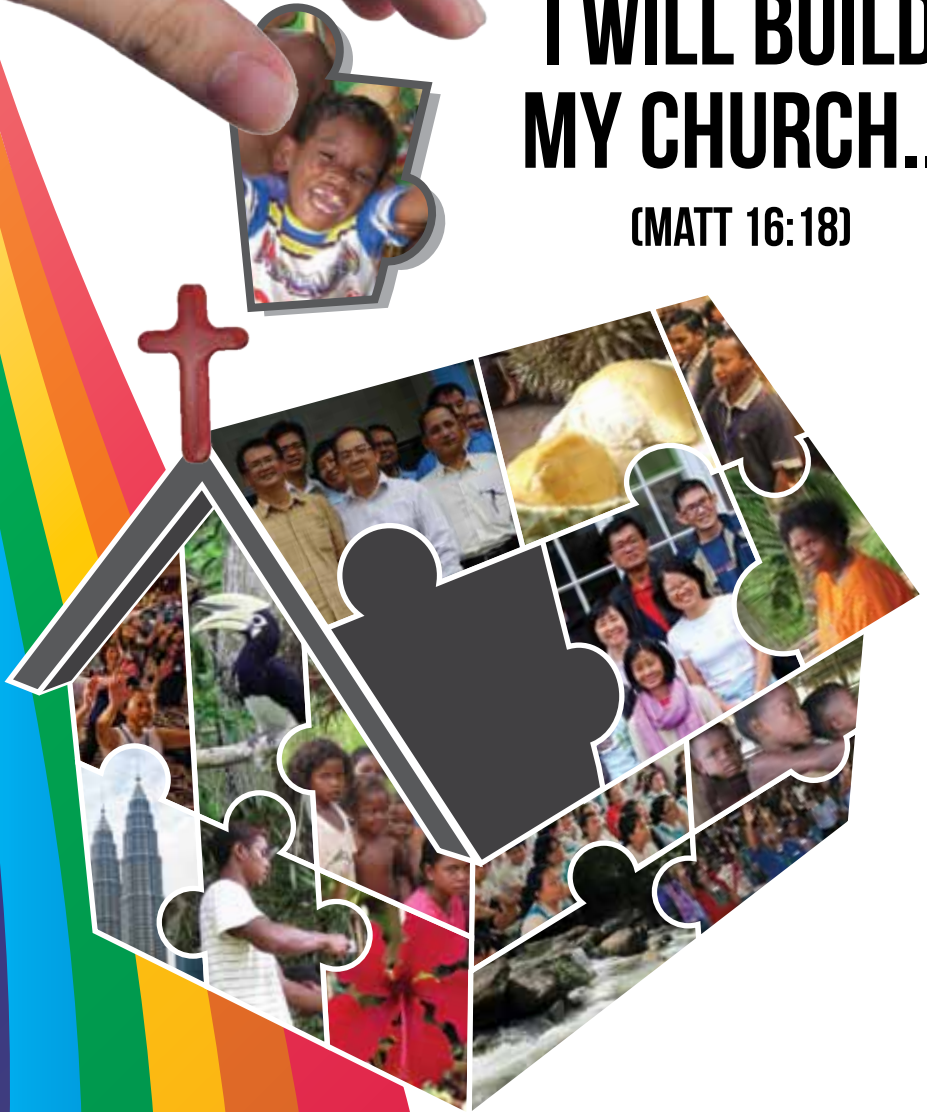


Adult Edition

I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH...

(MATT 16:18)



NECF 40-Day Fast & Prayer • 7th Aug - 15th Sept 2014





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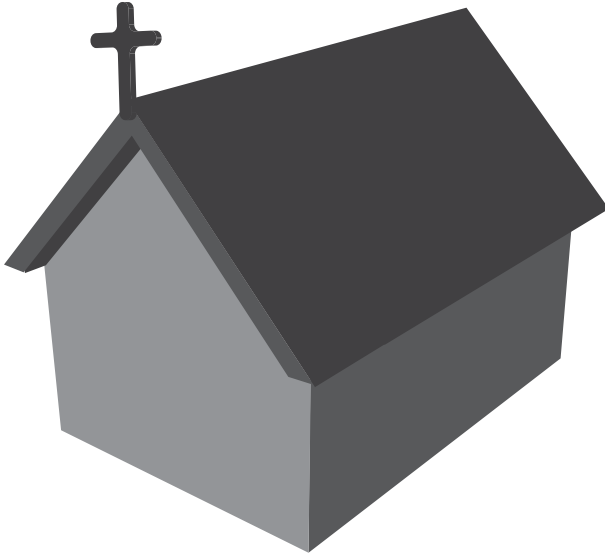
40-Day Fast & Prayer 2014
(7 August - 15 September)

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I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH

*Foreword by Eugene Yapp
Secretary-General, NECF Malaysia*

The theme for this year's 40-Day Fast & Pray is "I will Build my Church"(Matt 16:18). This is the 14th edition of our 40-Day Fast and Pray booklet and we thank our God for sustaining this annual prayer initiative.

Much prayer is needed as our nation faces one storm after another. A concerted effort in prayer demonstrates a church in humility, acknowledging that we need to be in alignment and in submission to the will of the Lord in how we live and in all that we do. As we pray, it is God who will bring everlasting change and goodness to nations and society.

While we continue to call upon the Lord's intervention for the nation, building the church of Christ is also important. These two are not mutually exclusive. Praying for the nation presupposes an informed church. Praying faithfully demands that the followers of Christ are themselves faithful. Praying in the midst of adversity demonstrates a strong church. Praying with discernment requires yielding ourselves to the Spirit of the Lord.

What would be required of the church if we are to sustain such a posture? In essence, we need a strong national church. That means churches need to be equipped and to disciple those within so that true spirituality permeates our being. Only then can our testimony be vibrant and our witness holistic to impact both society and nation.

In this booklet, some important topics include the unity of the body of Christ. At a time when Malaysia faces so many challenges, we need more than ever the unity of the body. It is through such unity that the church will remain strong in trials and tribulations. And it is through such unity that the church can impact the nation, despite the trials and tribulations. It is only as we begin impacting the nation that the church is also "discipling" the nation with truth, justice and righteousness from our God as revealed to us in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We trust the theme and the topics in this booklet will help strengthen our motivation and resolve to be fervent and consistent in our prayer life. More importantly, we pray that this booklet will help to inculcate the spirituality needed to transform our being and to live as agents of light and blessings for the Kingdom of God in our community, society and the nation.

God bless the church and Malaysia!



JESUS MUST INCREASE; I MUST DECREASE

The New Testament employs several different metaphors to describe the church. One favourite metaphor of the apostle Paul's is the church as the "body of Christ" (1 Cor. 12). John the Baptist regarded the followers of Jesus (the church) to be the "bride of Christ", metaphorically speaking, with the reference to himself as a "friend of the bridegroom" and also by designating Jesus as the "bridegroom" (John 3).

