

2023

“Kingdom Shift; Revive, Reset and Restore”

Joel 2:25, 1 Peter 5:10



Please join us in our consecration prayer from 7 pm to 8 pm nightly at home unless otherwise noted



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Table of Contents:

Words of Encouragement -Chief Apostle & Elect Lady Allen H Simmons.....	4
Uplifting Words -Overseer & Lady Melany Simmons.....	5
A Call for Prayer- Intercessor Pastor Dr. Catherine H. Clark.....	6
Why Do We Pray.....	7-9
Praying with Expectation.....	10
2023 Consecration Commitment.....	11
Fasting Fundamentals.....	12-13
What Happens To My Body While Fasting.....	14
What Happens In My Spirit While Fasting.....	15
What Happens To Me Mentally While Fasting.....	16
Personal Plan.....	18
Day 1 -12.....	19-30
10 Things You Should Know about the Church after COVID-19.....	31-33
Supporting Children to Adjust with Life After COVID.....	34
Family Corner.....	35-38
Setting the Atmosphere for Worship.....	39-49
30 Days of Reviving, Resetting and Reshifting.....	50-51

Words of Encouragement

As we consecrate ourselves these next 12 days, we must always be mindful of the Word of God which says in Matthew 17:21, *“Howbeit this kind goeth not out, but by prayer and fasting.”*

To consecrate means to “make sacred” or “to dedicate to a particular purpose.” This is accomplished by prayer and fasting. It goes hand-in-hand to accomplish our spiritual goals.

Prayer simply put is, talking to God. Prayer is a tool given to us by God so that we can stay in communication with him. Prayer is very vital and valuable to our relationship with God and yet a simple form of communication.

Fasting means to “abstain from food/water, in order to focus on communion, prayer and fellowship with God.

The bible teaches us that these two together, give powerful results. (OT – Exodus 34:28, II Chronicles 20:3, Jonah 3:5, NT-Luke 2:37, Matthew 4:2, Acts 13:2)

Just as the Bible teaches us that prayer and fasting are very important, it does not specifically command believers to spend lots of time in this. Periodically it is something that we should be doing to accomplish special results; because the real purpose of it all is to take our eyes off of the things of this world, and focus our thoughts and prayers on God.

As we walk into 2023, we are greatly anticipating a “Kingdom Shift: Revive, Reset and Restore” To shift is to cause to move from one place to another and from one dimension to the next. I believe wholeheartedly that as we embrace the kingdom and all that it entails, we are shifting into the absolute best part of our journey this far. As we embrace the shift, we will surrender our hearts, minds and souls to be revived. Once we are revived, our lifestyles, mindsets and actions can then be reset and aligned with God's Kingdom. Then restoration can come. Every area of our lives can be restored. Marriages, relationships, finances, health, and every area that the enemy has attacked.

The glory of this consecration will yield powerful results. For it is written, “The Father who seeth us in secret will reward you openly.” I encourage each of you to push through to the very end and watch God work! “Embrace the Shift” and expect your lives to be “Revive, Reset and Restore.”

May the eternal God of peace, bring to pass all of your requests that are found in His divine and perfect will.

In His Service,

Chief Apostle Allen H. Simmons & Elect Lady Judge Jan Y. Simmons

Uplifting Words

It's that time again, a very important time for us here at Greater New Bethel SOP that we dedicate to corporate fasting and praying. We consecrate ourselves for the greater good of our National and Local church, our government and communities, our leaders, president and his staff and our local ministries. We understand the importance of sacrifice and dedication to God, to our ministry and to our communities.

To God be the Glory! Over the past two years, the Covid-19 virus has interrupted the entire world around us. It is rare that God interrupts the entire world at once. We do not take this event lightly. We will honor God and use this Global Interruption as an opportunity to stop, listen and to God. We will go forward in Resetting and Restoring our lives. Not the way our lives were before, but we will allow the Holy Spirit to shift us back into a Kingdom Mindset. As we approach a brand new year of 2023, we are leaving behind the calamity and challenges that came from Covid-19. We are moving forward in Christ. As the world is in a different place now, so are we. We will not try to put new wine in old skins. As the world has shifted and modified its day to day activities, so shall we in the Lord's Kingdom. We will have a Kingdom Shift; and we will be spiritually revived, reset and restored. We accept this call to action.

Please take a moment and utilize the entire consecration booklet and participate in the daily reflections as well. The intercessory team has spent countless hours praying, fasting and seeking the face of God for a comprehensive manual that can be used not only for this period of reflection and renewal but as an instruction manual for fasting and consecration that can be used anytime you desire. Use this as basic instructions for any time you need an answer, you need healing, or for a deeper renewed relationship with God.

May God continue to bless us corporately as we impart on this consecration and throughout the year.

