

# Building a Vibrant Prayer Ministry

A Manual for Prayer Ministry

by

Gloria Trotman, PhD, CFLE, CC  
Pastor Jansen Trotman, MA, CFLE, CC

for

Ministerial Association  
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

"God's there, listening for all who pray, for all who pray and mean it."  
Psalm 145:18 (*Message*)

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# Foreword

Do you want to begin a prayer ministry and keep it flourishing in your church? This book offers both practical strategies and inspiration to get you started.

Authors Gloria and Jansen Trotman realized early in their pastoral ministry that prayer is a vital foundation in reaching people for Jesus. Their expertise will help your church thrive and build a vibrant prayer ministry that changes lives both inside and outside your congregation.

Watch as the power of God is unleashed through prayer in amazing ways. May this book help you and your church move forward by His power on your knees.

## **Janet Page**

Associate Ministerial Secretary for Pastoral Couples, Families, and Prayer  
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

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# Introduction

We invite you to begin the wonderful journey of prayer ministry. Many authors address the inexhaustible subject of personal prayer and devotional life. We created this resource for Christians who want to get others involved as partners in prayer ministry.

While individual prayer is vital, the Bible also encourages the practice of united prayer. When Jacob was about to face his brother, Esau, after twenty years in hiding, he called his family together and led them in prayer for God's protection (Genesis 32:7-12). When Jacob was reunited with his son Joseph, he gathered the family and pronounced blessings (Genesis 48:14-20). Holy convocations were designated to mark Israel's deliverance from Egypt (Exodus 12:16). When God's people were threatened with genocide during the Persian period, Esther called for fasting (Esther 4:15-17). When Daniel was faced with the threat of death because the wise men of Babylon failed to recall and interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream, he called a prayer meeting with his friends, asking God to reveal the dream and its interpretation (Daniel 2:16-23).

Prayer also features significantly in the New Testament. When Jesus was facing the cross, He gathered His disciples together in Gethsemane to pray (Matthew 26:36-46). After the death and resurrection of Jesus, the disciples united in prayer in the upper room to pray for the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). Great was the result! The united prayers of the New Testament church secured Peter's release from prison, despite the chains on his hands and feet and the armed guards surrounding him (Acts 12:5-17). Paul and the believers in Macedonia gathered by the river to pray together (Acts 16:13-18). And Jesus promised that where two or three believers gather to pray in His name, He will be in the midst to bless (Matthew 18:20).

If the church today would organize groups for the ministry of prayer, we would have a power that all the demons of Satan could not stop. God is anxiously waiting with multiplied barrels of blessings to pour out upon His praying church.

"Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight" (Leviticus 26:8). Notice the geometric progression here. The more people who participate in prayer ministry, the more power is not just added but multiplied!

In many years of prayer ministry, we have seen God's hand intervening, not only in our personal lives but also in the lives of others and in entire congregations. A single spark is all it takes to start a fire that blesses everyone around us. Light your spark today—and let God use you in this wonderful ministry.

Jansen and Gloria Trotman

## Why a Prayer Ministry?

In the beginning, God held open communion with man. In the beautiful, serene, sinless atmosphere of the Garden of Eden, He frequently met with Adam and Eve—the masterpieces of His new creation. What joy that first couple must have experienced when God met with them face to face in the cool of the day! When we consider the enjoyment a loving father can have while fellowshiping with his precious children even today, we can only imagine how much more enjoyment the heavenly Father and His first children must have had in that perfect world.

But then sin entered the world and erected a great barrier between humans and their Creator. Man and woman could no longer enjoy that blissful, open communion with their heavenly Father. God is a consuming fire to sin (Deuteronomy 4:24; Hebrews 12:29). So after humans sinned, they could no longer see God's face and live. For our protection, God keeps us at a safe distance, lest we be incinerated (Exodus 19:20-24).

However, God yearns for fellowship and interaction with His children. He cannot wait until the second advent of Jesus to meet with us and talk with us, so He has provided the medium of prayer. Through prayer we may talk to God as we talk to a friend. We may converse with Him about anything and everything. No topic is off limits. Our loving heavenly Father loves to hear from us. Prayer is the means by which we take our joys and sorrows, our successes and failures, our hopes and fears to our heavenly Father, who wants us to come to Him confidently. "So let's walk right up to him and get what he is so ready to give. Take the mercy, accept the help" (Hebrews 4:16, *Message*).

In Psalm 50:15, God declares, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me." David says in Psalm 86:7, "In the day of my trouble I will call upon You, for You will answer me." If ever there was a time to pray, it is now. Global calamities, global economic crises, global epidemics, and global social ills—all have become commonplace in our era. So many things—personal, national, and global—make prayer a necessity. We cannot bear these burdens by ourselves. Not every prayer of ours has been answered the way we desired, but many have been, and we trust God to answer the others in His way and time. That hope keeps us praying on.

Sometimes, in picking the roses, we have been pricked by the thorns, but still we love to go on picking and smelling the roses. Sometimes we have gone strolling on a sunny day and gotten caught in a downpour of rain, but still we enjoy another stroll on another day. Praying may not always get us all that we want, but it will always get us all that we need (Philippians 4:19). We have discovered that denied requests have often been among our best blessings. We have learned that the real purpose of prayer is not

to bring God into harmony with *our* plans but to bring *us* into harmony with His. It is more important to be on God's side than to get God to come over to our side.

King Ahab learned this the hard way (1 Kings 22). In his determination to get Jehoshaphat to join him in battle against Ramoth-Gilead, he secured four hundred lying prophets to support what he wanted. Because he didn't want to hear the truth, Ahab imprisoned the one true prophet, Micaiah. King Ahab paid dearly for this. His army was defeated, and he himself died in battle. We need to trust God to do always what is best for us. He will never fail us.

