

If My People Pray

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Date: 06 October 2024

Preacher: Rev. Murdo M Campbell

- [0 : 00] Well, if we could, this evening, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read. 2 Chronicles 7.
- 2 Chronicles 7, page 364 in the Pew Bible. And if we read again at verse 14. 2 Chronicles 7 at verse 14.
- Where the Lord says, If my people, who are called by my name, humble themselves and pray, and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will heal from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.
- If my people pray. If you were at the prayer meeting a week last Wednesday, then you'll know that it was a prayer meeting that didn't go according to my plan.
- Because a week last Wednesday, I turned up late to the prayer meeting, which I never do. And I turned up unprepared to the prayer meeting, which never usually happens.
- [1 : 18] And I even turned up without a sermon to preach, which I'm not known to usually do. But I didn't plan on being late or unprepared or turn up without a sermon.
- Because as far as I was concerned, I was prepared as much as I could be to preach on the next piece in the armor of God. That's the study we're going through at the moment on Wednesday night.
- But when it came to the crunch, the internet didn't work. So I couldn't transfer my sermon notes onto my iPad. So I resorted to using the printer to try and print some of my notes.
- But guess what? The printer didn't work either. Which made me not happy, but really frustrated. Because I had just printed a document, something to do with David's school and the Nicholson.
- I'd printed a document that had nothing to do with my sermon. And then two minutes later, I'm trying to print sermon notes. And I couldn't. And so I had nothing. And I went down to the prayer meeting with nothing, nothing but my frustration and the fact I was very late to the prayer meeting.
- [2 : 21] I was late, I was unprepared, and I was without a sermon. But, you know, I have to be honest. It was one of the best prayer meetings I had been to in a long time.
- It's one of the best prayer meetings I had been to in a long time. And yet, it was a prayer meeting with no preaching. Just prayer and praise. And, you know, the presence of the Lord that night reminded me, and maybe it reminded you if you were there.
- It reminded me that we need to get back to basics. We need to get back to the basics. We need to get back to prayer meetings that prioritize prayer to God and the praise of God.
- We need to get back to basics. And the amazing thing is that night, the Lord was in it all. The Lord was in it all because, well, when I got home after the prayer meeting, the internet was fine.
- I tried the printer. The printer worked. No problem. But that night at the prayer meeting, you know, we read this passage. We read from 2 Chronicles 6 and 7. And this is the passage I want us to think about this evening.

- [3 : 23] And I want us to think about this passage under two simple headaches. The petition of prayer and the power of prayer. The petition of prayer and the power of prayer.
- So, first of all, the petition of prayer. Look at 2 Chronicles 6 and there at verse 40. That's where we began reading earlier. 2 Chronicles 6 and verse 40.
- The petition of prayer. Now, O my God, let your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the prayer of this place. And now arise, O Lord God, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might.
- Let your priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation. And let your saints rejoice in your goodness. O Lord God, do not turn away the face of your anointed one.
- Remember your steadfast love for David, your servant. If you were here this morning, then you'll know that during the morning service, we were looking at Acts chapter 1, which presented to us the first prayer meeting after the ascension of Jesus.
- [4 : 28] It was the first prayer meeting of the New Testament church. And we were looking at it because, well, this week is our back to prayer meeting Wednesday. Back to prayer meeting Wednesday.
- We're similar to our back to church Sundays, which we've done many times. It's an opportunity to invite people who are either out of the habit of going to church or never been before. It's an opportunity to invite them to come along.
- And so similar to that, we're having a back to prayer meeting Wednesday to encourage those who are out of the habit of going to the prayer meeting or who have never been before to come for the first time.
- Because as we said this morning, the prayer meeting is not a private meeting. It's a public meeting to which everyone is invited. Therefore, you are invited to come to the prayer meeting on Wednesday.
- But from the first prayer meeting of the church after the ascension of Jesus, we noted the purpose of prayer and the priority of prayer. The purpose of prayer is to teach us to be like little children, that we are to depend upon the Lord in prayer.
- [5 : 31] The purpose of prayer is to teach us dependence, because far too often we depend upon our own strength and our own skills, rather than depending upon the strength and the spirit of the Lord.
- And so we saw the purpose of prayer. Then we thought about the priority of prayer, because the prayer meeting, as we said, it ought to be our priority. It's not to be a secondary event in the church's calendar.
- It's to be a significant event in the church's calendar. And so the prayer meeting, as we said this morning, it's to be a priority. It's to be a priority in our lives.
- And you know, I love finding all these quotes about prayer and about the prayer meeting. I have a book in my study, it's called Gathered Gold, and it's just full of quotes of different subjects.
- And I love finding ones about prayer and the prayer meeting, because I find them so challenging. And so if I find them challenging, I hope you find them challenging too.
- [6 : 29] I mentioned this morning Spurgeon's book, Only a Prayer Meeting. Read it. It's a brilliant book. Spurgeon considered the prayer meeting, as we said, the engine room of the church.
- If the engine room is out of action, he said, then everything will grind to a halt. And so we will never see much change for the better in our churches until the prayer meeting occupies a higher place in the esteem of Christians.