Bishop Designate Christian A. & Lady Melany Simmons

A Call to the Kingdom for Prayer

Greetings my New Bethel Sounds of Praise Family,

As the leader of the Intercessory Prayer Team, I seek to Empower like-minded servants to utilize our most powerful weapon, The Word of Prayer. It is through effectual fervent prayer that we are able to carry out all necessary orders dictated by God and our leaders! Be it known that your Prayers are making more of a difference than you even realize. Continue to stay on your post standing in the gap and on the wall in prayer and fasting for our Leaders and the body of Christ for the entire world. Be not weary in well doings for in due season you shall reap if you faint not! I encourage you again to stay on your post and know that there is much shifting happening in the spirit realm!

As our Chief Apostle Allen H. Simmons, our "Visionary" has spoken, Revive, Restore, and Reset, there is a Kingdom Shift Coming! A change in how we do church is a shift from a Church Mindset to a Kingdom Mindset which allows us to see things from God's point of view! It's the Unshakeable Commitment to the Sovereign cause of Christ that motivates us to present ourselves as living sacrifices and seek first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness and to recognize God's hand in our lives and pray without ceasing! One of the greatest gifts God has given us as intercessors is to meet the needs of his people through intercessory prayer; for God has given us through the Holy Spirit to believe the impossible! We also have the ability to intercede for those yet to come to salvation.

Be encouraged; you have much favor in the Lord's sight. Angels have been released and are on assignment to strengthen and assist you to usher in the harvest in the very areas where you have seen little to no movement! Whoso Refreshes others will be refreshed!

The Lord himself is Refreshing you! He's Honoring you for how you have continued to be faithful even in the midst of your own personal pain and hardships. Many of you have come under fire and persecution but the Lord is vindicating you, every tongue that rises up in Judgment against you He will Refute.

So, REVIVE-give new strength RESTORE-bring back into existence, RESET- set again! Finally, I say unto you Get Ready for the Kingdom Shift

Yours In Christ

Associate Pastor
Dr. Catherine H. Clark

Why Do We Pray

We pray so we can align ourselves with the will of God on earth. Because of this prayer is never an option. God's will is meant to be the backbone and the center of our prayers, the source of our confidence, the heart of our intercession. The key to effective prayer is understanding God's purpose for your life, his reason for your existence as a human being in general and as an individual.

Prayer is important during your fast. It keeps you focused and in communication with God. There are many of us that wonder about how to pray. Jesus gave his disciples a model for prayer.

There are several elements to prayer:

- **Establish the relationship:** Our father which art in Heaven
- **Acknowledge God's Nature:** Hallowed be thy name
- **Feel God's Presence and Guidance:** Thy Kingdom come
- **Trust God's Will & Power:** Thy will be done in earth, as it in heaven
- **Receive God's Providence:** Give us this day our daily bread
- **Accept & Give Forgiveness:** And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors
- **Allow the Rescue:** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil
- **Summation:** For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen
(Exploring the Seven Elements of the Lord's Prayer, Erik Douglas Randolph, 2014)

The word says that we should pray without ceasing, but in many cases, we pray but when we do not see the immediate results, we stop praying assuming that God is not listening. Unanswered prayers can be very discouraging and painful so remember the following as you create a lifestyle of habitual prayer.

1. When prayer does not bring results, it is an indication that something is wrong. The word of God in the Old and New Testament gives insight to why prayers are unanswered and the type of prayers in which God will respond. God answers prayers as soon as we request, but the revelation of his answer is based on divine timing~ Luke 18:1
2. God is faithful to answer prayer. We must remember that nothing is impossible~ Mark 11:24
3. God's will and Word work when we have an understanding and put it into practice.

True Prayer will do the following:

- Build intimacy with God
- Bring honor to his nature and character
- Cause respect for his integrity
- Enable belief in his Word
- Cause trust in his love
- Affirm his purpose and will
- Appropriate his promise

Six Hurdles to an Answered Prayer

1. Learning about prayer, but not practicing it~ false sense of satisfaction
2. Mental assent, rather than action ~agrees with God, but does not believe
3. Hearing the words, but not absorbing ~absorbing the Word is to meditate on it
4. Hoping rather than having faith~ hope is wishful thinking; faith is knowing
5. Prayer for faith~ if you are praying for faith, then you do not believe
6. Laziness/Cares of the world wicked service allows life concerns to keep us from the faith of work.

Major Hindrances to Prayer

1. Sin - (James 1:21-22) tells us how prevalent it is that we must acknowledge our sins and our fallen nature. This state of humanity causes many problems and misunderstandings regarding our faith, obedience, and prayer. When sin, especially willful sin is in your life, God will not hear you. (John 3:22, 1 John 2:1)

2. Fear - (1 John 4:18) Fear is a significant hindrance for us because it keeps us from believing. To operate in the Spirit, there must be an absence of fear. 1 John 4:8 tells us that there is no perfection in fear. Fear will keep you in sin and keep our understanding of the nature and the work of God from our hearts (Romans 5:8-9; Matt 18:21-22; Isaiah 43:25; and 2 Tim 1:7)

3. Guilt - Guilt is related to fear of not being forgiven. When we live in a constant sense of not being forgiven, we deny the power of God in our lives. (Romans 8:1-2) Explains that there is no condemnation for those in Christ. We can have confidence in this because of Hebrew 8:12, God says He will forgive and forget our sins.

