

Prayer Theme: **Abiding in Christ – Life More Abundant**

Text: **Eph. 3:16-19**

Day 1: The Greatest Need
Day 2: Our Greatest Gift to God-Our Being
Day 3: Christ in Us
Day 4: Abiding in Christ
Day 5: More Than Conquerors
Day 6: Joy of Obedience
Day 7: A Life That Blesses Others
Day 8: Christ Reflected in the Family
Day 9: Christ Reflected in the Church
Day 10: Christ Reflected in the Neighborhood

Introduction

Welcome to Ten Days of Prayer 2016! Ten years have passed since the church started to pray for ten days at the beginning of each year. God has worked many miracles in these prayer events. The Holy Spirit has wrought revival, conversions, renewed passion for evangelism, and healed relationships. Truly, prayer is the birthplace of revival!

We believe your life and the lives of those you pray for will be changed as you join fellow church members in praying for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, whom the Father has promised to give to those who ask Him. Read the responses of those who participated in the last Ten Days of Prayer:

“The power of the Holy Spirit is working through in our church. Some of our backsliders are coming back to church, plus some of our members are making a total commitment this 2015 to walk with the Lord. Thank you and God bless all of you.” *Joe Kin, Kanudi SDA Church, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea*

“God is blessing immensely as our church is gathering to pray during these ten days of prayer. There’s a young man who has not been in church for a long time. His wife came to the prayer gathering Friday night, and the group joined her in praying for her husband to return to church. On Sabbath morning he was there! We praise God for how He is working in our midst!” *Peggy Casebier, Oregon, USA*

“The Ten Days of Prayer revived Southend SDA Church and Friday prayer meetings, which no longer existed in my church. This ten-day session taught us that the power rests in prayer and brought unity amongst church members and a zeal to work for the Lord.” *Tafadzwa Katsota, Southend SDA Church, Zimbabwe*

“We did our ten days from January 1-10. Our pastor, Bill McClendon, had a protective prayer for everyone involved on the prayer list. That very day, January 7, I was in traffic going to work and the car in the center lane took off in the messed-up snow lane and began to spin over and over again, finally stopping in my lane, facing my car. His car stopped about two feet in front of mine. I said, “Thank you, Jesus!” He saw my face and then tried to turn his car around and then took off. A tow truck behind me expected business from this car, but there was none! I called our pastor at church and told him what happened. God is with us all the time; I personally know this forever.” *Charmaine Ridgely, Baltimore First SDA Church, Ellicott City, Maryland, USA*

“I am grateful to our heavenly Father. He did something special. I had my young brother (age 10) who had heart problems, and doctors decided to undergo heart surgery in India. When I started to pray for him, he recovered very quickly, within a few days. Meanwhile, the doctors were estimating that he would recover after two weeks. God decided to save his life once again, and tomorrow he will be back from India. I am still waiting for great things to happen in the remaining days.” *Yoel Asaph, Mwanza, Tanzania*

Our Prayer Theme: Abiding in Christ—Life More Abundant

During the Ten Days of Prayer 2016, we will be praying for the Holy Spirit to teach us how we can abide in Christ and receive the “life more abundant.” The apostle Paul challenges believers to “be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18), “that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (Eph. 3:16-19).

“‘Abide in Me, and I in you.’ Abiding in Christ means a constant receiving of His Spirit, a life of unreserved surrender to His service. The channel of communication must be open continually between man and his God. As the vine branch constantly

draws the sap from the living vine, so are we to cling to Jesus, and receive from Him by faith the strength and perfection of His own character” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 676).

“To ‘abide in me, and I in you’ is a possible thing to do, and the invitation would not be given if you could not do this. Jesus our Saviour is constantly drawing you by His Holy Spirit, working with your mind that you will abide with Christ. . . . The blessings He bestows are all connected with your own individual action. Shall Christ be refused? He says, ‘Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out’ (John 6:37). Of another class He says, ‘Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life’ (John 5:40)” (*In Heavenly Places*, p. 55).

We need the Spirit daily in our lives so that we can abide in Christ, experience a life more abundant, and share it with the lost sons and daughters of God. During these ten days we would like to take time to reflect on why and how we need to abide in Christ and what consequences will this have for ourselves and others. Let us pray together that God will teach us “this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).

Suggested Guidelines for the Prayer Times

- Keep your prayers short—just a sentence or two on one topic. Then give others a turn. You can pray as many times as you’d like, just as you talk in a conversation.
- Silence is good, as it gives everyone time to listen to the Holy Spirit.
- Singing songs together as the Spirit leads is also a huge blessing. You do not need a piano for this; singing acapella is fine.
- Rather than using up valuable prayer time talking about your prayer requests, simply pray them. Then others can also pray for your requests and claim promises for your need.

Claiming the Promises

God has given us many promises in His Word. It is our privilege to claim them in our prayers. All His commandments and counsels are also promises. He would never ask from us something that we could not do in His strength.

When we pray it is so easy to focus on our needs, our difficulties, our challenges—and to wail and whine about our situation. This is not the purpose of prayer. Prayer is meant to strengthen our faith. That is why we encourage you to claim God’s promises in your prayer time. They will help you take your eyes off yourself and your weaknesses and set them on Jesus. It is by beholding Him that we become changed into His image.

“Every promise in the Word of God is for us. In your prayers, present the pledged word of Jehovah and by faith claim His promises. His word is the assurance that if you ask in faith, you will receive all spiritual blessings. Continue to ask, and you will receive exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or think” (*In Heavenly Places*, p. 71).

“Plead for the Holy Spirit. God stands back of every promise He has made. With your Bible in your hands say, I have done as Thou hast said. I present Thy promise, ‘Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you’” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 147).

How can you claim His promises? For instance, when praying for peace, you can claim John 14:27 and say, “Lord, You have told us in Your Word, ‘Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.’ Give me the peace that You promised to leave with us.” Thank the Lord that He is giving you peace, even though you may not feel it right then and there.

We have created a document, “Promises to Claim in Prayer,” with different promises that you can claim. Have the promises nearby when you pray. Claim God’s promises in your private and public prayers.

Fasting

We encourage you to do a Daniel Fast during these ten days. Starting the year with prayer and fasting is a great way to consecrate our lives to God for the upcoming year. Ellen White tells us, “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).

We know about Daniel, who ate fruits and vegetables for 10 days. We likewise encourage you to adopt a very simple diet during these ten days. A simple diet that leaves out sugar, processed and refined foods, and sodas can benefit us on different levels. First, eating simply means less time needed to prepare food and more time available to spend with the Lord. Second, the more simple our diet, the easier it is for the stomach to digest it, and the clearer our minds will be. We all know that sugar beclouds the frontal lobe, the center of our thinking. If we want clearer minds for hearing God’s voice, and if we want to draw closer to Him, we need to make sure that our diet is not hindering us.

We are told, “Guard jealously your hours for prayer, Bible study, and self-examination” (*Gospel Workers*, p. 100). In addition to giving us clear minds, fasting will help us to search our hearts.

Fasting is not only about abstaining from food. We also encourage you to fast from TV, movies, computer games, and even Facebook and YouTube. Sometimes things that are not bad in themselves, like Facebook and YouTube, can take so much of our time. Put aside everything possible so you can have more time to spend with the Lord.

Fasting is about avoiding everything that hinders us from drawing closer to God in prayer and Bible study. We are told that “the spirit of true fasting and prayer is the spirit which yields mind, heart, and will to God” (*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1148).

Fasting is not a fast way to obtain a miracle from God. Fasting is all about humbling ourselves so God can work in us and through us. “For certain things fasting and prayer are recommended and appropriate. In the hand of God they are a means of cleansing the heart and promoting a receptive frame of mind. We obtain answers to our prayers because we humble our souls before God” (*Medical Ministry*, p. 283).

Let’s humble ourselves before God and search for Him with all our heart, mind, and strength. Let’s draw closer to Him through prayer and fasting, and He will draw closer to us.

Holy Spirit

Be sure to ask the Holy Spirit to show you how or what you should 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).

Faith

We are told in the Spirit of Prophecy that “prayer and faith will do what no power on earth can accomplish” (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 509). We are also encouraged to pray and have faith that God heard and will answer our prayer.

“Christ says, ‘Ask, and ye shall receive.’ In these words, Christ gives us direction as to how we should pray. We are to come to our heavenly Father with the simplicity of a child, asking Him for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Jesus says again, ‘When ye pray, believe that ye receive the things ye ask for, and ye shall have them.’ You are to come to the Father repenting and confessing your sins, emptying the soul of every sin and defilement, and it is your privilege to prove the promises of the Lord. . . . We are to believe the word of God; for the test of character is found in the fact that you are building yourselves up in the most holy faith. You are proved of God through the word of God. You are not to wait for wonderful emotions before you believe that God has heard you; feeling is not to be your criterion, for emotions are as changeable as the clouds. . . . While on earth, we can have help from Heaven. . . . for I have tested God a thousand times. I will walk out by faith, I will not dishonor my Saviour by unbelief” (*Review and Herald*, Oct. 11, 1892, par. 1, 3, 6).

“We have too little faith. We limit the Holy One of Israel. We should be grateful that He condescends to use any of us as His instruments. For every earnest prayer put up in faith for anything, answers will be returned. They may not come just as we have expected; but they will come, not perhaps as we have devised, but at the very time when we most need them. But, oh, how sinful is our unbelief! ‘If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you’” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 209).

We are also told that “for any gift He has promised, we may ask; then we are to believe that we receive, and return thanks to God that we have received” (*Education*, p. 258). So make a habit of thanking God in advance through faith for what He is going to do and how He is going to answer your prayers.

Pray for Seven

We encourage you to pray during these ten days in a special way for seven people whom you would like to see experiencing a “life more abundant.” They can be relatives, friends, coworkers, neighbors, or simply acquaintances. Take some time and ask God whom would He like you to pray for. Ask Him also to give you a real burden for these people.

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Leader's Guide

Welcome to Ten Days of Prayer 2016!

Welcome to Ten Days of Prayer 2016! God has worked many miracles through the Ten Days of Prayer program since it began as Operation Global Rain in 2006. The Holy Spirit has wrought revival, conversions, renewed passion for evangelism, and healed relationships. Truly, prayer is the birthplace of revival!

These guidelines are meant to help you as a leader. The first section covers topics related to Ten Days of Prayer 2016, and the second part includes pointers that will help you and your prayer group. Remember that these are just resources and ideas. Feel free to change things as the Spirit leads you.

During the Ten Days of Prayer, January 6-16, 2016, your group should meet daily in person or by phone for an hour of united prayer. The eleventh day, January 16, falls on Sabbath. This day is a celebration of all God has done in answer to united prayer. We hope these ideas and suggestions will help to make Ten Days of Prayer 2016 a powerful experience for your small group or church family.

As you embark on this journey, take time to read the testimonies of those who participated in Ten Days of Prayer 2015:

“The power of the Holy Spirit is working through in our church. Some of our backsliders are coming back to church, plus some of our members are making a total commitment this 2015 to walk with the Lord. Thank you and God bless all of you.” *Joe Kin, Kanudi SDA Church, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea*

“God is blessing immensely as our church is gathering to pray during these ten days of prayer. There’s a young man who has not been in church for a long time. His wife came to the prayer gathering Friday night, and the group joined her in praying for her husband to return to church. On Sabbath morning he was there! We praise God for how He is working in our midst!” *Peggy Casebier, Oregon, USA*

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“I am grateful to our heavenly Father. He did something special. I had my young brother (age 10) who had heart problems, and doctors decided to undergo heart surgery in India. When I started to pray for him, he recovered very quickly, within a few days. Meanwhile, the doctors were estimating that he would recover after two weeks. God decided to save his life once again, and tomorrow he will be back from India. I am still waiting for great things to happen in the remaining days.” *Yoel Asaph, Mwanza, Tanzania*

General Ten Days of Prayer Items

Why Pray for an Abiding Relationship with Christ and Life More Abundant?

As followers of Christ, we want to be witnesses for Him. We want to represent Him. But we cannot do this if we do not abide in Christ. We cannot be witnesses in our own strength, and we cannot be happy and have life more abundant outside of Him.

Christ has invited us to abide in Him, so it is very important to learn *how* to do this. Throughout these ten days we will see why and how to abide in Him, and we will find out how this can change our lives. Let us pray together that God will teach us “this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).

Daily Theme Sheets

A theme sheet has been prepared for each of the ten days. The first page gives a suggested plan for the prayer time and includes ideas for specific prayer items and songs to sing together. The second page contains passages from the Bible and Ellen White that add insight to the night’s theme. We recommend that you copy the theme sheets so each participant can have one to follow during the prayer time. These could be copied front to back.

Churches around the world will unite in praying about each day’s theme. Join them in praying through the Scriptures, quotes, and prayer suggestions on each theme sheet. The more focused you stay on the theme, the more meaningful the prayer time will be. However, you are not constrained to stick solely to the theme sheet; simply let it guide you. You don’t have to pray through each point in order—they are just suggested items to include.

Ellen White Passages on Abiding in Christ and Life More Abundant

We have included passages from the pen of Ellen G. White and several Bible verses for each night. These are taken from different books written by Ellen White and talk about the importance of abiding in Christ and how this will affect others. We suggest that you read these together with the group. This could be done at the beginning of the prayer time, to set the stage for the day’s prayer theme, or somewhere halfway through the prayer time.

Suggested Times for Each Prayer Section

How much time you spend on each section of prayer will probably vary somewhat each time you pray together. The following timeframes are suggestions for what typically works well:

- **Welcome/Introduction:** 2-5 minutes
- **Reading of Scripture and Ellen White Passages:** 3 minutes
- **Praising God in the Prayer Time:** 10 minutes
- **Confession and Claiming Victory over Sin in the Prayer Time:** 3-5 minutes
- **Supplication and Intercession in the Prayer Time:** 35 minutes
- **Thanksgiving in the Prayer Time:** 10 minutes

Intercede for Seven

Encourage each person to ask God to show them seven people to pray for during the ten days. These may be family members, friends, coworkers, church members, etc. Encourage them to pray that the Holy Spirit will lead these seven people to abide in Christ. Group members should also ask God to show them how they can pray for specific needs and reach out to their seven people during the ten days.

