



SOVEREIGN GRACE
MINISTRIES

A JOURNEY OF FAITH

THREE WEEKS OF PRAYER & FASTING

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WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

We don't usually think of weakness as something desirable. After all, weakness is the exact opposite of strength. But weakness has wonderful advantages for the believer—especially when it comes to prayer.

Few pray a lot when experiencing the heady days of prosperity. But seasons of trial and weakness naturally lead us to call on God for his help. Burdens become blessings when they become springboards to prayer!

Any concern too small to be turned into a prayer is too small to be made into a burden. *Corrie Ten Boom*

If we feel weak or burdened, then we MUST pray! God Himself has invited (indeed ordered) us to cast all our cares and anxieties upon Him. We do this personally and we do this collectively. It is hard to go from hearing the crowd cheering for you, to hearing them booing at you. Yet that is exactly what Jesus experienced over the space of a few short days (Matt 21:9; 27:22-23). However, instead of letting the weight of this sit heavily on his heart, he took it to his Father in prayer:

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. *Heb. 5:7*

My friends, this difficult season offers us a special opportunity. As we come to the end of our resources, we will find that we are on the verge of discovering and appropriating the infinite resources of a God who never tires or weakens and who loves to answer prayer! His invitation to each of us is still the same:

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. *Matt 11:28-30*

Let us look at this season of prayer before us as a time of continually bringing our needs to Jesus knowing he will turn our burdens into blessing. Let's pray knowing that God's strength is made perfect in our weakness. Let's pray knowing that God always loves his church and has promised to never leave us or forsake us. Let's pray with faith that God will be with us and bless us as we give ourselves to gospel work in the days to come. Let's pray believing in our great and gracious God!

Our Three Weeks of Prayer will finish when the Council of Elders Meeting begins on Thursday, May 23, 2013.

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO FASTING

The greatest enemy of hunger for God is not poison but apple pie. The greatest adversary of love to God is not his enemies but His gifts. And the most deadly appetites are not for the poison of evil, but for the simple pleasures of earth. For when these replace an appetite for God Himself, the idolatry is scarcely recognizable, and almost incurable.

John Piper

Fasting has been practiced by Christians around the world since the earliest days of the church. It is only in our wealthy and pleasure-loving Western world that many Christians have never fasted. Jesus said, "when you fast" (Matt 6:16) not "if". He clearly expected His followers to fast (Mark 2:20).

Pregnant women, nursing mothers, and those with health conditions should not fast. Consult with your doctor before embarking on an extended fast (7-30 days). If you plan on fasting, the following guidelines may be helpful.

BEGINNING A FAST

Stop drinking coffee and tea three days before a fast. You may experience withdrawal headaches.

Drink 4-8 glasses of juice throughout the day. Apple juice and white grape juice are especially good. If you crave salt, have some beef or chicken broth at night.

Try to dress warmly because you will feel colder when fasting.

Give yourself enough rest... especially if on a longer fast (longer than four days). Try to get 8-10 hours of sleep a night. Power naps during the day are often helpful (short rests of 20-30 minutes).

The hardest part of a fast is the first three days. After that your body stops fighting as hard and the hunger pangs decrease.

Fasting often results in headaches and irritability on the first day or two. That is because you are hungry... but also because your body is getting rid of the toxins that your regular diet produces. Once these toxins are washed away, you will typically find a special calm comes into your body and your mind will get clearer than it has been in a very long time. Praying at this time can be very fruitful and listening to God can become a true joy!

BREAKING A FAST

For every three days on a fast, you should take one day breaking it. So on a week-long fast, you should break the fast over two or more days.

Make your first meal something like chicken noodle soup and maybe a small portion of soft vegetables.