And it was from his experience of the Lord's blessing upon his ministry that Spurgeon wrote in his book, Only a Prayer Meeting. He said, the condition of the church may be very accurately gauged by its prayer meetings, not by its attendance on Sunday morning or Sunday evening.

The condition of the church may be very accurately gauged by its prayer meetings. Boys and girls, Spurgeon said, C.H. Spurgeon said, the prayer meeting is a graceometer, and from it we may judge the amount of divine working among a people.

If God be near a church, it must pray. And if he is not there, one of the first tokens of his absence will be slothfulness in prayer.

[7 : 37] Believe me, said Spurgeon, if a church does not pray, it's dead. If a church does not pray, it's dead.

And you know, it was following this morning's sermon in Acts chapter 1 that I found this quote, and it's actually about, it was actually about the prayer meeting, the prayer meeting of, the first prayer meeting in the church after the ascension of Jesus.

And there's a quote based upon the text in Acts 1. I don't know who wrote it, but this is what it said. The Spirit came upon the church at the prayer meeting. The church faced down persecution at the prayer meeting.

The Lord identified men for leadership at the prayer meeting. It has long been my conviction that outside of the Lord's Day worship, the prayer meeting is the most important meeting in the church's life.

There has never been a revival, he says, that did not come as God's people renewed their commitment to the prayer meeting. Churches turn corners, the spiritual atmosphere changes, an air of expectation descends, a hunger for God grows, and the blessing of heaven comes when prayer meetings are well attended, vibrant, and filled with bold, urgent, kingdom-centered prayer.

[8 : 57] What a quote. You know, I love finding all these quotes about prayer and the prayer meeting, because they say it much better than I could say it. One of my favorites was in last week's notices.

It was by an American pastor, Jim Cimbala. And this is what he said, You can tell how popular a church is by who comes on Sunday morning. You can tell how popular a pastor is by who comes on Sunday night.

But you can tell how popular Jesus is by who comes to the prayer meeting. You can tell how popular Jesus is by who comes to the prayer meeting.

And so we've thought about this morning the purpose of prayer and the priority of prayer, but we also see this evening the petition of prayer. And as you know, the petition of prayer is to be directed towards our heavenly Father.

Our Father which art in heaven. That's the way Jesus taught us to pray in the New Testament. That's what we pray every Lord's Day with the children after the kids' address. Our Father which art in heaven.

[10 : 00] We're to pray to our Father in heaven in the name of His Son, by the enabling of the Holy Spirit. So we're to pray to the Father in the name of Jesus by the Holy Spirit.

And we're to come before our heavenly Father in prayer. Like we were saying this morning, we're to come as little children. To come just like little children who are dependent, who are devoted, who are dedicated, who desire to hear from heaven.

But you know, when we consider this petition of prayer from the lips of King Solomon, Solomon doesn't address God as his Father in heaven.

He doesn't pray, our Father which art in heaven. No, Solomon prays, as we read, he prays to the Lord. The Lord God, he says, verse 41.

O Lord God, the God of Israel. Solomon prays to the Lord, the covenant God of His people. He prays to the Lord, the one who keeps covenant.

[11 : 02] The one who makes promises and keeps all his promises. And Solomon's prayer, as we said, it's a prayer of dedication. Where Solomon, he is dedicating the newly built temple to the Lord.

He has spent years building this temple. You remember that the Lord, He had promised Solomon's father, King David, He had promised David that his son, Solomon, would build the temple as this permanent residence for the presence of the Lord and the glory of the Lord amongst His people.

