

The background of the entire page is a photograph of two hands clasped together in a prayerful gesture. The hands are positioned on the left and right sides of the frame, with fingers interlaced. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the skin and the veins on the hands. The overall tone is warm and spiritual.

RENEW  ARKANSAS

PRAYER

GUIDE

A 30-day guide for pastors, leaders, and church members considering how God might Renew their church.

DAY 1

Lord, let us remember that we exist for your glory and not our own. May we seek renewal for the sake of your name.

Thank you for making the time to take this spiritual journey with us since church renewal is intrinsically connected to the renewal of church leaders. Those who are willing to seek the Lord's face and give Him glory will experience the Lord's favor.

No program or resource can set revival fires across Arkansas, but Jesus certainly can! There are no secrets or shortcuts to personal or church renewal, so if we really want to get close to God, we will daily draw near to Him and He will draw near to us (James 4:8).

If you are personally going thru a dark night of the soul, ask God right now to renew your strength and restore the joy of your salvation. If your church is in a spiritual cul-de-sac that you can't lead them out of, hang on to His steadfast love, truth, and glory which are timeless and immutable. Psalm 115:5 reminds us that since we are not the heroes of our churches, we cannot claim credit or glory for ourselves when He answers our prayers for renewal.

***"Not to us, Lord, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness."
Psalm 115:1***

DAY 2

Lord, we acknowledge our need for you to revive and renew us.

The early church in Acts was founded upon complete dependence on the Lord. Twenty centuries later, many churches have more money, more buildings, more organization, and more strategy. We are tempted to depend on those things to bring health and growth. We know better. Revival and renewal come only from the presence of God and the work of God. When God's Spirit is present and working in a congregation of believers, He brings joy and a fresh spirit of anticipation about what He can and will do through His people. Therefore, one of the most essential elements in seeking renewal is for a church to fervently and persistently ask the Lord to what only He can do: cleansing our hearts, renewing our spirits, restoring our joy, and enabling us to persevere. The result? The church is filled with life, the Lord is glorified, and the mission to reach the lost is embraced!

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You."
Psalms 51:10-13

DAY 3

Lord, there is no doubt that if you can make dry bones live, then you can revitalize our church. Your Word says that nothing is impossible with you!

Remember the last time your hypothalamus signaled a need in your body? It was when the area postrema and nucleus tractus solitarius signaled to your subfornical organ and the lateral parabrachial nucleus. That signal was relayed to your median preoptic nucleus detecting decreased volume and increased osmolyte concentration. Finally, the signals were received in the cortex areas of the forebrain. The last time you got thirsty, this physiological process played out in your brain. This craving led you to seek out a drink to quench your thirst.

In Ezekiel 37:1-14, the hand of the Lord comes on the prophet and ushers in a visionary revelation. Ezekiel is set down in a valley of bones, "very dry" bones we are told. God asked Ezekiel, "Can these bones live?" The prophet believes it can happen only if the power of God brings it about. The bones are told by the prophet, "hear the word of the Lord...I will cause breath to enter and you will live". The bones began to come together...tendons appeared, and flesh/skin covered them, but they lacked breath. God instructs the prophet to prophesy...he calls for breath...it enters them and they come to life...a vast army on their feet.

Friend, God is able to quench your heart's thirst for renewal in your church. He is able to breathe life into that which has become dry. Do you believe that? Pray for God to work a spiritual process in your heart that depends on Him. God has created that thirst in your spirit to be quenched with His presence and power.

***"I have spoken, and I will do it. This is the declaration of the Lord."
Ezekiel 37:14c***

DAY 4

Lord, break my heart for the condition of my church and my city, and rid my heart of pride.

How do you begin to lead a rebuilding effort when the challenge seems insurmountable? When Nehemiah heard that Jerusalem's walls were broken down and its gates burned, he wept, mourned, fasted, and prayed. His first response wasn't strategy nor action – it was intercession. To know God's will for our churches and our cities, we must first surrender to Him. We can't allow our hearts to be numb to brokenness. Your calling is to lead God's people to His strength and vitality. Nehemiah's burden was for the city, and it's a powerful model for us today. If facing a stagnancy in your church and a weakened spiritual condition in your people, allow your heart to move towards humility. Renewal will occur when we are desperate for our churches and for our communities to experience the hope found in Christ. This is not a time for indifference. It is a time for grieving and prayer. Grace and strength will come to the humble who seek God's leadership in rebuilding what has been broken. Deep, sincere prayer will attach our heart to God's great plan of resurrection life for His church.

