



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.

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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**).