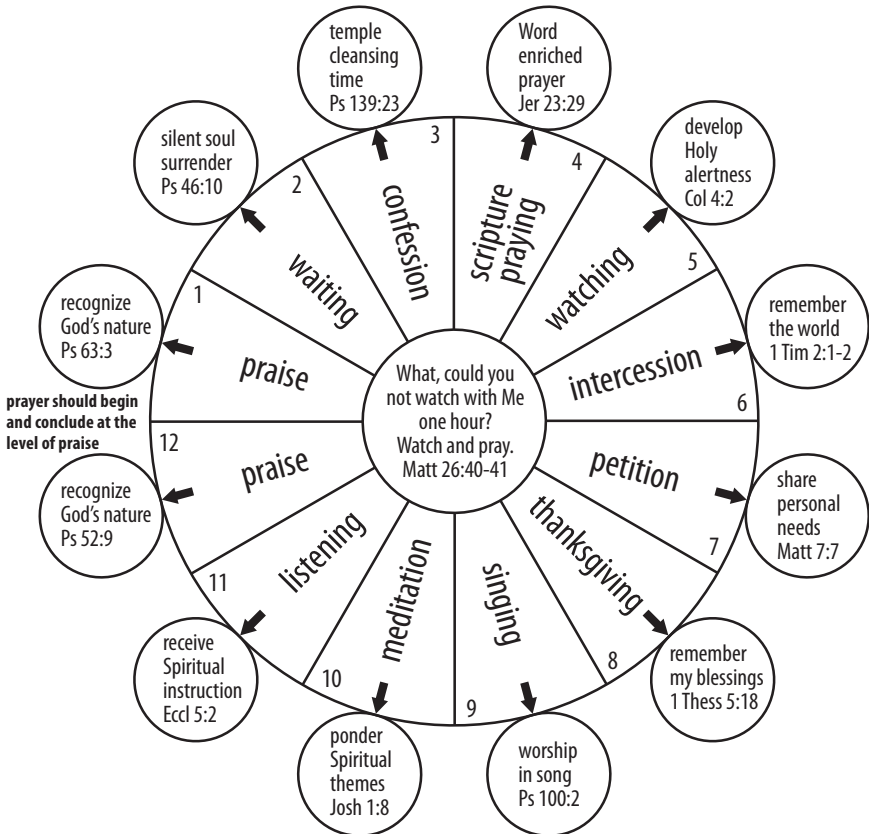
Eat small portions of vegetables, fruit, salads and soups. Avoid bread and meat until after the first two days. Drink lots of liquid as you break a fast. Avoid junk food completely.

If you don't feel strong desires for the manifestation of the glory of God, it is not because you have drunk deeply and are satisfied. It is because you have nibbled so long at the table of the world. Your soul is stuffed with small things, and there is no room for the great. I invite you to turn from the dulling effects of food and the dangers of idolatry, and to say with some simple fast: 'This much, O God, I want you.' *John Piper*

PRAYING FOR ONE HOUR

In Dick Eastman's helpful book, *The Hour That Changes the World*, he presents a system of dividing an hour into five-minute segments. If you wanted to pray for 30 minutes, the sections could be divided into two-and-a-half minute segments.

This is also a helpful prayer guide for churches to use during a prayer meeting.



A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT APPROACH TO PRAYER

This three-week prayer guide is set up differently than other prayer guides we have done in the past. Rather than prescribing everything day by day, categories will be presented for each person to peruse and select. In other words, it is a kind of “cafeteria” approach where you choose where you will spend your time in prayer. Some will spend more time fueling their faith for prayer. Others will spend more time using the fuel up in actual praying. Three basic categories are offered to guide us through this three-week season of prayer:

PREPARE

This is a series of questions intended to give clarity to your praying, along with heart preparations that will pave the way for praying with real faith.

PONDER

This will involve a series of passages from Scripture intended to build faith in God and equip us for the task of prayer. This section will also involve thought provoking quotes on prayer.

Rather than a day-by-day approach, these are all batched together week-by-week. If you have one day a week that you want to give more time to prayer, you can spend more time in this section at once. Others may choose to break it into bite size pieces over seven days, etc.

PRAY

This section will provide key Scripture promises and prayers to help propel the actual prayers we offer up. It is hoped that some of these prayer times will be done together with others such as elder teams, church leaders, small group leaders, in small groups, with friends, or within families. A good mix of private praying and group praying will generate much faith and hope in the task of prayer.

WEEKLY/DAILY PREPARATION

Is my heart ready to pray? Am I being watchful to distractions, temptations and inner oppression that will have to be dealt with?

Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. *Matt 26:41*

Is there any habituated sin in my thoughts that I need to be cleansed from?

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. *Isa 55:7*

Is there anyone I need to ask forgiveness from? Someone I know who is offended with me that I have not yet sought to be reconciled with?

If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. *Matt 5:23-24*

Is there anyone that I need to forgive (especially if they don't deserve it)?

Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends. *Prov. 17:9*

Am I presently more aware of unfinished and pressing tasks or of the priority of prayer? Am I more aware of the problems facing us or of the greatness and grace of God?

a) Have I spent time worshipping God privately?