Prayer is not an empty soliloquy. We are not talking to ourselves or to the sky; we are conversing with a real Person. But more than that, we are conversing with the most important and majestic Person in the universe (Psalm 95:3; 135:5; 86:8; Deuteronomy 10:17).

These are the days of automated answering services. We dial a telephone number and begin to talk as a voice responds at the other end of the line. After a few moments, we realize we are talking to a machine. Sometimes we laugh; at other times we become angry. Sometimes we wait endlessly and fruitlessly for a real person to come on the line to attend to us. God, however, is always on heaven's line. It is never busy, and there is no call waiting. In fact, He is standing by heaven's receiver: "It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear" (Isaiah 65:24). "The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them" (Psalm 145:18, 19).

We pray because our loving heavenly Father loves to converse with us (Jeremiah 29:12; 33:3). If we have time and voice to talk, He is always ready to listen (Psalm 34:15; 1 Peter 3:12). He longs to have a Father-child relationship with us. Jesus taught us to call God "Our Father" (Matthew 6:9, 32; 5:16, 45).

We pray because God has rich blessings to bestow on us (Psalm 81:10; Ephesians 1:3; Deuteronomy 28:2). We pray because it is our lifeline connection to God, the Source of all life. In Him, our strength is renewed (John 6:35, 48; 10:10). We pray because it is our armor against the forces of darkness (Luke 22:31, 32; Matthew 26:53). We pray because it is an unsurpassed privilege. "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). To the man of prayer, the gates of heaven are open wide, and he can walk right in to the throne room of the Monarch of the universe and sit down in fellowship with the King of kings and call Him "Father."

## Seven Steps to a Successful Prayer Ministry

Certain steps will help you create a successful prayer ministry:

### **Step One: Have a Personal Prayer Ministry**

All sincere Christians want to enjoy a more intimate relationship with God (Philippians 3:10). They experience an indescribable pleasure in His presence (Psalm 16:11). Before we can help others reap the benefits of a prayer ministry, we must first experience it for ourselves. Then we can truly say, "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him" (Psalm 34:8). Imagine a travel agent, who has never left town on a trip, trying to convince others to do so. Or imagine an ice cream vendor, who has never sampled any of his own ice cream, telling customers how delicious his ice cream is. How convincing would that be? The Psalmist prayed, "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation. . . . Then I will teach transgressors Your ways" (Psalm 51:12, 13). Sometimes we need to reboot our own spiritual life before we can help others.

**First**, ask God to teach you how to pray. The disciples discerned a richness in Jesus' prayer life and desired to pray as He prayed. There is a difference between real praying and merely saying prayers. Saying prayers is going through the motions of prayer because it is the thing to do. There is little "heart work" involved. This kind of prayer is just a habit learned from childhood, much like eating, dressing, and saying "thank you." Real praying, however, is talking with God as with a best friend. It is baring our hearts to a Person we love who also loves us. It is a real love relationship.

One of the best ways to learn to pray is to study the prayers in the Bible, especially those recorded in Psalms. You'll find a wide range of prayers that embrace the diverse experiences of humanity. These prayers include expressions of sadness and joy, defeat and victory, confession and praise, needs and thanksgiving.

**Second**, make a prayer agreement with God. While any time is a good time to pray, we benefit from committing to specific times when we will meet with God. Think of it as having a date. David felt that he needed to pray seven times daily (Psalm 119:164). Daniel the prophet decided that three times a day suited his purpose (Daniel 6:10). Many notable Christians often spent several hours a day in prayer. It is not so much the quantity and length of our petitions that matter to God as it is the fervency of our prayers (James 5:16-18).

**Third**, prepare your heart (Psalm 24:4; Matthew 5:8; Hebrews 10:22; 1 Timothy 2:8). When you have an appointment with a dignitary, celebrity, or anyone else of importance, it is natural to prepare yourself. We pay careful attention to our dress, our

grooming, and our social graces because we want to make a favorable impression. We should remember, therefore, that prayer is an appointment with the most important Being of the universe. God's invitation to meet with us in prayer is like no other.

**Fourth**, make a list of things, persons, situations, and challenges for which to pray. Ask the Holy Spirit to help as you compile your list. The Holy Spirit has been given to help us pray aright (Romans 8:26, 27). Your list may include personal needs, family members, church matters, world conditions, praise, and thanksgiving. Although God knows all things, it is His plan to let us ask for the blessings that we seek (John 5:6; Luke 18:35-43). The matter of asking helps to increase our faith as we approach God.

### **Step Two: Saturate Yourself with the Word of God**

The Bible is filled with encouragement and examples regarding prayer (Hebrews 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:17). Note the first prayer in Genesis 3:10, as Adam conversed with God: "So he said, 'I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.'" What a pity that the first recorded conversation of man with God was Adam expressing fear of his Creator. Even today, many approach God with fear and trembling, but God wants us to come to Him confidently and out of love.

The Bible's last prayer is recorded in Revelation 22:20: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" Dake Annotated Bible (KJV) lists 176 prayers in the Old Testament and 46 in the New Testament. These are actually worded prayers, not just references to prayer. The sword of the Spirit is one of the most powerful weapons in the Christian's arsenal for a victorious prayer life. Studying the prayers of the Bible is not just a useful exercise but also a most enriching and rewarding experience.

### **Step Three: Immerse Yourself in the Spirit of Prophecy**

God gave the remnant church this unique gift to help us navigate end-time challenges (Revelation 12:17; 19:10). The gift of prophecy was manifested in the life and ministry of Ellen G. White. As the messenger of the Lord, she calls us in her writings (the Spirit of Prophecy) to a deeper, richer reflection on the Word of God. Many of her books cover essential subjects related to Christian living, such as prayer. White herself maintained a strong prayer life, and some of her finest thoughts on the topic have been compiled in a volume entitled *Prayer*. This book is an indispensable resource for anyone who desires a firm grasp on the science and practice of prayer.