"When I heard these words, I sat down and wept. I mourned for a number of days, fasting and praying before the God of the heavens."

Nehemiah 1:4

DAY 5

Lord, let us remember that the mandate for revival or revitalization is being humble, sincere, fervent in prayer, and totally honest about sin in our lives.

Here is a thought: God is not a blue genie that grants wishes. And prayer is not some magical incantation for us to get whatever we desire. Genuine prayer exemplifies an attitude of the heart towards a loving and holy God. As believers, we have a relationship with God as a Father who truly wants the best for us. When we submit ourselves to His will and become more like Christ, God does not change to grant our desires, but our desires conform to become more of what God desires for us. Our daily prayer life can be an integral part of this renewal and transformation. Prayer flourishes when we humble ourselves before God, worship Him unashamedly, and thank Him sincerely for all He has done. As we seek renewal, let us remember that it is not our own wisdom, or effort, or righteousness that results in revitalization. But instead, let us pray with all humility, seek the face of God, and let Him faithfully bring about renewal in our lives and in our churches as He guides our path.

"If my people who are called by name, humble themselves, 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."

2 Chronicles 7:14

DAY 6

Lord, remind me of Your nearness and that You know me intimately. Search my heart. Convict and cleanse me of any offensive way that has hindered your work among us.

The pursuit of genuine renewal begins with an honest assessment of the heart. No one knows your heart, or the heart of the church, better than God.

In Psalm 139, David reminds us that nothing is hidden from the One who knit us together in our mother's womb. He knows when we sit and when we rise, the thoughts we think that are never shared, and even the words we speak before they become words. He has perfect, intimate knowledge of you and each member of His Body.

God's "too-wonderful" knowledge of our hearts, thoughts, and ways may be intimidating and overwhelming, but necessary as we pursue renewal. When we courageously pray verses 23-24, we are positioning ourselves to be transformed by the One who knows and loves us most fully. David's prayer is both an acknowledgment that God knows all and a trust that God knows best. Instead of condemnation and judgment (which we may fear), David experiences cleansing and grace as God leads him away from his offensive ways and in the way everlasting.

Invite God to examine your heart. Trust His way. Be renewed!

"Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my concerns. See if there be any offensive way in me; lead me in the everlasting way."
Psalm 139:23-24

DAY 7

Lord, help me to walk in holiness, to be set apart for the work of revitalization.

On August 29, 2001, I made a phone call that changed my life. A church member was concerned about her single young pastor, so she gave me the phone number of a single young lady that was willing to consider a blind date. I dialed the number, asked about her availability the next evening, and my wife of 21 years agreed to meet me to appease the lady who gave me her number in the first place!

As much as that call changed my life, the most impactful call I experienced was to salvation. As a nine-year-old, I knew that the Lord was calling me to Him. In that call, He was summoning me to holiness, to live a life set apart for the glory of God. That is why Paul challenges the Ephesians to “live a life worthy of the calling you have received” (Ephesians 4:1).

Another call that drives my life is my calling to ministry. I did not know that the journey would be what it has, but God has called and equipped. There are other callings, such as a father, son, and friend, and in each of these, it is my responsibility to live it out in holiness. The same is true for the call to leading revitalization.

***“But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’”
1 Peter 1:15–16***

DAY 8

Lord, help us not to live in the past. Help us to embrace the change needed to go forward.

The past is worth learning from but not worth living in. Some of our churches have wonderful, storied pasts. In other cases, the past contains many painful reminders that weigh on the present. In the first scenario, we're tempted to long for the glory days and compare everything to the way things used to be. This kind of thinking suffocates faith. In the second situation, the past propagandizes us into believing that failure and decline is the only thing ahead. Philippians 3 gives us the good news that God is doing a new thing. God is not finished. Paul understood that he was not a prisoner to his past sin nor was he limited by God's prior blessing. God's call is upward not backward. With singular focus, Paul resolved to press forward so that he might obtain all that God had for him. God is doing a new thing today. If we will lay hold of Him, we will get the joy of experiencing a fresh work of God in our lives. Let's all "press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

***"Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead."
Philippians 3:13***

DAY 9

Lord, we acknowledge our complete dependency upon you. Help us to walk with a prayerful humility before you and to be filled with your Spirit.