The true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. *John 4:23*

b) Have I spent time singing His praises (or listening to others do so)?

c) Have I slowed down enough to contemplate God's holiness and my sinfulness... and then Christ's life and death that closes that infinite gap?

Is there a song in my heart? Have I prayed today to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Have I offered myself to God in consecrated surrender?

Be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart. *Eph 5:18-19*

An evil man is ensnared in his transgression, but a righteous man sings and rejoices. *Prov. 29:6*

Will I take any time to pray with others this week? Other elders/leaders? My small group? Some friends? With my family? With the entire church? Who? When?

Will I fast this week? Will it be juice or water only? A one day fast; a 2-3 day fast; a one-week fast? A fast of one or more meals (including dinner)? Will I use the time I usually give to eating to spend time praying? Will I fast from entertainment for the week to create time to pray?

Will I take any extra time this week to meditate and pray? Where? When? Who will I ask to help me stay accountable?

Have I taken the time to quiet my soul?

A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh. *Prov 14:30*

Better is a handful of quietness than two hands full of toil and a striving after wind. *Ecc1 4:6*

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. *Isa 26:3*

I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me. *Ps 131:2*

- a) ...by casting my burdens on the Lord through prayer?
- b) ...by consecrating myself to the Lord and forsaking doubtful things?
- c) ...by time in quiet meditation on the Word to increase my faith?

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND UNITY

THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK

PREPARE

Review the preparation questions on page 6 prayerfully.

PONDER THE SCRIPTURES

Phil 2:1-8; Isa 45:22-23 What is the relationship between the gospel message, humility & unity? Using Phil 2:1-4, pray for unity of mind regarding the new polity of SGM.

Using **Psalm 133** pray for unity for SGM.

Using **1 Cor 1:10; Phil 1:27** pray for unity of mind as we implement the new polity of SGM.

Proverbs 2:1-7 Why is wisdom tied so closely to prayer? Why do we tend to seek wisdom from each other more than from God?

Psalm 32 What is the relationship between verses 8 & 9? How does verse 9 give us confidence that God is involved in our choices as we select leaders for SGM?

Using **Acts 6:3-7; Exod 18:21** pray for God's guidance as leaders are selected. Pray that men of integrity and wisdom will be chosen for these vital roles.

Pray for wisdom using **James 1:5** as new board members, regional leaders, and leadership team members are selected in coming days. Pray that God will place the right men in the right positions.

Eph 3:16-4:3 Unity requires supernatural empowerment through the Spirit as we are given eyes to see the wonder of God's love in the gospel!

Notice that prayer is the means of receiving this special grace from God.

1 Cor 3:1-15 First items that tear at churches are listed. Then outlooks that build churches are listed. Take note of the gospel foundation (vs 11) and gospel applications (what is "built on the foundation"; vs 10,12,14).

Phil 2:1-13 Consider the close correlation between unity, humility, the life and death of Christ, our effort and God's enablement! How do these interplay with each other? How should this affect the way we pray?

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. *Prov 17:17*

Verses to ponder on “words” Prov 10:19, Prov 11:12, Prov 12:18, Prov 15:1, Prov 16:21-24, Prov 20:19, Prov 22:11, Prov 26:20, Prov 27:6, Eccl 5:2, Eccl 6:11a.

Verses to ponder on pride and humility Prov 11:2, Prov 25:15, Prov 26:17, Prov 28:26, Hos 10:13.

Verses to ponder on respect Prov 22:1, Prov 27:18, Prov 29:9.

PONDER WISDOM FROM OTHERS

Nothing tends more to cement the hearts of Christians than praying together. Never do they love one another so well as when they witness the outpouring of each other’s hearts in prayer. *Charles Finney*

God never gives us discernment in order that we may criticize, but that we may intercede. *Oswald Chambers*

Our prayer must not be self-centered. It must arise not only because we feel our own need as a burden we must lay upon God, but also because we are so bound up in love for our fellow men that we feel their need as acutely as our own. To make intercession for men is the most powerful and practical way in which we can express our love for them. *John Calvin*

All God’s plans have the mark of the cross on them, and all His plans have death to self in them... But men’s plans ignore the offence of the cross or despise it. Men’s plans have no profound, stern or self-immolating denial in them. Their gain is of the world. *E. M. Bounds*

By prayer, the ability is secured to feel the law of love, to speak according to the law of love, and to do everything in harmony with the law of love. *E. M. Bounds*

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for united elder teams.
- Pray for unity as we implement the new polity.
- Pray for unity as we vote on a new Executive Director.
- Pray that trust, respect, and humility will characterize our relationships with each other.
- Ask God to grant unity, strength and wisdom to the regions and Regional Assemblies of Elders.

