

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.

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For Revival and Reformation Committee

Suggested Day of Prayer Format

Place: Gather in the sanctuary, in your home, online, outside under some trees, or, anywhere your small group can meet – make sure it’s a comfortable place 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, facilitator, or mentor should welcome people and share a few words of instruction. 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 actual prayer time, *not talked about first*.

- This is a time of intentional prayer and seeking God.
- Anything shared is confidential and should not be shared outside the room.
- 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.* You can also 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; Rev. 8:3).
- When possible use “we,” “us,” and “our,” instead of “I,” “me,” and “my” (Matt. 6:9-13).
- 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 family, group, or congregation isn’t used to praying in groups and including scripture and singing during prayer time, you may need to lead by example. While time for praying is the priority, this is also an opportunity to teach people how to pray corporately.

Devotional/Focused Reading: Just before going into prayer, lead out in taking turns to read a Bible passage, short devotional, or Spirit of Prophecy handout.

Prayer time: The leader should walk participants through intercessory prayers. Pray for family, friends, each other, local churches, special needs, latter rain power, the world, etc.

Training: The coordinator or a designated leader may take some time to offer discipleship training or other relevant/practical topic to encourage application or action – having spent time making our requests known unto God.

Closing: Close the prayer time with praise and thanksgiving. Choose perhaps one or two praise songs to end the program. Where feasible, especially at home, and where health guidelines can be followed, some may choose to have a meal together after the prayer time to break the fast. If so, keep the meal simple, but make the tables attractive to create a special atmosphere.

Spirit of Prophecy 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.

Sample Prayer Time Outline

10-Minute Pioneer Prayer Opening: 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 (Isa. 11:3).
17. Pray for God's Spirit to bless the remnant church and its leaders at other levels (Rev. 12:17).
18. Pray that God blesses the nations of earth (Rev. 14:6).

Five or 10-Minute Closing Prayer Time: Take time for thanksgiving and praise for those who feel led to offer them, with the prayer leader closing.

God bless!