4. Feeling of inferiority - We can hinder our prayers when we feel we are not worthy to receive an answer from God. We will only have a low opinion of ourselves when we do not understand how God sees us. (Ephesians 1:4-11) Explains how God sees us. Understanding that God chooses us changes our interaction with God. Hebrew 4:16 tells us to come boldly before the throne of grace.

5. Doubt - (James 1:5-8) We tend to do this after going before God. It is believing that He can while not trusting that He will fulfill His word.

6. Wrong Motives - Since we know that God knows the heart, we should understand that our motives are understood by God before we come before Him. James 4:3 Explains that when your supplications are based in lust, we will not get a response from God. (Dr. Myles Monroe, Power and Purpose of Prayer)

Praying with Expectation

Join us nightly in prayer from 7 pm to 8 pm

- 1. Give Thanks:** *1 Thessalonians 5:18, "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."*
- 2. Pray:** *Matthew 21:22, "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."*
John 16:24, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."
The first principle in tapping into the power of prayer is actually praying. Praying is actually plugging in the connection to tapping into the Power of Prayer.
- 3. Recognize the Power is not in the person praying but the Power is in God:** *Matthew 19:26, "But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."* *Jeremiah 10:12, "He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion."*
The second principle is acknowledging the Power from Prayer comes from God the Almighty.
- 4. Pray with Confidence:** *1 John 5:14-1, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: ¹⁵ And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."*
Confidence is approaching God knowing that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. Praying with confidence is having faith and believing that God hears us and will answer.
- 5. Pray Sincerely:** If we walk through the book of Psalms, we will see that David prayed sincerely to God. He often shared his deepest hurts, concerns and feelings. He recognized God for His true righteousness. When praying sincerely, we must be mindful not to use prayer as a bargaining tool to try to manipulate God into do what we want.
- 6. Communicate with God:** *John 16:13, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."*
Our communication with God should not only be when we want something. We should recognize that God wants fellowship and relationship with us. He wants to bless but He also wants to guide us, love us and protect us. How would you feel if the only time someone called on you was when they needed something or wanted something from you?
- 7. Pray for Acceptance of God's Will:** *Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."*

2023 Consecration Commitment

Refrain from eating or drinking between the hours of 6:00 am to 6:00 pm each day from January 1st to January 12th. New Year's Day and Sunday are an exception. The fasting time is 6:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Target your prayers during the fast. We can easily look around and see the times that we are living in are perilous and dangerous. We must pray for our spiritual leadership, our national leadership, our country, our world and God's Divine Kingdom worldwide. Our prayers should not be limited to our spiritual foundation but also to the government, communities and society in general. World peace, financial and economic stability, the spreading of the gospel, and unity are things that can be included in our prayers. When you put the needs of others on the altar, we believe that God will hear us and heal our land. In addition, God will meet our needs also.

Step 1: Set Your Objective

- Why are you fasting? Seek the Holy Spirit for guidance and clarity.

Step 2: Make Your Commitment

- What type of fast are you enduring?
- What are your limitations? Socially and physically
- How much time will you devote to prayer and study daily?

Step 3: Prepare Yourself Spiritually

- Ask God to help you make a comprehensive list of your sins.
- Confess every sin that the Holy Spirit calls to your remembrance and accept forgiveness
- Seek forgiveness from those you have offended.
- Ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit

Step 4: Prepare Yourself Physically

- Consult your physician if you take prescription medication or have a chronic ailment.
- Prepare your body by eating smaller meals before starting a fast.

Fasting Fundamentals

- Plan Your Fast

You should enter your fast with [prayer](#) and a specific plan for how long you will fast. Our corporate fast is from January 1st through January 12th from 6 am to 6 pm daily. Along with fasting we will have one hour of prayer daily at the main sanctuary from 7 pm to 8 pm.

Part of planning your fast should include targeting things to pray about and pre-planning topics of study. If you have medical conditions, you may need to alter your fast and it may also include pre-purchasing food substitutes or alternatives.

- Consider Your Schedule

While a fast, by nature, is inconvenient, it should be an inconvenience to you—not to those around you. Fasting is a personal commitment. If you have children and loved ones that are not fasting, try to incorporate their meal times with your prayer times or study times.

- Tell Only the People You Must

Your spouse will need to know you are fasting. Beyond that, you would be better off not telling many people that you are fasting. Telling your pastor can be a help both to you and to him. And always consult with your physician if you have medical conditions or you take routine medications that require food intake.

- Wean Yourself Off Caffeine and High Sugary Foods

Several days before your fast begins, you should start weaning yourself off caffeine and high sugary foods. Some people experience unbearable headaches 2 to 3 days after ceasing to drink caffeinated products.

- Beware of Your Emotions and Heightened Sense of Spiritual Awareness

Some people experience vast mood swings during a fast. One moment you are focused on God and then you are wallowing in pity. Knowing that this is likely to happen will help you react properly. Also expect a sense of heightened Spiritual Awareness, when you separate yourself from regular patterns of the world and focus on God, He gives you clarity and it helps to develop a more intimate relationship with Christ.