Jesus was the master of the metaphor. The gospels reveal several pictures of Christian life that Jesus paints with His words. Perhaps the vine and branches metaphor is one of the most familiar, and possibly the most powerful, portraits of them all. The clarion call of dependency leaps off the page and lingers in our mind and heart until every supply of life-giving fruitfulness is made ours in Christ Jesus. The declaration is one of obvious dependence and evident fruitfulness for those who choose to abide, remain, or continue in Christ. The picture is one of being in Christ, in process, by the Word. The foundation of willing dependency is consistent humility. We will never achieve the purpose of our connection to Christ apart from a humility that cultivates a desperation for God in everything. Similar to the prayer of Jehoshaphat in II Chronicles 20:12, when faced with an impending invasion, he states, "For we are powerless before this great multitude who are coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are on You." This is the heart of Jesus' declaration to His disciples, for them/us to get our eyes off everything else and get them fixed on Him (Hebrews 12:1-3). God desires that we bear fruit, more fruit, and much fruit for His glory and our good. The only way we can do so is to be personally connected to the One who claimed to be the sole source and substance of an effective and productive life.

I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

John 15:1-5

DAY 10

Lord, let us be confident in the sufficiency of your perfect Word and faithfully proclaim it in every ministry of the church.

We live in a world of information overload, where everyone seems to be looking everywhere for the source of authority on any given subject, amidst a sea of voices claiming to know what is best. Thankfully, when it comes to the most important questions in life, we don't have to go on a scavenger hunt for the truth. God's Word is the perfect and complete revelation that God has given us in order to know who Him, to be right with Him through faith in Jesus, and to know how He would have us to live. The Scripture is literally "breathed out by God" and is all that is needed to equip Christ's Church to live faithfully and to be ready for every good work that He calls us to. May we be confident that the Lord will renew His Church through the faithful ministry of His Word and may we not look to any strategy, gimmick, or wisdom of man to do what only God can do through His Word proclaimed.

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."
2 Timothy 3:16-17

DAY 11

Lord, let us be fully devoted to prayer as we humbly acknowledge that renewal is your work among us.

It is fundamental to say that private and corporate prayer is vital to the church. The early church, in Acts 2, knew that it was more than simply private conversations with the Lord. Their response in their conversion was to devote themselves to hearing teaching, fellowship with one another, breaking of bread, and last, but certainly not least, corporate prayer. No doubt, there are many modern churches that may not completely neglect prayer but have not devoted themselves to prayer like the early church did. Our goal should be like that of the early church. Not just using prayer to transition from one part of the worship service to another but making it an act of worship and devoting ourselves to crying out to the Lord together. Be encouraged to use prayer for what it is. Other than scripture our best and greatest tool, the communication line to our Lord and Savior.

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.”

Acts 2:42

DAY 12

Lord, help us to be willing to make the necessary sacrifices of time and preferences for the sake of pursuing renewal.

Distractions, responsibilities, and anxieties consume our minds and tend to distract our spiritual focus. We need God's help staying dedicated to His kingdom. If we want to see renewal, then we must prioritize eternal matters. Let us discipline ourselves to chip away all the unnecessary, frivolous concerns that devour our attention. Nothing is more important than God and his kingdom. We desperately need Him and His renewal. Our other needs do not fade away, but He promises to take care of our true needs if we seek his kingdom above all. May God persuade our hearts and minds to have nothing else before Him. Lord, allow Your glory to be our passion, and please meet our needs as we prioritize You and Your kingdom.

"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

Matthew 6:33

DAY 13

Lord, help us not to listen to people who give negative reports and lack faith in their lives.