Because you remember that throughout the wilderness, wanderings with Moses and the children of Israel, the presence of the Lord was always amongst the people. And it always moved from place to place.

It was always in this temporary residence, situated in the tabernacle. But now Solomon here in 2 Chronicles 7, he's built a house for the Lord, and he's dedicating this house of the Lord to His covenant God, the God of His people.

And you know, I find it fascinating to think what was happening that day, as Solomon dedicated the temple to the Lord. Because everyone was there. Nobody was missing that day.

[12 : 14] They were all gathered together to hear Solomon pray, as Solomon dedicated the temple to the Lord. And we read in the previous chapter, chapter 6, follow with me if you can, verse 12.

It says there that, Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands. Solomon had made a bronze platform, five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high, and had set it in the court, and he stood on it.

Then he knelt on his knees in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands towards heaven and said, O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven or on earth keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart.

And so on that day, when everybody was gathered and Solomon is dedicating the temple to the Lord, we're told there that he kneeled, or he knelt down, on a bronze platform.

And it was there in the courtyard of the temple. Solomon is before all the people. He's on his knees. And this bronze platform, we read there, it's five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high.

[13 : 33] So it's about seven and a half feet long, seven and a half feet wide. It's four and a half feet high. So Solomon's almost above the people, and he's praying, boys and girls, with his hands raised to heaven, and he's praying on behalf of the people.

He has his hands in the air, praying on behalf of the people. He's interceding on behalf of the people. And he's interceding, fascinating when you look at it, he's there not only as their king, because he's King Solomon, but he's also there as their prophet.

He's making a proclamation before them. And he's also there as their priest. He's there as a prophet, priest, and king. But thankfully tonight, we have a greater than Solomon.

And that's the beauty of it. We have a greater than Solomon tonight, who's at the right hand of God the Father. And as our prophet, priest, and king, Jesus Christ, our Bible tells us he's alive.

And he ever lives. He ever lives to make intercession for us. He ever lives to pray for us. You want to know what Jesus is doing right now, tonight? He's praying for you.

[14 : 47] He's praying for you. He ever lives to make intercession for us. That's why we can come with boldness to that throne of grace. We can come with all our petitions, all our problems, all our prayers, and bring them to this great high priest.

But you know what I love about Solomon's prayer here, the prayer of dedication, is that throughout his prayer, read it for yourself, of chapter 6, throughout his prayer, where he repeats the petition, O Lord, hear from heaven.

O Lord, hear from heaven. O Lord, hear from heaven. You know, it's a lovely prayer. You read through Solomon's prayer in 2 Chronicles 6.

It's a lovely prayer. But it's a long prayer. It's a long prayer. That doesn't mean that our prayers have to be long prayers. Because many of the examples of prayer given in the Bible, they're actually short prayers.

In fact, the Lord's Prayer, boys and girls, the Lord's Prayer, which Jesus uses to teach us to pray, which we pray every Lord's Day, it's only 66 words long.

[16 : 01] It's a short prayer. The prayer of the penitent thief who was on the cross. You remember, he turned to Jesus at the 11th hour of his life. And with only nine words, he said, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

The publican's prayer, in comparison to the Pharisee who prayed in the temple, the publican's prayer was only seven words. God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

God, be merciful to me, a sinner. Then there was the prayer of blind Bartimaeus, sitting at the roadside. And Jesus is passing by. And what does he pray? Another seven words, Son of David, have mercy on me.

Son of David, have mercy on me. But then there's the prayer of the Canaanite woman. Her prayer was only three words. Lord, help me.

Lord, help me. Do you know how often that is the prayer I have walking up these pulpit steps? Lord, help me. My friend, the example of Scripture shows us that the petitions of prayer are short prayers.

[17 : 10] They're short prayers. I always remember being at a Saturday night prayer meeting. It was at the Crossboss Communion. I still remember it. It was the old Stornoway Elder.

He was nicknamed Cicero. I don't even know his proper name. He was a lovely man, a godly man. But I always remember him saying at the start of the prayer meeting, and if you knew him, he had a characteristic lisp.

I'm not going to mimic his lisp. But he said, gentlemen, let's pray short and spiritual prayers. Gentlemen, let's pray short and spiritual prayers.

And I'm sure I've told you before that when I was in the Free Church College, when I was studying there, it was Professor Donald MacLeod. He would speak to us about public prayer.

