

THE PRAYER CLOSET

Encouraging & Equipping Believers in Prayer

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ISSUE 1

PRAYING FOR SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Spiritual awakening is the unique and powerful move of the Holy Spirit in which He awakens people to their spiritual need. This leads people to seek the Lord and to find answers and help for their spiritual needs. It is characterized by massive numbers of people turning to the Lord. It is a mighty move of the Spirit on huge segments of the population. This is the great need of our communities and cities. It is an absolute necessity for our nation.

When I use the phrase "spiritual awakening," I am referring to a work of the Spirit in both believers and unbelievers. In believers, the Holy Spirit awakens them to a renewed faith, repentance, and zeal for the Lord. In the lost, He awakens them to their lostness and their need of the Savior, Jesus Christ. He enables sinners to hear and respond to the good news about Jesus with faith and repentance.

I realize that many people talk about the need for revival. The term "revival" is used to describe a unique and powerful work of God in a church – among believers. There is great need for this in our churches. Yet, I am convicted that we need a mighty work of God both inside and outside of the church. I refer to this as "spiritual awakening."

I use the term "spiritual awakening" for two reasons. First, the term "revival" has been all but emptied of its rich meaning. For many in the church, "revival" is a series of church services. It is Sunday morning through Wednesday night during the second week of June. However, we must return to an

understanding that we need a unique and powerful move of God. We must have a powerful work of God, not just some religious excitement or events. I believe that spiritual awakening conveys this.

Second, it is difficult to make a hard and fast distinction between God's work inside the church and outside of the church. Throughout my life I have heard preaching and teaching like this: "When revival comes, God's people return to God. When God's people get right with God, we will see lost people come to Christ." I don't doubt the validity of this; I believe that there is truth in this type of teaching.

Yet, it has not been this neat and tidy throughout church history. The moves of the Holy Spirit throughout history have varied – sometimes the church would be changed and the lost would come to Christ, sometimes many lost people would come to Christ and the church would be transformed, sometimes these things would happen simultaneously. The key issue is the need for a powerful move of God that touches and changes huge segments of people. There must be a "spiritual awakening" for both those inside the church and outside the church.

This issue of *The Prayer Closet* will focus on praying for spiritual awakening. We will look at what happens in spiritual awakening. We will also offer you guidelines on how to seek God for this move of God in your area and throughout this nation. It is our hope and prayer that this issue will stir your heart to believe God for and to plead with Him for spiritual awakening.

Dr. Kevin Meador, P. O. Box 278, Hickory, MS 39332 (601) 646-2295

EMAIL: prayercloset_1998@yahoo.com

WEB AGES: www.prayerclosetministries.org - www.kingdompraying.com



What Is Spiritual Awakening?

Spiritual awakening is the powerful move of the Holy Spirit. It is something that only the Holy Spirit can do. We cannot save ourselves neither can we manufacture spiritual awakening. It is the Holy Spirit's work; it happens only through His power.

The Spirit's coming at Pentecost gives us insight on what the Spirit does in spiritual awakening. His work in **Acts 2** provides us with some sense of what the Holy Spirit does in spiritual awakening—in both the saved and lost.

The Spirit's Work In The Church

When the Holy Spirit moved powerfully among the believers in Jerusalem, it had the following results:

(1) *Powerful proclamation of the Word of God* – Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost was filled with God-exalting, Christ-centered truth. It was the powerful, straightforward declaration of who Christ is and how to respond to Him. When the Spirit awakens the church, there is clear and compelling proclamation of the truth to the lost. The person of Christ will be declared with deep conviction and absolute certainty (**Acts 2:22-35**). The way of salvation will be made known in plain and uncompromising terms (**Acts 2:36-39**).

(2) *Intense, consistent prayer* – In **Acts 2:42**, the Bible says that these believers were devoted to prayer. Their praying was intense and consistent. The Holy Spirit who grants awakening is the Spirit of prayer. When the Holy Spirit is about to grant awakening, He stirs the church to pray. The early church prayed fervently before the move of the Spirit (**Acts 1:12-14**). After the move the Spirit, they continued to pray with intensity and consistency. When the Holy Spirit grants spiritual awakening to a church, He moves the believers to a deeper, more faithful prayer life. In **Acts 1-2**, we see that intense and consistent prayer

precedes and continues after the powerful work of the Spirit.