Sabbath Services During Ten Days of Prayer 2016

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, especially, 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. See the Day 11 materials for more ideas.

Follow-up to Ten Days of Prayer 2016

Pray much about how God wants your church/group to continue what He has begun during Ten Days of Prayer 2016. Perhaps you will continue with a weekly prayer meeting. 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.

Testimonies

Please share stories of how God has worked through Ten Days of Prayer 2016! Your stories will be an encouragement to many others. Testimonies may be sent to stories@ministerialassociation.org or submitted online at 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 any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 18:19, KJV). How encouraging it is to be lifted up in prayer!

Claiming God's Promises

We have prepared a document with different promises that can be claimed in prayer. 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 of 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.

"With heartfelt simplicity we should state our needs to the Lord, and claim His promises with such faith and confidence that the congregation will know that we have learned to prevail with God in prayer. They will be encouraged to believe that the Lord's presence is in the meeting, and they will open their hearts to receive His rich blessing. Their faith in your sincerity will be increased, and they will be ready to listen with willing ears to the instruction given by the speaker" (*Evangelism*, p. 146).

"God has a heaven full of blessings for those who will co-operate with Him. All who obey Him may with confidence claim the fulfillment of His promises. But we must show a firm, undeviating trust in God. Often He delays to answer us in order to try our faith or test the genuineness of our desire. Having asked according to His word, we should believe His promise and press our petitions with a determination that will not be denied" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 145).

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, group members will allow their minds to be more receptive to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit

Be sure to ask the Holy Spirit to show you how or what you should 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).

Physical Togetherness

As you begin a united prayer session, invite everyone to come close together. When people move close together to form a tight circle, it helps to promote a spirit of unity, which is very important for united prayer. If people are spread out in a room, it is also difficult to hear each other's prayers.

Journaling

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

There are several ways journaling could be included in the Ten Days of Prayer if you desire. You could provide time during the prayer meeting for people to journal their responses to God in their 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. A simple way to do this is to draw a line down the middle of the paper. Write requests in the left column and answers in the right. 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 people 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. Appropriate 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).

Promises to Claim in Prayer (All Scripture KJV)

Promises for the Holy Spirit

“Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.” Zech. 10:1

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” Luke 11:13

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. . . . And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” John 14:26, 16:8

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.” John 14:12-14

“Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” Zech. 4:6

Promises that God Answers Prayers

“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” John 15:7

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” Heb. 4:16

“What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” Mark 11:24

“And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.” Ps. 50:15

“Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.” Matt. 18:19

“And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.” Matt. 21:22

“And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.” John 14:13, 14

“And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” John 16:23, 24

“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.” 1 John 5:14, 15

Promises About God's Power

“Is any thing too hard for the Lord?” Gen. 18:14

“The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.” Ex. 14:14

“With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.” Mark 10:27

“Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.” 1 Thess. 5:24

“I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.” Job 42:2

“With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.” Mark 10:27

“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” Rom. 8:31, 32

“God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” Num. 23:19

“Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” Isa. 40:28-31

Promises for God's Guidance

“Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.” Josh. 1:9

“And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.” Gen. 28:15

“Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.” Ex. 23:20

“But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.” Deut. 4:29

“Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.” Jer. 33:3

“Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” Isa. 40:4, 5

“I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.” Ps. 32:8

“And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.” Deut. 31:8

“What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.” Ps. 25:12

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” Prov. 3:5, 6

“And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday: And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.” Isa. 58:10, 11

“And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.” Isa. 65:24

Promises for a Changed Heart

“And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.” Jer. 24:7

“And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.” Deut. 30:6

“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.” Ezek. 36:26

“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” Phil. 1:6

“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” 2 Pet. 1:3, 4

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” 2 Cor. 5:17

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Gal 2:20

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.” 1 Thess. 5:23, 24

Promises for Forgiveness

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” 2 Chr. 7:14

“Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin.” Ps. 85:2

“For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.” Ps. 86:5

“And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.” Mark 11:25

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” Eph. 4:32

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Isa. 1:18

“I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” Isa. 43:25

“For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” Jer. 31:34

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.” Eph. 1:7

Promises for Victory Over Sin

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” 1 John 5:4

“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.” Rom. 8:37

“But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 15:57

“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” Isa. 41:10

“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” Eph. 6:16

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Gal. 2:20

“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” Phil. 2:13

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” Gal. 5:16

“And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.” Rom. 16:20

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Rom. 12:2

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” 1 John 2:15

Promises for Healing

“And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee.” Ex. 15:26

“As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” Deut. 33:25

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” Ps. 103:2-5

“Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.” Prov. 3:7, 8

“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” Isa. 53:3-5

“Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise.” Jer. 17:14

“For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord.” Jer. 30:17

“Behold, I will bring it health and cure; I will cure them and will reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth.” Jer. 33:6

“But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.” Mal. 4:2

“Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.” James 5:14, 15

Promises for Strength to Do God’s Will

“Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.” Ps. 27:14

“For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” 2 Cor. 4:16-18

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” Gal. 6:9

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Phil. 4:13

“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” Phil. 2:13

“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” 2 Cor. 12:9

Promises About Being God’s Witnesses

“Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.” Isa. 44:8

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.” Isa. 60:1

“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.” 2 Cor. 5:18

“But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.” Jer. 1:7

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Acts 1:8

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” 1 Peter 2:9

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” 1 Peter 3:15

A Night of Prayer

Optional All-Night Prayer Meeting for Day 10

Why a Night of Prayer?

There is nothing holy in staying awake and praying a whole night or part of a night. However, night might be the only time when people are not busy or in a rush. We believe that your purpose should not be to stay up the whole night but to pray as long as necessary and until you have prayed for all the things you feel God wants you to pray for.

We suggest that several people lead out during the night. Be sure to have some breaks. As a leader, you can sense the atmosphere and know when a break is needed and when you need to move on to the next section of prayer. We suggest that you take a ten-minute break at least every ninety minutes. You can also incorporate the reading of Bible passages into your prayer time. You may want to do all of the suggested items or only some of them, depending on what it is best for your group. Feel free to change the order of the suggested format.

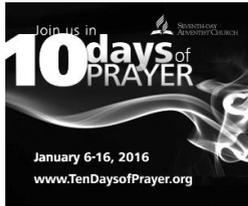
Here is our suggested format for the night of prayer:

- **Start with a session of praise.** Praise God in your prayers and also through songs.
- **Take some time for confession,** making sure that nothing is hindering God from hearing you. Give people time for private confession and have a time of corporate confession. Encourage the people to confess private sins privately and to confess publicly the public sins. In Daniel 9:1-19 we read about Daniel, who interceded and publicly confessed the sins of God's people. Encourage people to confess publicly the sins of the church.
- **Pray for the needs of those present at the prayer meeting.** So many people are hurting or in need of prayer, or know someone else who is in desperate need of prayer. Make a circle, put a chair in the middle, and invite those who have a special prayer request to come one by one and share their requests. Then gather around the person and have two or three people pray for their specific need and claim God's promises for them. You will be surprised at how many people are hurting and in need of prayer.
- **Divide the group in two.** Have the females pray in one room and the males in another. Have a female leader for the female group and a male leader for the male group. Many times there are personal needs that cannot and should not be shared with everyone. It is easier to share with those of the same gender.
- After you come back together, **pray for the list of needs found below.**
- **Pray for the seven people** you have prayed for during these ten days.
- **Choose a Bible passage and pray through it.**
- **Close the prayer time with another session of praise and thanksgiving.**

Prayer Needs

- Pray for church leaders (your local pastor, conference, union, division, and General Conference leaders) to be filled with the Holy Spirit and abide in Christ.
- Pray for the unity of the church in truth and Spirit. Pray that every church and entity be fully engaged in the mission of the church and in proclaiming the three angels' messages of Revelation 14 and the message of the fourth angel of Revelation 18.
- Pray for continued and growing focus on "Revival and Reformation" for members, conferences, unions, institutions, divisions, and the General Conference. Pay attention to the personal aspect of "Revival and Reformation" for you, your family, your church, and your community. Pray that people will engage in the "United In Prayer" initiative, asking for the latter rain of the Holy Spirit and the fulfillment of Joel 2, Hosea 6, and Acts 2.
- Pray for increased emphasis on personal and church-wide daily reading and following of the Bible through the "Believe His Prophets" initiative, which emphasizes the reading and study of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.
- Pray that every church leader around the world holds deeply to a faithful spiritual and evangelistic perspective. Plead with the Lord to guard pastors and church members against losing the prophetic identity of who we are as the Seventh-day Adventist Church, God's remnant church at the end of time.
- Pray for an increased sense of urgency and a realization by church leaders and members that we are living at the end of time and that Jesus is coming soon as He indicated three times in Revelation 22.
- Pray that we will devote more of our time to eternal values through Bible study and prayer, allowing God to fully direct His people according to His will and not our will. This will help keep us close to God and allow the power of the Holy Spirit to reverse trends of worldliness that threaten God's church and our daily lives.
- Pray for heartfelt gratitude for and full acceptance of the Spirit of Prophecy writings as being applicable today. Pray that church leaders and members read the materials on a regular basis.
- Pray for clear focus on Christ and His work for us during His life on earth, His death on the cross, His resurrection, His current ministry for us in the Most Holy Place in heaven, and His soon second coming.
- Pray for greater support and interest by all church members and leaders in maintaining Seventh-day Adventist education as truly Seventh-day Adventist in content and emphasis. This is so vital to the church's future workforce and mission perspective.
- Pray for increased interest in studying the books of Daniel and Revelation.
- Pray that people will understand and proclaim the sanctuary service as a beautiful explanation of the salvation process.
- Pray for God's love to be perfected in His church.
- Pray for increased emphasis on the wonderful doctrine of biblical creation—that our earth was created in six literal, consecutive days by the word of the Lord.
- Pray for a tremendous increase in spiritual support for Seventh-day Adventist young people who attend public campuses. Pray that they become vibrant missionaries who serve others at public universities and colleges worldwide.
- Pray for strong cooperation and unity between the church organization and supporting ministries in the evangelistic outreach of our church.
- Plead with the Lord to nurture and provide Godly, teachable, and humble church leaders for the future who will exemplify Christ-centered leadership as His church fulfills its heaven-born mandate to the world in proclaiming the three angels' messages with Christ's righteousness at the core.
- Pray that church members and the public will understand the importance of health reform as part of the loud cry restoring humans to the image of God through Christ's righteousness. Pray that a healthy lifestyle and temperance are accepted by all and that our bodies may be treated as temples of the Holy Spirit, allowing us to more fully receive important impressions from God.
- Pray for the comprehensive evangelistic plans and outreach activities of all thirteen divisions and attached union (Middle East and North Africa Union). Pray for success in "Mission to the Cities" and in reaching rural areas.

- Pray for every member to feel a burden for soul winning and to realize that heaven asks everyone to follow in Christ's steps and share their faith.
- Pray for the use of every appropriate social media format to share the three angels' messages in a creative and fresh manner with the busy people of today.
- Pray for increased participation in evangelistic outreach by all church members and institutions as they support the ongoing mission of the church.
- Pray for the establishment of thousands of "centers of influence" (churches, health centers, daycare centers, literature centers, community outreach centers, youth centers, vegetarian restaurants, clinics, and many more), especially in large cities around the world, and pray that these centers make a huge difference in people's lives as they experience God's truth through Christian service.
- Pray that God will give a full understanding of Christ's method (comprehensive health ministry), allowing all church members to meet people's needs and follow Christ's pattern of service to others.
- Pray for the united evangelistic and witnessing activities of every Seventh-day Adventist man, woman, and child around the world. Pray that we are empowered by the Holy Spirit as we submit to His leading in our lives.
- Beseech the Lord on behalf of Seventh-day Adventist families, that they may be models of how Christ can bring peace and love into homes, removing any abuse and stress through the sanctifying power of Christ's righteousness and pointing to Christ's soon return and the ultimate joining of God's eternal family in heaven.
- Pray for the broken families in your church and in the worldwide church.
- Pray for worldwide unity in every congregation and church entity, based on respect for God's Word, humble prayer, the Holy Spirit's power, respect for accepted church policy/process, and full engagement in the mission of the church.
- Pray for humility in our lives so we will be united in our submission to God's leading and the process of the church to make commonly agreed-upon decisions and accept whatever is voted at the General Conference Session level.
- Pray for the protection of our young people and all of us from ever-increasing worldly influences. Pray that we will focus on the Word of God and service to others. Pray that the local churches will sponsor young people in mission outreach and service opportunities.
- Pray for the increased use of Christian literature by all church members and for increased emphasis on literature evangelism, both through hard copy and electronic formats.
- Pray for renewed emphasis on the tremendous importance of attending Sabbath School, which emphasizes fellowship, mission, Bible study, and local outreach.
- Pray for an increased emphasis on small-group outreach, so that all members are participating in personal witnessing and proclaiming God's great truth in these last days.
- Pray for a heightened focus on Seventh-day Adventist media outreach, leading to a massive, integrated evangelistic witness around the world.



Day 1—Our Greatest Need: The Holy Spirit

“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

Suggested Format for the Prayer Time

Praise (approximately 10 minutes)

- Begin your prayer time by praising God for who He is, for His love, His wisdom, His Holiness, etc.
- Praise God that He will teach you how to abide in Him.
- Praise God that He is more than willing to give you the greatest gift, the Holy Spirit.

Confession and Claiming Victory Over Sin (approximately 5 minutes)

- Ask God to show you what sins you need to confess in your heart. Claim His victory over those sins.
- Ask God for forgiveness for not appreciating the gift of His Holy Spirit as you should, and ask Him to give you a hunger and thirst for the Holy Spirit.
- Thank God that He forgives you according to 1 John 1:9.