And this is something I'm still trying to learn. Looking at how long I took praying tonight, I'm thinking, Murdo, you need to learn this one. Because he said, remember that for the first five minutes, your congregation are praying with you.

[18 : 05] The next five minutes, they're praying for you. And anything after that, they're praying for you to sit down. So, for the first five minutes, your congregation, you're praying with me.

The next five minutes, you're praying for me. And then anything after that, you're asking me, or asking the Lord to make me sit down. But you know, it's important to pray.

And even to quote Spurgeon again, sorry to quote him again, but his book, Only a Prayer Meeting. Spurgeon, he said, as a general rule, meetings in which no prayer exceeds ten minutes, and I need to learn this, and at the most, or under five, will exhibit the most fervor and life.

In fact, Spurgeon said, length is a death blow to earnestness, and brevity is an assistant to zeal. Length is a death blow to earnestness, and brevity is an assistant to zeal.

Short spiritual prayers. And you know, that's what we can do privately too, to pray short prayers often, little and often.

[19 : 13] That's another thing I was taught by another elder one day when I was a young Christian, little and often. Short spiritual prayers. And so we see the petition of prayer.

But then secondly, we see the power, the power of prayer. So the petition of prayer and the power of prayer. Look at chapter 7, verse 1. As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple.

And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled the Lord's house. The priests could not enter the Lord's house, the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord filled the Lord's house.

Now I'm sure that many of us were familiar with the slogan from the Slavic Gospel Association. They come to our island every May, I think it is. And it's, the slogan of the Slavic Gospel Association is much prayer, much power.

Little prayer, little power. No prayer, no power. The slogan that was first penned and you could say even pronounced by its founder of the Slavic Gospel Association, Peter Danica, he was actually named Peter Dynamite.

[20 : 32] That's the nickname he was given because he was such a powerful preacher and he was a prayer warrior. Peter Danica was a prayer warrior and he lived by the statement, much prayer, much power.

Little prayer, little power. No prayer, no power. But the thing is the power of prayer isn't dependent upon the extent of prayer or the eloquence of our prayer or even the emotion of our prayer.

The power of prayer isn't dependent upon the extent or the eloquence or the emotion of our prayer because the power of prayer, it's not based upon what comes from our head. The power of prayer is what's based upon what comes from our heart.

As Jesus taught us, out of the heart the mouth speaks. And so my friend, whenever we pray, we're to pray from our heart, not just our head. We're to pray from our heart, not just our head.

We're to pray wholeheartedly. Wholeheartedly. And you know, even people who are seeking the Lord and salvation, that's how we, that's how you're converted.

[21 : 39] You pray wholeheartedly, earnestly, not from your head, but from your heart. Because the power of prayer, it's not based upon the extent of our prayer, the eloquence of our prayer, or even the emotion of our prayer, but the expression of our prayer as we come before the God who hears and the God who answers prayer.

And you know, there are so many prayer warriors found in the Bible, people who powerfully prayed to God. You look through the Bible, you find them all there. There was Abraham, the man of faith.

There was Moses, the man of God. Psalm 90 is the prayer of Moses. There was Manoah who dedicated Samson to the Lord. There was Hannah who prayed for a son.

There was Samuel who was that son. Jonah who prayed from the belly of the fish. There was Jeremiah who lamented before the Lord in prayer. Daniel, as you know, he was the man who prayed three times a day, little and often.

Habakkuk, he was one who prayed for revival. Isaiah, when he prayed, he saw the Lord high and lifted up. Paul prayed, well, that was the evidence that he was converted, that he'd been converted from being a persecutor of the church to being a preacher of the gospel.

[22 : 54] Stephen prayed. Remember when Stephen prayed? He prayed as he was being stoned to death. And as he prayed, he saw Jesus standing to receive him into glory.

And even while the apostle John prayed on the Lord's day when he was in exile on the Greek island of Patmos, John was graciously given that revelation of heaven. My friend, there are many prayer warriors mentioned in the Bible who powerfully prayed to God.

And we need to be a prayer warrior. We need to be like them. And the thing is, the Bible teaches us that we can be like them.

Because it was Elijah's prayer life that James picked up on in his letter. James, when he wrote his New Testament letter, he said, confess your sins to one another.

Pray for one another. For the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. James says, Elijah was a man just like us.

[24 : 00] With passions like ours, he says. He prayed fervently that it might not rain and for three and a half years it didn't rain. Then Elijah prayed again and heaven gave rain and the earth bore its fruit.

