasize our call to service. Have them read it and discuss it. Bring the group back together to close with a time of thanksgiving.
- Children praying: Have an area set aside for smaller children and assign someone to watch over them while the prayers take place. Children can also be introduced to simple concepts about God and simple prayers while in “play time.”
- Invite friends and family.
- Have everything ready for the prayer session. Prepare the songs in advance.
- Have a special supper and testimony time in the evening. Ask participants to bring a snack or potluck dish. Sharing a meal and friendly conversation after prayer helps build community spirit.
- Allow the Holy Spirit to lead your plans.