- Be Still and Focus on God

Fasting is a time to study God's Word, meditate and pray. To help with this, plan a specific Bible passage or topic you want to study during your fast. Look for verses you want to memorize and meditate upon. Fasting by Jesus and the disciples was always accompanied by prayer. Spend time talking to God and allowing Him to reveal Himself to you in His Word.

- Expect physical changes.

During fasting, expect your physical body to change as it is physically detoxing in addition to your spiritual detoxing. You could experience symptoms such as headache, fatigue, nausea, foggy brain, bad breath etc.

- Plan to drink plenty of water during your fast.
- Establish a time for reading and meditating on the Word. Read the Word and think through what you have read.
- You must refrain from critical speaking, spreading negative words about or to anyone. If you have friends that tempt you into this lifestyle, then you must plan to take a break from them.
- Limit watching and listening to the TV and Radio; Focusing on religious and educational shows, rather than things that could cloud your judgment.
- Establish a form of accountability during your fast, either a prayer partner or another person in the fast.
- Check your mind at all times. Remember if it means nothing to you, then it will mean nothing to God. If you do not combine your fasting with prayer and the Word, it will mean nothing more than dieting.

What Happens To My Body While I Am Fasting?

Your body will go through changes and you will feel differently. Do not be alarmed; this is all natural as your body begins to detox and eliminate waste. Listed below are some changes that you may experience.

- You will feel hungry
- Light-headed and/or Dizziness
- Body odor
- Constipation
- Dark urine
- Skin irritation
- Bad breath
- Nausea
- Coated Tongue
- Change in energy levels
- Sinuses may be clogged

These physical changes are occurring during the fast because your body is going through a detoxification process in which it is expelling harmful wastes and toxins. Your body will then begin to pull energy from fat that is stored. Skin irritation, body odor, bad breath, and coated tongue are just ways that your body is naturally expelling wastes and toxins.

In the beginning, your energy levels will drop and you may feel fatigue, hunger, irritation and even light-headed but hold on. Do not give up. Around day eight, your energy levels will balance and you will feel energized as if you were exercising. Most people have a clear mind and appear to function at better rates than before they started the fast.

As you will see, fasting benefits your physical body as well as your spirit. The biggest benefit of fasting both for the physical and for the spirit is that it naturally detoxes you and pulls from your reserve. Naturally, it pulls fat that is stored up and spiritually it quiets external influences and forces your spirit to pull from your spiritual reserve.

What Happens Spiritually While I Am Fasting?

We are all familiar with the passage of Mark 9:29, in which Jesus answers the disciples that some power only comes from fasting and prayer. Fasting also does much more for our spiritual lives than to only cast out devils and demons. When we fast, we are disconnecting from the world and our comfort zone and relying on God to fill us. Listed below are some benefits of fasting.

- **Brings spiritual clarity**
 - Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.
 - **Surrender comfort-** Fasting pulls you out of your comfort zone and kills your fleshly desires. It helps you to focus on your spirit and not your flesh. It promotes self-discipline.
- **Reveals things that control us**
 - Abstaining from food helps to regain mastery of flesh. Fasting reveals to us where our attention is diverted from God and diverts our attention back to God.
- **Unlocks Spiritual Power**
 - Breaks Satanic Strongholds
 - Isaiah 58:6, "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?"
- **Builds Trust and Develops greater intimacy with God.**
 - Just like any relationship, the more time and energy that you invest in it will produce greater intimacy and a deeper bond.

Fasting is a tool that God has given us that has many functions. It builds character and spiritual clarity, it reveals the deep things inside of us, it unlocks spiritual power and deepens our relationship with God. When done sincerely and honestly fasting aligns us to live the holy life that God desires of us.

What Happens To Me Mentally While Fasting?

Research in psychology has positive outcomes of fasting on cognition and memory. For all those who fast, patience is learned to withstand the temptation of food and other environmental stimuli and the ability to hold off which in turn, enhances the virtue of self-sacrifice, enabling a person to be humbled and attain maturity.

Fasting becomes a training in self-control and self-regulation as a fasting person learns to regulate his or her daily routine in a prescribed manner thus teaching discipline. Fasting makes us realize our strengths and weaknesses and we learn to tame ourselves in ways that can lead to self-improvement. This learning of being able to do things that can otherwise be quite difficult for many people, develops confidence and a sense of self-efficacy.

A fasting person may say to oneself, "If I can fast, I can do other difficult things in life." Fasting is prescribed not only for the body and mind but also for elevating one's level of spirituality as the person fasting is encouraged to expel from within oneself the impurities of thought and character. In a way, this practice releases oneself from earthly bonds and joins the person with the sacred.

The time spent otherwise in eating and drinking can now be spent on reflecting about the purpose of being and making efforts toward attaining the ultimate goals in life leading to self-actualisation in this world and the hereafter. The metaphysical belief that the ego component of soul drags oneself to earthly desires while fasting restrains the ego and elevates the status of soul is held by followers of many faiths and consequently fasting is encouraged and practiced by people around the world. A word of caution is necessary for those advanced in age or suffering from medical conditions to seek advice from a physician before fasting.