He was a man just like us. And Elijah was known as this man who had the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man. But the thing about Elijah, as you know, he not only called down rain from heaven, like Solomon, boys and girls, Elijah also called down fire from heaven.

And you know, I always find that occasion on Mount Carmel so fascinating. It's actually the first sermon I ever preached on. When Elijah was on the top of Mount Carmel and he was in this competition with the prophets of Baal and the competition was simply, let the God who answers by fire, let him be God.

Let him be the living and through God. And for hours you remember the prophets of Baal, they're chanting around their altar, they're crying out, they're cutting themselves in this attempt to get Baal to listen.

But we read there in 1 Kings 18, there was no voice, no one answered, no one paid attention. And then Elijah steps forward and he covers the altar in water and then he steps forward and he powerfully prays, hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that you, O Lord God, that you are God and that you have turned their hearts back again.

[25 : 38] And what do we read? Then the fire of the Lord fell. The fire of the Lord fell. And it was the same with Solomon. The fire of the Lord fell.

Verse 1, as soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices and the glory of the Lord filled the temple.

What a moment it must have been to witness that day when Solomon was dedicating the temple, to see this king praying on behalf of his people and to see the fire of the Lord fall and the glory of the Lord fill the temple.

To see the fire of the Lord fall and the glory of the Lord fill the temple. And you know, my friend, when Solomon prayed, the Lord's presence filled the place of worship.

When Solomon prayed, the Lord's presence filled the place of worship. And you know, we have to ask, well, is that not what we are looking and longing for too?

[26 : 46] Is that not what we want? Is that not what we're praying for? That the Lord's presence would fill the place of worship. That the glory of the Lord would be seen in his word and that the Lord's presence would fill this place of worship.

That the Lord would, as our Bible reminds us, that the Lord would open the windows of heaven and pour down blessing upon us, that there is not enough room to receive it.

Is that not what we want as we gather together in worship? And you know, what's remarkable is that the Lord answered Solomon's powerful prayer. The Lord answered his prayer because we read there, down in verse 12 of chapter 7, then the Lord appeared to Solomon in the night and said to him, I have heard your prayer.

What a great comfort that must have been. I have heard your prayer and I've chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice. When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain or command the locusts to devour the land or send pestilence among my people, if my people who are called by my name humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place. Do you know, I love what the Lord said to Solomon there because in chapter 6 when Solomon is praying and Solomon, maybe he wondered, is the Lord hearing me at all?

[28 : 28] But Solomon prayed there in verse 40 of chapter 6, he said, let your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the prayer of this place.

Let your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the prayer of this place. Now as you know and as you can see, when you leave the church this evening, you'll see that there are words over the door and I think I mentioned this a couple of weeks ago at the prayer meeting.

The words over the door are you are now entering the mission field. The mission field is out there. The mission field is out there. You're now entering the mission field when you leave church. But you know, I think Solomon's words should be over the door of our church hall.

Maybe I'll ask Diane to put that there too. Where we should have over the door of our prayer meeting, Lord, let your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the prayer of this place.

Lord, let your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the prayer of this place. because the thing is, that's a prayer that the Lord is willing and wanting to answer. That's a prayer that the Lord is willing and wanting to answer because when the Lord answered Solomon's powerful prayer, he said there in verse 15, he said there, now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place.

[29 : 50] My friend, the Lord is willing and wanting to answer prayer. The Lord is willing and wanting to answer prayer. But what I often think we forget is that there is a precondition to prayer.

There is a precondition to prayer. And it's with this precondition I want to conclude that this evening time has gone. This morning we considered the purpose of prayer and the priority of prayer.

This evening we thought about the petition of prayer and the power of prayer calling down fire from heaven. God willing on Wednesday evening we're going to look at the perseverance of prayer and the persistence of prayer.

But as we conclude this evening I want us to remember the precondition. The precondition of prayer. The precondition of prayer. Now I mentioned to you before that when I was in school my least favorite subject was English.

English. I hated English. I liked maths and physics and chemistry but I didn't like English. I couldn't understand paragraphs and punctuation and it stayed like that until I went to the Free Church College and I had to learn Greek.

[31 : 03] And it's only then that I understood what nouns and pronouns were and verbs and adverbs and all these things and sentence structure was a major one especially with Greek. And John Angus Professor John Angus he had a terrible time with us as students.