When God calls us to move forward, the voices around us can either build our faith or break our focus. In Numbers 13, twelve men saw the same land, but only two saw it through the lens of God's promises. The others focused on the obstacles—the giants, the fortified cities, the impossibilities. Their report discouraged the people and stirred fear. But Caleb silenced the crowd and said, “Let’s go up now and take possession of the land because we can certainly conquer it.” Faith doesn’t ignore reality—it just puts God’s power above the problem. Negative voices often sound reasonable, but they forget who God is. As you lead and labor for the Lord, beware of those who speak from fear rather than faith. Don’t let their doubt become your direction. Anchor your heart in the promises of God, not in the pessimism of people. If God has called you to it, He will carry you through it. Don’t let a faithless report rob you of a faithful response. Trust the God who brought you this far—He is able.

“Then Caleb quieted the people in the presence of Moses and said, ‘Let’s go up now and take possession of the land because we can certainly conquer it!’”
Numbers 13:30

DAY 14

Lord, we know that renewal will come with much spiritual attack and warfare. Protect us and make us strong in your power as we use the spiritual armor that You provide.

When the Lord moves, the enemy doesn't sit still. Every step toward spiritual renewal often invites pushback from the powers of darkness. But the good news is, we don't fight alone or without help. God has given us His full armor—not to hide behind, but to stand firm and stand strong. We are called to lean on His strength, not our own. Truth keeps us steady. Righteousness guards our hearts. The gospel of peace gives us solid footing. Faith is our shield. Salvation covers us. God's Word is our sword. And prayer is how we stay alert, dependent, and engaged in the fight. Trials won't surprise us—they are part of the journey. So let's be ready: suited up in God's armor, trusting His victory, and praying at all times. Lord, help us be faithful soldiers who stand firm—not out of fear, but through Your amazing power.

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens."
Ephesians 6:12

DAY 15

Lord, with Your help, there are no giants that cannot be slayed. Help us to remember that we have nothing to fear because You fight for us.

The giants standing before you may seem overwhelming—division in the church, hardened hearts, declining attendance, or spiritual apathy. But like David before Goliath, you are not called to shrink back in fear, but to stand in faith. David didn't wait for victory to be visible before he declared it. He stood before the battlefield and said, "Let no one lose heart." His confidence wasn't in his own strength or in borrowed armor—it was in the Lord who had proven Himself faithful before. You don't need someone else's tools or titles. You need the presence and power of the living God. Victory comes not from what you carry in your hand, but in whom you trust with your heart. David declared God's triumph before the stone ever flew because he trusted God's character and power, not his own capability. So press on. Preach boldly. Lead faithfully. The Lord who delivered you before is the same God who will deliver you again.

"David said to the Philistine, 'You come against me with a sword, spear, and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord of Armies, the God of the ranks of Israel—you have defied him.'"
1 Samuel 17:45

DAY 16

Lord, please raise up people within the church who are willing and able to disciple and encourage new believers.

From the Garden to the Ark to the Great Commission, God has revealed His heart to His people—and made His plan clear. Multiply. The Father's desire is to fill the earth with people who know and worship Him. And His plan to accomplish this is discipleship. Disciples who speak the truth in love and make other disciples—this is plan A for the advancement of His Kingdom. There is no plan B. Jesus said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (Luke 10:2). So let's pray together that the Lord would raise up laborers in our field.

Lord, give us multipliers. Lord, make us multipliers.

***"Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love."
Ephesians 4:15–16***

DAY 17

Lord, would you grow us in being a church that is marked by Biblical community and Christ-like love for one another.

We need one another, church!

We need one another to stimulate love for God, for one another, and for the lost.

We need one another to stimulate good works that honor the One who saved us, and open doors for us to share the gospel with the lost.

We need to encourage one another to remain faithful to the Lord, to a life of holiness, and to share the gospel with the lost.

So,...let us not neglect gathering together as Christ's church.

Let us be a church that meets these needs out of love!

***"...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near."
Hebrews 10:24-25***

DAY 18

Lord, please give us unity under the authority of your Word. Let us put selfish preferences and opinions aside in order to be united.

In no place in the Bible does it tell us to compromise on the truth of God's Word. In no place in the Bible does it tell us to run over one another with our headstrong ideas or opinions. You want the carpet blue, I want it red, so what do you do? You consider others as more important than yourself. It is called taking the low road of humility, like Jesus, who humbled Himself to the cross. Sometimes we run roughshod over one another in the body of Christ, like we are 5-year-olds on a playground and have to have MY way. Maybe we need to ask ourselves in the heat of the battle, "is this tension of the Lord?" Truth be told, I like blue carpet, too!