As a friend of the bridegroom, or as a "best man" in our modern wedding context, John the Baptist only seeks to shine the spotlight on Jesus. Thus John was not perturbed by Jesus' increasing popularity (John 3:26). Instead, John greatly rejoiced that people were flocking to Jesus since "the bride truly belongs to the bridegroom" (John 3:29). In his book, J. Oswald Sanders calls John the Baptist a preacher who eventually lost his entire congregation to Jesus!

Another primary concern of John the Baptist was to exalt Jesus above himself. John utters these memorable words succinctly in John 3:30: "He must increase; I must decrease." Due to his humble attitude, no wonder Jesus reserved the highest commendation for him as the greatest man in the kingdom of God (Matt. 11:11). Likewise the bride of Christ in Malaysia should also emulate John's humility of deferring to Jesus all the time. Do we want Jesus to shine brightly or ourselves to shine?



Prayer Points:

- 1. Pray for a passionate concern for the growth of churches in Malaysia and worldwide.*
- 2. For close co-operation among churches to establish God's kingdom on this earth.*
- 3. For a personal embrace of John 3:30 as a life goal for every believer in Christ.*





UNION AND COMMUNION WITH CHRIST

Ephesians 5 eloquently depicts the church as the “bride of Christ” and highlights the sacrificial love of Jesus for her. Paul then applies the “one flesh” concept in a human marriage to the relationship between Christ and the church (vs 31-32). The marriage analogy from the human world is to illustrate the intimate union between Jesus and the church on the spiritual level.

Paul states that this close relationship between Jesus and the church is a mystery since it transcends all human understanding (vs 32). This mystery, however, does not nullify the reality behind it. Nor should it hinder God’s people from entering into the most intimate spiritual union and communion with Jesus.

On the Damascus road, Paul himself had a glimpse of this mysterious union of Jesus with his followers. In Acts 9:4, when the risen Jesus appeared to Paul, he uttered these words: “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” This epiphany gave Paul a deeper awareness of the ineffable spiritual union of Jesus with his followers.

While the bride of Christ already has a foretaste of this mysterious and yet intimate union and communion with Jesus on earth, the fullness of this spiritual intimacy still awaits her. It will only culminate at the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven (Rev. 19:7). This future prospect should evoke a rapturous joy for the bride of Christ.



Prayer Points:

1. *Pray for effusive praise and gratitude for the sacrificial love of Jesus towards the “bride of Christ”.*
2. *Pray for concerted effort to cultivate an intimate spiritual union and communion with Jesus on the personal level.*
3. *For constant rejoicing that this spiritual intimacy with the Lord will be fully consummated in heaven.*






THE BRIDE'S READINESS FOR THE SECOND COMING

Some Bible teachers insist that the parable of the ten virgins is not a suitable passage for regarding the church as the bride of Christ (Matt. 25). The simple reason is that Jesus would end up with ten brides! Such a faulty interpretation arises when one fails to grasp that a metaphor merely represents spiritual reality, but is not the reality itself. In any case, the ten virgins are not the brides, but a bridal procession party waiting to accompany the bridegroom to the wedding banquet.

Nevertheless, by employing the analogy of the bridegroom in this parable, Jesus appears to regard the church on earth as his spiritual bride. To remind his bride of the crucial importance of being ready for his second coming, Jesus utilises the story of the bridal procession party to drive home this point. Thus, five virgins were regarded as wise because they made preparations for the sudden arrival of the bridegroom, whereas the five other foolish virgins failed to do so.

Although there was a delay by the bridegroom in this parable, this does not excuse the total lack of preparation for the bridegroom's coming. Nor should the delay cause the bride of Christ to develop a cavalier attitude. In addition, it is quite plausible for the church to be found sleeping instead of being active in Kingdom work. To avoid this spiritual malaise, the church should be fully prepared for the imminent return of the Lord to this earth.

 **Prayer Points:**

1. *That the bride of Christ will make advanced preparations for the return of the heavenly bridegroom.*
2. *That God's people will live a holy and blameless life in this world (2 Peter 3:14).*
3. *For an urgent concern for evangelism and missions due to the imminence of the second coming.*





A PURE DEVOTION TO CHRIST

A metaphor to connote the church as the bride of Christ is clearly evident in 2 Cor. 11:2. Here Paul speaks of his godly jealousy for the Corinthian believers because he has spiritually betrothed them to one husband.

As a bride, the Corinthian church was supposed to show sincere and pure devotion to her spiritual husband (vs 3). An illustration might help to amplify the preceding point. In Matt. 1, when Joseph, a righteous man, discovered that his betrothed Mary had conceived a child even before he slept with her, he was of course very upset and distraught. Displaying mercy, Joseph thought of divorcing Mary, who was legally his wife, so that she could escape from being stoned to death. All along Joseph had expected his bride Mary to be chaste and loyal to him before the full consummation of the marriage. In the end, it required an angelic intervention to convince Joseph that Mary's conception of Jesus was through the supernatural agency of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:20).

If Joseph's apparent perception of Mary's unfaithfulness made him a broken-hearted man, how much more pain and anguish it would be for Jesus to see his spiritual bride, the church, being disloyal to him. After all, did Jesus not suffer and die on the Cross to redeem the bride for Himself?



Prayer Points:

1. Pray for an exclusive devotion to the Lord Jesus by the bride of Christ even during times of persecution.
2. For a deep reflection on the costly price paid by Jesus on the Cross to redeem his spiritual bride.
3. For a desire to seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness rather than pursuing materialism and personal glory.





INTIMACY WILL BE TESTED

Gen 22:1 Some time later God tested Abraham.

Abraham's friendship with God was severely tested. He was asked to sacrifice his only beloved son, Isaac, as a burnt offering on the mountains of Moriah. His trust in God was based on God's covenant with him in Gen 17:2-8. His trust in God was tested to the point of near death when he reached out his hand to slay his son with his knife.

Has our relationship with God been tested to the point of death yet? The level of our intimate love for God will be defined by our response to the testing and trials that come by in our lives. Our act of faith in moments of distress will be based on our personal experience of Christ's love for each of us.

Therefore, blessed are we when we persevere under trial, because when we have stood the test, we will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him (Jas 1:12). Similarly, Abraham's obedience in the crucible of testing brought tremendous blessings not only upon his descendants but also to all the nations of the earth.



Prayer Points:

1. *Meditate on how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God (Eph 3: 18-19).*
2. *Thank God in all circumstances, accepting the good and (also the adversity) the evil (Job 2:10).*
3. *Ask God to give you the grace and strength not to charge God with wrongdoing in the midst of our severe trials and testing (Job 1:22). Ask God to help us to be victorious overcomers.*





INTIMACY REQUIRES PRIORITISING

Lk 10:42 ... Mary had chosen what is better, ...

Mary and Martha, two sisters who loved the Lord Jesus, demonstrate to us how we prioritize our preoccupation with God.