In addition to the works of Ellen White, you may be blessed by other books about prayer written by spiritual giants such as E. M. Bounds, C. H. Spurgeon, Andrew Murray, R. A. Torrey, George Müller, and M. L. Andreason.

### **Step Four: Determine Your Vision for this Prayer Ministry**

Your vision will be so compelling that it can only be realized with God's help. Prayer ministry is not your ministry alone; it is also God's ministry. "Vision is a clear and precise

mental portrait of a preferable future, imparted by God to His chosen servants, based on an accurate understanding of God, self and circumstances” (George Barna, *Turning Vision into Action*, pp. 35, 36).

Your vision may look something like this: “Prayer will become the hallmark of this congregation. By prayer and supplication, we will get the entire \_\_\_\_\_ Church to become a praying church, in readiness for the outpouring of God’s Holy Spirit and for our Lord’s return. Our church will become a ‘house of prayer for all people’ (Isaiah 56:7).”

When God gives you a vision, He also gives an unquenchable desire to pursue it until the vision becomes reality. Visions of ministry received from God have an intriguing quality of continual unfolding. Like Paul, the visionary leader admits, “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13, 14).

When God wants a task done, He first equips the person He has chosen to do it. It is a grave mistake to attempt what God has not equipped you to do. But a sling, placed by God in the hand of David, is more awesome than an army of ten thousand soldiers in the battle against Goliath. A trumpet to Gideon’s mouth and a pitcher in his hand can put to flight an entire army, if God directs. God often prepares us for the task and then commissions us. In Exodus 31, when God wanted the fine work done for the tabernacle, He told Moses, “I have chosen Bezalel, son of Uri . . . and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills” (Exodus 31:2, 3, NIV).

### **Preparing Your Vision Statement**

Your vision statement as a prayer leader will be influenced by your organization’s vision (if there is a stated one), the organization’s mission, and the organization’s core values.

The first step is to write a description with as much detail as possible. State what you would like to see your prayer ministry accomplish, by the help of God, in the next one to five years. Create a “dream list” with as many things as possible that you would like to have the ministry achieve under your leadership and through the power of the Holy Spirit (Zechariah 4:6). The clearer you are in stating what you envision, the more motivated you will be to realize it. A vision is not just a goal. It must be challenging. It must demand your best efforts and energies, linked with divine power. The next step is to sift and condense your list to a manageable size, focusing on the most important issues.

Remember that a vision is dynamic and not static. From time to time you may need to evaluate, modify, and update it. In time you will need to share your vision with those you serve: local church, conference, or union.

#### **Step Five: Create a Mission Statement for the Prayer Ministry**

Your mission statement expresses the purpose for your ministry and how you plan to achieve it. It defines what your ministry is all about, why it exists, and what you hope to accomplish. It clarifies the purpose of your ministry in clear, succinct language. A mission statement is helpful not just to keep you focused and on track but also to let others know what you are about. You may need to discuss the mission with your core prayer ministry members and get their input in crafting a compelling statement. Put it down on paper and share it with the church/conference.

Look at the mission statements of your conference, union, General Conference, or other ministries to find a pattern. The mission statement should address your environment, utilize your strengths, be realistic, and be easily understood. Here is an example: "The Prayer Ministry members of the \_\_\_\_\_ Church, following the example of Jesus, are partners in prayer to prepare ourselves, the church, and the community to face end-time challenges. We exist to help the membership to grow in the likeness of Christ and become prayer partners who work to build up one another."

#### **Step Six: Recruit Prayer Partners**

It is important to receive the endorsement and appointment to serve as the Prayer Ministries coordinator for your organization. After this is done, then you can set about recruiting others as team members. Jesus declared, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). Even Jesus Himself gathered others to pray with Him to advance His ministry. While God can use even one dedicated person, He encourages us to work *together* for His cause (John 17:20, 21, 23; Acts 2:1-4).

Recruit young and old. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams" (Acts 2:17). Ensure that those you recruit have a burden for this ministry. Don't wait for large numbers. Begin with even a few willing and dedicated ones.

#### **Step Seven: Launch the Prayer Ministry**

It is important to get everyone in the boat rowing in the same direction. The leadership of your organization should be consulted and informed. The church pastor is a key contact if your ministry is in the local church. The conference president is also key if the ministry is conference-wide. In addition, seek the support of your church board or conference committee. Have sound, concrete plans to present to them. After consulting with leaders, you are then free to take your plans to the church at large. While you do

not need or even want every church member to be part of the main ministry team, you will want everyone to pray for your ministry.

An excellent way to give the ministry a jump start is to have a launching day with a special program on a Sabbath. Let the service focus on prayer in the life of the church, as well as the importance of prayer to the individual member. Introduce the prayer ministry team to the congregation and share your goals.

In the case of unions and conferences, promotional material should be prepared and sent out to local congregations. Another good idea is for each level of the organization to appoint a Prayer Ministries coordinator who, with the support of the administration, will be responsible for promoting prayer ministry throughout the constituency. In our union, it was a tremendous help to have each local field send us the names of a few prayer warriors who became part of a union-wide prayer team. This group was kept informed of challenges and burdens that the union faced so they could unite with us in prayer on these matters. "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven" (Matthew 18:19). This unified approach is consistent with Jesus requesting His disciples to pray with Him during His agony in Gethsemane.

Finally, remember to network with others who are involved in a prayer ministry. Many useful ideas can be gleaned this way.

## CHAPTER 3

# Running the Ministry—Execution

Now that the groundwork for prayer ministry has been laid, some important elements must be attended to:

**Meetings:** Discuss with your team the best time for regular meetings. Special circumstances may demand special meetings.

