



THE PRAYER CLOSET

*Transforming Lives Through Intercessory
Prayer And Fasting*

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PRAYING FOR REVIVAL

Revival is an experience in the life of the church when the Holy Spirit does an unusual work. He does this primarily among the members of the church. It is a reviving of the believers. You cannot revive something that has never had life. It is the reviving, or awakening, of a sleeping, lukewarm church. Renewed faith, power, and vigor are granted to the church by the Holy Spirit. This then leads to the conversion of lost people. When the Holy Spirit awakens the church, He then awakens careless and unconcerned sinners to their need of salvation through Jesus Christ. Revival therefore consists of the Holy Spirit granting new spiritual health to believers and new spiritual life to unbelievers. It is an invasion from heaven that brings change in the church and the surrounding community.

Unfortunately "revival" is a misunderstood and often abused term. As I drove home from a worship service the other day, I saw five church signs that stated that churches would be having "revival" at certain time in the month. We must come to understand that "revival" is not a series of worship services that churches hold during the summer. It is not stirring up religious excitement. It is not something that we work up, but something that comes down from heaven. It is an invasion by the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit.

This fresh and powerful invasion by the Holy Spirit will be revealed by certain characteristics. These characteristics are:

- (1) *A fresh and overwhelming awareness of God's presence.* Both believers and unbelievers become consciously aware that God Himself is present in a powerful way. The believer can know and experience the presence of God on a daily basis. Yet, when revival comes, people experience God's presence beyond the normal experience of the Christian life.
- (2) *An extraordinary readiness to hear God.* Revival brings a deep thirst for the Word of God. People long to read, study, and obey the Word of God. They especially desire to hear the Word of God preached by His servants.
- (3) *A deep conviction over one's sin.* When revival comes, people see their sin is utterly abominable. People can no longer be unconcerned about their sin. They experience deep distress over their sin. They see their sin as offensive to God.
- (4) *A heartfelt repentance.* In revival, people will confess and forsake their sin. They will mourn over it and turn away from it. There will be not attempts

to lessen their sin or make excuses for their sin. In revival, repentance is deep, heartfelt, and life-changing. **A true movement of the Holy Spirit brings brokenhearted confession of sin and repentance from it!**

(5) *An extraordinary concern for others.* When revival comes, the church will have a fresh concern for others. The believers will have a deep and agonizing burden for the lost. The church will seek to minister to its surrounding community in a fresh and new way.

(6) *A genuine change in peoples' lives.* Revival is not simply the experience of religious excitement. It brings profound changes in the lives of believers and unbelievers. It is an experience that brings radical and permanent change.

Revival is the desperate need of our churches. Our spiritual laziness and lukewarmness call for a fresh and powerful work of the Holy Spirit in our midst. **We will experience revival or we will face the judgment of the Lord Jesus Christ (Revelation 2:5)!** This issue of *The Prayer Closet* will focus on praying for revival--for a powerful work of the Holy Spirit in our midst. If you desire revival in your church and across this nation, you must cry out to God. You must plead with God to send a genuine revival into our midst. There will not be genuine revival in our churches and across this land until God's people are broken and humble before God's throne of grace pleading for God to send genuine revival.

This issue will contain suggestions on how to seek God for revival. I plead with you to seek God for revival in the church and in the nation. Will you remain content in your condition? Can you be comfortable with the spiritual condition of your church and the nation? **Will you settle for anything less than true revival?** A person who experienced the revival in Scotland in 1949 put it this way, "You were brought into contact with the

powers of the world to come and you will never be content with anything less." If you long to see a fresh and powerful work of the Holy Spirit in your church and nation, then you must seek God with all your heart and strength. You must be committed to persistently crying out to God for this invasion of the Holy Spirit. You should give God no rest until He grants this revival (**Isaiah 62:7**).

Why Should I Pray For Revival?

The most basic reason to pray for revival is because this is God's appointed way of receiving revival. The Bible reveals that you are to ask God in order to receive from God (**James 4:2**). If you do not ask God for revival, you cannot expect to receive it. The Lord Jesus Christ reveals that you are to seek the Father with persistence about your concerns (**Matthew 7:7-8**). You must ask God to send revival. You must seek Him to grant revival. You must knock for the doors of heaven to be opened for an outpouring of God's presence and power in revival.

Too many times we simply desire to see a move of the Holy Spirit in our lives and churches. We long for God to do a fresh work in our midst. **However, good intentions and desires are not enough.** It is not enough to see the need of revival or even to long for it. This must drive you to cry out to God. This must move you to plead with God to grant revival. Seeing the need for and desiring revival should send you into God's presence broken and desperate, pleading for revival (**2 Chronicles 7:14**). You must ask God to send revival. This is His appointed way.