Supplication and Intercession (approximately 35 minutes)

- Ask God to reveal more of His character so that you can know Him.
- Ask God to make you willing to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
- Pray that your family members and friends will feel their need for the Holy Spirit.
- Is anything hindering the Holy Spirit from coming into your heart? Tell God about those things.
- Pray that church leaders (your local pastor, conference, union, division, and General Conference leaders) will see the need for the Holy Spirit in their lives.
- Pray for the unity of the church in truth and Spirit.
- Pray for continued and growing focus on “Revival and Reformation” for members, conferences, unions, institutions, divisions, and the General Conference. Pay attention to the personal aspect of “Revival and Reformation” for you, your family, your church, and your community. Pray that people will engage in the “United In Prayer” initiative by asking for the latter rain of the Holy Spirit and the fulfillment of Joel 2, Hosea 6, and Acts 2.
- Pray for every member to feel a burden for soul winning and realize that heaven asks everyone to follow in Christ’s steps by sharing their personal faith through God’s guidance.
- Pray for increased emphasis on personal and church-wide daily reading and following of the Bible through the “Believe His Prophets” initiative, which emphasizes the reading and study of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.
- Mission to the Cities—Pray for the West-Central Africa Division and the cities they are working to reach for Christ: Lagos, Douala, Calabar, Accra, Abuja, Lome. Pray also for the Southern Asia Division and the cities in India they are trying to win for Christ: Mumbai, Kochi, Bidar, New Delhi, Coimbatore, Surat, Imphal, Vijayawada. Pray that God’s Word will bear fruit.
- Pray that the seven (or more) people on your list will see their need and open their hearts to the Holy Spirit.
- Pray for any personal needs you have.

Thanksgiving (approximately 10 minutes)

- Thank God for the gift of His Holy Spirit!
- Thank God for the ways His Holy Spirit has been working in your heart.
- Thank God for how He is going to save souls for His kingdom during these ten days.

Suggested Songs to Sing

“Live Out Thy Life Within Me” (*SDA Hymnal* #316); “I Need Thee Every Hour” (*SDA Hymnal* #483); “Seek Ye First”; “Draw Me Nearer” (*SDA Hymnal* #306); “Hover O’er Me, Holy Spirit” (*SDA Hymnal* #260); “Sweet, Sweet Spirit” (*SDA Hymnal* #262); “Baptize Us Anew” (*SDA Hymnal* #258).

Our Greatest Need: The Holy Spirit

“And I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 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 11:9-13

It is the power of the Holy Spirit that is needed. There is with you and with the flock of God a self-satisfied feeling that must be broken up. The Spirit of God is a convincing power. When this is breathed upon the church, there will be a decided change in their spiritual efficiency. The Lord God is ready to give, but many do not realize their necessity of receiving. They are weak, when they might be strong; powerless, when they might be powerful through receiving the efficiency of the Holy Spirit. Their light is dim. Arouse them from their self-satisfied, self-righteous condition. (*Testimonies to Southern Africa*, p. 69)

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you, And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. (John 16:7, 8, KJV)

We need the softening, subduing, refining influence of the Holy Spirit, to mold our characters, and to bring every thought into captivity to Christ. It is the Holy Spirit that will enable us to overcome, that will lead us to sit at the feet of Jesus, as did Mary, and learn His meekness and lowliness of heart. We need to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit every hour of the day, lest we be ensnared by the enemy, and our souls be imperiled. (*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 203)

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. (John 16:13-15, KJV)

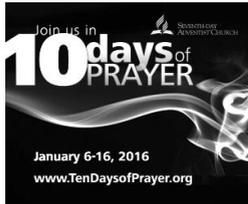
A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work. There must be earnest effort to obtain the blessing of the Lord, not because God is not willing to bestow His blessing upon us, but because we are unprepared to receive it. Our heavenly Father is more willing to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. But it is our work, by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer, to fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us His blessing. A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer. While the people are so destitute of God's Holy Spirit, they cannot appreciate the preaching of the Word; but when the Spirit's power touches their hearts, then the discourses given will not be without effect. Guided by the teachings of God's Word, with the manifestation of His Spirit, in the exercise of sound discretion, those who attend our meetings will gain a precious experience, and returning home, will be prepared to exert a healthful influence. (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 121)

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)

Christ has promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to His church, and the promise belongs to us as much as to the first disciples. But like every other promise, it is given on conditions. There are many who believe and profess to claim the Lord's promise; they talk *about* Christ and *about* the Holy Spirit, yet receive no benefit. They do not surrender the soul to be guided and controlled by the divine agencies. We cannot use the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is to use us. Through the Spirit God works in His people “to will and to do of His good pleasure.” Philippians 2:13. But many will not submit to this. They want to manage themselves. This is why they do not receive the heavenly gift. Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given. The power of God awaits their demand and reception. This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train. (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 672)

Questions for Personal Reflection

1. The word *ask* (*aiteo*) used at the end of verse 13 in Luke 11 is a form of continual asking. Why do you think God used this form of the word?
2. Does anything hinder you from asking God daily for the Holy Spirit to come into your heart and life? Will you surrender those things to God today?



Day 2—Our Greatest Gift to God: Our Being

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." Rom. 12:1

Suggested Format for the Prayer Time

Praise (approximately 10 minutes)

- Begin your prayer by praising God for who He is: He is faithful, omniscient (all-knowing), just, etc.
- Praise God that He has been waiting so long for you to give Him your whole heart.
- Thank God that He does not want just *some* of you but that He wants you with *all* talents and shortcomings.
- Praise God for the ways He is teaching you to abide in Him.

Confession and Claiming Victory Over Sin (approximately 5 minutes)

- Ask God to show you which sins you need to confess openly and which you need to confess privately. Claim His victory over those sins.
- Ask God for forgiveness if you have not been surrendering your heart to Him daily.
- Ask God for forgiveness for times when you used your time, money, and talents for yourself and not for Him and His glory.
- Thank God that He forgives you according to 1 John 1:9.

Supplication and Intercession (approximately 35 minutes)

- Ask God to take away anything that hinders you from surrendering your time, money, strength, abilities, fears, hopes, and will. Tell Him you want to belong wholly to Christ.
- Ask that God will help you to pray like Jesus, "Not my will, but Your will be done" (Luke 22:42).
- Does anything hinder you from giving Him your whole heart and being? Tell Him about those things. Ask Him to make you willing to surrender them.
- Pray for your family members and friends who are not surrendered (fully) to Christ. Ask God to make them willing to surrender their whole being to Him.
- Pray that your local pastor and church leaders at different levels will give to God their whole being.
- Pray for the young people of our church to find joy in surrendering their lives to Christ and following Him. Lift up the young people of your church by name in prayer.
- Pray that every church leader around the world holds deeply to a faithful spiritual and evangelistic perspective. Plead with the Lord to guard pastors and church members against losing the prophetic identity of who we are as the Seventh-day Adventist Church, God's remnant church at the end of time.
- Mission to the Cities—Pray for the Trans-European Division and the cities they are trying to win for Christ: London, Zagreb, Tallinn, Dublin, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Budapest, Bergen, Randstad, Warsaw, Belgrade, Gothenburg. Pray for people to have a deep hunger for the Word of God.
- Pray that the seven (or more) people on your list will see their need and open their hearts for the Holy Spirit.
- Pray for any personal needs you have.

Thanksgiving (approximately 10 minutes)

- Thank God that He will answer according to His will and in His time.
- Thank God that He is willing to take your sinful heart and make it pure and holy.
- Thank God that Jesus was willing to live and die, not for Himself but for the One who sent Him.
- Thank God for revealing Himself in a special way in your life during these ten days of prayer.

Suggested Songs to Sing

"Live Out Thy Life Within Me" (SDA Hymnal #316); "Yes, Lord, I Give My Life to You"; "I Need Thee Every Hour" (SDA Hymnal #483); "Seek Ye First"; "Draw Me Nearer" (SDA Hymnal #306); "I Surrender All" (SDA Hymnal #309); "Near, Still Nearer" (SDA Hymnal #301); "Wholly Thine" (SDA Hymnal, #308).

Our Greatest Gift to God: Our Being

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.” Rom. 12:1

Christ taught His disciples that the amount of divine attention given to any object is proportionate to the rank assigned to it in the creation of God. He called their attention to the birds of the air. Not a sparrow, He said, falls to the ground without the notice of our heavenly Father. And if the little sparrow is regarded by Him, surely the souls of those for whom Christ has died are precious in His sight. The value of man, the estimate God places upon him, is revealed in the cross of Calvary. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” And will not God judge those who cause pain or disappointment to the ones for whom Christ has given His life? Then let men be careful how, by word or action, they cause one of God’s children sorrow or grief. (*The Signs of the Times*, Nov. 17, 1898)

Christ made a complete sacrifice in our behalf, when He gave Himself as an offering for sin; and He asks us to give ourselves entirely to Him. He asks for the whole heart; He will accept nothing less than the undivided affections. “God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” (*The Signs of the Times*, Feb. 1, 1899)

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s. (1 Cor. 6:19, 20, KJV)

Whether we give ourselves to the Lord or not, we are His. Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price. We are the Lord’s by creation, and we are His by redemption. Therefore we have no right to think that we can do as we please. All we handle is the Lord’s. We have no right of ourselves to anything, not even to an existence. All our money, time, and talents belong to God, and are lent us by Him that we may accomplish the work He has given us to do. He has given us the charge, “Occupy till I come.” Luke 19:13. (*Our High Calling*, p. 42)

The love of Christ in the heart is what is needed. Self is in need of being crucified. When self is submerged in Christ, true love springs forth spontaneously. It is not an emotion or an impulse, but a decision of a sanctified will. It consists not in feeling, but in the transformation of the whole heart, soul, and character, which is dead to self and alive unto God. Our Lord and Saviour asks us to give ourselves to Him. Surrendering self to God is all He requires, giving ourselves to Him to be employed as He sees fit. Until we come to this point of surrender, we shall not work happily, usefully, or successfully anywhere. (Letter 97, 1898)

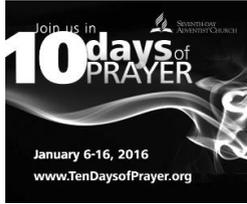
I see before me today those whom I know God can use if they will put their dependence in Him. . . . It is an honor to follow the Saviour. And it is by obeying the instructions that He has given that you are to be prepared to meet Him when He comes. If you will ask God to help you to overcome what is un-Christlike in your dispositions, He will prepare you for entrance into heaven, where no sin can enter. Those who daily give the life to Jesus, and who follow on to know Him, will be greatly blessed. Say, Christ gave His life for me, and I must give my life for Him. If you give yourselves wholly to Him, you will be conquerors in the warfare against sin. The Lord Jesus will be your helper, your support, your strength, if you will receive and obey Him. (*The Youth’s Instructor*, June 9, 1914)

In the parable the pearl is not represented as a gift. The merchantman bought it at the price of all that he had. Many question the meaning of this, since Christ is represented in the Scriptures as a gift. He is a gift, but only to those who give themselves, soul, body, and spirit, to Him without reserve. We are to give ourselves to Christ, to live a life of willing obedience to all His requirements. All that we are, all the talents and capabilities we possess, are the Lord’s, to be consecrated to His service. When we thus give ourselves wholly to Him, Christ, with all the treasures of heaven, gives Himself to us. We obtain the pearl of great price. (*Maranatha*, p. 72)

Questions for Personal Reflection

1. You are so precious in God’s eyes that He did everything to make you His own. How does this make you feel?

2. Think about what Jesus gave for you so that heaven could be yours. Is it worth giving yourself daily to Him? Isn't it the most reasonable thing to do?



Day 3—Christ in Us

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”
Gal. 2:20, KJV

Suggested Format for the Prayer Time

Praise (approximately 10 minutes)

- Begin your prayer time by praising God for who He is (His character). Praise Him that He never changes, for His mercy, for His faithfulness, etc.
- Praise God that there is no better place to be than in the middle of His love, being wholly surrendered to Him.
- Praise God that He is calling you to abide in Him.

Confession and Claiming Victory Over Sin (approximately 5 minutes)

- Ask God to show you if there are any sins you need to confess privately. Claim His victory over those sins.
- Ask God to forgive you for times when you did not allow Him to live in your heart. Ask Him to live in your heart daily.
- Thank God that He forgives you according to 1 John 1:9.

Supplication and Intercession (approximately 35 minutes)

- Can those around you see that Christ lives in you? Ask God to come into your life and shine through you and that other people will see Him in you.
- Pray for family and friends who are not abiding in Christ. Pray that the fruit of the Spirit will be made manifest in their lives.
- Pray that God will give you faith to receive the righteousness of Christ as your own.
- Can you see traces of selfishness in your life? Surrender those to God and ask Him to make you unselfish.
- Pray for a lowly and meek heart that Christ may abide in you.
- Pray for an increased sense of urgency and a realization by church leaders and members that we are living at the end of time and that Jesus is coming soon as He indicated three times in Revelation 22.
- Pray that we will devote more of our time to eternal values through Bible study and prayer, allowing God to fully direct His people according to His will and not our will. This will help keep us close to God and allow the power of the Holy Spirit to reverse trends of worldliness that threaten God’s church and our daily lives.
- Pray for heartfelt gratitude for and full acceptance of the Spirit of Prophecy writings as being applicable today. Pray that church leaders and members read the materials on a regular basis.
- Mission to the Cities—Pray for the Southern-Asia Pacific Division and the cities on which they are concentrating their efforts: Metro Manila, Dhaka, Cebu, Makassar, Yangon, Urdaneta, Karachi, Kota Kinabalo, Vavao, Medan. Pray for the workers to be filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- Pray that the seven (or more) people on your list will see their need and open their hearts for the Holy Spirit.
- Pray for any personal needs you have.

