

The Three Angels' Call To Prayer

DAY 4 — GOD'S MISSION AND PRAYER, PART 2

"We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth" – Colossians 1:3-6

Rapid Growth

The New Testament church exploded in growth. In answer to earnest, heartfelt prayer the Holy Spirit was poured out in mighty power. Three thousand were baptized in one place on a single day. In Acts 4 the record states that "many who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand" (Acts 4:4). If we include women and children, the number of believers a few short months after Pentecost would have surely numbered 15,000–20,000. Throughout the book of Acts the church continued to grow rapidly. Acts 6 declares that many priests or religious leaders were obedient to the faith (verse 7). The narrative tells the story of Philip's preaching in Samaria, Paul's missionary journeys throughout the Mediterranean world, Peter's studying the Scriptures with Cornelius, and believers filled with the Holy Spirit and sharing Christ's message everywhere. The impact of the gospel was so great that the apostle Paul could declare that the gospel was preached to every creature under heaven (Colossians 1:23).

The experience of the New Testament church is instructive to the church today as we wait for the coming of our Lord. What was the key to their success? Why did the church in the New Testament grow so rapidly? Let's examine just a few reasons. The New Testament church saturated everything they did in prayer. They lived life totally dedicated to and dependent on God. They recognized that they were powerless to accomplish Jesus' mission without Jesus' power. Ellen White states it succinctly:

"We need to look constantly to Jesus, realizing that it is His power which does the work. While we are to labor earnestly for the salvation of the lost, we must also take time for meditation, for prayer, and for the study of the word of God. Only the work accomplished with much prayer, and sanctified by the merit of Christ, will in the end prove to have been efficient for good" (The Desire of Ages, p. 362).

God's Mission—God's Way

Notice this instruction carefully. It is Christ's power that accomplishes His work through us. It is not our wisdom, our intellect, our charisma, or our knowledge. The wisdom for soulwinning comes from Jesus. The power to change lives is Christ's and Christ's alone. In the final analysis, only the work accomplished with much prayer and sanctified by the merit of Christ will prove to have been efficient for good. God's mission must be accomplished God's way.

Is there a loved one you long to see in the kingdom of God? Is there a friend or co-worker who needs Jesus? Is there someone you know who once walked with God's people but has drifted away? Write their names on a plain piece of paper and place that paper in your Bible right at 1 John 5:14-17. Each day claim the promise of God in behalf of your loved ones. Right now, let's spend a few moments asking God to bring people to our minds that He would have us witness to, and then let's kneel together to pray for them.

Prayer Time (30-45 Minutes)

Praying God's Word – Colossians 1:3-6

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"Praying Always"

Lord, we confess that we have not spent enough time in prayer. So often we rely on our own wisdom and our own plans in all that we do. And when it comes to fulfilling Your mission, we do not seek Your guidance enough. Please forgive us. Help us to be a praying church and a church that relies on You for success and not on human ideas and plans. Convert our prayer life and bring revival to us.

"Your Faith in Christ Jesus"

Lord, we realize that only the work accomplished with much prayer, and sanctified by the merit of Christ, will in the end prove to have been efficient for good. Please help us to make sincere and intense prayer a higher priority in all mission efforts and activities of our church, but also in our personal lives and families. Increase our faith in Your ability to fulfill Your promises to us.

"Your Love for All the Saints"

God of Love, You created us with an eternal capacity to grow in Your love. Thank You for pouring out Your love into our hearts so that we in turn may be enabled to love those around us.

More Prayer Suggestions

Thanks and Praise: Give thanks for specific blessings and praise God for His goodness.

Confession: Take a few minutes for private confession and thank God for His forgiveness.

Guidance: Ask God to grant wisdom for current challenges and decisions.

Our Church: Pray for regional and world church needs (see separate sheet with requests).

Local Requests: Pray for current needs of church members, family, and neighbors.

Listen and Respond: Take time to listen for God's voice and respond in praise or song.

Song Suggestions

SDA Hymnal: Open My Eyes (#326); Love at Home (#652); Give of Your Best to the Master (#572); I'll Go Where You Want Me to Go (#573); So Send I You (#578); Bringing in the Sheaves (#369); Rescue the Perishing (#367)