2023 Consecration My Personal Plan

My Consecration Commitment

My Objective:

My Prayer Target Areas:

My Personal Study Topics:

My Personal Study Time:

Additional Comments:

12 Days of Consecration and Fasting

January 1 ~ Hunger for Word, Thirst for Righteousness, Obedience to the Word

January 2 ~ New Bethel Church Leadership (Pastors, Deacons, Ministry Leaders)

January 3 ~ Community and Government (President, Governors etc)

January 4 ~ Family, Friends, Enemies, Associates, Co-workers

January 5 ~ New Bethel Sounds of Praise, Provision, Finances, Auxiliaries/Ministries

January 6 ~ National SOP – Vision, Leadership

January 7 ~ Renewed Hope and Revival

January 8 ~ Unity of the Spirit, Bond of Peace, Oneness Mind/Speech

January 9 ~ Uncommon Love, Strengthened Faith, Acceptance of One Another

January 10 ~ Employment, Sick and Shut In, Restoration of the Saints

January 11 ~ Relationships, Church Growth and Power to Connect

January 12 ~ Endowment Power, Leading of the Holy Spirit and Anointing of the House and Members

January 1

Hunger for Word, Thirst for Righteousness, Obedience to the Word

6 And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.

2 John 1:6

25 But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

James 1:25

The Word of God is a matter of life and death. We get life and go on living by the Word of God. Our physical life is created and upheld by the Word of God and our Spiritual Life is quickened and sustained by the Word of God. The bible is not just a book filled with stories and biblical events, it carries the tool that gives us life and that tool is the Word of God. It is filled with examples of his love, grace, his commandments for our life's and instructions on daily life living. The Word of God is our daily nourishment. It is important that our "Hunger" for the Word and "Obedience" to the Word is reset and renewed.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, You have proclaimed that if we love You, we will keep Your commandments. To walk with You is to avoid sin. We must kill sin, lest it rises and kills us. Give me a willing and able desire to follow You. Wherever it may take me, let me follow You as a lamb follows his/her shepherd. In Your holy name. Please reset my hunger and obedience to your word.

Reflections:

January 2 New Bethel Church Leadership (Pastors, Deacons, Ministry Leaders)

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15

Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

Hebrews 13:7

When I think about church leadership, I think about self-sacrifice. I think about the numerous hours that church leadership spends helping others. Good leaders do not hang back waiting to see what others are doing. Good leaders identify problems and find solutions. They are upfront with demonstrating how to live and act. They are often at the forefront fighting battles and taking hits that most of the congregation never see. Their families are often always in the spotlight. Our church leaders give mentally, financially and emotionally. Much of their time and energy is focused on the church but they are often left forgotten. The role of leaders often leads to loneliness, stunted spiritual growth and burnout. It is important that we pray for their spiritual growth, work-life-church balance, and that they continue to be led by the Holy Spirit. We also pray for protection for our leaders and their families.

Prayer:

Lord, We pray that our church leaders will have the strength they need to face the challenges before them, both spiritual and physical. We know there are times when it feels like they are carrying the weight of the world on their shoulders. So, we ask that You would give them supernatural strength and grace to lead the church. The kind of strength that only comes from You, Lord . In the mighty name of Jesus, amen.

Reflections:

January 3

Community and Government

For we do not wrestle 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.

Ephesians 6:12

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

1 Timothy 2:1-2

What do you think about when you hear about community and government? Do you think about politicians and community outreach? One thing that is certain is that we live in days of political turmoil, division, manipulation and corruption. We have civil servants that work to manage the local, state and federal government. We also have police officers to keep order, accountants to prepare taxes and social workers to assist with domestic issues. All of these workers are agents that God has on earth used to help keep order in this earthly realm. We must pray for them, just as we pray for our church leaders. We must pray that they are influenced by the Holy Spirit, that they show justice to all and they are not corrupted by the evil forces all around.

Prayer:

O God, the Father of Nations, the Ruler of Heaven and Earth, I pray today for the government leaders and civil servants. I pray for the leaders of the nation to know you first, to lead through your wise counsel and guidance. I pray for them to lay aside selfish desire and influence of corruption, instead focusing always on the best interests of the people. May they lead through humility and love, leading us to peace and unity. Lord, keep our leaders and civil servants grounded in what is good and true, protecting them from the temptations and distractions of power and influence. May they know and follow you, leading through faith, ever working for the good of the people they serve.

Reflections:

January 4
Family, Friends, Enemies, Associates, Co-workers

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Colossians 3:13

After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before.

Job 42:10

Relationships are a gift from God. These relationships extend to friends, family, coworkers and even enemies. Relationships are not always easy and often require maintenance. They can be encouraging and helpful but can also be confusing and struggling. It is good to have people in your corner that can help with life issues, be a shoulder to lean on and give encouragement. Truthfully, in life we will not get along with everyone but there are lessons to be learned from complex relationships. We can learn difficult things about ourselves that we have to deal with. Working through challenging relationships leads to stronger self-control, develops a sincere Godly love for people and creates genuine prayers for people whom we may not agree with.