**Preparation:** Know what will take place at the meetings. Leave nothing to chance.

**Promotion:** Keep the church aware of the needs and benefits of this ministry. Share answers to prayer.

**Delegation:** Do not feel that you have to do all of the work alone. The ability to delegate is a gift of leadership.

**Time:** Regular sessions need not last longer than one hour.

**Place:** The church is a good place for ministry meetings. However, sessions may be outdoors or in members' homes.

**Frequency:** Some may prefer to meet monthly; others, weekly. In addition, the group may have set hours when they pray without coming together physically.

**Intergenerational:** Include all age groups and all genders. Samuel, David, Mary, Daniel, and Esther are examples of young prayer warriors in the Bible.

### Leading Your Prayer Ministry Successfully

1. Accept your leadership responsibility with joy. It is God's work, not man's work (Colossians 3:23, 24).
2. Realize that to aspire to leadership in God's work is an honorable ambition (1 Timothy 3:1).
3. Pray about your work. God is ready to supply all the resources you need (Philippians 4:19).
4. Know that when God calls someone to serve, He also equips that person. God is saddened by ineptness and inefficiency in His work (Exodus 3).
5. Remember that your ministry is *part* of the whole, not the whole. It is like one segment in the orange, or one spoke in the wagon wheel, or one brigade in the army (1 Corinthians 12).

6. Ask, "How can I lead this ministry to best glorify God?" (1 Corinthians 10:31). Have a clear vision, goals, and mission for your area of service.
7. Work closely and harmoniously with other church officers or conference or union leaders (1 Corinthians 3:9).
8. Study the books and other materials that the church has provided for your ministry (2 Timothy 2:15).
9. Be aware that church leadership is different from secular leadership. Be a humble servant (Matthew 20:25, 26).
10. Remember that the goal of each ministry is evangelistic. How can you lead others to Christ? Plan for this aspect of your responsibility (Matthew 28:18-20).
11. Pray often about your ministry and the part you have to play in the kingdom of God (James 1:5; Matthew 7:7).
12. Keep within the parameters that the church has set for your area of service (1 Chronicles 12:33).
13. Do not expose the church to legal problems by your actions and decisions (Romans 13:1).
14. Advance planning is vital to ministry success (1 Chronicles 12:32). "He who fails to plan is planning to fail."
15. Seek wise counsel for any plans you propose to undertake. It is not your own ignorance but failure to seek wise counsel that is the shame (Proverbs 11:14).
16. Be aware that the church has set in place levels of responsibility and authority. Respect this order. Anyone who cannot follow this principle is unfit to lead any ministry (1 Timothy 5:17; Romans 13:7).
17. Work with a clean heart and pure motives. God will not bless your work otherwise (Matthew 5:8).
18. Don't get side-tracked by petty issues and squabbles. Stay focused on what your purpose is (Matthew 5:37).
19. Settle any differences and conflicts with others in the spirit of Christ (Matthew 5:23, 24, 39).
20. Stay strong and focused even under criticism and opposition. Let God champion your cause (Acts 20:22-24).
21. Understand the difference between destructive and constructive criticism (Ephesians 4:29-32).
22. Communicate regularly with your team. Keep everyone rowing in the same direction.
23. Approach your responsibility with humility (Matthew 20:27, 28).
24. Remember that you are Christ's ambassador in the leading of your ministry. Represent Him always (2 Corinthians 5:20).
25. Everywhere you go, let your conduct reflect your connection with Christ (Ephesians 5:1).
26. Pick the right leadership style for the task at hand. (Sometimes you may need to function as an encourager, motivator, supporter, director, pacifier, or promoter.)
27. Go forward with God (Psalm 27:3; Isaiah 41:10).

## CHAPTER 4

# Blessings for Which to Pray

The prayer ministries team will have many items for which to pray. At meetings, select a few to focus on. "And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive" (Matthew 21:22).

Following is a suggested list of matters to pray for. You will think of others, and some items on this list may not be relevant to your current ministry or location. Use this as a list to get you started. Pray for:

1. Yourself and a pure heart.
2. Victory over besetting sin and temptation.
3. Strength to face personal battles and struggles.
4. Personal health and healing, and for others who are sick.
5. The experience of genuine conversion, personally and collectively.
6. Unity among the members of God's church.
7. Preparation and assurance for the time of trouble before us.
8. Our children and young people to become good examples of Christ.
9. The academic success of our students.
10. Our Christian schools and our students, wherever they attend school.
11. Our families to enjoy peace, harmony, and success.
12. A personal pentecostal experience.
13. The outpouring of God's Spirit on the entire church.
14. The binding of Satan so that the gospel can go forward with power.
15. The faithfulness of all members.
16. Greater fervency among us for the spread of the gospel.
17. Our leaders and officers to be good examples of Christian behavior.
18. Our church building program.
19. The financial needs of all to be supplied.
20. The success of our evangelistic programs.
21. The return of prodigals and former believers.
22. Parents to get godly wisdom for training children in this present age.
23. Safety and peace for military families.
24. Wisdom and understanding for the leaders of the nation and world.
25. The community around us, as well as the nation and world, to receive a mighty religious awakening and to accept God's truth for these last days.
26. The breaking down of Satan's barriers and strongholds in our homes, church, and community.
27. Greater love to saturate our lives individually and as a church.
28. The hastening of Christ's return to gather His children home.

## CHAPTER 5

# Intercessory Prayer

Much of prayer ministry is intercessory praying—praying for others. “No one prays aright, who prays for himself alone,” someone has said. We often have so many needs and burdens of our own that we forget to pray for others, or we may pray for them too little.

God has called us to stand in the gap between others and divine judgment. “So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it” (Ezekiel 22:30). May He find among us some who will stand in the gap for our church, for this generation, for this city, for this nation, for our world, by our intercessory prayers. Woe is pronounced upon us if we fail to do this (Ezekiel 13:3-5).