By praying, you are showing God that you are at the end of yourself. When you pray for

Revival, you are saying, "God, You must do a fresh and new work in our midst or there is no hope. You will either revive us or there will be a funeral for this church. We can't, but, O God, You can!" An attitude of humility and brokenness precedes revival. Revival only comes when there is a holy desperation and dependence on God. God is pleased with this type of attitude. God will not revive a self-sufficient, proud people. He revives the contrite and brokenhearted (**Isaiah 57:15**). He gives grace to the humble but resists the proud (**James 4:6**).

Praying for revival is an act of faith. By praying for revival, you are believing that God can and will do a fresh and powerful work in your midst. This is putting away all confidence in the flesh and looking to God's mercy and power. Through prayer, you are trusting God for the work that He alone can do. This pleases God and is the very attitude that He requires of those who come to Him (**Hebrews 11:6**). God will honor those who honor Him.

Prayer is the channel by which you receive the presence and power of God. You experience these things through prayer. In revival, you receive an extraordinary experience of His presence and power. It is not possible to experience these things in your life on a daily basis or even in the midst of a revival without prayer. Revival begins with and is received through prayer.

A final reason that you should pray for revival is because prayer is an instrument through which God works in your life. By praying for revival, God deals with you. Prayer makes you more sensitive to the Word of God and to the leading of the Holy Spirit. God will show you sins that must be confessed and removed from your life. He will reveal sinful habits that need to be acknowledged and rooted out of your life. He will open your eyes to areas that you need to submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. When these things

start happening, you will be prepared to receive revival from God. This process takes place when you pray, especially when you are pleading with God to grant revival.

Ways To Seek God For Revival

The following are some suggestions on how you can seek God for revival. These suggestions are offered to you to help you plead with God for genuine revival in your church and across the nation. **I want to emphasize that these suggestions are not magical formulas.** They are simply ways that you can seek God for revival. Revival comes from God. Receiving revival calls for believers to seek God with faith and with the Word of God. These suggested starting points for your intercession for your church and the nation. You can use these suggestions, add more to them, or you can develop your own prayer requests and reasons from these. As you pray for revival, be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leadership. He may give you insights on how to pray for revival in your particular church. He also may give you more Scripture to pray through concerning revival. As you pray through these requests, start with yourself. Ask God to do these things in your life. Plead with Him for a fresh work of His grace and His power.

A. Specific Requests

(1) *Pray that God will create a spirit of humility and brokenness among the believers (**Isaiah 57:15; James 4:6**).* God will not revive those who are self-sufficient and proud. The believers must come to see their spiritual bankruptcy and utter dependence on God.

(2) *Pray that God would grant believers a deeper understanding and awareness of His holiness (Isaiah 6:1-5; 1 Peter 15-16).* The holiness of God is a neglected subject in the church today. Yet, it is essential to revival. We need to understand that God is utterly holy. He does not and cannot sin. He is not tempted nor is He tempted. He is pure and without the stain of sin. He always does what is right and good. Pray that believers would be gripped by the absolute holiness of God.

(3) *Ask God to reveal to believers the depth and the evil of their sin. Call on the Holy Spirit to move them to confess and repent of their sin (Psalm 19:12-14; 1 John 1:9).* The Holy Spirit is grieved when a believer cherishes sin and does not confess and repent of it (Psalm 66:18; Ephesians 4:30). When the Holy Spirit is grieved, He will not release His miraculous, life-transforming power into our midst. Sin has to be dealt with by believers. Believers must be honest about their sin and must come clean with God about these things.

(4) *Plead with God to grant the believers a hunger for the Word of God and a readiness to obey the Word of God (Psalm 119:97, 103; 1 John 2:3-6).* Plead with the Holy Spirit to stir within every believer a desire to search and to know the Word of God. Ask Him to remove any complacency toward the Word of God by the believers. Call on Him to stir the believers to be doers of the Word and not simply hearers of the Word (James 1:22-24).

(5) *Ask God to reveal any obstacles that could hinder your church from experiencing genuine revival. Then pray for its removal (Psalm 139:23).* Pray that God will reveal anything that is not pleasing to Him in your church. Call on Him to deal with these obstacles. Plead with Him to remove anything that is hindering the church to experience a genuine working of the Holy Spirit in revival.