PRAY PROMISES

Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way.

Ps 25:8-9

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart,
O God, you will not despise. *Ps 51:17*

Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken
together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure
you use it will be measured back to you. *Luke 6:38*

It is well with the man who deals generously and lends; who conducts
his affairs with justice. *Ps 112:5*

When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your
brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in
return and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the
crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they
cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.

Luke 14:12-14

For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth,
to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him.

2 Chron 16:9

Whoever pursues righteousness and kindness will find life,
righteousness, and honor. *Prov 21:21*

You meet him who joyfully works righteousness, those who remember
you in your ways. Behold, you were angry, and we sinned; in our sins we
have been a long time, and shall we be saved? *Isa 64:5*

But this command I gave them: 'Obey my voice, and I will be your God,
and you shall be my people. And walk in all the way that I command
you, that it may be well with you.' *Jer 7:23*

Whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord,
whether he is a slave or free. *Eph 6:8*

Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no
cause for stumbling. *1 Jn 2:10*

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all
without reproach, and it will be given him. *James 1:5*

Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established.

Prov 16:3

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us. *Ps 67:1*

Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?
Ps 85:6

Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe in your commandments. *Ps 119:66*

Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips! *Ps 141:3*

Teach me to do your will, for you are my God! Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground! *Ps 143:10*

Restore us to yourself, O LORD, that we may be restored! Renew our days as of old. *Lam 5:21*

O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name. *Dan 9:19*

We have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy.

Col 1:9-11

And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Phil 1:9-11

Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

1 Thess 3:11-13

I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man. *Acts 24:16*

We have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. *1 Jn 4:16*

By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. I will run in the way of your commandments when you enlarge my heart! *John 13:35, Ps 119:32*

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

FROM THE VANTAGE POINT OF CHRIST'S VICTORY

PREPARE

Review the preparation questions on page 6 prayerfully.

PONDER THE SCRIPTURES

Psalm 110:1-6 How does Paul apply Ps 110:1 in Eph 1:20-23? How does this affect his prayers (Eph 6:12—note the use of “heavenly places”)?

1 Sam 13:5-7, 15, 19, 22, 1 Sam 14:1-23 A little faith and a lot of God. Is God leading us to say in faith the words of 1 Sam 14:6?

2 Kings 18:1-19:19 What are some of the strategies of Satan found in 18:19-30? What are some ways we can express the sorrow of 2 Kings 19:1-2 in our day?

Psalm 27:2-5 In this warfare Psalm, what is the key request in prayer that brings the necessary protection? Compare this to James 4:7-8. Why is communion with God a great weapon against the enemy?

Psalm 23:5-6 Note the presence of enemies concurrent with the presence of God. How does this lead us to confidently declare, “I will fear no evil” (vs 4)?

Psalm 13:1-6 Note the argumentation in this prayer. Then notice that God’s giving exceeds our asking (vs 6).

Psalm 44:3-8 Delight first, then deliverance. God ordains (vs 4) and we participate through holy living, gospel proclamation, and prayer (see Eph 6:10-18).

PONDER WISDOM FROM OTHERS

A man who is intimate with God will never be intimidated by men.

Leonard Ravenhill

If Bible Christianity is to survive the present world upheaval, we shall need to have a fresh revelation of the greatness and the beauty of Jesus... He alone can raise our cold hearts to rapture and restore again the art of true worship. *A. W. Tozer*

In worship, God imparts himself to us. *C. S. Lewis*

Prayer is the exercise of drawing on the grace of God. *Oswald Chambers*

I saw more clearly than ever, that the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was, to have my soul happy in the Lord. The first thing to be concerned about was not, how I might serve the Lord, how I might glorify the Lord; but how I might get my soul into a happy state, and how my inner man may be nourished... I saw that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the Word of God and to meditation of it. *George Mueller of Bristol*

Study your prayers, a great part of my time is spent getting in tune for prayer. *Robert McCheyne*

The one concern of the devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work and prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but he trembles when we pray. *Samuel Chadwick*

The enemy uses all his power to lead the Christian, and above all the minister, to neglect prayer. He knows that however admirable the sermon may be, however attractive the service, however faithful the pastoral visitation, none of these things can damage him or his kingdom if prayer is neglected. *Andrew Murray*

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for renewed courage in the battle.
- Pray that we would use both the defensive and offensive weapons of warfare (which includes prayer!) Eph 6:10-18.
- Pray for protection from fear, discouragement or despair. Pray for faith and courage flowing from the triumph of Christ!
- Pray that God would protect every church in Sovereign Grace.