Martha honoured the Lord Jesus when He came to her village by opening her home and hosting him. Verse 40 says she was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She was stressed with the workload and was not pleased with the way the Lord handled the situation. Jesus’s reply pointed her to the only one thing that was needful (v42). He pointed out to her that her priority was wrong; and Mary though seemingly was not too helpful in the preparations, had chosen what was better. Her priority was to give Jesus all the attention, by sitting at the Lord’s feet listening to [him] v39.

In pursuing intimacy with the Lord, we need to review some of our priorities in life. Is reading the Bible, the living word, a priority in our lifestyle? How much time do we spend reading the Bible and praying compared to golfing or shopping?



Prayer Points:

1. *Meditate on Mt 11:28 – Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*
2. *Thank God for His invitation to learn from Him when we come into His presence.*
3. *Ask for rest in our souls as we come into His presence. Humble our hearts and minds to learn from Him for His yoke is easy and His burden is light.*





INTIMACY REFLECTS CHRIST-LIKENESS

Jn 15:5-8

In this parable, Christ gives a beautiful analogy of Him being the Vine and we the branches. He says that as we abide in Him (Christ), and He (Christ) (abides) in us, we will bear much fruit. Andrew Murray described the branch as a perfect likeness of the vine. The only difference is the vine is great and strong, and the source of strength; the branch is smaller and feeble, ever needing and receiving strength. Without the vine a branch cannot bear fruits for all its resources come from the vine. The vine provides life, sap and strength for the branch. The branch has nothing but what the vine provides and imparts. Thus, without Christ we can do nothing (which is of Christ).

Intimacy with Christ requires us to remain in His likeness and nature. When we align our lives with His purposes, we naturally bear fruits which Christ desires us to bring forth.

In our daily walk, remaining in Christ's likeness and nature remains a challenge. Without absolute dependence on Christ, we cannot bear fruits like humility, hospitality and love that are similar to Christ.



Prayer Points:

1. Meditate on v1, Christ is the true vine, and our heavenly Father is the vinedresser. Be assured that we as His branches, are in the good hands of the God who cares for all our needs to grow and to bear fruits.
2. Thank Christ for His constant provision of strength and guidance that we can remain in Him despite the storms in life.
3. Ask God to continue to reveal to us this revelation of the mystery of our union with Christ, the Vine, who is constantly at work to provide for the branch to bear fruits.





INTIMACY THROUGH THE WORD

Jn 15:7-11

Merrill C Tenney explained that to remain in Christ and to allow His Words to remain in us means a conscious acceptance of the authority of His Word and a constant contact with Him through prayer. When Christ's disciples are in such an intimate relationship with Christ through His Word, his or her prayer request would be to ask for matters which are close to the heart of our Lord for us. Therefore, such prayers would certainly be answered as Jesus promised in v7 marking us as disciples who are fruitful, bringing glory to our heavenly Father.

Tenney points out that two results from this relationship are obedience and joy. Obedience to the commands of Jesus marks the authenticity of our love for Him. This results in joy in us and in Christ. Obedience, in fulfilling the purpose of God, brings success. When the life of Christ in us brings out fruitfulness, natural joy will follow. Remaining in Him is never a burdensome or boring task.



Prayer Points:

- 1. Meditate on Joshua 1:8, ... but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.*
- 2. Thank God that His Word is always there to guide us and lead us in the path of righteousness.*
- 3. Ask God to help us to be fruit-bearing intercessors by always abiding in Him and His Word.*






INTIMACY THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Jn 14:15&16 If you love Me, keep My commandments... and He will give you another Helper...

Christ promised us a Helper, the Holy Spirit, before His return to our heavenly Father. The Holy Spirit will dwell in us and guide us. Preceding this promise is a call from Jesus to obey His command if we truly love Him. He repeats Himself again in verse 23 that if anyone loves Him, he or she will obey His teaching. Christ knew that His believers would need His help to be able to fulfil this command. Such a fulfillment must be motivated by love for Christ rather than an authoritarian command. Therefore, one of the purposes of the Holy Spirit is to teach us all things and remind us of everything taught by Christ (v 26).

In growing intimately with Christ we need to learn how to allow the Holy Spirit to live with us daily.

One of the Holy Spirit’s many functions is to represent God to believers as Jesus did in His incarnate state on earth. His dwelling within us is the specific privilege of believers of Christ (Jn 7:38-39).

 **Prayer Points:**

1. *Meditate on how the stream of living water will flow from within us each day (Jn 7:38).*
2. *Thank our Lord Jesus for His precious promise of giving us the Holy Spirit, who will dwell in us, who is our Helper/Counselor to help us grow into greater intimacy with Christ.*
3. *Ask the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, to lead us into a deeper knowledge of and deeper relationship with our Lord Saviour Jesus Christ and our heavenly Father.*





INTIMACY THROUGH WEAKNESS

Lk 15:20 ...when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

Every sincere believer encounters this paradox of grace: that while we are confronted with (and often shocked by) the darkness of our sinful desires, God still pursues us even in our brokenness. He even calls us lovely because of the gift of righteousness through Christ (2 Cor 5:17-21), because He affirms the sincere “yes” in our hearts (Ps 51:12, Mt 26:41), and because He sees us through the lens of our eternal destiny as Jesus’ Bride (Eph. 4:11-13, 5:24-25). Like the Father who “ran...embraced...and kissed” his prodigal son (Lk 15), God is unrelenting in His pursuit of the weak yet sincere believers, unwavering in His commitment to love us into perfection. Our ability to grow in intimacy with Christ is connected to our ability to see ourselves through His eyes so that we can live under His gaze without shame.



Prayer Points:

1. *Meditate on what the Word declares we are in Christ (e.g., 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:10; Jn. 1:12; 1 Pet. 2:9)*
2. *Thank Him that He delights in us even in our brokenness, that He does not despise us in our weakness but strengthens us to love Him rightly.*
3. *Ask God to reveal and to flood with His light the dark areas of our heart. When we live in the light, we have fellowship and grow in intimacy with God (Jn. 3:17-19, 1 Jn 1:5-10). Ask for the ability to see ourselves and to agree with the way our Heavenly Father sees us so that we can (and ask for grace to) confidently approach Him daily to grow in beloved-ness before God.*





WHAT HINDERS OUR INTIMACY WITH CHRIST

Mt13:22 Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

Song 2:15 Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes.

Foxes are cunning animals that will destroy vineyards under the cover of night. Unlike lions that are bold and strong and attack by day, foxes are small, fast, crafty and hard to catch. The “little foxes” in the vineyard of our heart represent small compromises like fear, sinful thoughts, words and attitudes, the small yet persistent misuse of time and money. Like the seed sown among thorns (Matt. 13:22), these compromises, cares and anxieties impede fruitfulness. The cry to “catch us the foxes” is the cry for God to remove everything that hinders our wholehearted love for Him.



Prayer Points:

1. Meditate on the willingness and ability of God to aid us in our weaknesses (Rom 8:26-27; Heb 4:14-16; Jude 1:24).
2. Thank Him for His kindness and willingness to remove any obstacle, and for His commitment to bring us forth in love.
3. Ask God to reveal any areas of compromise that are hindrances in your relationship with Him (Ps 139:23-24). Invite Him to remove anything that destroys intimacy and for grace to arise from our comfort zones to partner with Him.