Thanksgiving (approximately 10 minutes)

- Thank God that the “the inward man is being renewed day by day” (2 Cor. 4:16).
- Thank God that He is willing to come and live in your heart.
- Thank God that He has sent angels out to answer the prayers you have prayed during these ten days.

Suggested Songs to Sing

“Live Out Thy Life Within Me” (SDA Hymnal #316); “Yes, Lord, I Give My Life to You”; “I Need Thee Every Hour” (SDA Hymnal #483); “Draw Me Nearer” (SDA Hymnal #306); “I Surrender All” (SDA Hymnal #309); “Leaning on the Everlasting Arms” (SDA Hymnal #462); “Fill My Cup, Lord” (SDA Hymnal #493).

Christ in Us

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Gal. 2:20, KJV

Why are we so dull of comprehension? Why do we not cling to Jesus, and draw from Him by faith the strength and perfection of His character, as the vine branch draws the sap from the living vine? We are to look to Jesus, and as temptations close us about, climb up step by step in the work of overcoming. Abiding in Christ, we become one with Him. Then we are safe, entirely safe, against all the assaults of Satan. Christ living in the soul is revealed in the character. Man is nothing without Christ. But if Christ lives in us, we shall work the works of God. We shall represent Christ in our life, we shall talk of Christ because we meditate upon Him. We shall grow up into Christ to the full stature of men and women in spiritual understanding. (*Signs of the Times*, Oct. 10, 1892)

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. (John 15:5, KJV)

When we feel our heart need, when we long after the quickening influence of the Holy Spirit, Christ draws nigh to us. Self is crucified. Christ lives in us, and the power of the Spirit attends our efforts; then the soul is refined and elevated. Light from the heavenly sanctuary shines upon us, and we are enabled to exert an influence which is a savor of life unto life. By a union with Christ, by living faith, we are privileged to enjoy the efficacy of His mediation. We are crucified with Christ, buried with Christ, risen with Christ, to walk in newness of life. (*Signs of the Times*, Oct. 11, 1899)

Man needs a power outside of and beyond himself, to restore him to the likeness of God, and enable him to do the work of God; but this does not make the human agency unessential. Humanity lays hold upon divine power, Christ dwells in the heart by faith; and through co-operation with the divine, the power of man becomes efficient for good. (*Colporteur Ministry*, p. 104)

Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. (John 4:13, 14, KJV)

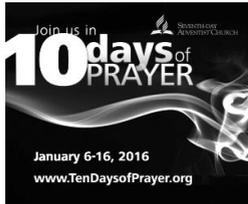
Jesus did not convey the idea that merely one draft of the water of life would suffice the receiver. He who tastes of the love of Christ will continually long for more; but he seeks for nothing else. The riches, honors, and pleasures of the world do not attract him. The constant cry of his heart is, More of Thee. And He who reveals to the soul its necessity is waiting to satisfy its hunger and thirst. Every human resource and dependence will fail. The cisterns will be emptied, the pools become dry; but our Redeemer is an inexhaustible fountain. We may drink, and drink again, and ever find a fresh supply. He in whom Christ dwells has within himself the fountain of blessing,—“a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” From this source he may draw strength and grace sufficient for all his needs. (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 187)

So long as we are in the world, we shall meet with adverse influences. There will be provocations to test the temper; and it is by meeting these in a right spirit that the Christian graces are developed. If Christ dwells in us, we shall be patient, kind, and forbearing, cheerful amid frets and irritations. Day by day and year by year we shall conquer self, and grow into a noble heroism. This is our allotted task; but it cannot be accomplished without help from Jesus, resolute decision, unwavering purpose, continual watchfulness, and unceasing prayer. Each one has a personal battle to fight. Not even God can make our characters noble or our lives useful, unless we become co-workers with Him. Those who decline the struggle lose the strength and joy of victory. (*Gospel Workers*, p. 477)

It is the privilege of every soul to exercise faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. But pure spiritual life comes only as the soul surrenders itself to the will of God through Christ, the reconciling Saviour. It is our privilege to be worked by the Holy Spirit. Through the exercise of faith we are brought into communion with Christ Jesus, for Christ dwells in the hearts of all who are meek and lowly. Theirs is a faith that works by love and purifies the soul, a faith that brings peace to the heart, and leads in the path of self-denial and self-sacrifice. (*This Day with God*, p. 359)

Questions for Personal Reflection

1. Jesus wants not a distant relationship with you but to be as close as possible. He wants to dwell in your heart. How does this make you feel? How can you invite Him to dwell in your heart?
2. Consider prayerfully what would hinder Christ from abiding in you.



Day 4—Abiding in Christ

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” John 15:4, 5

Suggested Format for the Prayer Time (Sabbath Afternoon program)

Praise (approximately 10 minutes)

- Begin your prayer time by praising God for who He is. For example, He is a wonderful counselor (Isaiah 9:6).
- Praise God that all you have to do is abide in Christ in order to have victory over sin.
- Praise God for the ways He is teaching you to abide in Him.

Confession and Claiming Victory Over Sin (approximately 5 minutes)

- Ask God to show you if you’re holding back from surrendering anything to Him. Confess this privately to Him. Claim His victory over those sins.
- Ask God to forgive you for times when you tried to do things in your own strength.
- Thank God that He forgives you according to 1 John 1:9.

Supplication and Intercession (approximately 35 minutes)

- Pray that God will help you to better understand your need to abide in Him and give you the desire to do so. Pray also that family and friends will abide in Him. And pray that God will teach you *how* to abide in Him (John 15:4).
- Pray that church leaders (your local pastor, conference, union, division, and General Conference leaders) will be filled with the Holy Spirit and abide in Christ.
- Pray for greater support and interest by all church members and leaders in maintaining Seventh-day Adventist education as truly Seventh-day Adventist in content and emphasis. This is so vital to the church’s future workforce and mission perspective.
- Pray for increased interest in studying the books of Daniel and Revelation.
- Pray that people will understand and proclaim the sanctuary service as a beautiful explanation of the salvation process.
- Mission to the Cities—Pray for the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division and the cities they are trying to win for Christ: Luanda, Antananarivo, Lilongwe, Maputo, Saurimo, Bloemfontein, Lubango, Kitwe, Harare. Pray that people will see their need of Christ and call upon Him.
- Pray for clear focus on Christ and His work for us during His life on earth, His death on the cross, His resurrection, His current ministry for us in the Most Holy Place in heaven, and His soon second coming.
- Pray that we will devote more of our time to eternal values through Bible study and prayer, allowing God to fully direct His people according to His will and not our will. This will help keep us close to God and allow the power of the Holy Spirit to reverse trends of worldliness that threaten God’s church and our daily lives.
- Pray that the seven (or more) people on your list will see their need and open their hearts for the Holy Spirit.
- Pray for any personal needs you have.

Thanksgiving (approximately 10 minutes)

- Thank God for the different ways Jesus set us an example of how to abide in God.
- Thank God in advance for how He is going to work and answer your prayers.
- Thank God that He will teach you how to abide in Him.
- Thank Him for sending the Holy Spirit to work on all the prayer requests you have prayed.

Suggested Songs to Sing

“Have Thine Own Way, Lord” (*SDA Hymnal* #567); “Be Still My Soul” (*SDA Hymnal* #461); “Wonderful Peace” (*SDA Hymnal* #466); “Leaning on the Everlasting Arms” (*SDA Hymnal* #469); “Turn Your Eyes Upon

Jesus” (*SDA Hymnal* #290); “Take the World, but Give Me Jesus” (*SDA Hymnal* #329); “Not I, but Christ” (*SDA Hymnal* #570).

Abiding in Christ

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” John 15:4, 5

Those who make a success of the Christian life will count all things as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. Only those who are abiding in Christ can know what true life is. They realize the value of true religion. They have brought their talents of influence and means and ability to the altar of consecration, seeking only to know and do the will of Him who has died to redeem them. (*Our High Calling*, p. 8)

It is not a casual touch with Christ that is needed, but it is to abide with Him. He called you to abide with Him. He does not propose to you a short-lived blessedness that is realized occasionally through earnest seeking of the Lord and passes away as you engage in the common duties of life. Your abiding with Christ makes every necessary duty light, for He bears the weight of every burden. He has prepared for you to abide with Him. This means that you are to be conscious of an abiding Christ, that you are continually with Christ, where your mind is encouraged and strengthened. (*In Heavenly Places*, p. 55)

Do not stand outside of Christ, as many professed Christians of today. To “abide in me, and I in you” is a possible thing to do, and the invitation would not be given if you could not do this. Jesus our Saviour is constantly drawing you by His Holy Spirit, working with your mind that you will abide with Christ. . . . The blessings He bestows are all connected with your own individual action. Shall Christ be refused? He says, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). Of another class He says, “Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life” (John 5:40). (*In Heavenly Places*, p. 55)

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (Matt. 11:28, KJV)

Have you, have I, fully comprehended the gracious call, “Come unto me”? He says, “Abide *in* me,” not Abide *with* Me. “Do understand My call. Come to Me to stay with Me.” He will freely bestow all blessings connected with Himself upon all who come to Him for life. He has something better for you than a short-lived blessedness that you feel when you seek the Lord in earnest prayer. That is but as a drop in the bucket, to have a word with Christ. You are privileged with His abiding presence in the place of a short-lived privilege that is not lasting as you engage in the duties of life. . . . Will anxiety, perplexity, and cares drive you away from Christ? Are we less dependent upon God when in the workshop, in the field, in the market-place? The Lord Jesus will abide with you and you with Him in every place. (*In Heavenly Places*, p. 55)

All who receive Christ by faith become one with Him. The branches are not tied to the vine; they are not joined to it by any mechanical process of artificial fastening. They are united to the vine, so as to become part of it. They are nourished by the roots of the vine. So those who receive Christ by faith become one with Him in principle and action. They are united to Him, and the life they live is the life of the Son of God. They derive their life from Him who is life. (*In Heavenly Places*, p. 56)

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (2 Cor. 5:17, KJV)

Baptism may be repeated over and over again, but of itself it has no power to change the human heart. The heart must be united with Christ’s heart, the will must be submerged in His will, the mind must become one with His mind, the thoughts must be brought into captivity to Him. . . . The regenerated man has a vital connection with Christ. As the branch derives its sustenance from the parent stock and, because of this, bears much fruit, so the true believer, united with Christ, reveals in his life the fruits of the Spirit. The branch becomes one with the vine; storm cannot carry it away; frost cannot destroy its vital properties. Nothing is able to separate it from the vine. It is a living branch, and it bears the fruit of the vine. So with the believer. By good words and good actions he reveals the character of Christ. . . . (*In Heavenly Places*, p. 56)

Christ has provided means whereby our whole life may be an unbroken communion with Himself; but the sense of Christ’s abiding presence can come only through living faith. (*In Heavenly Places*, p. 56)

Questions for Personal Reflection

1. Is anything (worries, cares of life, stress, riches) hindering you from abiding in Christ?
2. Where is your responsibility in making sure that you abide in Christ?

SERMON FOR SABBATH 9th OF JANUARY 2016
PRAYER MINISTRY, IOUC

ABIDING IN CHRIST, THE TRUE VINE

Scripture reading : John 15:1-11 (King James Version)

INTRODUCTION

The last verse in chapter 14 tells us that Jesus and the Disciples are about to leave the upper room. They are headed to the Garden of Gethsemane.

In the chapter 15, Jesus is pictured for us as the True Vine.

The disciples have just been informed that Jesus is going away, but that His work is going to continue, and that it is to continue through them and their lives - John 14:12. If they were to carry on the work of the Lord, then they needed to know how to produce that kind of fruit in their lives.

This morning, we are 2,000 years away from that night, but the work of the Lord still marches forth. God is still working through the followers of Jesus Christ to accomplish His work and will in the world today.

As we go through these 10 days of prayer, we may wonder how we are supposed to do the work of the Lord and how we can produce that kind of fruit in our own lives. Well, the answer is found in these verses which talk about our main theme for these 10 days of prayer 2016 - ABIDING IN CHRIST ! Because this passage is all about being a genuine Disciple and about how to bear fruit for the glory of the Lord, we shall take a moment to view this portrait of Jesus: The True Vine and see how and why we shall Abide in Him.

I. THE PERSONALITY OF THE TRUE VINE – verses 1-3

A. The Genuineness Of The True Vine

Jesus and Jesus alone possesses life within Himself – John 14:6. All other vines are counterfeit. He alone is the true source of everlasting, abundant life.

B. The Gardener Of The True Vine

The word "husbandman" refers to the vine dresser, the gardener, the one who has the responsibility of caring for the vineyard. Jesus says that the Heavenly Father is the Gardener.

The key phrase in verse 2 is "*in me*".

The Gardener is involved in everything that has to do with the Vine. This verse highlights the specific duties of the Gardener in regard to the Vine :

1. **Protection** - that is, the Gardener provides tender watch care and protection for the Vineyard. The Lord sees it all, nothing passes the gaze of our heavenly Father - Pro. 15:3

2. **Purifying** - The Gardener uses two primary methods for purifying his vineyard.

a. **He Challenges The Branch** - "*Taketh away*" means to lift up or to raise higher. That is, the Gardener will take the unfruitful branch and lift it from dirt into which it has fallen giving it a better chance to be productive.

On a personal level, this means that when we get to a place in our Christian lives where we are unfruitful and barren, the Lord will have to reach into our lives, disturbing our slumber and He will lift us up in an effort to challenge us and shock us to growth.

There are times when the Lord can only accomplish this through chastisement. Which, if responded to with repentance, will help us to be fruitful for His glory.

Has the Lord been challenging areas of your life? If so, do not run from His challenge. Instead of running from God, turn and run to Him.

After all, His chastisement is always a proof of His love - Rev. 3:19, and of your relationship to Him - Heb. 12:8.

b. He Cleanses The Branch - That is, the Gardener removes things from the branch that sap its vitality and strength. Things like sucker branches, useless buds, misdirected shoots, spots, discolored leaves, etc. Anything that consumes life but produces no fruit must go!