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. Everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others."
Philippians 2:3-4

DAY 19

Lord, empower us to let go of any bitterness, to forgive, and to seek forgiveness. Please reconcile any broken or strained relationships within the church.

Hurt happens. If you haven't been hurt, just keep breathing! It will come! It is particularly painful when we are hurt in the one place we least expect it ... the church. Unresolved hurt is one of Satan's greatest tools to destroy the church and ruin our witness to a watching world. If left unattended, it can turn into bitterness, which always springs up, causes problems, and hurts those around us (See Hebrews 12:15).

The question is not, "Have you been hurt?" but "How have you dealt with your hurt?"

God has one remedy: we must choose to forgive. Paul reminds us in our reading today of the critical importance of this. Over and over again, the Bible is clear that we must forgive anyone and everyone who has hurt us. We may think that we cannot forgive, but we can. We know this because Christ commands us to forgive, and He cannot ask us to do something that we can't do by His grace. Christ's rationale is simple: How can anyone harbor unforgiveness against others when we have been forgiven so much by God?

Pray that we will see and repent of the sin of unforgiveness and be the first to seek to reconcile with others. Make a list of those you feel have hurt you and walk through that list and forgive. You may need to go to them and seek reconciliation.

How can we profess to be a church when we will not do the first work of the church, which is to forgive? Remember: we are never more like Jesus than when we forgive!

"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."
Ephesians 4:31-32

DAY 20

Lord, please fill our hearts with compassion for the lost.

The very existence and purpose of every New Testament Church is to lead the lost to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord. Jesus made it clear by His teaching in the Gospels and example for all believers that everyone, everywhere, needs to hear the gospel. Salvation was God's design for fallen mankind since Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The virgin birth was God's plan for getting Jesus, the perfect Son of God to earth. Jesus lived a perfect life which made Him the perfect sacrifice for our sins. After being crucified on a cross, Jesus rose from the dead on the third day which proves because He rose again, we can have eternal life in Him. Jesus commissioned His disciples before He left earth by saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and earth. Go make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." Jesus' last words, post resurrection, was an assignment for every Christian disciple. "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you SHALL be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." May we have compassion for reaching the lost in a fallen world who need to see the hope, love, and joy that only comes through Jesus Christ.

"But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd."

Matthew 9:36

DAY 21

Lord, forgive us for not obeying the Great Commission.

Lists are important for the things we must do. Grocery lists. Honey-do lists. Work details. Otherwise, we may forget something important. Believers have many things to remember. Did I read my Bible today? Have I prayed for others today? Did I tithe after my last payday? But do we ever ask, "Did I witness for my Savior today?" The Bible, prayer, worship attendance, and giving rise to the top. Jesus gave His command of going, making disciples, teaching them, and baptizing them. Our Savior's final command should ring loud with importance. Yet, we tend to shrug it away. Our attitude may be, I can do that anytime, but we never make time. We think someone else will do that, my plate is full of church duties and commitments. We fail to give serious thought to the eternal reality of the lost. In truth, the command to be a witness is simply not a priority, and we move through life neglecting to share the greatest news ever – "Jesus saves." May God by His Holy Spirit awaken us to our sin of neglect. Lord God, our Redeemer, help us to remember to obey the Great Commission of our Savior, Jesus.

"Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your loving kindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin."

Psalms 51:1-2

DAY 22

Lord, revive in us a passion to reach the lost with the Good News of Jesus.

While the phrase, “The Great Commission,” may have been coined as early as the 17th Century, we know that the passionate missionary, Hudson Taylor, popularized it in his call to evangelize China in the 1800s. But we also know that the challenge goes all the way back to the final words of Jesus Christ, and we should all understand the value of “last words.” Christ’s final challenge and direction for the church was clear: evangelize and disciple the lost. May we never lose sight of this commission as our guide shaping the heart of our churches . . . we should break every tie, every conflict, every discussion about direction with this passion. Jesus Christ came to seek and save the lost – and that is the same mission He left to His church.

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’”
Matthew 28:18-20

DAY 23

Lord, open doors for our church to serve and meet needs in our surrounding community in order to show Christ's love. Give us unique Gospel opportunities in our community among the lost.