Selfish praying backfires and leaves us with our own prayers for ourselves unanswered. “Yet even when you do pray, your prayers are not answered, because you pray just for selfish reasons” (James 4:3, CEV). Jesus is our intercessor right now, at the Father’s right hand (Hebrews 7:25), but while on earth, He was also constantly interceding for others. In His last recorded prayer (John 17), He spent most of His time praying for others. When Peter was facing the test of his life, Jesus assured him that while Satan was attacking him, his Savior was praying for him (Luke 22:31, 32).

Moses, the man of God, was an unparalleled intercessor. He prayed even for those who opposed him (Exodus 32:30-32; Numbers 12:1-13; Numbers 14:1, 20). The apostle Paul not only sought intercession from the brethren on his own behalf (2 Corinthians 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; Hebrews 13:18) but often reminded them of *his* intercession on *their* behalf (Romans 1:9; Ephesians 1:16; 1 Thessalonians 1:2; Philippians 1:4). Paul tells us clearly that we have an obligation to intercede for all men (1 Timothy 2:1).

Jesus commands His followers to pray even for those who do us wrong (Luke 6:28). He left us His own example to follow (Luke 23:34). Stephen, the first Christian martyr, emulated the Master (Acts 7:59, 60). The point is, no one is exempt from needing our intercessory prayers. We will be blessed if we spend time sincerely praying for others.

Lord, help me live from day to day  
In such a self-forgetful way,  
That even when I kneel to pray,  
My prayer shall be for others.

Others, Lord, yes others,  
Let this my motto be;  
Help me to live for others,  
That I may live like Thee.  
—Charles D. Meigs

Make a list of persons near and far, friend and foe, for whom you can intercede. Be sure to include persons who are not yet your friends. Remember to intercede for your fellow church members, the youth, the sick, the world church, missionaries, church leaders, earth's trouble spots, your neighborhood, your nation, and world people groups. The list is endless. Now you see why notable Christians spend so much time in prayer. One of the great joys we have experienced over the years has been meeting people who shared with us the fact that they regularly prayed for us.

## Forms and Ways of Praying

Prayer can take place in so many different forms. Let variety add color to your prayer ministry.

1. Prayer walking. Go out in twos and threes. As you pass people, cars, or buildings, say a silent prayer for those you are passing. Sometimes the Holy Spirit will impress you to say a word of encouragement to a needy soul. Prayer walking is easy because it does not require conversation with anyone. Some prayer walkers leave door hangers/cards with printed prayers on car windshields or door knobs.
2. Praying God's Word. Search the Bible for promises and other texts and pray them back to God. For example, "God, You said, 'I will never leave you.' I need You now."
3. Praying God's attributes. Pick an attribute of God and dwell on it in prayer (for example, God's mercy, graciousness, love).
4. Praying names of God. Pick one or more of God's names and use it in your prayer.
5. Praying the names of the Holy Spirit (Comforter, Guide, etc.).
6. Praying the name of Jesus.
7. Praying the Psalms. Pick a psalm to suit your particular need and pray that psalm.
8. Praying the parables. Meditate on a chosen parable and pray about that lesson.
9. Praying the miracles. Pick a miracle that may pertain to your own illness or interest and claim healing.
10. Praying in song. Sing your prayer. Many of the powerful hymns are prayers.
11. Prayer breakfasts. Have an early morning prayer session followed by breakfast and fellowship. Members love this.
12. All-night prayer meeting. Most effective on Friday nights because of the Sabbath atmosphere. Encourage members to take a nap before coming to the service, which could begin at 9:30 on Friday night and end on Sabbath morning around 9:00. (See sample program in Supplementary Information at the end of this book.)
13. School of Prayer. Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them to pray. Many members, old and new, could benefit from lessons on how to pray.
14. Praying the sanctuary. A mental tour of the sanctuary (Exodus 25, 26, 27) offers several prayer points: the laver inspires prayer for cleansing; the lamb leads us to thank God for the Lamb of God who takes away our sin; the mercy seat urges us to plead for God's mercy and grace.

15. Use the A-C-T-S formula sometimes.

**A = Adoration**

Spend time giving adoration and praise to God for who He is.

**C = Confession**

We frequently need to confess our sins and receive God's forgiveness.

**T = Thanksgiving**

We thank God for what He has done and His numerous blessings.

**S = Supplication**

We make our requests known to God, who always knows what is best.

16. Use the ABC formula sometimes.

**A = Ask**

God invites us to ask. Ask confidently.

**B = Believe**

Faith is indispensable for answered prayer.

**C = Claim**

Claim God's promise to supply all your needs. Thank Him in advance for the answer to your prayer.

## Conditions for Answered Prayer

What are the basic principles that make our prayers more acceptable to God, and therefore more effective? We find many helpful guidelines when we study the prayers of the Bible.

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you pray aright. "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26).
2. Study what the Bible has to say about your specific need or desire and pray God's Word back to Him (Philippians 4:19; Proverbs 3:5, 6).
3. Be as specific as possible (Nehemiah 1:5-11; Luke 18:41).
4. Claim specific promises of God in Scripture (1 Kings 8:56; 2 Corinthians 1:20; 2 Peter 1:4).
5. Visualize the presence of God. He is a real, personal Being (Acts 17:27, 28; Exodus 3:1-5; Genesis 28:16, 17).
6. Keep focused on prayer. Control wandering thoughts (James 1:6-8; 5:16b; Isaiah 26:2-4).
7. Persevere in prayer. Do not give up too soon (Luke 18:1-8; Genesis 32:26).
8. Pray in faith. Believe that God will fulfill His promise (Mark 5:22, 23; Mark 9:18-29; Hebrews 4:16; 11:6).
9. Submit to God's will. He is too wise and loving to always give us what we want (Daniel 2:20-22; 2 Corinthians 12:7; Romans 11:33-35).
10. Come to God in humility (Luke 18:9-14; Psalms 34:18; 51:16, 17; 138:6).
11. Pray in the name of Jesus, in the spirit of Jesus, having the mind of Jesus (John 14:12-14; 16:23; 20:31; 1 John 3:22; Proverbs 18:10).
12. Come before God with clean hands and a pure heart (Psalm 66:18; Isaiah 1:15; 59:1).
13. Forgive anyone who has injured or troubled you in any way (Matthew 6:12, 14, 15; Ephesians 4:31, 32).
14. Sometimes we may need the support of others in prayer (James 5:13-16; Matthew 18:20).
15. Sometimes a matter may be of such great importance that we may need to fast along with our praying (Matthew 17:21; Nehemiah 9:1, 2; Esther 4:3; Daniel 9:3).

