

## Our Prayer Theme: A Deeper Experience

During Ten Days of Prayer 2019, we will look at how to have a deeper, richer Christian experience. Whether new believers or longtime church members, we all need to have a fresh, daily encounter with Jesus. This series features real-life lessons, Bible promises, and encouraging Spirit of Prophecy quotes to strengthen our daily walk with Christ.

We read about the early believers: “The Corinthian believers needed a deeper experience in the things of God. They did not know fully what it meant to behold His glory and to be changed from character to character. They had seen but the first rays of the early dawn of that glory. Paul’s desire for them was that they might be filled with all the fullness of God, following on to know Him whose going forth is prepared as the morning, and continuing to learn of Him until they should come into the full noontide of a perfect gospel faith” (Acts of the Apostles, pp. 307, 308).

We pray that this prayer focus will help us develop a deep, abiding relationship with Jesus until we “come into the full noontide of a perfect gospel faith” and fully reflect His character of love.

## Suggested Guidelines for the Prayer Times

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

## Claiming the Promises

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

It is so easy to focus on our needs, our difficulties, our challenges—and to wail and whine about our situation when we pray. This is not the purpose of prayer. Prayer is meant to strengthen our faith. That is why we encourage you to claim God’s promises in your prayer time. Take your eyes off yourself and your weaknesses and look to Jesus. By beholding Him, we become changed into His image.

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



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

Topic-specific promises are included on each nightly handout.

## Fasting

We encourage you to do a Daniel Fast during these ten days. Starting the year with prayer and fasting is a great way to consecrate our lives to God for the upcoming year. Ellen White tells us, “Now and onward till the close of time the people of God should be more earnest, more wide-awake, not trusting in their own wisdom, but in the wisdom of their Leader. They should set aside days for fasting and prayer. Entire abstinence from food may not be required, but they should eat sparingly of the most simple food” (Counsels on Diet and Foods, pp. 188, 189).

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

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

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

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

## Holy Spirit

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

“We must not only pray in Christ’s name, but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This explains what is meant when it is said that the Spirit ‘maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.’ Romans 8:26. Such prayer,



God delights to answer. When with earnestness and intensity we breathe a prayer in the name of Christ, there is in that very intensity a pledge from God that He is about to answer our prayer ‘exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.’ Ephesians 3:20” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 147).

## Faith

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

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

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

## Pray for Seven

We encourage you to pray during these ten days in a special way for seven people whom you would like to see experiencing a “life more abundant.” They can be relatives, friends, coworkers, neighbors, or simply acquaintances. Take some time and ask God whom would He like you to pray for. Ask Him also to give you a real burden for these people. Write these names down on a piece of paper and keep it in a prominent place, such as in your Bible. There is something powerful about writing the names down, and you’ll be amazed at how God works in response to your prayers!

## Ten Days of Prayer Challenge

Everyone can do something to hasten the coming of Jesus through Total Member Involvement.

“For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me” (Matt. 25:35, 36).



In *The Ministry of Healing* we read, “We must live a twofold life—a life of thought and action, of silent prayer and earnest work” (p. 512). It is our privilege to show others the love of Jesus. We have received so much love from our Savior; let’s not keep it for ourselves. Let’s share His love with others.

We encourage you and your church to ask God in prayer how you can reach out to others after the Ten Days of Prayer. Choose one or several activities, choose a day, and be the hands and feet of Jesus. As you work to organize everything, avoid letting these arrangements distract you from praying. “Personal effort for others should be preceded by much secret prayer; for it requires great wisdom to understand the science of saving souls. Before communicating with men, commune with Christ. At the throne of heavenly grace obtain a preparation for ministering to the people” (Prayer, p. 313).

In the online resources, you’ll find a special sheet with suggestions for reaching your community for Jesus.

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