LOVE POURED OUT

Matthew 26:7 ... a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on His head as He sat at the table.

In Luke, she is identified as Mary of Bethany, an orphan who lived with her siblings Martha and Lazarus. The costly oil was her security, her part of the inheritance to be used as dowry for her wedding someday.

This part of the devotional starts with the crux of it all: Love. Encountering Jesus led her to give up the most expensive thing she owned for something of far greater value. But in pouring out her love on Jesus, her act of devotion was judged as foolishness.

Likewise, as His Church lives out its extravagant love for Jesus in this nation, voices of opposition will rise. When we truly love Jesus, the world will look upon us with contempt and hatred. Yet, no flood of persecution can drown the Perfect Love, and giving up all else for that love – even our very lives – will be counted as loss in the light of knowing Him.



Prayer Points:

1. Ask Him to reveal His love, beauty and majesty to you. This draws us to pour out love upon the One Who is worthy.
2. Spend time responding to His revelation by adoring and praising Him for who He is.
3. Pray that the church will rise up and give extravagant worship to Jesus like Mary of Bethany did, and for the Church to stand on the words of Jesus in the face of persecution.





PLEDGING OUR ALLEGIANCE

John 15:18 If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.

We are called to be set apart for God – to be in the world but not of it. When we pledge our allegiance to Jesus, we instantly make enemies with the world. In the gospels, our Lord was accused by the world for being a glutton and for driving out demons with demonic powers. The world did not love Him. They would rather choose Barabbas, a murderer, than Him.

In our context, being hated by the world may mean having our colleagues call us religious fanatics, our teachers at school openly challenging our faith in front of other students, or our unbelieving family members denying us. Yet, our hope is this: “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:10). Our true home is not in this world that is perishing, but in the kingdom of heaven which is eternal.



Prayer Points:

1. *Meditate on how we have been set apart from the world to be people of the kingdom (John 17:16).*
2. *Thank Him for the honour and privilege of being in allegiance with Him, and for the grace to continue walking in that calling.*
3. *Pray that the Church will be loyal and faithful to Jesus even when the world threatens her with persecution.*





LOVE COMPELS US TO LOVE

Luke 23:33-34 And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”

Jesus, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, has known the Father since eternity. Jesus lived, died and rose again, the only begotten Son come down to declare the Father’s love, yet the world hung Him on the cross and counted Him worthy to die among criminals.

Our Lord and Forerunner, Jesus Christ, said that those who follow Him must carry their own cross. As He loved on the cross, we must also love on our own crosses. This is only possible if we remain in the place of first love, abiding, as Jesus did, in the love of His Father. Stephen, the first martyr, cried aloud before he died, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin,” (Acts 7:60). The saints today must press on in love so that we can stand and look into the eyes of our enemies and say, “Jesus loves you. I love you too.”



Prayer Points:

1. Ask Him to remind you of specific people that count you as their enemy, and also for His grace to release forgiveness to them (Matt 6:14-15).
2. Spend time blessing them with your prayers (Matthew 5:44-45).
3. Ask Him to root you and ground you in love that your response may be love when persecution comes (Ephesians 3:14-17).





OPEN HEAVEN IN PRISON

Acts 16:25-26 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed.

In the book of Acts, the church grew rapidly and was driven to expand His Kingdom in other parts of the world because of persecution. As heaven opened over the first church, so did the prison doors and courts. No opposing force on earth could stop the work of heaven. Prison hindered Paul and Silas from physically going around preaching the gospel, but it did not stop them from agreeing with the authority of heaven over all the earth. They prayed and worshipped and ushered in the manifest presence of God within the prison walls. The foundations shook, the doors opened, the chains were loosed – these tools of oppression came apart at the glory of the Lord! When revival comes, what can man do to thwart it?



Prayer Points:

1. Ask the Father to help align your heart with His for revival in this nation, and how you can recognise it and be a part of it.
2. Declare the authority of heaven over your own personal life, your church, this nation and the nations.
3. Pray for the Church that she will respond to persecution with prayer and worship that ushers in the presence of God even more in this nation.





REJOICE!

Acts 5:41 So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.

There is a story about a believer who, captured by his persecutors, was stabbed in his cheeks with a blade. The believer began laughing uncontrollably. His persecutors shouted at him, “Why are you laughing? Are you not afraid of death?” He looked at them and replied, still laughing, “Why should I be afraid? I have already died in Him!”

Humanly speaking, suffering does not equal joy. God, however, is beyond human logic. In Matthew, we read that the disciples were filled with sorrow when Jesus began to speak about His death in Jerusalem. In John, we sense the disciples’ distress around the supper table when Jesus spoke of the sufferings they must endure. But what joy they had when they personally beheld the risen Lord and His ascension. Christ’s victory over death was their reason to be joyful! Counted worthy to suffer as Christ did, they also had the assurance that they were counted worthy to share in His glory!



Prayer Points:

1. Ask Him to remind you of events in the past where you suffered for Him and thank Him for counting you worthy to share in His suffering.
2. Thank and praise Him for defeating death through the cross and resurrection.
3. Since joy is among the fruit of the Spirit, ask Jesus to pour out His Spirit over the Church in this nation that she will rejoice when she goes through persecution.





THE REWARD

2 Corinthians 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

For the early church, persecution and martyrdom were common. Some of us might have experienced persecution to a certain degree but not to the point of death. Yet, we are always carrying the death of Jesus in our bodies, always being delivered over to death, as Paul writes in the previous few verses. And this happens so that His life is revealed in us. As such, no matter the severity of the trials we face, Paul calls these afflictions “light” and “momentary”. If we place our earthly lives, gains and losses side by side in comparison with eternity and the glorious reward of the saints, our 70 to 80 years of human life on earth will seem like a second. Living in constant awareness and heartsickness for eternity has helped many saints stand through seasons of persecutions. Do we have a vision of eternity? Are we content with earthly things or are we aching for more of heaven each day?



Prayer Points:

1. *Thank Him for the reward that you have in Him – both seen and unseen – as you go through afflictions here on earth.*
2. *Ask Him for a greater revelation, understanding and awareness of eternity.*
3. *Pray that the Church in Malaysia will have her heart focused on eternity, that she will be able to withstand the coming persecution.*





THE VICTORIOUS CHURCH

Revelation 21:7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

Revelation 21 speaks of the glory of the New Jerusalem, where all things are made new and where there will be no more death, pain or tears. There will be no need for the sun or moon because the Lamb Himself will be the light. Prior to that, it also talks about tribulation upon the saints as Satan rages in his final days. These two scenes combined are an exhortation for all believers to endure suffering as the coming of Jesus approaches. How beautiful that the words “inherit” and “son” are used in this verse. As King Jesus, the only begotten Son, is found worthy to reign over all the earth, we too, who are sons through the spirit of adoption, will share in His inheritance when He comes to reign over the nations one day (Rev 5:9-10; 19:11-16). Stand fast, for He is worthy of it all!