Prayer:

We praise you for the people you have blessed me with, the ones that love, encourage, support, and uplift me through all the twists and turns of life. I'm thankful that I do not have to go through life alone. I pray that you would be present in my relationships, that you would draw us together in a deeper community with one another toward greater unity with you. I pray that you would help heal any places of brokenness or discord in my relationships, and that you would restore any friendships that have fallen apart.

I pray that I clothe myself in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. May I be patient with my relationships, and may I forgive freely like you have forgiven me.

Reflections:

January 5

New Bethel Sounds of Praise, Provision, Finances, Auxiliaries/Ministries

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

*A Psalm of David. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell
therein
Psalm 24:1*

God promises to supply all of our needs according to His Riches and Glory by Christ Jesus. Usually when we hear this scripture, we think about money and financial prosperity. Yes, money and finances are necessary in our lives and church but we have other needs also. We need servants to work ministries, reach people in and out of the church, maintain stability and execute systems that govern our organization. Most importantly we need the Holy Spirit to guide us. As we think about our churches provisions and finances, let us be mindful that we need finances to keep the church going but also have integrity in managing the resources that God has given. These resources extend from financial, time and people. We should not abuse nor take God's resources lightly. They should be managed with integrity and compassion for other people's sacrifices.

Prayer:

Holy Spirit, our Living Hope, we long for Your glory and power. Our hearts long to be overcome by Your presence. Like a mighty rushing wind, fill this place. Baptize us with Your fire. Spirit of truth, teach us all things and bring to remembrance the words of Jesus. Guide us into all truth. Give us power in our weakness to speak the Word of God with boldness. Send a fresh outpouring of you Spirit upon our church Amen

Reflections:

January 6 National SOP – Vision, Leadership

Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.

Hebrews 13:17

*11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers,
12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up
13 until we all reach 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.*

Ephesians 4:11-13

Leadership is not about function or bureaucracy, but about awakening and empowering human presence. A real leader is someone who awakens individuals to possibilities that they don't see at all. There is something mysterious in each individual that cannot be reduced to a role or function. In its deepest sense, the spirituality of leadership is really the ministry of service to possibility. Good leaders lead because they somehow inhabit the privilege and burden of vision and they are called to that kind of a frontier. Behind the facade of your daily life — your role, your function, your image — there is something eternal going on.

Real leadership helps people to recognize that there is something at the heart of human presence that can never be functionalized. It targets and focuses on the world of experience. Change takes place at the heart of things, where identity unfolds and where it reflects on and mirrors itself. Persons who are alive and in conversation with their own depths are always revising, changing, and moving the old thresholds of meaning within themselves. When we keep the frontiers of possibility open, this is where great change can happen. When a good leader awakens the depth of presence in another and encounters the sacredness and inner world of the other, leadership is truly transformational and healing.

Prayer: We thank you also for the quality of leadership that is represented here among us, and for the many and diverse gifts that contribute toward the building of the kingdom. Pour out your spirit upon us. Confirm and strengthen our vision. Be the hope that sustains and strengthens us in these challenging times. For all these things, we pray. Amen.

Reflections:

January 7 Renewed Hope and Revival

*Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?
Psalm 85:6*

*Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work.
2 Thessalonians 2:16-17*

Hope is defined as a strong and confident expectation. People can survive without much food, water, shelter, clothing and even affection but without hope, many of us would be doomed or in a grave by now. If we lose hope, life can come to a standstill. Without hope, it is hard to move forward. And troublesome situations can cause us to give up and lose hope. Covid-19 caused many people to lose hope. The sickness and death that came from the illness was catastrophic. It causes many to lose hope. I want to remind everyone that hope is in our hearts. Hope propels our faith, hope activates confidence, encourages praise to God, brings security and fills us with joy. We know that many have been disheartened by many life obstacles but it is time for our hope to be reset and restored. As we are restored, the hope that we have on the inside, we must share that with the world around us. We must take it to the streets and that will cause a revival in the kingdom that will spread in our communities.

Prayer:

Lord, Give me strength and courage to keep moving forward, even when things are difficult. Help me to trust in Your plan for my life, no matter what comes my way. Help me to stay anchored in your word. My hope is in You and Your Word, that it will sustain me, guide me, and give me wisdom in the midst of all that is happening around me. Help me to live by the words of the Psalmist's: "You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word" (Psalm 119:114, NIV).

Reflections:

January 8

Unity of the Spirit, Bond of Peace, Oneness of Mind/Speech

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brothers to dwell together in unity!"

Psalms 34:14

Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it.

1 Peter 3:12

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Colossians 3:1-34

Oneness of Mind/Speech? Is that even possible? Yes it is possible but we must be unified. Unity in the church is brought on by the Holy Spirit and spreads as people surrender to God's will and drop their personal agendas. Unity manifests as we submit to God's will and let Him have His way in our hearts, our minds, our programs and services. God's Word and His Kingdom are universal. With that being said, we are able to have unity with other denominations without judgment. We should ask ourselves what are we doing as an individual to promote peace and unity? Are we gossiping, spreading discord, and/or sharing tales about our neighbors? Are we submitting our plans to God's will, are we praying for those we may not agree with, showing love and extending grace?