Paul concludes his epistle on grace speaking to the spiritually mature. The spiritually mature assume the responsibility of restoring, bearing burdens, and thinking humbly (Galatians 1-3). Spiritual maturity is also reflected in serving. We are exhorted to not lose heart or grow weary, because that is our tendency. Perseverance is an indicator of spiritual maturity and being filled with the Holy Spirit. Our opportunity is now. We are reminded in 2 Corinthians 9:8, "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed." Let us pray for the Father to grow us into spiritual maturity by His grace, His Spirit, and His Word resulting in persevering to the end and abundant good works for the benefit of others and the glory of God.

"Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, a while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith."

Galatians 6:9-10

DAY 24

Lord, we pray for the lost to hear the message of salvation through us, to believe this Gospel, and be added to our number for your glory.

The church community worshiped God together, ate meals together in their own homes, and they prayed together. There was fellowship when they were in the temple worshiping God, and there was fellowship in their personal day-to-day lives. They were constantly praising God together. Signifying the personal relationship that they had with each other. Church fellowship goes beyond church services on Sunday. We should be praising God together in church service and throughout our day-to-day lives. It is important to realize that it is God who is responsible for the growth of the church community. Our role in the church is fellowship and worship. Verse 47 says that the Lord added to their number day by day. Too many churches get caught up in producing the wow factor. They use flashy lights, talented musicians, and motivational speakers in an attempt to attract more people to the church. They focus so much on growing the church that they don't implement effective fellowship that is described in Acts. It is not our doing that brings growth to the church, but it is the Lord's. Our focus should be on coming together as a unified group of believers who worship God together and do life together. Through this unified fellowship, we can become righteous instruments for the Lord to use to grow his kingdom.

“And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

Act 2:46-47

DAY 25

Lord, let us remember that we don't have to serve alone. Would you raise up leaders for the good work you have called us to?

While we long for renewal and workers for the harvest field, we must remember that renewal begins not with strategy but with surrender. Jesus didn't tell his disciples to fix the shortage of workers; he told them to pray. Why? Because God sends the right people when his people seek him first. This burden is not meant to be carried alone, remember this: you are not called to do it all, you are not meant to do it alone. The same God who called you to the harvest fields is faithful to call others alongside you. Prayer opens the door for fresh passion, purpose, protentional, and people as the unexpected is answered by the Lord. Don't carry the burden in silence. Instead, bring it to the Lord of the harvest. Ask boldly. Believe expectantly. Revival doesn't come through more effort; it comes through more dependence.

"Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.'"
Matthew 9:37-38

DAY 26

Lord, may your church be increasingly equipped and prepared for the work of ministry that is needed.

The comma is the most misused punctuation mark in the English language according to professional copy editor, proofreader, and dissertation coach, John Garger. And, a misused comma is exactly what has caused some to misunderstand an important aspect of ecclesiology taught in Ephesians 4:11-15. Earlier English translations placed a comma between "for the equipping of the saints" and "for the work of ministry" in verse 12. What's the harm in adding a little comma? Well, when it comes to the understanding of this passage, the impact of that very small punctuation mark is profound. Adding the comma between the words "saints" and "for" creates a list of functions to be performed by the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors/teachers in verse 11. This comma causes the passage to conclude God gave these ministers to the church for the purpose of equipping the saints, for the purpose of carrying out the work of ministry, and for the purpose of building up the church body. One comma shifts the work of ministry from the saints in the church to those God gave to help equip the church. Later English translations have correctly removed the comma between the words "saints" and "for," resulting in the work of ministry shifting back to the saints within the church. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors/teachers were given to the church, to equip the church members to carry out the work of ministry. The result being that every member of the body of Christ would be built up into greater Christ-likeness. If renewal is going to happen, pastors must be diligent to equip the saints, and the saints must be willing to apply their heads, hearts, and hands to the works of ministry.

"And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ"
Ephesians 4:11-12

DAY 27

Lord, give us the wisdom needed to navigate the many challenges and decisions that renewal requires.