- (3) *A renewed commitment to the Word of God* – In **Acts 2:42**, the Word of God says that these believers were devoted to the apostles doctrine. They were committed to studying and learning the Word of God. They earnestly sought to understand and obey the truth of God's Word. When the Holy Spirit awakens believers, He draws them back to the Word of God. There is a renewed love and zeal for the Word. There is a fervent desire to hear and obey the Word of God.
- (4) *Genuine, heartfelt fellowship among believers* – In **Acts 2:42**, the Bible says that these believers were devoted to fellowship and the breaking of bread. In **Acts 2:44**, the Word says that they were all together and had everything in common. **Acts 2:46** reveals that they met together on a daily basis. They also broke bread in their homes, eating together with glad and sincere hearts. This move of the Holy Spirit radically changed their relationships to one another. He drew them together in loving devotion. They had genuine, heartfelt fellowship. When the Spirit awakens a church, He stirs the believers to genuine, heartfelt fellowship. He moves them to share their lives together in extraordinary ways.
- (5) *Fervent worship* – In **Acts 2:47**, the Word of God says these believers were praising God. This phrase refers to a continual action. It speaks of both personal and corporate worship. These believers were diligent to worship God. They focused on Him and spent time adoring Him individually and together. When the Spirit awakens a church, He grants them a spirit of worship. He moves that church to adore God – to focus on and exalt His holy character.

The Work Of The Spirit In The Lost

When the Holy Spirit moved powerfully in Jerusalem, He touched and dealt with the lost. When the Holy Spirit unleashed His power in this city, it had the following effects on the lost:

- (1) *Curiosity* – This move of the Holy Spirit caused the crowds to wonder what is happening (**Acts 2:5-13**). When the Holy Spirit moves in powerful ways, it will cause the lost to take notice. They will be amazed and even perplexed about His work. Yet, this curiosity can be preparation for coming to Christ.
- (2) *Deep conviction* – The Word of God says that the lost in Jerusalem were cut to the heart. They experienced deep conviction over their sin and their need of Jesus. In spiritual awakening, the Holy Spirit produces deep and abiding conviction. It is conviction that cuts to the heart.
- (3) *The search for answers and help* – These lost people did experience deep and abiding conviction. Yet, that was not the end. They asked Peter, "Brothers, what shall we do?" (**Acts 2:37**). They wanted answers for their condition. They sought for help. In spiritual awakening, lost people are convicted and they seek the Lord. The Holy Spirit moves on them powerfully, granting conviction that leads them to seek the Lord.
- (4) *Conversion* – The Word of God says that about three thousand received the good news about Jesus (**Acts 2:40-41**). They turned from their sins and confessed Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. God awakened and transformed these people through His Word and His Spirit (**Acts 2:42**). This is the result of spiritual awakening – the conversion of large segments of a population turning to Jesus Christ in true faith and adding them to the church.

In spiritual awakening, the Holy Spirit moves powerfully on believers and unbelievers. Our hope and prayer should be for this powerful move of the Spirit that awakens and transforms our churches and our society. This is our great need and it can be a reality through fervent and consistent prayer.



How Can I Pray For Spiritual Awakening?

Praying for spiritual awakening is a crucial prayer concern for the child of God. The following are some guidelines to help you in learning how to pray for spiritual awakening:

- *Focus on God's sovereignty* – I realize that spiritual awakening may seem impossible to you. Yet, with God, all things are possible. We can see a mighty move of God that shakes our churches and our society. God is sovereign and He can bring about this awakening. Use the following Scriptures to bolster and encourage your praying: **Genesis 18:14; Psalm 135:5-6; Jeremiah 32:17, 27; Luke 1:37; Romans 4:20-21.**
- *Plead God's mercy* – Our only hope for spiritual awakening is God's mercy. We do not deserve a mighty move of God. We only deserve judgment. When praying for spiritual awakening in your area or this nation, plead for God to have mercy. The following verses can help you plead for His mercy: **Nehemiah 9:31; Psalm 25:6, 78:38; Isaiah 55:7; Jeremiah 3:12; Lamentations 3:22-23; Daniel 9:9; Luke 1:50; Luke 6:35; Ephesians 2:4.**
- *Remember that God is an unchanging God.* The Bible tells us that God does not change; He remains the same (**Malachi 3:6**). The God who granted mighty moves of the Spirit in the past is the God we serve today. ***The God who has granted spiritual awakening in the past is our God today. God has not changed.*** He is still the God who desires to awaken the church and the lost. This should fuel your praying for the awakening that we need.
- *Don't be afraid to pray for spiritual awakening.* I realize that this may be overwhelming for some believers. Yet, God has done this in the past. He has the power and the mercy to do it again. **Matthew 7:7-11** should give you motivation and boldness. We need spiritual awakening. We can and must ask God for it. We must seek Him for it. We must

knock on the doors of heaven until we receive this mighty and unique move of God.