Prayer Points:

1. Meditate upon God’s promises to His people in the end times and how He is inviting you to claim His promises.
2. Pray that He will strengthen you to endure the hour of tribulation.
3. Rev 22:17 is the end time cry of the Church. Pray that when the Church gathers for prayer meetings, her focus will be for Jesus to come back soon.





UNITING AS A BODY OF CHRIST

The most profound exposition on the subject of Unity in Christ's Body is given by the Lord Jesus himself in John 17 – the Lord's High Priestly prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane.

There could not have been a more significant time for Jesus to utter this prayer than on the eve of His crucifixion. He intercedes to God the Father for the disciples in John 17:6-19 and then for us, His disciples and church to follow, in the remaining verses of 20-26. In those 20 out of 26 verses in the chapter, Jesus prayed the most lavish, generous prayer, claiming promises before God the Father. Significantly, he reveals the "spiritual DNA" of unity – that "all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You" (v21). He even goes on, with deliberate repetition, to pray "I have given them the glory that You gave Me that they may be one as We are one: I in them and You in Me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me" (vs22-23). The earlier three chapters also make it clear that this sacred unity includes God the Holy Spirit, giving us our cardinal doctrine of the Tri-une Godhead as the Holy Trinity.

Knowing that we share such a unity with our uniquely loving and relational, personal God, is it any wonder that Jesus said of His church "...the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18)?



Prayer Points:

1. *Pray for us, Christ's disciples and church, to fulfil this High Priestly prayer that calls us to unity.*
1. *Pray that we will remember and pursue this spiritual DNA of the church – unity – so that the world will know that Christ was sent by our heavenly Father.*





ESSENTIAL QUALITIES FOR UNITY

The next sacred authority on the subject of unity is the apostle to the Gentiles, St Paul.

The unity of the church depends on the charity of our character and conduct (Eph 4:2). John Stott points out that too many start with structures (which may be useful) but Paul starts with moral qualities (which are more important). There are four moral qualities:-

1. **“lowliness”** (humility). This was despised as servility in ancient times. The word used means “lowliness of mind” shown by Christ which led him to empty himself to become a servant (Phil 2:3-8).
2. **“meekness”**. This was associated with domestic animals. It is not “weakness” but that gentleness of the strong (or ‘moderation’, as appreciated by the philosopher Aristotle) whose strength is under control and with a disposition not to assert personal rights. Together (1) and (2) form a natural pair and perfect balance in Christ (Stott adds) who was “gentle and lowly in heart” (Matt 11:29).
3. **“patience”** and **“mutual forbearance”** (continuing our summary from Stott) also form a natural pair. Patience is long-suffering towards aggravating people, such as God in Christ has shown us (Rom 2:4; 1 Tim 1:16). Forebearance speaks of mutual tolerance without which no group of humans can live in peace.
4. **“love”** the final quality, embraces the above four as the crown and sum of all virtues. It seeks the welfare of others and the good of the community (Col 3:14).



Prayer Points:

1. *If we would truly desire unity in the Body let us pray also for the five essential qualities: lowliness, meekness, patience, mutual forbearance and love.*
2. *Ask our Father to forgive us for our shortcomings and give us the ability to be what He is – humble, meek, patient, forbearing, and loving.*





CHRISTIAN UNITY DEMANDS THE MATURITY OF OUR GROWTH

Paul explicitly spells out the church’s goal which is not just pious rhetoric. First, in Eph 4:13-14 he says, “until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood... so that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro... with every wind of doctrine...”. Then he continues in v15, “Instead, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him (Christ)”. Paul’s exhortation closes with a brief appeal to his well-known body metaphor, “when each part (of the body) is working properly, (making) bodily growth and (building up) itself in love”.

Christian unity cannot grow without Christian faith and knowledge and a balance of truth and love. Nor can it grow apart from a healthy body. It is corporate and never individualistic. Although in one sense, unity is a given and is inviolable (as Stott reminds again), yet in another sense, it needs to be “maintained” visibly (v3) and “attained” fully (v13). Unity already exists as God’s gift. But it must also be attained fully as a goal. Stott suggests, as there are degrees of sanctity, there are degrees of unity.



Thought for Prayer:

1. *Prayerfully consider the various practical measures our churches and Christian communities local, national and international, have taken to help us grow in Christian maturity and unity. Have we taken advantage of any of them or have we been too self-centred and busy “doing our own thing”?*





UNITY ENABLES MISSIONS

God redeems people through the power of the Gospel of Christ and brings them together in a community called the Church. Through the Church, God makes known His salvation plan to all the people of the earth.

In order to fulfil her role, the Church needs to live in unity. There is nothing more harmful to the Church than disunity. When there are factions in the Church, it grieves the Holy Spirit and hinders His work. It dishonours God. It bears false witness to the perfect unity of the God of the Trinity. It invalidates the Church's testimony that God is a God of mercy and love. It discourages those who serve in the Church. It chases away believers and seekers.

On the other hand, when God's people live in harmony and peace, God is pleased. The Holy Spirit can move freely among them. The world will know that Christians are followers of Jesus Christ and many will be drawn to Him. A wonderful environment is set for the healthy spiritual growth and development of believers. God's servants can unite their efforts to do God's will. God's goals can be accomplished more easily in a united Church.



Prayer Points:

1. *Pray that the Malaysian Church will "teach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ".*
2. *Pray that members of the Malaysian Church will identify with one another as belonging to the same Body, feel for one another and care for one another.*





BIBLICAL UNITY IS NOT UNIFORMITY

Satan knows the destructive power of disunity and the constructive power of unity. That is why he works to cause divisions within the church. From the beginning of the early church, he made the Greek-speaking Jewish believers doubt the care and love of the Hebrew-speaking Jewish Christians. He caused the Jewish believers to distance themselves from the Gentile believers.

What type of unity does Scripture teach? Firstly, doctrinal unity. Believers see God, humanity and the world through the Bible's lens. They believe and hence speak the same things about reality as understood through the Bible. Secondly, unity of the heart. Believers are so closely and wonderfully linked together as one body that they feel both the joy and pain of one another.

A united Church does not mean that believers have completely similar thoughts, behaviors and values. Scriptural unity generated by the Holy Spirit is based on the amazing power of the Gospel of Christ that all believers have experienced. It's so transformational that they willingly submit to one another and do not insist that things be done their way. They follow the footsteps of Jesus who is totally secure in His Father's love and completely submits to Him. The Holy Spirit continuously moulds believers so that their thoughts and behavior are in line with the Bible. To that end, the Church is developing biblical unity that glorifies God, attracts seekers and enables it to shine brightly in this dark world.

Prayer Points:

- 1. Pray that God will restore broken relationships in churches, bring reconciliation and heal hurts.*
- 2. Pray that the Holy Spirit will work deeply in believers' lives so that they can live in unity with one another.*




TRUTH IS THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN UNITY


Though unity in the church is of utmost importance in order for the Church to effectively fulfil her God-assigned role, it is not the absolute criterion for how believers should relate to one another.