But one of the things I do remember and recognize is a conditional sentence. A conditional sentence. Because a conditional sentence it has an if-then clause.

If-then. And that's what we see here because there's a conditional clause in verse 14. It's a precondition to prayer. It says there in verse 14 if my people who are called by my name humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

There's a conditional clause in the Lord's call to prayer. It's a conditional clause in the call to prayer because there's a precondition to prayer.

There's a precondition to prayer. If my people so if we belong to the shepherd Jesus says my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me and I give to them eternal life.

[32 : 26] If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways then then I will hear from heaven. I will forgive their sin and heal their land.

And so my Christian friend what the Lord is highlighting to us as his people is that we have a role in prayer and we have a responsibility to be at the prayer meeting. We have a role in prayer and we have a responsibility to be at the prayer meeting.

You know we have 70 communicant members in our congregation. On average the prayer meeting attendance is less than 20. That's less than 30% of the Christians in Barbas Free Church attending the prayer meeting.

And Barbas as you know it's meant to be the place where there was a revival. And as you know we have many visitors we had one I think last week last Wednesday at the prayer meeting visitors to our congregation to our community because of a 1949 revival.

people but that was over 70 years ago. That was in the past. That was back then. What about now? What about today?

[33 : 44] What about in the 21st century? Do you know my friend there will never be a revival. There will never be reformation. There will never be conversions if we're not gathering together to pray.

We need to pray. Now as I said this morning I know there are people in our congregation who can't come to the prayer meeting. I know there are people in our congregation who are unwell and housebound and I know we're also in the privileged position of having young Christian families in our congregation where sometimes both parents are Christians and so they both can't get out to the prayer meeting because they've got a young family but there are many others and we have no excuse.

This is our call. It's not for me. No, no. This is the Lord's call to prayer. The Lord calls his people to pray and this is the precondition to prayer.

It's his call. If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and forgive their sin and heal their land if my people pray.

That's the Lord's call upon us as his people. May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, help us to be a praying people.

[35 : 23] We confess, O Lord, that we are often apathetic, that we are often so distant and detached from what it is we are meant to be doing, what we have been called to do.

We are a people who have been called from darkness and to thine own marvelous light. We have been called from death to life. And help us then to see that as sheep of this good shepherd who have been called by him and how he knows our name, how the Lord says there, if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and forgive their sin and heal their land.

And O Lord, we pray that we would be a people of prayer, that we would see to it that we do business with God, and that thou art the God who promises to hear and to answer and to do in us and for us exceedingly abundantly above all, more than we could ask and more than we could ever think.

Do us good than we plead. Go before us into this new week and keep us by thy grace, for we ask it in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. We're going to bring our service to a conclusion this evening.

We're going to sing in the words of Psalm 85. Psalm 85 in the Sing Psalms version on page 113. Psalm 85.

[36 : 58] Now we're singing from the beginning down to the verse mark 9. Psalm 85.

I suppose Psalm 85 could be summed up in the phrase, do it again, Lord. Do it again, Lord.

You did it in the past. That's how it begins. In times past, Lord, you showed favor to your own beloved land. The prosperity of Jacob you restored by your strong hand. You forgave your people's trespass.

You were pleased their sins to hide. You withdrew all your displeasure. From your wrath you turned aside. Then he says, do it again, Lord. God our Savior now restore us.

From us turn away your rage. Will your anger burn against us? Will it last from age to age? Will you not again revive us? That we may rejoice in you. Show us, Lord, your covenant mercy.

[37 : 54] Your salvation grant anew. Do it again, Lord. So Psalm 85 from the beginning down to the verse mark 9. To God's praise. In times past, Lord, you show favor to your own beloved land.

The prosperity of Jacob you restored by your strong hand.

You forgave your people's trespass. You were pleased their sins to hide.

You withdrew all your displeasure. From your wrath you turned aside.

God our Savior now restore us. From us turn away your rage.

[39 : 28] Will your anger burn against us? Will it last from age to age?

Will you not again revive us? That we may rejoice in you.

Show us, Lord, your God and mercy, your salvation grant anew.

I will hear what God the Lord says to his saints.

He offers peace, but his people must not wander and return to foolishness.

[40 : 51] Surely for all those who fear him, his salvation is at hand, so that once again his glory may be seen within our land.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen. Amen. Amen.