PRAY PROMISES

As I looked, this horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them, until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom... He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. But the court shall sit in judgment, and his dominion shall be taken away, to be consumed and destroyed to the end. And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey them. *Dan 7:21-22, 25-27*

In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one. *Eph 6:16*

Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. *John 12:31-32*

Jesus Christ who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him. *1 Peter 3:22*

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. *1 Jn 3:8*

Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. *1 Jn 4:4*

I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death." *Rev 12:10-11*

They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful. *Rev 17:14*

The LORD is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek you. *Ps 9:9-10*

When the earth totters, and all its inhabitants, it is I who keep steady its pillars. *Ps 75:3*

The LORD will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore. *Ps 121:7-8*

As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds his people, from this time forth and forevermore. *Ps 125:2*

The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe. *Prov 18:10*

Oh, that my people would listen to me, that Israel would walk in my ways! I would soon subdue their enemies and turn my hand against their foes. Those who hate the LORD would cringe toward him, and their fate would last forever. But he would feed you with the finest of the wheat, and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you. *Ps 81:13-16*

Use **2 Kings 19:15-19** as the basis for prayer (applying the “mocking” of verse 16 to demonic forces). Then use Josh 7:8-9 in prayer.

Contend, O LORD, with those who contend with me; fight against those who fight against me! Take hold of shield and buckler and rise for my help! Draw the spear and javelin against my pursuers! Say to my soul, “I am your salvation!” *Ps 35:1-3*

Awake and rouse yourself for my vindication, for my cause, my God and my Lord! Vindicate me, O LORD, my God, according to your righteousness, and let them not rejoice over me! Let them not say in their hearts, “Aha, our heart’s desire!” Let them not say, “We have swallowed him up.” *Ps 35:23-25*

Deliver me from my enemies, O my God; protect me from those who rise up against me; For behold, they lie in wait for my life; fierce men stir up strife against me. O my Strength, I will watch for you, for you, O God, are my fortress. My God in his steadfast love will meet me; God will let me look in triumph on my enemies. *Ps 59:1,3, 9-10*

Have you not rejected us, O God? You do not go forth, O God, with our armies. Oh, grant us help against the foe, for vain is the salvation of man! With God we shall do valiantly; it is he who will tread down our foes.

Ps 60:10-12

Summon your power, O God, the power, O God, by which you have worked for us. *Ps 68:28*

But as for me, my prayer is to you, O LORD. At an acceptable time, O God, in the abundance of your steadfast love answer me in your saving faithfulness. Deliver me from sinking in the mire; let me be delivered from my enemies and from the deep waters. Let not the flood sweep over me, or the deep swallow me up, or the pit close its mouth over me. Answer me, O LORD, for your steadfast love is good; according to your abundant mercy, turn to me. Hide not your face from your servant; for I am in distress; make haste to answer me. *Ps 69:13-17*

But I am afflicted and in pain; let your salvation, O God, set me on high!

Ps 69:29

Make haste, O God, to deliver me! O LORD, make haste to help me! Let them be put to shame and confusion who seek my life! Let them be turned back and brought to dishonor who delight in my hurt! Let them turn back because of their shame who say, “Aha, Aha!” May all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you! May those who love your salvation say evermore, “God is great!” But I am poor and needy; hasten to me, O God! You are my help and my deliverer; O LORD, do not delay! *Ps 70:1-5*

For they persecute him whom you have struck down, and they recount the pain of those you have wounded. Your foes have roared in the midst of your meeting place; they set up their own signs for signs. We do not see our signs; there is no longer any prophet, and there is none among us who knows how long. How long, O God, is the foe to scoff? Is the enemy to revile your name forever? *Ps 69:26, Ps 74:4,9,10*

Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved! O LORD God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?
Ps 80:3-4

O LORD, my Lord, the strength of my salvation, you have covered my head in the day of battle. Grant not, O LORD, the desires of the wicked; do not further their evil plot, or they will be exalted! *Ps 140:7-8*

PRAY

FAITH AFFIRMATIONS

But as for me, I will look to the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me. Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD will be a light to me. *Micah 7:7-8*

We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.
2 Cor 10:5

The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever. *Rev 11:15*

PURSUING MISSION

FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

PREPARE

Review the preparation questions on page 6 prayerfully.