So it is in the life of the believer. When we allow things into our lives that hinder our walk with the Lord, then we are in danger of a pruning.

"Pruning" by its very name sounds painful, and it isn't always easy to cut the junk from our lives, the heavenly Husbandman, oversees the process.

How is this pruning accomplished? By the Word of God - v. 3.

The question this morning is this, has the Lord been speaking to you through His Word? If so, have you been heeding the call from the Lord? If not, then I challenge you to allow the Lord to prune your life with His Word.

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE TRUE VINE – verses 2-6

A. There is a distinct purpose (verse 2) - The Vine has but one purpose: to produce fruit. The Vine exists for that purpose alone. Without the fruit, the vine and all of its efforts are wasted. The True Vine has a singular purpose and that is to bear fruit to the glory of the Lord.

B. There is a distinguished purpose (verse 8) - The reason the Vine desires to produce fruit is so that the vine dresser might receive the honor. When fruit is yielded in a vineyard, the Vine, the branches, the soil, even the fruit does not get the credit. All the glory passes on to the Gardener. So it is with the Lord Jesus. Everything He did and does was and is to glorify His Father.

This ought to be the burning desire of every child of God – that is, to live our lives that every waking minute is bringing glory to the Father in Heaven - 1 Cor. 10:31.

There is something wrong in any life when there is no desire to bring glory and honor to the God who loves us, sustains us and cares for us along the way.

C. There is a delegated purpose - The Vine itself does not bear fruit! Its fruit are the branches. The branches have the obligation of bearing the fruit. The Vine supplies its life to the branches and they take that life and use it to bear fruit. Let's look closer to the branches and its fruit bearing.

1. The qualifications for bearing fruits :

a. The branch must be attached to the vine (verse 2) - If you are not in the Vine, then there is no way for you to share in the Vine's life. This is all about a vital union between the believer and the Lord Jesus-Christ, the True Vine.

b. The branch must abide in the vine (verses 4-5) - That is, we must maintain a close fellowship with the Vine if He is to live through us and produce His fruit in our lives. This is only accomplished by "abiding" in Him!

How does one abide? Prayer, studying the Word, deny self, draw nigh to God! The closer we abide to the Vine, the more His life can flow through us to produce the fruit He desires.

Is there any wonder that so many Christian lives are fruitless and barren?

How would you describe your life this morning? Are you bearing much fruit for the Lord?

2. The quality of our fruits - When we speak of fruit, what do we mean? What will be produced in our lives when we yield? What happens if the fruit is not being produced through us?

These fruits are elsewhere termed "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22; Eph. 5:9), or "fruits of righteousness" (Phil. 1:11; cf. Heb. 12:11), that is, fruits which are righteousness. These fruits are evident in the character and the life. When these "good fruits" (James 3:17) are absent it becomes necessary to sever the fruitless branch. (Nichol, F. D. (Éd.). (1980). The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (Vol. 5, p. 1042). Review and Herald Publishing Association.)

Our duty is to abide so that we can produce fruits! It is clear from these verses that God anticipates a steady progression in the level of our fruitfulness. Notice verses 2 & 8 - no fruit, fruit, more fruit, much fruit! The closer we abide in the Vine, the more fruit He will yield through our lives.

3. The outcome of fruitlessness (verse 6) - Not every branch abides in the Vine as it should. It is still attached, but it has ceased to draw life from the Vine's fullness. As a result, it is fruitless and withered. When this happens, it will result in the loss of vitality !

That is withered --- possessing no life! Death and dried up.

This may describe our situation this morning! There is deadness where there used to be life. There is weakness where there used to be power. There is emptiness where there used to be fullness.

Why not acknowledge and come back to renew that communion with the Lord ?

III. THE PROMISE OF THE TRUE VINE – verses 7-11

Those who abide in the True Vine can rest assured of certain precious and sure promises!

A. An unhindered prayer life (verse 7)

Why? When we are abiding as we should be, and when we are drawing our life from Him, then His will will be our will.

That is, every time we pray and every thing we pray for will fit perfectly with His will and He will grant our requests (John 14:13-14).

B. An unending love (verse 9)

Jesus loves all men always, but those who are abiding in Him have entered into a special, ever-deepening relationship with Him. This is the promise of the Vine to the branches!

To abide in Christ means to abide in the shelter of His love. It is comforting to know Christ's love for us is as abiding as the Father's love for the Son.

C. An uncommon joy (verse 11)

Joy is not happiness, which depends upon happenings, but it is a deep settled inner pleasure. It is the deep settled assurance and confidence in our relationship with the Father and with His Christ that fills the heart with "joy unspeakable and full of glory", and that ignites the heart to serve God.

Joy is the second of the graces of the Spirit listed by Paul (Gal. 5:22). True joy is not found in noisy laughter or in giddy excitement caused by the world's shallow pleasures. The Christian finds his joy in resting in the love of Christ, in victories won, and in unselfish service for humanity. Joy will reach its highest realization in the world to come, but a high degree of joy may be experienced here and now by those who abide in Christ.

CONCLUSION

Jesus is the True Vine. His desire is to live through your life so that you might bear fruit unto the Heavenly Father. As we close, there are a couple of questions that need to be asked right now.

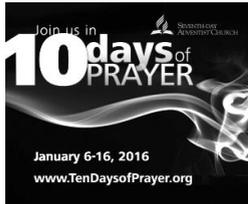
- Are you "abiding in Jesus – the true Vine"?

Are you drawing your strength from Him so that He is able to produce His fruit through your life?

- Are you bearing His fruit today?

Where do you stand with Jesus today? If God has revealed areas in your life that need to be pruned back or other wise dealt with today, then I challenge you to come to Jesus and let Him take care of your need.

As we go through these 10 days of prayer, let's surrender our lives to Jesus and abide in Him so that we can begin or even continue to experience Abundant life right now and right here!



Day 5—More Than Conquerors

“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” Rom. 8:37

Suggested Format for the Prayer Time

Praise (approximately 10 minutes)

- Begin your prayer time by praising God for who He is (His character). Praise Him for His faithfulness and that He is a refuge.
- Praise God that all you have to do is abide in Christ if you want to have victory over sin.
- Praise God that Jesus obtained the victory over sin at the cross.

Confession and Claiming Victory Over Sin (approximately 5 minutes)

- Ask God to show you the sins you need to confess openly and the ones you need to confess privately. Claim His victory over those sins.
- Have there been times when you did not feel that you wanted to conquer sin? Ask God for forgiveness. Ask Him to put in your heart the desire to overcome sin.
- Ask God for forgiveness that we, as a church, have still not overcome sin.
- Thank God that He forgives you according to 1 John 1:9.

Supplication and Intercession (approximately 35 minutes)

- Pray that God will give you the desire to overcome sin.
- Pray for family members and friends who also need to gain victory over sin.
- Pray for those areas in your life where you still need to gain victory over sin. Ask Him to give you complete victory.
- Ask God to help you believe that He can give you complete victory over sin.
- Do you still cherish any idols in your life? Bring them before God and ask Him to put hatred in your heart for those things.
- Pray that church leaders (your local pastor, conference, union, division, and General Conference leaders) will let God give them victory over sin.
- Pray that God will make you humble so you can see your weaknesses and ask for power to overcome them.
- Pray for the comprehensive evangelistic plans and outreach activities of all thirteen divisions and attached union (Middle East and North Africa Union). Pray for success in “Mission to the Cities” and in reaching rural areas.
- Mission to the Cities—Pray for the South American Division and the 74 cities on which they have chosen to concentrate their outreach. Pray also for the South Pacific Division and the cities they have chosen to reach for Christ: Sydney, Christchurch, Lae, Apia. Pray that God will send workers and that He will bless their efforts.
- Pray that God will continue to lead His church and give its members victory over sin.
- Pray that the seven (or more) people on your list will see their need and open their hearts for the Holy Spirit.
- Pray for any personal needs you have (Prov. 3:5, 6).

Thanksgiving (approximately 10 minutes)

- Thank God that He is willing to give you His righteousness.
- Thank God that He is the One “which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13).
- Thank God for Jesus’ sinless life and that He showed us how we can be overcomers.
- Thank God that He is answering the prayers you prayed according to His will.

Suggested Songs to Sing

“Not I, but Christ” (*SDA Hymnal* #570); “Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior” (*SDA Hymnal* #569); “Power in the Blood” (*SDA Hymnal* #294); “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus” (*SDA Hymnal* #290); “Jesus, I Come” (*SDA Hymnal* #292); “Rock of Ages” (*SDA Hymnal* #300); “Burdens Are Lifted at Calvary” (*SDA Hymnal* #476).

More Than Conquerors

“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” Rom. 8:37

In their conflicts with Satan, the human family has all the help that Christ had. They need not be overcome. They may be more than conquerors through Him who has loved them and given His life for them. . . . The Son of God in His humanity wrestled with the very same fierce, apparently overwhelming, temptations that assail us—temptations to indulgence of appetite, to presumptuous venturing where God has not led them, and to the worship of the god of this world, to sacrifice an eternity of bliss for the fascinating pleasures of this life. Everyone will be tempted, but the Word declares that we shall not be tempted above our ability to bear. We may resist and defeat the wily foe. (*Christ Triumphant*, p. 195)

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (1 Cor. 10:13, KJV)

The life-work given to us is that of preparation for the life eternal, and if we accomplish this work as God has designed that we should, every temptation may work for our advance; for as we resist its allurements, we make progress in the divine life. In the heat of the conflict, while engaged in earnest spiritual warfare, unseen agencies are by our side, commissioned of heaven to aid us in our wrestlings, and in the crisis, strength and firmness and energy are imparted to us, and we have more than mortal power. But unless the human agent shall bring his will into harmony with the will of God, unless he shall forsake every idol, and overcome every wrong practice, he will never succeed in the warfare; but will be finally overcome. Those who would be conquerors must engage in conflict with unseen agencies; inward corruption must be overcome, and every thought must be brought into harmony with, and subjection to, Christ. The Holy Spirit is ever at work seeking to purify, refine, and discipline the souls of men in order that they may become fitted for the society of saints and angels, and as overcomers be able to sing the song of redemption, ascribing glory and honor to God and to the Lamb in the courts above. (*Christian Education*, pp. 122, 123)

We have no enemy without that we need to fear. Our great conflict is with unconsecrated self. When we conquer self, we are more than conquerors through Him who has loved us. My brethren, there is eternal life for us to win. Let us fight the good fight of faith. Not in the future, but now, is our probation. (*Counsels on Stewardship*, pp. 21, 22)

But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. (Heb. 13:16, KJV)

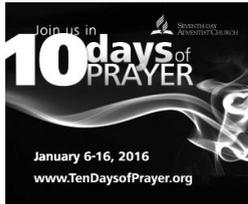
Living the life of the Saviour, overcoming every selfish desire, fulfilling bravely and cheerfully our duty to God and to those around us—this makes us more than conquerors. This prepares us to stand before the great white throne free from spot or wrinkle, having washed our robes of character, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (*Reflecting Christ*, p. 37)

The controlling power of appetite will prove the ruin of thousands, when, if they had conquered on this point, they would have had moral power to gain the victory over every other temptation of Satan. But those who are slaves to appetite will fail in perfecting Christian character. The continual transgression of man for six thousand years has brought sickness, pain, and death as its fruits. And as we near the close of time, Satan's temptation to indulge appetite will be more powerful and more difficult to overcome. (*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 59)

My brethren, let us put all this aside. We have no right to keep our minds stayed on ourselves, our preferences, and our fancies. We are not to seek to maintain a peculiar identity of our own, a personality, an individuality, which will separate us from our fellow laborers. We have a character to maintain, but it is the character of Christ. Having the character of Christ, we can carry on the work of God together. The Christ in us will meet the Christ in our brethren, and the Holy Spirit will give that union of heart and action which testifies to the world that we are children of God. May the Lord help us to die to self and be born again, that Christ may live in us, a living, active principle, a power that will keep us holy. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 187, 188)

Questions for Personal Reflection

1. What are the greatest battles in your life? Over what things do you want to have victory?
2. What is hindering you from being “more than conqueror”? Surrender those things to God.



Day 6—The Joy of Obedience

“And I will delight myself in Your commandments, which I love.” Ps. 119:47

Suggested Format for the Prayer Time

Praise (approximately 10 minutes)

- Begin your prayer time by praising God for who He is (His character). He is all comfort, the Restorer, etc.
- Thank God for Jesus, who showed us what it means to have the joy of obedience.
- Thank God that there is joy and peace and happiness in obeying Christ.

Confession and Claiming Victory Over Sin (approximately 5 minutes)

- Ask God to show you which sins you need to confess privately. Claim His victory over those sins.
- Pray for forgiveness for times when sadness and gloom marked your Christian walk.
- Thank God that He forgives you according to 1 John 1:9.

Supplication and Intercession (approximately 35 minutes)

- Are you happy to do what God asks you to do? Pray that God will give you the willingness to obey Him and joy to do whatever He asks.
- Pray that the young people in your church will discover the joy of obedience.
- Pray that church leaders (your local pastor, conference, union, division, and General Conference leaders) will gladly do whatever God is asking.
- Pray for God’s love to be perfected in His church.
- Pray for increased emphasis on the wonderful doctrine of biblical creation—that our earth was created in six literal, consecutive days by the word of the Lord.
- Pray for a tremendous increase in spiritual support for Seventh-day Adventist young people who attend public campuses. Pray that they become vibrant missionaries who serve others at public universities and colleges worldwide.
- Pray for strong cooperation and unity between the church organization and supporting ministries in the evangelistic outreach of our church.
- Plead with the Lord to nurture and provide Godly, teachable, and humble church leaders for the future who will exemplify Christ-centered leadership as His church fulfills its heaven-born mandate to the world in proclaiming the three angels’ messages with Christ’s righteousness at the core.
- Mission to the Cities—Pray for the North American Division: New York, Calgary, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Seattle, San Francisco, Oakland, Tampa, Oklahoma City. Pray also for the Northern Asia-Pacific Division and the cities they are trying reach: Tokyo, Daegu, Daejeon, Wuxi, Ulaanbaatar, Taipei. Pray for God’s Spirit to work powerfully in these cities.
- Pray that church members and the public will understand the importance of health reform as part of the loud cry restoring humans to the image of God through Christ’s righteousness. Pray that a healthy lifestyle and temperance are accepted by all and that our bodies may be treated as temples of the Holy Spirit, allowing us to more fully receive important impressions from God.
- Pray that the seven (or more) people on your list will see their need and open their hearts for the Holy Spirit.
- Pray for any personal needs you have.