One thing is certain: God loves to hear and answer the prayers of His children. If we can find time and words to pray, our Heavenly Father will answer. "The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth" (Psalm 145:18).

## CHAPTER 8

# The Children's Prayer Movement

Children have always been close to the heart of Jesus. They were in the front of the Galilee gatherings; they were invited by Jesus and placed by their mothers in Jesus' lap, even against the disciples' protests:

"The people brought children to Jesus, hoping He might touch them. The disciples shooed them off. But Jesus was irate and let them know it: 'Don't push these children away. Don't ever get between them and me. These children are at the very center of life in the kingdom. Mark this: Unless you accept God's kingdom in the simplicity of a child, you'll never get in.' Then, gathering the children up in his arms, he laid his hands of blessing on them" (Mark 10:13-16, *Message*).

Jesus made clear His special interest in children and announced His strong feelings against those who sought to harm them. "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:6).

The Bible tells stories of children who were used by God, such as Samuel and Timothy. And it was a little boy's lunch that was used as the starter meal for a luncheon that fed more than five thousand people on the grassy plains. "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?" (John 6:9). Jesus accepted the miniature resources of a child and placed His anointing on that little snack. The result was a banquet!

Also throughout history, child preachers have made their mark on different countries. God also has a place for children in prayer ministry.

Here are some suggestions for a children's prayer movement:

### **The Purpose**

1. To establish and cement a lasting relationship with Jesus through prayer.
2. To teach children to communicate with God through prayer.
3. To serve as a witness to the community.

### **What the Purpose is Not**

1. Not to create perfect children.
2. Not to criticize them when they make mistakes.

**Age**

1. Children of all ages are ideal for this movement. Use them in age-appropriate activities.
2. Teens should also be encouraged to help in this movement.

**Preparation (Plans)**

1. Lay the plan before God.
2. Get the whole church involved.
3. Select adult sponsors for the prayer movement. These must be people who relate well to children. They must be properly screened.
4. Form a Children's Prayer Movement Committee. The composition may be the pastor, elder, children's division leader, Adventurer/Pathfinder leader, etc. This will also serve as the official prayer band for the movement.

**Preparation (Physical)**

1. Attractive advertising posters.
2. Badges/buttons.

**Preparation (Spiritual)**

1. Ongoing prayer groups for the children.
2. Involvement of children in church services.
3. Children's prayer meetings.
4. Adult-child prayer partners (these must be thoroughly screened, and they should meet for prayer in semi-public areas, not in secluded locations).

## The Place of Prayer in Evangelism

### **The church's challenge:**

Signs of the times declare that the end of the world is near. The prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, Matthew 24, Luke 21, and 2 Timothy 3:1-5 are being fulfilled before our very eyes. We see natural signs, social signs, political signs, religious signs, and prophetic signs. Jesus is anxious to return to claim His chosen people. However, many in the church and in the world are not prepared for His coming. God is not slow, but longsuffering (2 Peter 3:9, 10).

### **Every member is to be involved.**

God has charged His church with evangelizing the world. Every convert is commissioned to be a convert maker, and all heaven waits with intense eagerness to see the church fulfill this responsibility (Luke 8:26-40; Acts 8:1-4; John 20:21).

"Not upon the ordained minister only rests the responsibility of going forth to fulfill this commission. Everyone who has received Christ, is called to work for the salvation of his fellow men. . . . Everyone who has heard the invitation is to echo the message from hill and valley, saying, 'Come'" (Ellen White, *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 110).

"God expects personal service from everyone to whom He has entrusted a knowledge of the truth for this time" (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 30).

### **The evangelization of the world depends first and foremost on a revival in prayer.**

Prayer is an indispensable element in this warfare for souls (Acts 6:1-7; Acts 2:1-4; Acts 1:8). Prayer is not just a helpful additive to the evangelistic program. Prayer *is* evangelism (Matthew 9:38; Luke 10:2). Before the disciples were able to achieve the success of the Day of Pentecost, they spent much time agonizing in prayer. Referring to this experience, Ellen White says, "The disciples prayed with intense earnestness for a fitness to meet men and in their daily intercourse to speak words that would lead sinners to Christ. Putting away all differences, all desire for the supremacy, they came close together in Christian fellowship" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 37). All our evangelistic efforts should be saturated with prayer before, during, and after the initiatives. This is the most important aspect of all our evangelistic planning.

### **Why is prayer so important in evangelism?**

- A. We are in spiritual warfare, and our weapons must be spiritual (Ephesians 6:12; 2 Corinthians 10:4).
- B. Prayer is one of our most powerful weapons because it can do anything God can do (Genesis 18:14).

- C. It helps to remove all hindrances (2 Chronicles 7:14; Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 124).
- D. By prayer, we carry on the work of God (Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 362).
- E. Through it we seek the Holy Spirit, without whom no sinner can be won to Christ (Luke 24:49; Ellen White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 511, 512).
- F. All great spiritual revivals began with prayer.
- G. Jesus, the world's best Evangelist, saturated His work with prayer (Luke 6:12, 13).