PONDER THE SCRIPTURES

Acts 2:32-36 What descended from the throne when Christ ascended to the throne? Compare this with John 14:12 & Luke 11:13. Now pray for the promise of John 14:12 using the prayer of John 14:13-14!

Meditate on the great purposes of God by connecting **Gen 12:1-3; Acts 1:8; Gal 3:8; Matt 28:19-20**. What are the implications for you... for your church... for SGM?

Ps 45:2,6,17; Heb 1:2-3,6 What does Ps 45:17 tell us about God's commitment to mission?

Isa 49:1-7 When the apostle Paul applies Isa 49:6 to him and Barnabas in Acts 13:47 ("the Lord has commanded us") do you think it is appropriate to apply it in a secondary way to us as well? What encouragement does Isa 49:1-7 give us about the heart of our God? Do you feel you carry that heart as well?

Isa 53:10- 54:3; Gal 4:27 Redemption leading to mission! Link this promise to 2 Cor 1:20 and pray, believing God wishes to answer this for SGM!

Other Scriptures: Col 1:5-7 with Col 4:3-6, 12, 1 Thess 1:8, Rom 10:13-20, Rom 15:18-21

PONDER WISDOM FROM OTHERS

It is possible to move men, through God, by prayer alone. *Hudson Taylor*

Prayer puts God's work in his hands—and keeps it there. *E. M. Bounds*

Leaders must be released from the idea that they must be great prayer warriors before they can begin to call others to prayer.

David Bryant

History is silent about revivals that did not begin with prayer. *Edwin Orr*

The greatest thing anyone can do for God and man is pray. It is not the only thing; but it is the chief thing. *S. D. Gordon*

One should never initiate anything that he cannot saturate with prayer. *Anonymous*

Prayer wonderfully clears the vision; steadies the nerves; defines duty; stiffens the purpose; sweetens and strengthens the spirit.

S. D. Gordon

Time spent in prayer will yield more than that given to work. Prayer alone gives work its worth and its success. Prayer opens the way for God Himself to do His work in us and through us. Let our chief work as God's messengers be intercession; in it we secure the presence and power of God to go with us. *Andrew Murray*

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that each region will become more fruitful in church planting (pray that the new polity and structures it provides will lead to new opportunities for collaboration resulting in a unified vision for Christ exalting mission).
- Pray for a mighty infusion of faith in God as we face the coming days.
- Pray for a vision and provision of many church plants both here and in many other nations.
- Pray for churches that love the Gospel and actively share it with the lost.
- Pray for compassion for the lost, open doors to speak, and boldness through the Holy Spirit.
- Pray for the provision of many new workers for the harvest.

PRAY PROMISES

Yet he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make known his mighty power. *Psa 106:8*

He sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction. *Psa 107:20*

Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know, and a nation that did not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, and of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you. *Isa 55:5*

In those days and in that time, declares the LORD, the people of Israel and the people of Judah shall come together, weeping as they come, and they shall seek the LORD their God. *Jer 50:4*

They shall ask the way to Zion, with faces turned toward it, saying, 'Come, let us join ourselves to the LORD in an everlasting covenant that will never be forgotten.' *Jer 50:5*

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. *Luke 19:10*

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Rom 10:17

In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. *2 Co 5:19*

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. *2 Pe 3:9*

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. *1 Jn 5:20*

All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name. *Psa 86:9*

For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations. *Isa 61:11*

And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. *Matt 24:14*

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Rev 7:9-10

PRAY

SCRIPTURE PRAYERS

Spend time thanking God for His goodness and sovereign plan for our group of churches through the trials of recent months using **Acts 4:24-31** as your guide.