- *Confess and repent of unbelief.* God will not answer when we pray in unbelief (**James 1:6-8**). Deal with your unbelief in this area. God has the mercy and the power to grant spiritual awakening. We must seek Him with believing hearts.
- *Be willing to "pray the price" for spiritual awakening.* The previous statement is not a typo. It is stated exactly as I meant it. We must be willing to "pray the price." Praying for spiritual awakening requires a commitment. You must be willing to pray for the long haul. We must believe God for this awakening and plead with God for it. We must be fervent and consistent in praying for this. It may happen in our generation, it could be in the next generation, or beyond. Yet, we must be willing to pray the price whether it takes place in our generation or the next.
- *Seek spiritual awakening in your personal life* – Praying for spiritual awakening begins with your personal life. There is no need to pray for spiritual awakening in your city, community, state, or nation if you are not willing to seek for it first in your own personal life. Plead for a powerful spiritual awakening in your own personal life. Ask for the Holy Spirit to stir you and renew your faith and repentance as never before in your walk with Him. Spiritual awakening has to begin in your heart.



Prayers For Spiritual Awakening

The following is a prayer guide that you can use to plead for spiritual awakening in your city, community, or nation. These prayer pointers are based on the Word of God and you can plead them with confidence and expectation. You can use these prayers or develop your own from them. By offering these Scripture prayers, I want to encourage you to

make praying for spiritual awakening in your area and across the nation a daily part of your prayer life. You might use a prayer a day or a combination of these prayers on a daily basis. Yet, the key issue is to pray God's Word for the awakening that we desperately need. When a prayer has a blank in it, you can place the name of your city, area, or a state.

Father, I ask in Jesus' name that You would grant a spirit of humility to all of the people in _____. Humble us concerning our spiritual need. I pray that You would then pour out Your grace on us in spiritual awakening (**James 4:6**).

Father, I pray that You would open the eyes of all the people in _____ to their spiritual condition. I ask that they would seek You with all of their being for their spiritual need (**Psalms 119:18**).

Father, I plead that You would unleash Your almighty power into _____. I ask that Your sovereign power would convict and meet the spiritual needs of every person in _____ (**Jeremiah 32:17, 27**).

O God, have mercy on all the people in _____. We do not deserve anything from You but judgment. Yet, in mercy, grant spiritual awakening to the people of _____. Meet every spiritual need, touching and transforming the lives of all the people in this area (**Lamentations 3:22-23**).

Father, I pray that Your Word will be like a flame of fire in this area. I ask that Your Word would penetrate every home and every heart in this area. I plead in Jesus' name that Your Word will bless and transform every person in this area (**2 Thessalonians 3:1-2**).

Father, I plead in Jesus' name that You would destroy every scheme that the enemy has for this area. I ask that his destructive plans will be hindered and stopped. Unleash spiritual awakening in this area instead. Smash the enmity and unbelief through the good news of Jesus Christ (**2 Corinthians 2:11**).

Father, I ask in Jesus' name that You would draw every lost person in this area to Jesus. I plead that You would work powerfully in the life of every lost person, showing them their need of Christ and drawing them to Jesus in true faith (**John 6:44**).

Father, I pray that You would unleash Your conviction into the life of every person in this area. Grant the conviction that cuts to the heart and drives people to seek for answers and help for their spiritual condition. I ask that You would do this in the life of every person throughout this area (**Acts 2:37**).

Father, I plead that You would grant a spirit of repentance to every person in this area. I ask that every person in this area would hate sin. I pray that they will seek You for forgiveness and change (**Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9**).

Father, I ask You to change the heart of every person in this area. Create pure hearts in the people of this area. I pray that You would renew every person in this area will seek after You and Your Word (**Psalms 51:10**).

Father, I plead that You would work powerfully in every church in _____. I ask that You would stir and renew every believer in every church in _____. Let Your power flow into every church, renewing and stirring the believers to love You and to seek You as never before in their walk with You (**Ephesians 1:19**).

Father, I pray in Jesus' name that You would grant a spirit of prayer to all the believers in _____. I ask that all the believers would begin seeking You with all their being. I plead that this will lead to spiritual awakening and to a growth and increase of prayer in all the churches (**Colossians 4:2; Luke 18:1**).