### **What happens when the church prays?**

- A. We become united in Christian love (John 17:20-23; Ellen White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 36-38).
- B. We have less bickering and strife in the church.
- C. We see more holiness of life among members.
- D. More hearts will be reached with the gospel (Ellen White, *Evangelism*, p. 342).
- E. Many more conversions to the truth will take place (Ellen White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 38).
- F. We will have more spiritual power to face the enemy.
- G. The church will be on fire spiritually (Acts 2:1-4).

### **How to go about it:**

- A. Individually pray for revival.
- B. Encourage other individuals to pray for souls.
- C. Have group prayer in all meetings of the church.
- D. Hold all-night prayer meetings (Luke 6:12).
- E. Organize a prayer calendar for the church.
- F. Organize prayer bands. Never underestimate the power of prayer bands in evangelistic programs. Spurgeon, the prince of preachers, attributed his evangelistic success to this.
- G. Schedule prayer spots throughout the day.
- H. Remember to include the children and youth in prayer initiatives.

### **Conclusion**

Jesus is calling for prayer evangelists now. Time is short. A restless God and restless angels anxiously wait for members to catch the evangelistic fire. Don't wait for the whole church to be motivated.

"As it was in the days of Noah . . ." is the way Jesus describes our times. Only eight were saved. What happened to the others? Were they waiting on others? Were they too earthly minded? Were they too fascinated with sin? Were they listening to the wrong weather reports?

When the patience of God ran out, “the door was shut” (Genesis 7). It was too late for many!

Now is the time for us to fall on our knees and ask God to prepare us for His coming and to help us prepare others. God is counting on you to stand in the gap now. Elijah on Mt. Carmel was faced with a challenge to stand up for God before an apostate nation (1 Kings 18). Even the king on the throne, along with his wife, was steeped in idolatry. But God had one man to represent Him—one man of God against 850 false prophets! Elijah’s power was not in numbers but in *prayer* (James 5:17). This victory is still being talked about today.

God’s pledge is that if we humble ourselves and pray He will hear and answer (2 Chronicles 7:14). Where are the modern-day Elijahs for God to work with? Are you one of them?

# Supplementary Information

# A Letter— From Jesus to You

Dear Friend,

I miss My time with you. Since you are one of My special friends (John 15:15), I have been hoping and waiting for you to spend some quality time with Me at prayer meeting time at My house at [NAME AND ADDRESS OF LOCAL CHURCH].

I once invited some other people to meet with Me, but they made light of it, made many excuses, and turned down My invitation (Luke 14:16-24). I was very disappointed and saddened, but I turned to others who were happy and excited to come and meet Me. Is anything more important than meeting with Me? (Matthew 6:33; Psalm 16:11; Psalm 122:1).

You see, My friend, My house is designated to be a house of prayer for you. (Isaiah 56:7; 2 Chronicles 6:20; Mark 11:17), and it hurts Me when you forsake meeting with My other friends for praise and fellowship in My house (Hebrews 10:25).

I have issued another invitation for extraordinary fellowship with Me in my Father's house (John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 2:9; 1 Peter 1:3, 4), but if you don't enjoy meeting with Me at prayer meeting time now, how will you enjoy it then in My Father's other house? Besides, I come with special blessings and answers to your prayers during each prayer meeting (Matthew 18:20; Psalm 92:13), but you don't seem to want them. Perhaps that is the reason why some of your prayers are not answered (2 Chronicles 7:13-16). The united praying of My church has uncommon power and moves Me to action (Acts 12:5, 7, 12; Acts 2:1-4).

Prayer meetings are My means of strengthening you to face life's trials and battles (Matthew 11:28; James 5:16). These times of prayer also prepare your heart to meet Me when I return to take you home to heaven (1 Peter 4:7).

I am inviting you once more to visit with Me at prayer meeting time. If you reject my invitation, don't be surprised or disappointed if you miss out on the wonderful blessings I have prepared for you. I really miss you when you are absent from prayer meeting.

Will I see you there at the next prayer meeting?

—Jesus

P.S.

Prayer and Worship Are Essential to Spiritual Growth—"Seek every opportunity to go where prayer is wont to be made. Those who are really seeking for communion with God will be seen in the prayer meeting, faithful to do their duty and earnest and anxious to reap all the benefits they can gain. They will improve every opportunity of placing themselves where they can receive the rays of light from heaven" (Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 98).

## Quotations on Prayer by Ellen G. White

"Those who will put on the whole armor of God and devote some time every day to meditation and prayer and to the study of the Scriptures will be connected with heaven and will have a saving, transforming influence upon those around them."

*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 112

"Religion must begin with emptying and purifying the heart, and must be nurtured by daily prayer."

*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 535

"Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, 'Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide in me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee.'"

*Steps to Christ*, p. 70

"If the Savior of men, the Son of God, felt the need of prayer, how much more should feeble, sinful mortals feel the necessity of fervent, constant prayer? Our heavenly Father waits to bestow upon us the fullness of His blessing. . . . Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence?"

*Steps to Christ*, pp. 94, 95

"At the sound of fervent prayer, Satan's whole host trembles. He continues to call legions of evil angels to accomplish his object. And when angels, all-powerful, clothed with the armory of heaven, come to the help of the fainting, pursued soul, Satan and his host fall back, well knowing that their battle is lost." *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 346

"'Come unto Me,' is His invitation. Whatever your anxieties and trials, spread out your case before the Lord."

*The Desire of Ages*, p. 329

"There is no time or place in which it is inappropriate to offer up a petition to God. There is nothing that can prevent us from lifting up our hearts in the spirit of earnest prayer. In the crowds of the street, in the midst of a business engagement, we may send up a petition to God and plead for divine guidance, as did Nehemiah when he made his request before King Artaxerxes."