To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. *2 Thess 1:11-12*

Pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. *Matt 9:38*

And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus. *Acts 4:29-30*

To you I lift up my eyes, O you who are enthroned in the heavens! Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maidservant to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD our God, till he has mercy upon us. *Ps 123:1-2*

PRAY

FAITH AFFIRMATIONS

Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. *Ps 62:8*

Our soul waits for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name. *Ps 33:20-21*

May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD. *Ps 104:34*

What shall I render to the LORD for all his benefits to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD. *Ps 116:12-13*

I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. *1 Cor 2:2*

GEORGE MÜLLER ON ANSWERED PRAYER

In George Müller's book, *Answers to Prayer*, Müller tells of a young Irishman by the name of McQuilkin who was brought to the knowledge of God in November of 1856 in Ireland. Two months after his conversion, he got hold of one of Müller's early books and became aware of the fact that things could be obtained from God through prayer, so he began to pray that God would give him a spiritual friend. Very soon God led him to another Christian young man and they began to meet for prayer each week. They prayed that God would lead them to others who knew the Lord. Soon, by autumn of 1857, one year after his conversion, the Lord brought them two more young men who were also Christians. Young McQuilkin believed that God had brought that group of four men together by believing prayer. He proposed to the other three that they should meet on Friday nights to pray for their work in the Sunday schools and in the prayer meetings and for the preaching of the gospel. So, in the autumn of 1857, they met for prayer every Friday evening. On January 1, 1858, they had their first answer to prayer. A young farm servant was converted and joined them. There were now five of them agreeing to meet and pray. Not long after, another young man, age 20, was converted and now there were six of them meeting and praying. This really encouraged the first four.

About Christmas of 1858, now this is two years into their adventure of prayer, a young man from a nearby community had been converted through the testimony of this group of men, and he went back to his little town and told his friends what had happened and this friend wanted these men to come over and preach the gospel to them and tell them about Jesus Christ. So on February 2, 1859 they all went together and held meetings in one of the churches there and as a result of those meetings, some people believed and wanted them to come back and minister again. So they came back two weeks later.

Müller wrote, "From that time on, the Spirit of God began to work and to work mightily. Souls were converted and conversions multiplied rapidly. Some of these converts went to other places and carried the spiritual fire with them. The blessed work of the Spirit of God spread in many places. Such was the beginning of that mighty work of the Holy Spirit, which has led to the conversion of hundreds of thousands. Some of my readers will remember how, in 1859, this fire was kindled and spread through Ireland, England, Wales and Scotland. How the continent of Europe was more or less partaking of this mighty working of the Holy Spirit. How it led thousands to give themselves to the work of evangelism and how, in the year 1874, not only the effects of this work first begun in Ireland was felt, but that new, more, blessed work was going on in Europe in general. It is almost needless to add that in no degree was the honor due to the instruments (which is these young men), but to the Holy Spirit alone. Yet these facts are stated in order that it may be seen what delight God has in answering abundantly the believing prayer of His children."

How big is our praying? What are we asking God to do? Let me challenge you with something. If God were to promise you that tonight at 12:00 o'clock midnight, all of your prayers would be answered—every one of them—what would change? What would change in your family? What would change in your church? What would change in your life—if all of your prayers could be answered at midnight tonight?

Source: www.praybold.org

FINAL THOUGHTS

There is neither encouragement nor room in Bible religion for feeble desires, listless efforts, lazy attitudes; all must be strenuous, urgent, ardent. Flamed desires, impassioned, unwearied insistence delight heaven. God would have His children incorrigibly in earnest and persistently bold in their efforts. Heaven is too busy to listen to half-hearted prayers or to respond to pop-calls. Our whole being must be in our praying. *E. M. Bounds*

No erudition, no purity of diction, no width of mental outlook, no flowers of eloquence, no grace of person can atone for lack of fire. Prayer ascends by fire. Flame gives prayer access as well as wings, acceptance as well as energy. There is no incense without fire; no prayer without flame. *E. M. Bounds*

The coming revival must begin with a great revival of prayer. It is in the closet, with the door shut, that the sound of abundance of rain will first be heard. An increase of secret prayer with ministers will be the sure harbinger of blessing. *Andrew Murray*

God shapes the world by prayer. Prayers are deathless. They outlive the lives of those who uttered them. *E. M. Bounds*

Natural ability and educational advantages do not figure as factors in this matter of prayer; but a capacity for faith, the power of a thorough consecration, the ability of self-littleness, an absolute losing of one's self in God's glory and an ever present and insatiable yearning and seeking after all the fullness of God. *E. M. Bounds*