Consider that Jesus is an eternal God with neither beginning nor ending. In Rev 1:8, Jesus said, "I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end....". He never had a beginning, nor will He ever have an ending. God the Father has always existed, along with the Son and the Holy Spirit. That concept is almost impossible for us to grasp because everything we know in life has a beginning and an ending. God told both the prophet Jeremiah and apostle Paul that He planned for them to be what they became even before they were born (Jeremiah 1:5, Galatians 1: 15-17). In eternity past, He developed a plan for your life also, and He has equipped you with unique talents and skills to fulfill that plan. When by faith we can grasp this truth, it should be no problem to realize that God has all the wisdom to accomplish it. Our job is to follow His commands each day. Pray today that the Father would direct your paths and give you the wisdom and understanding to accomplish His will for your life. Ask Him to let you hear His voice throughout the day. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" John 10:27. Notice Jesus did not say we may hear His voice, or we might follow Him. No, He said we will hear His voice and we will follow Him. Let the Holy Spirit guide your decisions and responses during the day, and you will be surprised at what happens.

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him."

James 1:5

DAY 28

Lord, please provide physically and financially all that is needed for renewal.

In Philippians 4:19, the apostle Paul makes a promise... now part of God's Word. God promises us that He will meet all of our need as His people... and as His church. But, are there strings attached? Let's see! First, notice the Source of this supply: "My God". Next, notice the Surety of the Supply: "shall". Thirdly, notice the Scope of the Supply: "all your need". Lastly, notice the Substance of the Supply: "according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." God's blessings and provisions come through a relationship with God's Son, Christ Jesus. If you are a child of God by trusting in Christ for salvation, He will see to it that your needs are met. There is no such promise from God about meeting the needs of those who are lost; He only promises to meet the needs of His children. GOD WILL PROVIDE! We must remember, that God will provide the right thing, for the right target, at just the right time. That's true in your life... and in your church. His will for you and your church is the string that's attached to this promise! Are you trusting God to meet all of your needs?

***"And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."
Philippians 4:19***

DAY 29

Lord, please give us great joy for the task at hand.

"If it was easy, everyone would do it." This was said to me by a mentor as I was bemoaning a difficult situation happening at my church. In that moment, that is not what I wanted to hear. What would have encouraged me was to hear, "you can do it, you are not alone, you are right, they were wrong..." Instead, there was a task before me and it had to be done no matter what. I could do it in bitterness or with the attitude of "God has allowed me to encounter this. How will I learn, lean into God, and find joy through this situation". My mentor reminded me that everything we have to do is not easy. Parenting is not easy, marriage is not easy, assisting aging parents is not easy, and church is not easy. But those "not so easy" tasks can bring great joy to our life. The joy can come from what we learn about ourselves. We have to find strength not within ourselves, but when we lean into God to find strength. We have to find joy in the unpleasant moments of life. In the book of Nehemiah, the Law of God had been read to Israel after they rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem. As the Word of God was read to them, it struck them to their core, because they had not been following the Law as they should. It was not what they wanted to hear, but what they needed to hear. Nehemiah then reminded them that they can find joy through God even in difficulty. May we find joy in the midst of our journeys. May we seek the joy of the Lord even when it is difficult. Because, if it was easy, everyone would do it.

"Then he said to them, 'Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.'"

Nehemiah 8:10

DAY 30

Lord, please give us great endurance to run this race.

Every believer and leader have a race to run, and the course that lies before you will be challenging. This current segment of your race is unique to you. Your circumstances, challenges, trials, and struggles are contextually unique. BUT we have many believers who have run before us and finished well and who, at times, faced unimaginable circumstances. More importantly we have a Savior who goes before us. In this renewal process the temptation may be to fix our eyes on the problem and not the solution. Jesus has set the course, He has set the pace, and in order for us to finish well we must keep our eyes on Him. We run our race with strength when we lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, refusing to let discouragement slow us down. Keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus will keep us on track to build His Kingdom and His Church. We have one race to run, let's run it well. Let us run with grit and endurance because it is worth it. Believer take heart, God has prepared you for this moment and prepared this moment for you and He has given you, His Spirit. Now believer, run well. In the words of Jim Valvano (Jimmy V), in his speech given shortly before he died of cancer when he announced the start of the V Foundation for Cancer Research: "Don't give up, don't ever give up". There is always hope for any church.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted."

Hebrews 12:1-3



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