Prayer:

Dear God, we know that you are with us and you fight for your people. We believe that it's not by might, nor by power, but by your Spirit, that you make a difference in our world. We thank you for oneness and unity of the faith you have planned and prepared for the Church. Lord, please visit the church with the spirit of unity and oneness like He did the early church, in Jesus name.

Reflections:

January 9

Uncommon Love, Strengthened Faith, Acceptance of One Another

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. 9 Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. 10 Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

1 Peter 4:8-10

God accepts us, despite our messy lives, impure motives, and irritating attitudes. One of the ways we reflect God's love and bring Him glory is to accept each other just as He accepts us. We can love and accept others, without necessarily agreeing with their opinions and endorsing their actions or lifestyle. Once we realize that despite certain differences we're all human and all created by our Father in His image, the easier it is to focus on our common needs. Communication and trust go a long way toward increasing our patience and understanding toward those who do things differently from us. Let us be mindful to share uncommon love and always show acceptance towards each other.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, give me uncommon love that accepts others for the way they are without demanding complete change. Show me that stereotyping someone is wrong and provide me with opportunities to overcome this problem in my thinking. God's unconditional love, unchanging, and unceasing love for us. Help strengthen us to love unconditionally as God loves us.

Reflections:

January 10

Employment, Sick and Shut In, Restoration of the Saints

Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

James 5:14

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed

Luke 4:18

Far too often we forget to be thankful for our jobs and good health until we find ourselves unemployed and/or sickness has us missing work, lunch dates, and other aspects of everyday life. Being unemployed or suffering from a sickness can cause a huge emotional toll because it knocks the wind out of us and drains our confidence levels. Sickness and/or unemployment may be a quick inconvenience that comes and goes and we move on. For others, sickness is a way of life. If we are facing these situations, it is important that we communicate with Jesus Christ and ask Him to provide us with positivity and strength to push forward. It is important that we do not forget those who are sick and shut-in. They may not be able to get out and fellowship, so we must make it a priority to visit, stay in communication with and pray for those who are suffering amongst us and in our communities.

Prayer:

Dear God, we ask that you give comfort through unemployment, pain and sickness. We pray for their salvation and that you may somehow use their illness to bring them closer to you Lord and stronger in faith. We know that you can restore health! You have the power to heal us, power to comfort us and give us new hope. Please give us rest when we are weary and peace when we are uncertain. suffering. We beg for deliverance and submit that no healing is too hard for you.

Reflections:

January 11

Relationships, Church Growth and Power to Connect

Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Acts 2:47

“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

Matthew 16:18

As we think about church growth, relationships and connecting, we want to ensure that we are growing in a healthy and Christ-centered fashion. A ministry may appear to be going well but in reality it may be stagnant. We do not want to have an atmosphere that is poisonous and brings harm to people. We want to create an atmosphere that is completely submissive to the Holy Spirit, welcomes corporate commune with God and offers nourishing relationships with people. Our ultimate goal is for people to walk away from our services knowing who Jesus is, taking the love of Christ home and to their places of employment. Numbers in a seat do not necessarily mean the church is growing. Church growth should be measured by souls saved and bringing others in to be saved.

We can encourage church growth by encouraging people to serve in areas in which they are gifted, spending time, money and resources in outreach, effectively communicating biblical teaching, killing gossip and discord amongst members, demonstrating sincere praise and worship and engaging in genuine relationships with each other.

Prayer:

Thank you, Father, for the increase in your church, please raise up gifted and Christ-focused workers that are led by the Holy Spirit. We also pray that your Holy Spirit will attract and keep people and bring significant change in their lives. We ask that you will consistently reset and restore the relationships in our church community and that your Holy Spirit will find permanent residence in our ministry.

Reflections:

January 12

Revival, Power, Leading of the Holy Spirit through Anointing of the House and Members

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

Romans 8:26-27

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come

John 16:13

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Galatians 5:25

The anointing is precious as it flows from the Head down to the Body. The function of the anointing is to maintain the link between the Head and the Body. The anointing is the operation of the Holy Spirit within man. The relationship between the Holy Spirit, Christ, and the church can be compared to the nerves in the human body. The nerves direct and coordinate all the members of the body. The head communicates and directs all the members through the nerves. All the members in the body move according to the direction of the nerves. Submitting to the nerves is submitting to the head. Likewise, in the spiritual Body the Holy Spirit carries the thoughts of the Head to all the members

As we yield to the leadership and authority of the Holy Spirit it will flow through our church and give us power. It will help us to withstand trials and tribulations that come our way. But additionally, give us power to operate in God-given gifts to support His Kingdom and to go into the world and help the lost.

Prayer:

Father, we thank you for this consecration and the revival of our spirits. We pray, in the name of Jesus, that your power, Holy Spirit and Anointing refreshes us from this day to the end of the year. We repent of our thoughts and actions that were contrary to your word and we are resetting our minds and asking that you anoint and restore our desire to serve you and to do the will of the Father. We pray that your Holy Spirit will have freedom in our homes, jobs, church, communities, corporate America and our government. We align ourselves with the vision of the house and recommit ourselves to be active workers in the vineyard. We reestablish broken fellowships, we mend damaged relationships, and we ask your power to enlarge our territory.