In his first epistle, Apostle John wrote, “We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us...” (1 John 1:3). According to John, in order for him to develop a deep and strong fellowship with the readers, he first told them what he believed about Jesus. In other words, there can be no significant fellowship among people who do not share the same understanding and view of Jesus Christ. Truth is the foundation of genuine Christian fellowship.

Similarly, when Apostle Paul wished to invite the believers in Rome to be partners in his missionary fellowship to Spain, he wrote to them the theological book of Romans which spelt out clearly the truths that Christians believe in. According to Paul, for any partnership to be deep and meaningful, it had to have its basis in a common theology.

 **Prayer Points:**

1. *Pray that the unity of the Malaysian Church will be expressed through partnership in the expansion of the kingdom of God.*
2. *Pray that the unity in our churches will not be superficial but be Spirit-generated, biblically-sound and Christ-exalting.*

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UNITY THROUGH THE FIVE-FOLD MINISTRY

When Paul was addressing divisions in the church at Corinth, he said in 1 Corinthians 11:19, “No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God’s approval.” Paul expected some disunity in the church because not all professing Christians are genuine believers. Due to the presence of unbelief or false belief, there will be “necessary” disunity in the church.

When we try to develop or preserve the unity of the church, we must not do so at the expense of truth or biblical theology. In fact, we should do so by exalting the great doctrines of Scripture, not by avoiding them. We cannot sacrifice truth on the altar of unity.

Scriptural unity is something that every church needs to work on constantly. God, in His wisdom, has given the church “apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to equip His church so that they can reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God”. God’s servants are instructed to “preach, correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instructions” so that the people of God can truly be united in Christ and with one heart, one mind, and one voice speak God’s truth in love to one another and to the world.



Prayer Points:

1. *Pray that pastors, preachers, teachers and leaders will patiently and faithfully make known the great doctrines of Scripture to their churches.*
2. *Pray for divine wisdom, guidance and vision for national church leaders as they work to unite the churches/denominations and Christian organizations in Malaysia together to serve God’s purpose for our nation.*





THE GREAT COMMISSION

Mark 16:15-16 Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved.

The Church has the awesome task of bringing the good news to impact the nations and is His primary agent in this task. The Church in Malaysia is in a strategic position to reach out to the multicultural people in this nation. The Body of Christ that makes up the Church in Malaysia is multilingual and multicultural with a natural ability to communicate across cultures and ethnic barriers. We happily claim to be “Truly Asia” and to be “A fusion of ethnic cuisines”.

The Church needs to desperately heed the Great Commission to impact the lives of the numerous people that we work and live with, many of whom are suffering in loneliness, fear, and who are in desperate need of love and fellowship.



Prayer Points:

1. *Ask for forgiveness for our complacency and failure to reach out to the many people we come into contact with in our daily lives.*
2. *Pray for forgiveness that despite our gift of being able to speak more than one language, we have not reached out in kindness to those of different ethnicities whom we meet daily.*
3. *Pray that we will deliberately set aside at least a few minutes each day to reach out with kindness to at least one person amongst the many people we meet daily.*
4. *Pray that we will set up small prayer groups in our places of work, in our homes and in our schools, and do prayer walks in our neighbourhood.*





DISCIPLING THE NATIONS

Matthew 28:19-20 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Jesus Christ has commanded His Church to “make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”. The Church in Malaysia has unfortunately been quite weak in obeying the Great Commission not only to baptize people but also to disciple people. The Church needs to teach and equip our members with the biblical truths so that Christians are not only strong in the Word but also become the salt and the light of the world. If we neglect this important task, we should not be surprised if members are shaped by worldly views and the prevailing culture of compromise. The Church needs to reverse this trend of compromising.

We are to be a chosen generation, a royal priesthood and a holy nation. The Church needs to reclaim these three aspects of its identity.



Prayer Points:

1. *Pray for forgiveness for neglecting our role in discipleship so that the Body of Christ may take its rightful position as a chosen generation, a royal priesthood and a holy nation.*
2. *Pray that each of us will disciple our children, youth and new Christians so that each can take his rightful place as the salt and light of the world.*
3. *Pray for the strong development of discipleship in every local church.*
4. *Pray that we will witness to those we meet in our daily lives and testify of His reality in our daily lives.*





WITNESSING ACROSS ETHNO-LINGUISTIC CLUSTERS

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

The Lord Jesus commands us to be His witnesses “in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”. Our Jerusalem could be wherever our local church is located and our Judea could be wherever our people are located. The Church in Malaysia is a collection of ethno-linguistic clusters, mainly the Chinese, Indian, English and Bahasa Malaysia-speaking clusters. The Chinese (both English-speaking and Chinese-speaking) form 27% of Christians in Malaysia while Indians form 4.4%. The Bahasa Malaysia-speaking cluster forms 64% of Christians in Malaysia and is economically the most disadvantaged cluster.

Whatever threatens one ethno-linguistic group will affect all the other groups. We are better placed to enhance the rights of freedom to worship God and to maintain the language, culture and way of life of each cluster, especially the indigenous cluster – if we stay as one united people.



Prayer Points:

1. *Pray that the Federal Constitution would remain as the supreme law of Malaysia.*
2. *Pray against every erroneous interpretation of the Federal Constitution that threatens to rob Malaysians of what is rightly theirs including the freedom of religion and their land rights.*
3. *Pray for unity among all ethno-linguistic clusters and that they will be deeply rooted in biblical truths.*
4. *Pray for unity across ethno-linguistic clusters and that language and culture will be a uniting force rather than a barrier between Christians.*
5. *Pray for the poor of every ethno-linguistic group and ask that God opens doors for us to help the poor irrespective of their ethno-linguistic backgrounds.*





DISCIPLING THE ORANG ASLI OF MALAYSIA

Revelation 7:9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb...

The Orang Asli are the minority non-Malay indigenous people of Peninsular Malaysia who were the first people to occupy the Malay Peninsula. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the Orang Asli were traded and used as slaves by the coastal people. It drove the Orang Asli deeper into the hills and forests.

The Orang Asli are divided into 19 ethnolinguistic groups under three categories known as the Proto-Malays, Senoi and Semang. Most of the Orang Asli have retained their tribal identities to the present day mainly due to their isolation. A number of the Orang Asli are Christians and there are churches among them throughout the land.

The Aboriginal Peoples Act of 1954 is a unique piece of legislation that caters to the Orang Asli. Its primary purpose was to protect them from Communist indoctrination. Unfortunately, after five decades, their welfare has not improved much. The church needs to invest time and effort towards improving the socio-economic development of the Orang Asli.



Prayer Points:

1. Pray that the government will recognise the rights of the Orang Asli to their land.
2. Pray that wherever the Christian Orang Asli choose to build their place of worship, the authorities will respect their rights to freedom of worship and to build churches.
3. Pray for the younger generation of Orang Asli to excel and achieve a higher level of education.
4. Pray for increased discipling of young Orang Asli by the Orang Asli Church in Malaysia.
5. Pray for young Orang Asli to rise up to better represent their people.