Thanksgiving (approximately 10 minutes)

- Thank God that through Christ you can say, “I delight to do thy will” (Ps. 40:8).
- Thank God that He has His people in every city who are wistfully looking to heaven!
- Thank God that He is raising up Godly, humble, and teachable leaders for the future.

Suggested Songs to Sing

“Trust and Obey” (*SDA Hymnal* #590); “Blessed Assurance” (*SDA Hymnal* #462); “It Is Well With My Soul” (*SDA Hymnal* #530); “Wonderful Peace” (*SDA Hymnal* #466); “There Is Sunshine in My Soul Today” (*SDA Hymnal* #470).

The Joy of Obedience

“And I will delight myself in Your commandments, which I love.” Ps. 119:47

The Lord has determined that every soul who obeys His word shall have His joy, His peace, His continual keeping power. Such men and women are brought near Him always, not only when they kneel before Him in prayer, but when they take up the duties of life. He has prepared for them an abiding place with Himself, where the life is purified from all grossness, all unloveliness. By this unbroken communion with Him, they are made collaborators with Him in their lifework. (*Heavenly Places*, p. 53)

When Christ dwells in the heart, the soul will be so filled with His love, with the joy of communion with Him, that it will cleave to Him; and in the contemplation of Him, self will be forgotten. Love to Christ will be the spring of action. Those who feel the constraining love of God, do not ask how little may be given to meet the requirements of God; they do not ask for the lowest standard, but aim at perfect conformity to the will of their Redeemer. With earnest desire they yield all, and manifest an interest proportionate to the value of the object which they seek.

It is the submissive, teachable spirit that God wants. That which gives to prayer its excellence is the fact that it is breathed from a loving, obedient heart. (*My Life Today*, p. 7)

If ye love me, keep my commandments. (John 14:15, KJV)

The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely—because he is required to do so—will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right—because right doing is pleasing to God. (*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 97, 98)

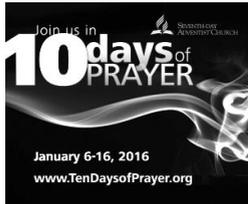
We are in this world to be a help and a blessing to one another, uniting with Christ in the effort to restore the image of God in man. In order to do this work, we must learn of Jesus. “Take My yoke upon you,” He says, “and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” In this promise there are no “ifs.” Those who have experience in wearing Christ's yoke of restraint and obedience know that it means to have rest and peace in Him. In obedience there is joy and consolation. Holy angels hover round about the obedient to keep them in paths of peace. (*Atlantic Union Gleaner*, Sept. 9, 1903)

There is no saving faith in Christ only as it is revealed by obedience. Every human being is under a solemn responsibility to obey God. His present and eternal happiness depends upon his willing obedience to the divine requirements. Man's will and inclination are to be wholly yielded to God. When this is done, man will co-operate with God, showing, by precept and example, that he has chosen to be, in all his ways, under the control of his Maker. God rejoices when, like Moses, his children choose rather to serve him than to enjoy the pleasures of this world. Could the curtain be rolled back, could men behold the angelic host as they glorify God with songs of gladness and rejoicing, they would realize that obedience ever causes joy, and disobedience, sorrow. God and the angels rejoice over every victory gained by the Christian; but when temptation overcomes the soul, there is sorrow in heaven. (*Review and Herald*, Dec. 14, 1897)

We give the lie to the truth, and glorify Satan, when we walk in sadness and gloom because we think more is required of us in the Christian life than we can perform. Your Redeemer loves you, and He presents to you eternal joys in a life of obedience. There is no one who has ever tasted the joy of full and willing submission to God, who has not felt peace, happiness, and assurance in His love. (*Review and Herald*, Jan. 13, 1891)

Questions for Personal Reflection

1. Are you experiencing the joy of obedience to Christ?
2. Does anything hinder you from having joy in obeying your loving Savior?



Day 7—A Life That Blesses Others

“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”

John 7:38

Suggested Format for the Prayer Time

Praise (approximately 10 minutes)

- Begin your prayer time by praising God for who He is (His character). He is an eternal God, a patient and loving God. He is our strength (Ps. 27:1), and He is our resting place (Jer. 50:6).
- Praise God that He is willing to use us to bless others, even though we have flaws and make mistakes.
- Praise God that it is not we ourselves but Christ living in us that touches and blesses lives.

Confession and Claiming Victory Over Sin (approximately 5 minutes)

- Ask God to show you which sins to confess openly and which to confess privately. Claim His victory over those sins.
- Ask God for forgiveness for times when your life was not a blessing to others.
- Ask God for forgiveness for times when you were more concerned about being successful than serving Him.
- Thank God that He forgives you according to 1 John 1:9.

Supplication and Intercession (approximately 35 minutes)

- Pray that God will give you faith even when the devil tries to discourage you from ministering to others.
- Ask God to give you a burden for souls and a love for His lost children.
- Pray for an attractive, Christ-like character that will draw people to Jesus.
- Pray for every member to feel a burden for soul winning and realize that heaven asks everyone to follow in Christ's steps by sharing their personal faith with God's guidance.
- Pray for the use of every appropriate social media format to share the three angels' messages in a creative and fresh manner with the busy people of today.
- Pray for increased participation in evangelistic outreach by all church members and institutions as they support the ongoing mission of the church.
- Mission to the Cities—Pray for the Inter-American Division and the cities they are trying to win for Christ: Mexico City, Caracas, Bogotá, Nassau, Belize City, Georgetown, Cali, Cayenne, Guatemala City, Quetzaltenango, Port-au-Prince, Tegucigalpa, Mérida, Puerto Rico (entire island), Santiago de los Caballeros, and Maracaibo. Pray that members can develop strategies for reaching these large cities.
- Pray for the establishment of thousands of “centers of influence” (churches, health centers, daycare centers, literature centers, community outreach centers, youth centers, vegetarian restaurants, clinics, and many more), especially in large cities around the world, and pray that these centers make a huge difference in people's lives as they experience God's truth through Christian service.
- Pray that the seven (or more) people on your list will see their need and open their hearts for the Holy Spirit.
- Pray for any personal needs you have.

Thanksgiving (approximately 10 minutes)

- Thank God that He wants to use us and not the angels to be co-laborers with Him to bless others.
- Thank God that Jesus set an example for us of how we can be a blessing to others.
- Thank God that He is sending the Holy Spirit to work on the hearts of the people you are praying for.

Suggested Songs to Sing

“God is so Good”; “Give of Your Best to the Master” (SDA Hymnal #572); “I’ll Go Where You Want Me to Go” (SDA Hymnal #573); “So Send I You” (SDA Hymnal #578); “Let Your Heart Be Broken” (SDA Hymnal #575); “I Love Thee” (SDA Hymnal #236); “Far and Near the Fields Are Teeming” (SDA Hymnal #358).

A Life That Blesses Others

“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” John 7:38

Everyone in whose heart Christ abides, everyone who will show forth His love to the world, is a worker together with God for the blessing of humanity. As he receives from the Saviour grace to impart to others, from his whole being flows forth the tide of spiritual life. (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 13)

The humblest and poorest of the disciples of Jesus can be a blessing to others. They may not realize that they are doing any special good, but by their unconscious influence they may start waves of blessing that will widen and deepen, and the blessed results they may never know until the day of final reward. They do not feel or know that they are doing anything great. They are not required to weary themselves with anxiety about success. They have only to go forward quietly, doing faithfully the work that God’s providence assigns, and their life will not be in vain. Their own souls will be growing more and more into the likeness of Christ; they are workers together with God in this life, and are thus fitting for the higher work and the unshadowed joy of the life to come. (*Steps to Christ*, p. 83)

The Lord is calling upon us to awake to a realization of our responsibilities. God has given to every man his work. Each one may live a life of usefulness. Let us learn all that we can and then be a blessing to others by imparting a knowledge of truth. Let every one do according to his several ability, willingly helping to bear the burdens. (*Counsels on Health*, p. 218)

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Tim. 2:15, KJV)

You may be a great blessing to others if you will give yourself unreservedly to the Lord’s service. Power from on high will be given you if you will take your position on the Lord’s side. Through Christ you can escape the corruption that is in the world through lust, and be a noble example of what He can do for those who cooperate with Him. (*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 489)

God desires men and women to live the higher life. He gives them the boon of life, not to enable them merely to gain wealth, but to improve their higher powers by doing the work He has entrusted to mankind—the work of searching out and relieving the necessities of their fellowmen. Man should work not for his own selfish interest but for the interest of every one about him, blessing others by his influence and kindly deeds. This purpose of God is exemplified in Christ’s life. (*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 645)

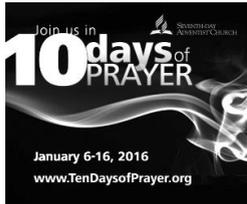
But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. (James 4:6, KJV)

When we are humble and contrite we stand where God can and will manifest Himself to us. He is well pleased when we urge past mercies and blessings as a reason why He should bestow on us greater blessings. He will more than fulfill the expectations of those who trust fully in Him. The Lord Jesus knows just what His children need, how much divine power we will appropriate for the blessing of humanity; and He bestows upon us all that we will employ in blessing others and ennobling our own souls. (*Help in Daily Living*, p. 61)

Those who truly love God will desire so to improve the talents that He has given them, that they may be a blessing to others. And by and by the gates of heaven will be thrown wide open to admit them, and from the lips of the King of Glory the benediction will fall upon their ear like richest music, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34). (*In Heavenly Places*, p. 367)

Questions for Personal Reflection

1. What small things can you do to be a blessing to those around you?
2. Many times it is easier to be a blessing to people who are far away than to your own family. How can you be a blessing to those closest to you?



Day 8—Christ Reflected in the Family

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.”
1 John 4:7

Suggested Format for the Prayer Time

Praise (approximately 10 minutes)

- Begin your prayer time by praising God for who He is (His character). He is gracious, etc.
- Praise God that He is the Father of the human family on earth.
- Praise God that He wants the human family to reflect His beauty and character.

Confession and Claiming Victory Over Sin (approximately 5 minutes)

- Ask God to show you which sins to confess privately. Claim His victory over those sins.
- Ask God for forgiveness for times that you did not reflect God in your family.
- Ask God for forgiveness for times that you did not honor and respect your parents and siblings.
- Thank God that He forgives you according to 1 John 1:9.

Supplication and Intercession (approximately 35 minutes)

- Ask God to fill your heart with the Holy Spirit and make you a living example to your family.
- Ask God that each member of your family be drawn closer to Christ.
- Ask God to protect Adventist families from the attacks of the devil, including the families in your local church. Ask God for healing where this is needed.
- Pray that church leaders (your local pastor, conference, union, division, and General Conference leaders) and their families will reflect Christ to the world.
- Pray for a wonderful harvest of souls resulting from seeds planted during the *Great Controversy* distribution project in all its various formats.
- Pray for parents to reflect Christ to their children and raise them for the Kingdom.
- Pray that God will give a full understanding of Christ’s method (comprehensive health ministry), allowing all church members to meet people’s needs and follow Christ’s pattern of service to others.
- Pray for the united evangelistic and witnessing activities of every Seventh-day Adventist man, woman, and child around the world. Pray that we are empowered by the Holy Spirit as we submit to His leading in our lives.
- Beseech the Lord on behalf of Seventh-day Adventist families, that they may be models of how Christ can bring peace and love into homes, removing any abuse and stress through the sanctifying power of Christ’s righteousness and pointing to Christ’s soon return and the ultimate joining of God’s eternal family in heaven.
- Mission to the Cities—Pray for the Euro-Asia Division and the cities they are working in: Moscow, Kiev, Kishinev, Donetsk, Kharkov, Minsk, St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Krasnoyarsk, Khabarovsk, Rostov-on-Don, Tbilisi, Yerevan, and Almaty. Pray for the thousands of outreach activities and reaping events currently taking place.
- Pray that the seven (or more) people on your list will see their need and open their hearts for the Holy Spirit.
- Pray for any personal needs you have.

Thanksgiving (approximately 10 minutes)

- Thank God that He is working on your family members’ hearts.
- Thank God that He is willing to cleanse, purify, and abide in you and your family
- Thank God that Jesus gave us an example of how to honor our parents and love our siblings.

Suggested Songs to Sing

“Happy the Home” (SDA Hymnal #655); “Lord Bless Our Homes” (SDA Hymnal #654); “Love at Home” (SDA Hymnal #652); “’Tis Love That Makes Us Happy” (SDA Hymnal #579).

Christ Reflected in the Family

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.”