Father, You have granted spiritual awakening in the past. You have shaken the foundations of cities and nations with Your power throughout history. The Bible says that You are unchanging – that You remain eternally the same. I ask in Jesus' name that You would grant spiritual awakening in _____. Unleash spiritual awakening that will change every

church and bring thousands and millions to Jesus Christ. You've done it before and I now ask You to do it again (**Malachi 3:6**).

Father, Your Word says that You can do exceedingly abundantly above anything that I can imagine or ask. I am pleading for spiritual awakening. I know that You can do this and I am asking for it. I am claiming the promise of **Ephesians 3:20**. I ask You to be true to Your Word and to grant a spiritual awakening beyond what I can imagine or ask (**Ephesians 3:20**).



Praying For Spiritual Awakening In America

The great need in America is spiritual awakening. We must have a mighty move of God that touches and transforms the hearts of people. We must experience a unique work of the Spirit that will transform the very fabric of our society.

The following is a prayer guide that will enable you to pray for spiritual awakening in our nation. It will help you to cover every state in one week. You are provided with states that you can intercede for each day. God will respond if we pray. We can see mighty moves of God if we will seek Him.

MONDAY

Maine
New Hampshire
Vermont
New York

Massachusetts
Rhode Island
Connecticut

TUESDAY

Pennsylvania
Ohio
Illinois
New Jersey

Delaware
Maryland (D.C.)
Virginia

WEDNESDAY

North Carolina
 South Carolina
 Georgia
 Florida

Kentucky
 Alabama
 Mississippi
 West Virginia

THURSDAY

Texas
 Michigan
 Indiana
 Tennessee

Arkansas
 Louisiana
 Oklahoma

FRIDAY

Kansas
 Missouri
 Nebraska
 Iowa

South Dakota
 North Dakota
 Wisconsin
 Minnesota

SATURDAY

Montana
 Wyoming
 Colorado
 New Mexico

Arizona
 Utah
 Idaho

SUNDAY

Washington
 Oregon
 Nevada

California
 Hawaii
 Alaska

Praying

For

The Gateway Cities



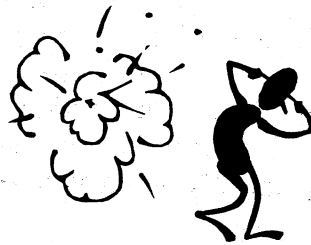
Another powerful way to pray for spiritual awakening is to intercede for the gateway cities of this nation. The gateway cities are the largest cities in our country. These cities are magnets of societies, drawing all kinds of people into them.

These cities are strategic economic, political, social, and spiritual centers of our nation. They can also be places of loneliness,

pain, and spiritual darkness. However, each one of them is a gate through which the good news may spread to the whole country. Each one is a gate through which spiritual awakening could flow to other cities and areas throughout our nation.

Call on God to move powerfully in these gateway cities. Ask Him to shatter the darkness of sin and unrighteousness. Plead that He would grant spiritual awakening in these cities and that it would affect the entire nation.

- *New York City* (21 million).
- *Los Angeles* (16 million)
- *Chicago* (9 million)
- *Washington\Baltimore* (7 million)
- *San Francisco* (7 million)
- *Philadelphia* (6 million)
- *Boston* (5 million)
- *Detroit* (5 million)
- *Dallas\Fort Worth* (5 million)
- *Houston* (4 million)
- *Atlanta* (4 million)
- *Miami\Ft. Lauderdale* (3 million)
- *Seattle\Tacoma* (3 million)
- *Phoenix\Mesa* (3 million)
- *Minneapolis\St. Paul* (2 million)



**Learning To
 Listen To God In
 A Noisy World**

Let's face it. We live in a noisy world. We live hectic, fast-paced lives. It's difficult to listen to God with all the commotion in and around our lives. The following are some suggestions on how you can develop the ability to listen to God in the midst of your daily life.

- ⇒ *Ask God to give you a hearing ear (Matthew 7:7).* Pray that God will grant you sensitivity to His voice in your daily life.
- ⇒ *Believe that God is the speaking God and that He wants to speak to you (John 10:27).* Your heavenly Father desires to speak to you. Your communication with

God is not just about you talking to Him. It should also include Him speaking to you. He desires to do this. Believe this and trust Him to do it.