(6) *Pray that your pastor will preach the Word of God with power, conviction, and authority (1 Corinthians 2:1-4; 2 Timothy 3:16-4:4).* Revival usually comes when God gives His people bold, faithful, and fearless preachers of the Word of God. True and powerful preaching of the Word of God is used by God to revive His people. Plead that your pastor will powerfully preach the Word of God. Pray that He will proclaim the fundamental truths of the faith with great clarity, conviction, and power.

(7) *Ask God to deal with any unforgiveness or bitterness among the believers of the church (Ephesians 4:30-32).* Unconfessed sin grieves the Holy Spirit. Yet, in the context of Ephesians 4, the emphasis on right relationships in the church. When believers are at odds with each other, the Spirit is grieved. Nothing quenches the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit like broken relationships among believers. Pray that the broken relationships among believers would be healed. Ask Jesus Christ to bind Satan's work through the broken relationships (Ephesians 4:27). Call on God to deal with the unforgiveness or bitterness that is grieving the Holy Spirit.

(8) *Plead that God would convict and save any deceived, unregenerate church members (Matthew 7:21-23; 2 Corinthians 13:5-6).* There are times when deceived, unregenerate church members work against what God is doing in the church. They cause believers to stumble. Plead that God would deal with any members who may be deceived and are not truly saved. Call on God to strip their hope in themselves and reveal to them the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

(9) *Call on God to convict believers that they must give an account of their lives at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:9-10).* Believers need to realize that they must give an account to God for their lives. There will be a day of judgment for the believer. Believers need to be gripped and motivated by the fact that they will give

account to the Lord Jesus Christ one day. Pray that believers will realize this and remember this.

(10) *Pray that God will grant the believers an agonizing burden for lost people and an unceasing desire to share the gospel with them (Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 9:1-3).* Call on God to create within believers a burden to pray for and share the gospel of Jesus Christ with lost people. Plead with Him to grant this to every believer.

(11) *Plead that God will give the believers a deeper love for the Lord Jesus Christ (1 John 4:1-3).* The Spirit of God enables people to confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Revival is a powerful work of the Holy Spirit in which He draws believers closer to the Lord Jesus Christ. In revival, He leads believers to love and to confess Jesus Christ in a deeper, more faithful way than at other times. Pray that the Holy Spirit will deepen the believers' love for and confession of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Lord and Savior.

B. Prayer Arguments

The following are prayer arguments that you can use to plead with God for revival. These prayer arguments are biblical reasons that you can use to call on God to revive His people. Nehemiah provides an example of this kind of praying (**Nehemiah 1**). **Nehemiah 1** records Nehemiah's prayer for the restoration of Jerusalem. The city was in ruins and God's name and glory were at stake. Nehemiah prays to God and calls on Him to restore Jerusalem. In calling on God to restore Jerusalem, Nehemiah quotes from Deuteronomy. He gives scriptural reasons why God should restore Jerusalem. The following prayer arguments are scriptural reasons why God should grant genuine revival to His church. You can use these to plead with God to grant the revival that we

so desperately need. You can take these and develop other prayer arguments to use in pleading with God. The key issue is to plead with God's own Word. Call on God to be faithful to His own Word.

(1) Father, this church bears Your name. We are Your representatives in this world. We have dishonored You and Your name through our indifference, unconcern, and lack of holiness. How can You bear allowing us to continue as we are? Have mercy on us, O God! Grant revival to us that we might live lives worthy for Your name's sake (**2 Corinthians 5:20**).

(2) Father, we have become a reproach to the lost world around us. Our lack of holiness and failure to deal with sin has brought on us the contempt and ridicule of the world. How can You let Your church be ridiculed? How can You stand the fact that Your church lacks influence in this community? O God, have mercy on us! Revive Your church that we may exercise a righteous influence in the world. Cause Your presence and power to be displayed in this church so that believers and unbelievers will be in awe of You. Do this, O God, for the sake of Your Son, who bought and established the church with His own blood! For the sake of Jesus and His love for the church, grant revival to Your people (**Acts 20:28**).

(3) Father, You have commanded in Your Word that we must not grieve the Holy Spirit. Yet, I confess that we have grieved Your Holy Spirit. He is grieved because of our sin and unwillingness to deal with that sin. I plead that You would grant revival so that we would deal with our sin as never before in our relationship to You. Do this so that Your Holy Spirit will no longer be grieved. Do this so that Your Holy Spirit will be pleased to release His power into our midst (**Ephesians 4:30**).

(4) Father, I plead that You will grant revival in order to deal with our unbelief. Jesus will not work