1 John 4:7

The religion of Christ will lead us to do all the good possible, to both high and low, rich and poor, happy and oppressed. But especially will it lead to the manifestation of kindness in our own family. It will be manifested by acts of courtesy and love to father and mother, husband, wife, and child. We are to look to Jesus, to catch His Spirit, to live in the light of His goodness and love, and to reflect His glory upon others. (*My Life Today*, p. 200)

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7, KJV)

If you will give yourself fully to Jesus He will create in you an intense desire for the friendship of God, and you will have deep longings to reflect the goodness and the love of Jesus in your life and character to your family and to those who know not the love of God. By cultivating patience, meekness, forbearance, by showing respect and rendering obedience to your father and mother as it is fit in the Lord, you will be giving testimony in your everyday life that the truth has power to sanctify the character. (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 4, p. 194)

It is a hard matter to adjust family difficulties, even when husband and wife seek to make a fair and just settlement in regard to their several duties, if they have failed to submit the heart to God. (*The Adventist Home*, p. 119)

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (John 7:38, KJV)

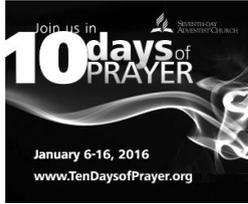
If the will of God is fulfilled, the husband and wife will respect each other and cultivate love and confidence. Anything that would mar the peace and unity of the family should be firmly repressed, and kindness and love should be cherished. He who manifests the spirit of tenderness, forbearance, and love will find that the same spirit will be reflected upon him. Where the Spirit of God reigns, there will be no talk of unsuitability in the marriage relation. If Christ indeed is formed within, the hope of glory, there will be union and love in the home. Christ abiding in the heart of the wife will be at agreement with Christ abiding in the heart of the husband. They will be striving together for the mansions Christ has gone to prepare for those who love Him. (*The Adventist Home*, p. 120)

We must have the Spirit of God, or we can never have harmony in the home. The wife, if she has the spirit of Christ, will be careful of her words; she will control her spirit, she will be submissive, and yet will not feel that she is a bondslave, but a companion to her husband. If the husband is a servant of God, he will not lord it over his wife; he will not be arbitrary and exacting. We cannot cherish home affection with too much care; for the home, if the Spirit of the Lord dwells there, is a type of heaven. . . . If one errs, the other will exercise Christlike forbearance and not draw coldly away. (*The Adventist Home*, p. 118)

If you have high aims, and purpose to reach an elevated standard, the home life is the very best discipline you can have. If you are wrong at home, you will be wrong in every aim and endeavor. Begin there to perfect a character that God will approve, that will make you a blessing at home; and when away from home, you will not fail to be a blessing to those you are brought in contact with. Religion practiced in the home will reflect beyond the home circle. (*The Youth's Instructor*, April 21, 1886, par. 7)

Questions for Personal Reflection

1. How can you lead your family by example to a life more abundant in Christ?
2. Have you always been a good family member? Do you need make some things right? Do you need to make your family more of a priority instead of other things?



Day 9—Christ Reflected in the Church

“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” John 17:23, KJV

Suggested Format for the Prayer Time

Praise (approximately 10 minutes)

- Begin your prayer time by praising God that He is joy, peace, and patience, etc.
- Praise God that He has called His remnant church to be a light to the world.
- Praise God that He will finish the work He has started in the church.

Confession and Claiming Victory Over Sin (approximately 5 minutes)

- Ask God to show you the sins that you need to confess privately. Claim His victory over those sins.
- Ask God for forgiveness for times when you allowed envy, suspicion, or faultfinding toward your brothers in your heart. Pray for a new heart, filled with love and compassion.
- Thank God that He forgives you according to 1 John 1:9.

Supplication and Intercession (approximately 35 minutes)

- Ask God to prepare your heart to receive the Holy Spirit.
- Pray for your family to be united and that peace and love would rule our churches.
- Ask God to purify the church so visitors will sense the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- Pray that church leaders (your local pastor, conference, union, division, and General Conference leaders) will work in love, compassion, and unity to finish the work Christ gave us to do.
- Pray for worldwide unity in every congregation and church entity, based on respect for God’s Word, humble prayer, the Holy Spirit’s power, respect for accepted church policy/process, and full engagement in the mission of the church.
- Pray for humility in our lives so we will be united in our submission to God’s leading and the process of the church to make commonly agreed-upon decisions and accept whatever is voted at the General Conference Session level.
- Pray that we will devote more of our time to eternal values through Bible study and prayer, allowing God to fully direct His people according to His will and not our will. This will help keep us close to God and allow the power of the Holy Spirit to reverse trends of worldliness that threaten God’s church and our daily lives.
- Mission to the Cities—Pray for the East-Central Africa Division and the cities they have chosen to work in: Kinshasa, Dar-es-Salaam, Addis Ababa, Kampala, Kananga, Lodwar, Kigali, Lubumbashi, Goma, Magara, Juba. Pray for the strongholds of Satan to be broken and relationships with Christ to be established.
- Pray for the protection of our young people and all of us from ever-increasing worldly influences. Pray that we will focus on the Word of God and service to others. Pray that the local churches will sponsor young people in mission outreach and service opportunities.
- Pray that the seven (or more) people on your list will see their need and open their hearts to the Holy Spirit.
- Pray for any personal needs you have.

Thanksgiving (approximately 10 minutes)

- Thank God for what He has done in His church and will do through the church.
- Thank God that He is willing to cleanse, purify, and lead the church.
- Thank God that Jesus prayed for the church that we might be one.
- Thank God that He is working on the hearts of the people you are praying for.

Suggested Songs to Sing

“Built on the Rock” (*SDA Hymnal* #347); “The Church Has One Foundation” (*SDA Hymnal* #348); “I Surrender All” (*SDA Hymnal* #309); “I Would Be Like Jesus” (*SDA Hymnal* #309); “I Want Jesus to Walk With Me” (*SDA Hymnal* #624).

Christ Reflected in the Church

“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” John 17:23, KJV

There is nothing that can so weaken the influence of the church as the lack of love. . . . The people of the world are looking to us to see what our faith is doing for our characters and lives. They are watching to see if it is having a sanctifying effect on our hearts, if we are becoming changed into the likeness of Christ. They are ready to discover every defect in our lives, every inconsistency in our actions. Let us give them no occasion to reproach our faith.

It is not the opposition of the world that will most endanger us; it is the evil cherished right in our midst that works our most grievous disaster. It is the unconsecrated lives of halfhearted professors that retard the work of the truth and bring darkness upon the church of God.

There is no surer way of weakening ourselves in spiritual things than to be envious, suspicious of one another, full of faultfinding and evil surmising. . . .

When you are associated together, be guarded in your words. . . . If the love of the truth is in your heart you will talk of the truth. You will talk of the blessed hope that you have in Jesus. If you have love in your heart you will seek to establish and build up your brother in the most holy faith. If a word is dropped that is detrimental to the character of your friend or brother, do not encourage this evil speaking. It is the work of the enemy. Kindly remind the speaker that the Word of God forbids that kind of conversation. We are to empty the heart of everything that defiles the soul temple, that Christ may dwell within. Our Redeemer has told us how we may reveal Him to the world. If we cherish His spirit, if we manifest His love to others, if we guard one another's interests, if we are kind, patient, forbearing, the world will have an evidence by the fruits we bear that we are the children of God. It is the unity in the church that enables it to exert a conscious influence upon unbelievers and worldlings. (*That I May Know Him*, p. 153)

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. (John 13:35, KJV)

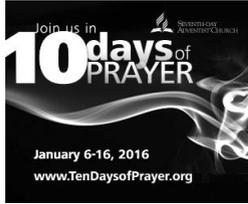
The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means that sin is taken away, and that the vacuum is filled with the Spirit. It means that the mind is divinely illumined, that the heart is emptied of self, and filled with the presence of Christ. When this work is done for church members, the church will be a living, working church. (*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 318)

When we will bring our hearts into unity with Christ, and our lives into harmony with His work, the Spirit that descended on the day of Pentecost will fall on us. We shall be strong in Christ's strength, and be filled with the fullness of God. . . . We shall give ourselves to Christ, making an unreserved consecration of all our property, all our capacities, to His service. We shall make good our profession of faith; we shall serve God by serving those who need our help. Then we shall let our light shine forth in good works. (*The Review and Herald*, Dec. 16, 1884)

As the disciples, filled with the power of the Spirit, went forth to proclaim the gospel, so God's servants are to go forth today. Every one on whom is shining the light of present truth is to be stirred with compassion for those who are in darkness. From all believers light is to be reflected in clear, distinct rays. A work similar to that which the Lord did through his delegated messengers after the day of Pentecost He is waiting to do today. At this time, when the end of all things is at hand, the zeal of the church should exceed even that of the early church. Zeal for the glory of God moved the disciples to bear witness to the truth with mighty power. Should not this zeal fire our hearts with a longing to tell the story of redeeming love, of Christ and Him crucified? (*The Review and Herald*, Jan. 26, 1905)

Questions for Personal Reflection

1. How can you, a member of Christ's living church, encourage unity and love for your brothers?
2. Consider prayerfully whether you need to forgive, apologize to, or reconcile with anyone in or outside the church.



Day 10—Christ Reflected in the Neighborhood

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Acts 1:8

Suggested Format for the Prayer Time

Praise (approximately 10 minutes)

- Begin your prayer time by praising God that He is kindness, goodness, and gentleness.
- Praise God that He chose to use you to reach out to souls that thirst for the water of life.

Confession and Claiming Victory Over Sin (approximately 5 minutes)

- Ask God to show you which sins to confess openly and which to confess privately. Claim His victory over those sins.
- Pray for forgiveness for times when you were ashamed to share your faith with others. Ask God to give you courage and love through Christ abiding in you.
- Thank God that He forgives you according to 1 John 1:9

Supplication and Intercession (approximately 35 minutes)

- Ask God to give you a burden for souls and a love for His lost children.
- Ask God to put in your neighbors’ hearts a hunger and thirst for Him.
- Ask the Lord to fill you with His Holy Spirit and to teach you how to reach your neighbors through acts of love, by ministering to their needs, by winning their confidence, and by inviting them to follow Jesus.
- Pray that you experience the joy of sharing Christ.
- Pray for an attractive, Christ-like character that will draw people to Jesus.
- Pray that God will teach you how to point people to Jesus, not to yourself.
- Pray for the increased use of Christian literature by all church members and for increased emphasis on literature evangelism, both through hard copy and electronic formats.
- Pray for renewed emphasis on the tremendous importance of attending Sabbath School, which focuses on fellowship, mission, Bible study, and local outreach.
- Pray for an increased emphasis on small-group outreach, so that all members are participating in personal witnessing and proclaiming God’s great truth in these last days.
- Pray that church leaders (your local pastor, conference, union, division, and General Conference leaders) can be a good witness to their neighbors.
- Mission to the Cities—Pray for the Inter-European Division and the cities they have chosen to work in: Geneva, Prague, Vienna. Lift up also the Middle East and North Africa Union and the 43 cities they are planning to enter in the next four to five years. Pray for the church members working in these cities.
- Ask God for boldness to witness for Him in every circumstance.
- Pray for a heightened focus on Seventh-day Adventist media outreach, leading to a massive, integrated evangelistic witness around the world.
- Pray that the seven (or more) people on your list will see their need and open their hearts to the Holy Spirit.
- Pray for any personal needs you have.

Thanksgiving (approximately 10 minutes)

- Thank God that He is working in the lives of your family, friends, and neighbors.
- Thank God that He has people in every city who are wistfully looking to heaven!
- Thank God that He is working in the hearts of all the people you have been praying for.

Suggested Songs to Sing

“Live Out Thy Life Within Me” (*SDA Hymnal* #316); “Give of Your Best to the Master” (*SDA Hymnal* #572); “Let Your Heart Be Broken” (*SDA Hymnal* #575); “Seek Ye First”; “This Little Light of Mine” (*SDA Hymnal* #580); “Rescue the Perishing” (*SDA Hymnal* #367); “Seeking the Lost” (*SDA Hymnal* #373).

Christ Reflected in the Neighborhood

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Acts 1:8

The children of God are called to be representatives of Christ, showing forth the goodness and mercy of the Lord. As Jesus has revealed to us the true character of the Father, so we are to reveal Christ to a world that does not know His tender, pitying love. “As Thou hast sent Me into the world,” said Jesus, “even so have I also sent them into the world.” “I in them, and Thou in Me; . . . that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me.” John 17:18, 23. The apostle Paul says to the disciples of Jesus, “Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ,” “known and read of all men.” 2 Corinthians 3:3, 2. In every one of His children, Jesus sends a letter to the world. If you are Christ’s follower, He sends in you a letter to the family, the village, the street, where you live. Jesus, dwelling in you, desires to speak to the hearts of those who are not acquainted with Him. Perhaps they do not read the Bible, or do not hear the voice that speaks to them in its pages; they do not see the love of God through His works. But if you are a true representative of Jesus, it may be that through you they will be led to understand something of His goodness and be won to love and serve Him. (*Steps to Christ*, p. 115)

Visit your neighbors and show an interest in the salvation of their souls. Arouse every spiritual energy to action. Tell those whom you visit that the end of all things is at hand. The Lord Jesus Christ will open the door of their hearts and will make upon their minds lasting impressions. Even while engaged in their daily employment, God’s people can lead others to Christ. And while doing this they will have the precious assurance that the Saviour is close beside them. They need not think that they are left to depend on their own feeble efforts. Christ will give them words to speak that will refresh and encourage and strengthen poor, struggling souls who are in darkness. Their own faith will be strengthened as they realize that the Redeemer’s promise is being fulfilled. Not only are they a blessing to others, but the work they do for Christ brings blessing to themselves. (*Counsels for the Church*, p. 62)

Your influence reaches the soul; you touch not a wire but that vibrates back to God. . . . It is your duty to be Christians in the highest sense of the word—“Christlike.” It is through the unseen lines that attract you to other minds with which you are brought in contact that may, if you are in constant connection with God, leave impressions that will make you a savor of life unto life. Otherwise, if you are selfish, if you are self-exalted, if you are worldly-minded, no matter what your position, no matter what your experience has been, or how much you know, if you are not having the law of kindness on your lips, sweet fragrance of love springing from your heart, you can do nothing as it ought to be done. (*My Live Today*, p. 178)

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also. (1 John 4:20, 21, KJV)

The true, honest expression of a sister, or brother, or friend, given in genuine simplicity, has power to open the door of hearts which need the fragrance of Christlike words and the simple, delicate touch of the spirit of Christ’s love. (*My Life Today*, p. 178)

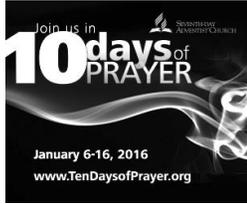
All around us are heard the wails of a world’s sorrow. On every hand are the needy and distressed. It is ours to aid in relieving and softening life’s hardships and misery. The wants of the soul, only the love of Christ can satisfy. If Christ is abiding in us, our hearts will be full of divine sympathy. The sealed fountains of earnest, Christlike love will be unsealed. (*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 151)

What sweetness flowed from [Christ’s] very presence! The same spirit will be revealed in His children. Those with whom Christ dwells will be surrounded with a divine atmosphere. Their white robes of purity will be fragrant with perfume from the garden of the Lord. Their faces will reflect light from His, brightening the path for stumbling and weary feet. (*The Adventist Home*, p. 424)

Questions for Personal Reflection

1. Do you desire to be filled with the love of Christ and filled with His compassion for a dying world?

2. What are some practical ways in which you can witness in your neighborhood?



Day 11—Life More Abundant Suggested Format for the Final Sabbath

This final Sabbath should be a time of great rejoicing in all that God has done for you and your church during the Ten Days of Prayer. Design your day to celebrate God's goodness and mighty power. Consider how you have experienced the outpouring of the Holy Spirit during the past ten days. This Sabbath is an opportunity to rejoice in what He has done, is doing, and will do.