*Steps to Christ*, p. 99

"We should go to Jesus and tell Him all our needs. We may bring Him our little cares and perplexities as well as our greater troubles. Whatever arises to disturb or distress us, we should take it to the Lord in prayer. When we feel that we need the presence of Christ at every step, Satan will have little opportunity to intrude his temptations."  
*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 200, 201

"It is a wonderful thing that we can pray effectually; that unworthy, erring mortals possess the power of offering their requests to God. What higher power can man desire than this—to be linked with the infinite God?"  
*Gospel Workers*, 1915, p. 258

"Rest yourself wholly in the hands of Jesus. Contemplate His great love, and while you meditate upon His self-denial, His infinite sacrifice made in our behalf in order that we should believe in Him, your heart will be filled with holy joy, calm peace, and indescribable love. As we talk of Jesus, as we call upon Him in prayer, our confidence that He is our personal, loving Savior will strengthen, and His character will appear more and more lovely."  
*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 311

"If we keep the Lord ever before us, allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and praise to Him, we shall have a continual freshness in our religious life. Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God as we would talk with a friend. He will speak His mysteries to us personally."  
*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 129

"The darkness of the evil one encloses those who neglect to pray. The whispered temptations of the enemy entice them to sin; and it is all because they do not make use of the privileges that God has given them in the divine appointment of prayer. Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence?"  
*Steps to Christ*, pp. 94, 95

"Do not neglect secret prayer, for it is the soul of religion. With earnest, fervent prayer, plead for purity of soul. Plead as earnestly, as eagerly, as you would for your mortal life, were it at stake. Remain before God until unutterable longings are begotten within you for salvation, and the sweet evidence is obtained of pardoned sin."  
*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 163

"Daily prayer is as essential to growth in grace, and even to spiritual life itself, as is temporal food to physical well-being. We should accustom ourselves to often lift the thoughts to God in prayer."  
*Messages to Young People*, p. 115

"If ever there was a time when every house should be a house of prayer, it is now. . . . By sincere, earnest prayer parents should make a hedge about their children. They should pray with full faith that God will abide with them and that holy angels will guard them and their children from Satan's cruel power." *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, pp. 42, 43

"Pray as you never before prayed that the Lord will lay His hand upon you, that you may be able to comprehend the length and breadth and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 214

"Let small companies assemble in the evening, at noon, or in the early morning to study the Bible. Let them have a season of prayer, that they may be strengthened, enlightened, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. This work Christ wants to have done in the heart of every worker. If you yourselves will open the door to receive it, a great blessing will come to you. Angels of God will be in your assembly. You will feed upon the leaves of the tree of life. What testimonies you may bear of the loving acquaintance made with your fellow workers in these precious seasons when seeking the blessing of God. Let each tell his experience in simple words. This will bring more comfort and joy to the soul than all the pleasant instruments of music that could be brought into the churches. Christ will come into your hearts. It is by this means only that you can maintain your integrity."

*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 195

# Sample Program

\_\_\_\_\_ Seventh-day Adventist Church

## All-Night Prayer Meeting

Friday, November 1 to Sabbath, November 2

9:00 PM – 10:00 AM

PM

Chairperson	9:00 – 9:15	Song Service
	9:15 – 9:30	Opening Song, Prayer, Scripture Reading
	9:30 – 10:00	Devotional
	10:00 – 10:30	Kidz Korner
	10:30 – 11:00	Special Feature (have each person move around the room and pray sentence prayers with five different people)
Chairperson	11:00 – 11:15	Prayer in Groups
	11:15 – 11:30	Bible Reading ( <i>SDA Hymnal</i> , 698, 704, 706, 710, 711)
	11:30 – 11:40	Private Meditation
	11:40 – 12:00	Bible Drill

AM

Chairperson	12:00 – 12:20	Reading ( <i>Testimonies</i> , vol. 9, pp. 19-24)
	12:20 – 12:30	Group Discussion
	12:30 – 12:45	Prayer in Groups
	12:45 – 1:00	Personal Testimonies
Chairperson	1:00 – 1:15	Praise Team
	1:15 – 1:45	Singing with Understanding & Hymn Quiz
	1:45 – 2:00	Prayer in Groups
	2:00 – 2:15	Break and Fellowship Time
	2:15 – 2:30	Private Meditation
	2:30 – 2:45	Favorite Text Drill
Chairperson	2:45 – 3:00	Reading ( <i>Evangelism</i> , pp. 110-115)
	3:00 – 3:15	Group Discussion
	3:15 – 3:30	Prayer in Groups
	3:30 – 3:45	Private Meditation

Chairperson	3:45 – 4:00	Reading ( <i>Testimonies</i> , vol. 8, pp. 19-22)
	4:00 – 4:15	Discussion
	4:15 – 4:30	Prayer in Groups
Chairperson	4:30 – 4:45	Reading ( <i>Testimonies</i> , vol. 6, pp. 305-312)
	4:50 – 5:00	Prayer in Groups
	5:00 – 5:45	Devotional Pledge
	5:45 – 6:00	Morning Praise (Praise and Worship)
	6:00 – 7:30	Prayer Breakfast
Chairperson	8:00 – 9:00	Sabbath School
	9:00 – 10:00	Festival of Praise: Singing and a Sermonette

NOTES:

Choose chairpersons and others to present the various items. Preferably, choose a different chairperson for each segment. Select readings appropriate to your current prayer emphasis (evangelism, revival, youth, world conditions, church matters, etc.).

## Recommended Resources

We recommend the following books for anyone involved in prayer ministry. Most are available for purchase online or at Christian bookstores or the Adventist Book Center. Some titles are no longer in print but can often be found used on sites such as Amazon.

We do not necessarily endorse every thought expressed in these books. Please read with biblical discernment and prayer, and you will be blessed!

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