

## Leader's Guide: Back to the Altar

Welcome to Ten Days of Prayer 2023! We believe prayer is the birthplace of revival. God has worked so many miracles in past years as we have sought Him together in prayer and fasting. The Holy Spirit has brought about conversions, renewed passion for evangelism, revived churches, and healed relationships.

Has God's voice been calling you to revival? The Bible is full of promises for you:

"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 Chronicles 7:14).

"And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13).

"And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Joel 2:32).

"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (James 4:8).

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me" (Revelation 3:20).

Wherever you are in life right now, God is closer than you think. He wants to pour out His blessings on your family, your church, your community, and your world. Join us now in responding to the call to come back to the altar!

## General Items for Ten Days of Prayer

### Daily Prayer Guides

We have provided a prayer guide for each of the ten days. Each guide includes a Bible passage, devotional reading, Bible texts to pray through, prayer suggestions, and song suggestions. We recommend that you copy the daily guides so each participant can have one to follow during the prayer time.

Churches around the world will unite in praying about each day's topic. Join them in praying through the verses and prayer requests, but don't feel that you must rush through the entire list of prayer suggestions. You may want to divide into small groups and have each group pray for a portion of your prayer requests.

We also included a document called World Church Prayer Requests. It's important to pray together for our world church family, but you may want to spend extra time praying for local needs if your group includes visitors from the community. Pray about how you can best welcome guests and make them feel a part of your group.

### Suggested Times for Each Prayer Session

Keep your prayer time simple so the group can focus on actually praying. How much time you spend on each section will vary. The following guide is just a suggestion:

**Welcome and introduction:** 2 – 5 minutes

**Read devotional (in daily prayer guide):** 5 minutes

**Pray through the verses in "Praying God's Word" (in daily prayer guide):** 10 – 15 minutes

**Pray about the items in "More Prayer Suggestions" (in daily prayer guide):** 20 – 30 minutes

**Respond in song and praise:** 5 – 10 minutes

### Pray for Others

Encourage each person to pray consistently for five to seven people that God has placed in their life. They can be relatives, friends, coworkers, neighbors, or simply acquaintances. Encourage them to ask the Holy Spirit for guidance in choosing these names and in reaching out to these people during the ten days. You may want to provide some cards or pieces of paper on which people can record the names they will be praying for.

**Sabbath Services During Ten Days of Prayer**

Have a special prayer focus and share testimonies of answered prayer during the church services on both Sabbaths. Be creative—there are many ways to share with the church family what is happening during the daily prayer meetings.

**Final Sabbath Celebration**

The final Sabbath should be designed as a time of great rejoicing in all that God has done throughout the ten days. Include ample time for testimonies of answered prayer, biblical teaching/preaching on prayer, and singing. Lead the congregation in a time of prayer so that those who have not attended the daily meetings can experience the joy of praying with others. Please see the Sabbath Celebration handout for more ideas.

**Follow-up to Ten Days of Prayer**

Pray about how God wants your church/group to continue what He has begun during Ten Days of Prayer. Perhaps you will continue with a weekly prayer session. Or perhaps God wants you to begin a new ministry in your church or an outreach to the community. Be open and follow where God leads. You're sure to be amazed as you walk with Him. The document called Outreach Challenge is filled with ideas for service.

**Testimonies**

Please share stories of how God has worked through Ten Days of Prayer! Your stories will be an encouragement to many others. Testimonies may be submitted online at [www.tendaysofprayer.org](http://www.tendaysofprayer.org).

## United Prayer Pointers

**Agree Together**

When someone prays a request to God, be sure some others pray for that same request and agree together—this is powerful! Don't think that because one person has prayed about the request, no one else needs to. "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 18:19). How encouraging it is to be lifted up in prayer!

**Claiming God's Promises**

Encourage the group to claim God's promises as they pray. It is so easy to focus on our problems. But when we claim God's promises, we increase our faith and remind ourselves that nothing is impossible with God. The promises help us take our eyes off our weaknesses and difficulties and set them on Jesus. For every weakness and every struggle, we can find Bible promises to claim. Encourage people to search for more promises and write them down so they can claim them in the future.

**Fasting**

Invite those joining you in Ten Days of Prayer to consider some type of fasting, such as fasting from TV, secular music, movies, the Internet, sweets, or other types of food that are hard to digest. Use the extra time to pray and study the Bible, asking God to help you and your congregation to abide more fully in Christ. By adopting a simple diet, we allow our minds to become more receptive to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

**Holy Spirit**

Be sure to ask the Holy Spirit to show you what to pray for in a person's life or in a particular situation. The Bible tells us that we do not know what to pray for and that the Holy Spirit is the one making intercession for us.

"We must not only pray in Christ's name, but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This explains what is meant when it is said that the Spirit 'maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.' (Romans 8:26). Such prayer God delights to answer. When with earnestness and intensity we breathe a prayer in the name of Christ, there is in that very intensity a pledge from God that He is about to answer our prayer 'exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think' (Ephesians 3:20)" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 147, emphasis supplied).

**Journaling**

Keeping a prayer journal during the Ten Days of Prayer can help participants to internalize the daily prayer theme, make concrete commitments to God, and recognize His blessings. Writing out our prayers and keeping a record of God's answers is a proven path to encouragement.

If you wish, you might provide time during the prayer meeting for people to journal their responses to God in private prayer journals. Or you could keep a group journal of prayer requests and answers—either in a notebook, on a large poster, or online. It is exciting and faith-building to look back and see how God has answered prayers!

**Reverence**

Encourage and model a reverent attitude. We are approaching the throne room of the King of the universe. Let's not treat this prayer time carelessly in our posture or mannerisms. However, it is not necessary that everyone kneel continuously. You want people to be comfortable for an hour, so encourage everyone to kneel or sit or stand as God leads and as they are comfortable.

**Sentence Prayers**

Prayers should be short and to the point. This gives others an opportunity to pray as well. Try to limit your prayers to a few sentences. Each person can pray multiple times. Short sentence prayers keep the prayer time interesting and allow the Holy Spirit to impress the group how to pray. You don't need to open and close each short sentence prayer with phrases such as "Dear God" and "Amen." It is an ongoing conversation with God.

**Silence**

As a leader, don't dominate the prayer time. The goal is to get others praying. Times of silence are wonderful, as they give God time to speak to our hearts. Allow the Holy Spirit to work and give everyone time to pray.

**Singing**

Spontaneous group songs, mingled between prayers, add beauty to the prayer meeting. Suggested songs are listed at the end of each theme sheet. Do not feel that you need to use all the songs—these are simply suggestions. Singing is also a good way to transition from one prayer section to another.

**Taking Prayer Requests**

Don't ask for prayer requests from the group. Instead, tell people to pray their requests and encourage others to join in agreement and prayer for those requests. Here's why: time! Talking about the requests will take up most of your prayer time. Satan is thrilled if he can keep us talking about the problem instead of praying about the problem. Group members will often begin counseling and suggesting solutions. The power is from God! The more we pray, the more His power is unleashed.

**Your Daily Time**

This is so important! Make sure that you as a leader are spending time daily at the feet of Jesus, talking with Him and reading His Word. If you will make knowing God a first priority in your life, it will open such a beautiful experience to you. "From the secret place of prayer came the power that shook the world in the Great Reformation. There, with holy calmness, the servants of the Lord set their feet upon the rock of His promises" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 210). When a leader prays, God works on hearts!