Theme Text: John 10:7-16

So Jesus said again, "I am telling you the truth: I am the gate for the sheep. All others who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Those who come in by me will be saved; they will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only in order to steal, kill, and destroy. I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness.

"I am the good shepherd, who is willing to die for the sheep. When the hired man, who is not a shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees a wolf coming, he leaves the sheep and runs away; so the wolf snatches the sheep and scatters them. The hired man runs away because he is only a hired man and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd. As the Father knows me and I know the Father, in the same way I know my sheep and they know me. And I am willing to die for them. There are other sheep which belong to me that are not in this sheep pen. I must bring them, too; they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock with one shepherd." (GNT)

The needs of each congregation are unique, so please work with local leaders to develop a specific plan for your church. Some suggested items to include in your final Sabbath church service:

- **Biblical Teaching on John 10:7-16:** This could be a sermon or homily, or the passage could be used as a basis for weaving together stories of how God has worked during the Ten Days of Prayer.
- **Testimonies:** Include ample time for testimonies of answered prayer. Those who have participated in the Ten Days of Prayer should have many stories they can share with the congregation, but encourage them to be brief so that everyone can participate. Others may also have stories. It might be good to have some testimonies pre-planned, in addition to having an open sharing time.
- **Prayer Time:** Invite the whole congregation to join in a time of united prayer. You could lead the congregation through an interactive prayer similar to what you have used throughout the week. You can pray over a specific passage together. This could be done with people in small groups or with everyone praying together. Another option would be to have several different kinds of prayer throughout the service—praying the Scriptures, small-group, individual, congregational, silent, and so on.
- **Singing:** This is a day to rejoice in all God has done, and music is a great way to celebrate. If there is a song that has become a theme song for your group, make sure to sing that with the whole congregation.
- **Future Plans:** If God has led you toward a special outreach or ministry through the Ten Days of Prayer, let your church family know about your plans and invite them to join in.
- **Children/Youth:** A children's story about prayer would certainly be appropriate. Also, if you have had any children or youth involved with the regular prayer meetings, have them share their testimonies and/or lead out in a prayer time.
- **Flexibility:** Make sure to be flexible in your plans so that you can follow the Holy Spirit's leading throughout the service.

LIFE MORE ABUNDANT WITH JESUS – THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Scripture reading: John 10:1-16

INTRODUCTION

"Two men were called on, in a large classroom, to recite the Twenty-third Psalm. One was a published orator trained in speech technique and drama. He repeated the psalm in a powerful way. When he finished, the audience cheered and even asked for an encore that they might hear his wonderful voice again. Then the other man, who was much older, repeated the same words --'The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want...' But when he finished, no sound came from the large class. Instead, people sat in a deep mood of devotion and prayer.

"Then the first man, the orator, stood to his feet. 'I have a confession to make,' he said. 'The difference between what you have just heard from my old friend, and what you heard from me is this: I know the Psalm, my friend knows the Shepherd.'"

Of the many images painted by John in his wonderful Gospel, probably the most descriptive is that of Jesus as the Good Shepherd.

For like a shepherd, Jesus is concerned with the welfare and the care of His sheep.

As we go through the message this morning and after these 10 days of prayer, I want each one of us to ask ourselves this question, "***Do I/you really know the Shepherd?***"

Knowing the Shepherd makes your life more abundant and rich!

Why is Jesus called the Good Shepherd and how does our life become more abundant and rich with Him?

These verses teach us that Jesus possesses certain qualities that qualify Him to be called the Good Shepherd. Let's take a few minutes this morning to look into this passage and answer to these questions above.

I. HE POSSESSES THE RIGHT CREDENTIALS – verses 1-5

A. He came properly (verses 1-3a)

Jesus uses the imagery of the sheepfold to illustrate His message.

A Sheepfold was a circular wall about 10 feet tall with a single opening that served as a door. Several flocks might be placed into the sheepfold at night, with a porter lying at the door. In the morning the shepherd would return, call his sheep by name, and lead them out to pasture.

Jesus is telling His audience that only thieves and robbers seek to enter the sheepfold by another means besides the door. The true shepherd, however, always makes use of the door!

Jesus proves that He is the Shepherd of the sheep because He came into the world in the right manner. He entered according to plan. He had presented His credentials to His people. Notice the proof that He came in the right way:

1. He had been virgin born - Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:21-23
2. He had been born in Bethlehem - Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:4-6
3. He had come in the fullness of time - Gal. 4:4
4. He had been brought out of Egypt - Hos. 11:1; Matt. 2:14-15
5. His arrival had provoked the rage of the enemy - Jer. 31:15; Matt. 2:16-18.

He was the right person, born in the right place, arriving at the right time, summoned from the right country, and attended by the right sign. He possesses all the credentials necessary to prove that He is the Good Shepherd! When Jesus came with the right credentials, John the Baptist openly introduced Him to the nation and declared His identity - John 1:29.

B. He Calls Properly

There may be several flocks sharing the same sheepfold. However, when the shepherd of the sheep walks up to the door and calls his sheep, they instantly recognize his voice and respond to him. They know his call.

Illustration:

A man in Australia was arrested and charged with stealing a sheep. But he claimed emphatically that it was one of his own that had been missing for many days. When the case went to court, the judge was puzzled, not

knowing how to decide the matter. At last he asked that the sheep be brought into the courtroom. Then he ordered the plaintiff to step outside and call the animal. The sheep made no response except to raise its head and look frightened.

The judge then instructed the defendant to go to the courtyard and call the sheep. When the accused man began to make his distinctive call, the sheep bounded toward the door. It was obvious that he recognized the familiar voice of his master. "His sheep knows him," said the judge. "Case dismissed!"

So it is with the lost soul. There are many voices that compete for our attention in the world, but there is a special note to the voice of the Lord. When He calls, everything changes - John 6:44.

The voice of the Good Shepherd is the only one that can awaken the dead heart. The only one that can give us hope. The only one that sounds right to a desperate soul.

All other calls sound empty and frightening when compared to the sweet call of the Lord Jesus.

C. He Commands Properly (verses 4-5)

When the shepherd calls forth his sheep, he goes before them and they instinctively follow him. He just leads them out and they follow close behind.

When a sinner's soul encounters the grace of God and accepts it, he will have a desire to follow the Good Shepherd!

When a person is saved and his heart is right with God, he does not have to be begged to come to worship, to tithe, to share his faith, etc. He has been called out by the Shepherd and has a burning burden to worship Him - 2 Cor. 5:17. His heart's desire is summed up by 1 Cor. 10:31.

II. HE POSSESSES THE RIGHT CHARACTER – verses 6-10

A. His Personality (verses 6-8)

In these verses, Jesus reveals His identity as the Door. If you remember, there was only one opening going into or out of the sheepfold. It was in this opening that the shepherd lay. Therefore, the shepherd Himself became the door of the sheep. Nothing could enter the fold; nothing could exit the fold without going through the shepherd Himself.

If anyone desires entrance into the fold of God, there is only one door. That door is Jesus Himself!

He is the only way to God - Eph. 2:18; John 14:6; Acts 4:12. This truth is abundantly clear from 1 John 5:12. Jesus is the only way to the Father.

Access to the spiritual kingdom is possible only through Him. Those who hold forth any other means of access to God are false shepherds, false teachers.

B. His Performance (verse 9a)

Jesus plainly tells His listeners that He alone is the door into God's eternal salvation. His promise to those who enter is that they will be saved.

That is, they will experience the fullness of God's perfect salvation.

When a sinner comes to Jesus and is born again, he is delivered from eternal lost - John 5:24; Rom. 5:9.

C. His Promise (verses 9b-10)

The thief is a threat to the sheep. When a thief enters the fold, his primary purpose is to use the sheep for his own personal gain. He doesn't care about their welfare. The Good Shepherd, on the other hand, comes so that the sheep might experience a life that is immeasurably better. He cares about the sheep and He promises them a new and better life in Himself.

Everything changes when a person meets Jesus! When He enters into a life, it cannot remain the same. He gives us the ability to live better, to love better and to do something with our lives that will glorify God.

The word life, "zoe" in greek, used here in its theological sense, is equivalent to eternal life.

When Adam and Eve were created they possessed life – $z\bar{o}\bar{e}$ - but lost it when they sinned. True, their physical life was extended, but they were no longer conditionally immortal - Gen. 2:17. Jesus came to restore the $z\bar{o}\bar{e}$ that Adam had forfeited - John 8:51.

“that they might have life more abundantly” – Life includes the physical, intellectual, and spiritual. Physical life is regarded as abundant in a body that is full of vigor and in perfect health. Jesus’ miracles of physical healing gave an abundant physical life to those whose life forces were ebbing. But physical restoration was by no means the complete fulfillment of Jesus’ mission. Man also has intellectual and spiritual life, which must also be made alive and abundant, for *“man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord”* (Deut. 8:3). Important as the physical and the intellectual aspects of a well-rounded life are, no life is fully complete unless the spiritual nature is nurtured.

III. HE POSSESSES THE RIGHT CONCERN – verses 11-16

A. His Concern Is Proven By His Sacrifice (verses 11-13)

Jesus explains the difference between the concerned shepherd and the hireling.

The hireling is there only for the paycheck. When trouble comes, he runs away and leaves the sheep to be devoured by the wolves.

The shepherd, on the other hand, owns the sheep and has a vested interest in their welfare. Therefore, the good shepherd is willing to pay any price to protect the sheep, even if it means that he has to give His very life for them.

Jesus has proven that He is the Good Shepherd because He saw the danger that the sheep were in and did not run away, but did everything in His power to save them.

Since God had said that the wages of sin is death, Jesus came down from Heaven and was born in human flesh. Then, after a sinless life He died on a cross, taking the place of every sinner who would put his/her faith in Him - 2 Cor. 5:21; 2 Cor. 5:15.

B. His Concern Is Proven By His Sheep (verse 14)

Jesus speaks of the bond that exists between the shepherd and his sheep. They know Him and will not follow another, and the shepherd knows his sheep.

The individual sheep in a flock all look alike to the untrained eye. A good shepherd, however, can tell them apart--often because of their defects and peculiar traits.

Illustration:

A man who was tending a large flock explained this to a Christian friend who expressed surprise at his familiarity with each animal. "See that sheep over there?" he asked. "Notice how it toes in a little. The one behind it has a squint; the next one has a patch of wool off its back; ahead is one with a distinguishing black mark, while the one closest to us has a small piece torn out of its ear."

Observing all of them, the believer thought about Christ, the Chief Shepherd, who also knows the individual weaknesses and failings of His flock and watches over the members with discerning love and sympathetic understanding.

He knows His sheep by name - v. 3. They know not only His voice - v. 4, but they know Him.

Knowledge leads to action. The good Shepherd who knows the sheep of his flock, takes a personal, loving interest in each one of them; the sheep, in turn, knowing the character of their Shepherd, place implicit confidence in their guardian and render loving, unquestioning obedience.

With infinite concern the good Shepherd notes the doubts, fears, trials, conflicts and defeats that disturb their peace and He swiftly comes to their aid.

Dear fellow brothers and sisters, the Good Shepherd knows His sheep!

He knows everything there is to know about you - Matt. 10:29-31; Matt. 6:8.

He is your Good Shepherd and He will look after you - Psa. 23:1-6.

He is still Jehovah-Jireh - "The Lord will see to it!" - Gen. 22:14.

C. He Proves His Concern By His Salvation (verses 15, 16)

Jesus makes it plain that there will be other sheep that will come along afterwards. These sheep can be assured of being saved just like those who were there to hear Jesus speak.

Therefore, anyone who needs salvation can rest assured that Jesus will provide that salvation when faith is placed in Him - John 1:12.

When faith is placed in Jesus Christ, salvation is always the result. He is still the Door and He is still the Good Shepherd.

CONCLUSION:

There is no question that Jesus is the Good Shepherd.

The only question that remains at this point in the service is this: ***Do you know the Shepherd?***

How you answer that question will determine and enable you to sense:

- What is the Greatest Need?
- That your Greatest Gift to God is Your Being!
- The importance of Christ in You!
- How and why you should abide in Christ, the True Vine?
- You are more than conquerors!
- The Joy of Obedience!
- Your Life is a blessing to others!
- Christ is reflected in your Family!
- Christ is reflected in your Church!
- Christ is reflected in your Neighborhood!

Above all else, your answer to that question will make all the difference in how you can enjoy right from here on this earth **A RICH AND ABUNDANT LIFE IN HIM WHO IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD!**

Let us not wait anymore, delay is dangerous! Revival and Reformation are the key words and the key actions as we prepare ourselves and others to meet Jesus, the Good Shepherd!

Fellow brothers and sisters, let's take a moment to answer that crucial question personally through a prayer season.