RAISING UP BUMIPUTRA CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP OF MALAYSIA

Joshua 1:7 Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.

Indigenous Bumiputra Christians form the backbone (64%) of the Christian community in Malaysia. About 44% of Sarawak’s people and 31.5% of Sabah’s are Christians. The majority of indigenous Bumiputra Christians are from the interior of Sabah, the Kadazandusun and the Murut peoples, and the interior of Sarawak, the Iban, Bidayuh, and the Orang Ulu (Upriver) people.

Recent events that threaten religious freedom have been of great concern to the Christians of Sabah and Sarawak. Their leaders have expressed fear that the Malaysia agreements, written with a view to safeguard the interests, rights, and autonomy of the people of Sabah and Sarawak upon the formation of the federation of Malaysia, have not been complied with.

Indigenous leaders have also expressed concern about perceived oppression in land matters, such as the forceful alienation of native lands. The Penans, Kayan and Kenyah, in particular, perceive that their lands have been forcibly taken away for the building of dams.



Prayer Points:

1. *Pray that all the promises made to the people of Sabah and Sarawak prior to and following the formation of Malaysia be kept and fulfilled.*
2. *Pray that the backbone of Christianity in Malaysia, the Bahasa Malaysia cluster, will increase in strength and rise to take their rightful place in society.*
3. *Pray for a fresh wave of the Holy Spirit to bring revival and a new awakening in Sabah and Sarawak.*
4. *Pray that the government will protect the land rights of the indigenous people of Sabah and Sarawak.*





DISCIPLING THE YOUTH OF MALAYSIA

2 Timothy 2:1-2 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

Every generation needs to be evangelised and disciplined. Though the Church keeps growing, it remains shallow and weak. There is a great need for the Church to build strong and faithful spiritual leaders who will pass on their faith to the next generation. There is also an urgent need to focus on building lives, especially of the young generation, in godly character and accountability. The task of discipleship is given to the Church by the Lord Jesus, and if we neglect it, we should not be surprised if believers, especially youths, become shaped by worldly views and the prevailing culture of compromise, materialism, consumerism and self-gratification. The Church needs to urgently turn our youth away from this dangerous path of self-destruction.

We need to return to the basic biblical foundation of discipleship, including long-term teaching and mentoring to nurture our youth into a generation of faithful and spiritual men and women.



Prayer Points:

1. *Pray for deliverance from deception, complacency, compromise, religiosity, self-centeredness, self-sufficiency, impure thoughts and indifference.*
2. *Pray that the Church will renew its efforts to disciple believers to live godly and faithful lives based on biblical truths.*
3. *Pray for a generation of young men and women who will turn away from the culture of compromise and establish themselves as a generation of godly and faithful disciples.*
4. *Pray for faithful men and women who will disciple the next generation.*
5. *Pray for Christian parents who prioritise the spiritual development of their children.*





DISCIPLING THE NATIONS TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.

Acts 1:8 You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Every year more than one billion people travel across borders. Foreign workers in Malaysia numbered 3.5 million as of mid-2011, of which 1.5 million were legal and 2 million illegal. About 100,000 foreign students from about 100 countries are enrolled in Malaysia. Christians among these foreign workers and foreign students account for 8.6% of the Christians living in Malaysia. Many of these foreign nationals face exploitation and hardship. Malaysia is also the transit home for many refugees.

Malaysians travel extensively to all corners of the earth. Many have set up businesses overseas and consequently are in close and prolonged contact with the people of these nations. Opportunities for reaching out to the people of other nations, whether here in Malaysia or abroad, are plenty.



Prayer Points:

1. *Pray that the Church will arise and witness to foreign workers, students and refugees who are in Malaysia.*
2. *Pray for the many foreign students, workers and refugees in Malaysia that they will become deeply rooted in biblical truths*
3. *Pray that as we travel and spend time overseas, we will take the opportunity to support local churches there to witness and care for the disadvantaged in those lands.*
4. *Pray that the Church in Malaysia will reach out in witness and care for the many vulnerable refugees facing great hardship as they transit in Malaysia.*





THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

If you have not chosen the Kingdom of God first, it will in the end make no difference what you have chosen instead. ~ William Law

The “Kingdom of God” has in recent times become a common catch phrase among Christians in their conversations. To be accurate in our usage of the phrase, we need to understand what it really means.

The biblical explanation about the “Kingdom of God” is the realm in which God rules and acts sovereignly. It is the realm where the kingship of God is absolutely acknowledged and obeyed. His sovereignty is over all, though not every person accepts and submits to Him (Ps. 103:19; Matt 6:9-10).

The wonder of the Kingdom is, as Jesus said, “within you” or “among you” (Lk. 17:20-21). There is another aspect of the Kingdom that is yet to come. What it means is that the Kingdom of God is found among a people who accept His kingship. It is not about the size of the group, where we meet or what language we speak. As we come together as the Kingdom’s people, God is in our midst.

The activities of the Kingdom are primarily God’s; however, He also works through his people. Therefore, His people must “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matt. 6:33).



Prayer Points:

1. Pray and meditate on Matt 6:33. Ask God what it is to seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness.
2. Ask God to help us live daily by consciously honouring Him as our King and living out His Kingdom’s values.





WHO BELONGS TO THE KINGDOM?

“The ultimate basis for the privileged position of the poor is not in the poor themselves but in God, in the gratuitousness and universality of God’s grace love”. ~ Gutierrez

When granting citizenship to foreigners, governments are very strict and selective. Normally, only people who have certain qualifications, skills or rich get approved. A handful of countries open their doors to refugees but most do not.

Fortunately, the Kingdom of God welcomes the poor. In fact, while it is open to all who believe in its King, the Kingdom of God has a special place for those who are poor, suffering or oppressed. “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God” (Luke 6:20). Why is this so? Are the poor better or purer than others? No. God’s preference for the poor is not because the poor are morally or spiritually better than others but because they have to live in such de-humanizing conditions that affront the very image in which the Creator created them.

Unlike the kings and leaders of earthly kingdoms, this King not only has a place for the poor but he chose to be poor himself (2 Corinthians 8:9) – thereby identifying himself with them. As the Church seeks to reach out to the poor like her King does, identifying with them is the first crucial step. One approach that the Church can take is community development where identifying with the poor and marginalized is a key principle.

Prayer Points:

1. Thank the Lord for granting you citizenship into his kingdom.
2. Pray for the Church to make special efforts to reach the poor and needy, identifying with them as Jesus did.
3. Get involved in works which are helping the marginalized.



THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND PRAYER


Matt 6:10 ...your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

**“Men may spurn our appeals, reject our message, oppose our arguments, despise our persons, but they are helpless against our prayers.”
~ J. Sidlow Baxter**

The verse from Matthew above records part of Jesus’s teaching to his disciples about prayer. Jesus points us to some key themes we need to pay attention to in our act of praying.