- ⇒ *Have an ongoing conversation with God throughout the day (1 Thessalonians 5:17).* As you pray throughout your day, it prepares you to hear from God. Talk to God about the situations you encounter, the feelings that you experience, the things you hear, and the people with whom you come into contact. As you do this, it opens your heart and mind to hear from God.
- ⇒ *Take mini-retreats throughout your week (Psalm 46:10).* Very few of us will ever have the opportunity have extended times of silence and listening to God. Because of this, you can have mini-retreats. Take 5 or 10 minutes and simply get alone with God and ask Him to speak to you.
- ⇒ *Fill your life with God's Word (Joshua 1:8).* The more you saturate your life with God's Word, the more receptive you are to His voice.
- ⇒ *Be diligent to confess and repent of your sins (Psalm 66:18).* Unconfessed sin is like earwax – it can affect your hearing. Unconfessed sin can keep you from hearing God's voice. Deal with sin on a daily basis.
- ⇒ *When you feel God has spoken to you, ask for confirmation (Matthew 7:7-8).* God does not mind confirming His Word. He welcomes your request to do this.
- ⇒ *When you know God has spoken, act in faith and obey His voice (1 Samuel 15:22).* The key to hearing God's voice is obedience to Him. If you desire to hear from God, you must be willing to obey Him. Confess to God your willingness to hear and obey.
- ⇒ *Ask for the filling of the Holy Spirit daily (Ephesians 5:18).* It is the Holy Spirit who will enable you to hear and respond to God's voice.



New Products From The Prayer Closet!

The Intercessor's Handbook

This prayer manual offers you Scripture prayers for all kinds of needs—salvation, healing, marriages, families, etc. It is ideal for learning how to pray the Scripture. It is crucial tool for any prayer ministry or prayer room. (165 pp.) **\$15.00**

The Intercessors Package

This package includes The Intercessors Handbook, Standing In The Gap bible study, and the Armor of God Key Ring. It is ideal for equipping believers in how to intercede faithfully and powerfully with God. **\$18.00**

Developing A Heart For Praise Kit (Revised)

We have recently revised this kit. It now contains six messages on developing the ability to praise God. It comes with a manual that helps you apply the truths of the messages and a workbook that aids you in praising God. **\$10.00**



News from AWAKENING IN MISSISSIPPI

Awakening In Mississippi (A.I.M.) is a prayer initiative that seeks to equip and encourage believers to plead for spiritual awakening in Mississippi. It is seeking to enlist and empower believers to create a "prayed-for" Mississippi.

The Mississippi Day Of Prayer

We are calling on all the churches in Mississippi to observe The Mississippi Day of Prayer on September 6, 2005. It is our goal that all the churches of this state will pray in agreement for spiritual awakening and God's blessing on this state on this day. **If you would like to receive a free packet of materials on observing The Mississippi Day Of Prayer, please contact us at The Prayer Closet.**



The Governor's Prayer Team

The Governor's Prayer Team exists to offer specific and fervent intercession for the governor and the lieutenant governor. If you would like to join this team and make a difference in Mississippi, please visit our site www.awakeninginmiss.com and click on The Governor's Prayer Team button. When you join, you will receive a packet of materials that will help you pray. If you would like to receive a promotional package for your church, please let us know.

Awakening In Mississippi Prayer Meeting Guides

We have developed prayer guides that you can use during your prayer meetings that focus on Mississippi and its particular needs. These prayer meeting guides are reproducible and can be distributed for your prayer meetings. If you would like to receive sample copies, please contact us.

The Mississippi Prayerwalking Explosion II

The Prayer Closet will be sponsoring the second Mississippi Prayerwalking Explosion on February 19, 2005. This year's theme is "Every Neighbor For Christ." This seminar will deal with saturating your community or city in prayer. The topics for this seminar will be prayerwalking, spiritual mapping, basic prayer evangelism, and ministering to your area through prayer. It will offer help and practical strategies for pastors and churches in reaching their communities or cities for Jesus Christ. This conference will be in Hickory, Mississippi at the Hickory Chamber of Commerce Building. Registration begins at 8:30 and the conference will go from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. There is no fee for this conference. If you would like more information, please contact us at The Prayer Closet.



The Prayer Closet Ministries, Inc.
Dr. Kevin Meador
P. O. Box 278
Hickory, MS 39332

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U. S. Postage Paid
Hickory, MS
Permit #2

Steve & Ann Mayes
P. O. Box 525
Pelahatchie MS 39145