The first thing we need to remember in the prayer of the Church is to recognize that the Kingdom belongs to the Father who is in heaven. He is enthroned on high and rules His Kingdom wisely and correctly. We do not need to fret over the future of the Kingdom.

The second thing is that our prayers are to focus on the purposes of the Kingdom. Prayers for the Kingdom are for the will of the Lord to be done on earth as it is in heaven. When these conditions are fulfilled, God’s good and perfect will and blessing will pervade the Church and the nation. His people will be a channel of blessings to others. This is the clear teaching of Jesus. When the Kingdom is prioritized, God will meet the needs of His people. (Matt. 6:30)

 **Prayer Points:**

- 1. Praise God and recognize that He is always in control of His kingdom.*
- 2. Pray that we, His Church, will learn to submit to His good and perfect will for His Kingdom.*
- 3. Pray that His children will put prayer as priority in their spiritual discipline.*





THE REALM OF THE KINGDOM

“King of my life I crown Thee now, Thine shall the glory be.” ~ Jennie Evelyn Hussey (1874 – 1958)

The Kingdom is the realm where the King reigns. The gospel or good news of the Kingdom is the news that Jesus reigns! Where He reigns, we can expect righteousness, peace and joy (Rom 14:17).

The Pharisees once asked Jesus when the kingdom of God would come. Jesus replied that it would not come by carefully observing the times and seasons because the kingdom is within (or inside) them (Luke 17:20-21).

If Jesus is king of your life, that is where the realm of His Kingdom is. Today the disciples of Jesus Christ continue to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom. God is still rescuing people from the dominion of darkness and bringing them into the Kingdom of His Son (Col 1:13). Is Jesus your king?



Prayer Points:

1. *Pray that everyone in our nation will seek and find the Kingdom and the King.*
2. *Pray that believers will experience righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*





ENTERING THE KINGDOM

Acts 14:22 We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.


Those who refuse to surrender the kingship of their lives but continue to practise self-rule cannot enter the kingdom of God. Entering the kingdom means turning from self-rule to the rule of Christ the King. This is what repentance means. John the Baptist proclaims, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near” (Matt 3:2). Those who would enter the kingdom must give up control of their lives to the King.

Jesus says that those who love the attractions of this world will find it hard to enter the kingdom of God (Luke 18:24).

A believer who enters the kingdom of God needs to believe in his heart and confess with his mouth that Jesus is Lord (Rom 10:9). He then must live a life of obedience to the commands of the King.

Jesus commands that the good news of the kingdom be proclaimed everywhere. However, proclamation of the good news attracts persecution. When the disciples faithfully obeyed this command, they were persecuted. Although they were scattered from Jerusalem, they continued sharing the good news of the kingdom wherever they went (Acts 8:1-4).

Through their sufferings, they learned obedience (Heb 5:8). They carried their cross and followed Christ (Luke 9:23). They learned that suffering produces perseverance (Romans 5:3).

 **Prayer Points:**

- 1. Pray for grace and for the power that God gives to us to obey Him.*
- 2. Pray for a fresh vision of the joy set before us so that we, the disciples of Christ, might learn to endure the cross, scorning its shame (Hebrews 12:2).*





THE KINGDOM’S MESSAGE


“Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary use words.” ~ Francis of Assisi

Jesus at the beginning of His ministry came proclaiming “the good news of God” and that “the Kingdom of God is at hand” (Mk. 1:14-15). At the close of His ministry on earth, in the message of the Great Commission He challenged his disciples to go to the entire world and make disciples of all.

The intention of the proclamation of the gospel is to extend the invitation of God for all to participate in the Kingdom through the means of repentance and faith in Him.

Jesus as the mediator between men and God offered His life in providing a satisfactory atonement for us. Through Him we have eternal life. The Kingdom of God is also about bringing all things in subjection to Christ and initiating change to society and nation.

This is the message of the Kingdom that we must faithfully proclaim. As Kingdom people we must pray for fervency and effectiveness in the proclamation of this message. We must also pray for the openness of people’s hearts when they hear this message.

 **Prayer Points:**

1. *Pray for faithfulness in proclaiming the gospel of His Kingdom.*
2. *Pray that as people of His Kingdom, our lives must speak as loud as our words.*
3. *Pray for the openness of hearts of the people who hear the message of the Kingdom.*





THE KINGDOM AT WAR

“Winning against Satan is not a question of claiming some kind of imagined authority over him; we simply need to pursue righteousness, avoid sin, and stand firm in the truth” [1 Tim. 1:18-19; James 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:9]. ~ John MacArthur

Matthew’s gospel records Jesus saying “if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Matt 12:28). It is clear from this passage of Scripture that the ushering of God’s Kingdom necessitates a war staged against the kingdom of darkness.

That our natural eyes cannot see the reality of this spiritual warfare does not make it less real. Paul said “we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Eph 6:12).

We are also instructed to put on the full spiritual armour to engage in the battle. Let us uphold our country in prayer. The issues affecting our nation are more than meets the eye. We need to gain spiritual victories in order to gain physical victories in the name of Jesus Christ. Let us put on the full armour of God and be ready for battle (Eph 6).



Prayer Points:

1. Pray for the Malaysian Christians to be steadfast, tenacious and committed citizens of the Kingdom of God who will stand for their faith against any onslaught.
2. Pray that we will always abide in His word (John 15:7) and rely on His wisdom in our spiritual warfare.
3. Pray for us to be strong, very courageous and obedient according to the commands of God (Josh 1:7).





BE THE SALT AND LIGHT

Matt 5:13 You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

As disciples of Jesus, we have the properties and effects of salt. We impact the nation with our being. Our beliefs, values and passions as reflected in our choices, speech, actions and lifestyles should influence our society – disinfecting it from elements that corrupt or destroy while preserving its integrity.

However, our influence can only take effect when we are in direct contact with others physically. As salt in a salt shaker has no effect on food, our private holiness does not change the social environment. We need to come out of our holy huddle and be engaged with society. It is while relating to others that our influence rubs off on them.

Impacting a nation, it calls for the collective influence of all believers. How much “salt” is needed to reverse certain social trends? David Pawson says it takes only 5%! Christians number approximately 9% in this nation and are placed in different spheres of the society. In some spheres, our presence may need to be more intentional. If each of us learns to engage with society, we can truly say “The Kingdom of God is here!”



Prayer Points:

1. *Pray that disciples of Jesus will not compromise and be willing to pay the cost of being different or holy, live by God’s standards, and be an example of integrity where we are.*
2. *Pray that Christians will be engaged in social issues, speaking out boldly yet wisely against injustice in love and humility.*
3. *Pray for more Christians to join the government and education sectors where our presence is lacking.*
4. *Pray that believers will be united and that those in the same area of influence will collaborate with one another to collectively impact our nation.*







Prepared & Compiled by NECF Malaysia
32, Jalan SS2/103, Petaling Jaya
47300, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia
Tel:03-77278227 Fax:03-77291139
Email:prayer@necf.org.my
www.necf.org.my