10 Things You Should Know about the Church after COVID-19

June 08, 2020 by: Megan Hill

1. Coronavirus hasn't changed anything important about the church.

In all important ways, nothing changed. We are still the people of God, gathered in the presence of God, to bring glory to God. We still affirm his righteous rule by living under his command. We still love one another with the same love with which the Father loved the Son ([John 17:26](#)). We still testify to the truth and power of the gospel before a watching world. Throughout redemptive history, God's people have gathered to worship him in all kinds of situations—many of them less than ideal. They worshiped together as slaves in Egypt and exiles in Babylon, as wanderers in the wilderness and as objects of Roman persecution. The church in a pandemic joins their faithful company. We may be six feet apart, but we are still the church.

2. God loves the church.

When we can hear a sermon—and even interact with other church members—without getting off the couch or putting on street clothes, it's hard to muster the energy to actually go to church again. But our fundamental motivation for committing to the church hasn't changed because of coronavirus. As we are able, we go to church, serve the church, and love the church because God does. Christ promises to be present with his people when they gather in his name ([Matt. 18:20](#)). He serves the church by making her holy, and he loves the church by dying for her ([Eph. 5:25–27](#)). And what God loves, we must love.

3. Lone Christians aren't a thing.

The quarantine can create a false sense of self-sufficiency. It can be tempting to think that my spiritual growth can be downloaded remotely too. But the Christian life was never meant to be lived alone. With his words to Adam in the Garden, "It is not good that man should be alone" ([Gen. 2:18](#)), God establishes the importance of congregational life. And this corporate priority is borne out in the rest of Scripture: the family of Abraham, the assembly of Israel, the churches in Acts, the congregations of the New Testament Epistles. In the whole Bible, there are no lone Christians. You were created and redeemed to join with God's people in your particular location to worship and work together for his glory. You were made for church. This book helps readers delight in being a part of relationships within the church—no matter how messy and awkward they seem—with rich theology, practical direction, and study questions for group use.

4. Corporate worship is the essential business of your life.

Recently, there's been a lot of talk about what's essential, with civil authorities categorizing our ordinary activities and businesses under various phases and classifications. But whatever official designation church services receive, Christians must not allow our hearts to believe that worship with the church is unimportant. In corporate worship, the people of God assemble in his presence to speak to him (by prayer and song) and to hear him speak to us (by word and sacrament). We gather at his invitation and according to his command. We

testify to his rule over his kingdom, and we exalt him before our unbelieving neighbors. In worship, we offer to our sovereign God the praise he is due. It is the most essential business of your life.

5. *Your elders are a gift from Christ.*

On our own, we are, as the old hymn says, “prone to wander.” Our hearts are “deceitful above all things and desperately sick” ([Jer. 17:9](#)); alone, we quickly grow cold, fail to watch out, and stumble into sin. We need help. Thankfully, Christ organized his church for the good of our souls. The elders of your church are the gifts that the ascended Christ has given you to look out for your soul ([Eph. 4:8, 11–14](#)). With love and tenderness—and sometimes words of urgent warning and rebuke—they minister Christ’s care to you. There is no safer place for a sheep than under the watchful eye of a shepherd.

6. *The church needs you—and you need it.*

The Bible repeatedly describes the church as a body. “For just as the body is one and has many members . . . so it is with Christ,” writes Paul ([1 Cor. 12:12–13](#)). In the church, we each have unique gifts and graces, and we use them together for one another’s good. No part is unimportant, and no part can function well without the others. We need each other. And in the local church, we grow in our knowledge of Christ. We each have some gifts, but Christ has all the gifts. We each have a measure of the Spirit, but Christ has the Spirit in “without measure” ([Rom. 12:3](#); [John 3:34](#)). We each serve in a few ways, but Christ serves perfectly in every way. We each know some things, but Christ has “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” ([Col. 2:3](#)). Only in the assembled body can we experience the fullness of Christ our head ([Eph. 1:22–23](#)).

7. *The church makes you holy.*

In most churches, the pandemic has required additional cleaning protocols. But there are other more dangerous threats to the cleanliness of the church. Sin, our mortal enemy, festers in our hearts unbidden—like mildew around the sink. Thankfully, the local church is designed to promote the purity of each of its members. As we receive the sanctifying word together, as we exhort and encourage one another, as we cry out together for the help of the Holy Spirit, as we set a godly example for one another, and as we warn one another of the danger of sin, we work together to banish sin’s destructive decay.

8. *The church is your family.*

Defining a “household” has become another preoccupation of our pandemic age. Our civil authorities recognize that these foundational units of people who live and care for one another need to continue doing so. In most cases, the members of a household are free to carry on as they were—just wash your hands frequently. The Bible tells us that we’re part of a different kind of household—one whose boundaries aren’t demarcated on census or tax filings. As a Christian, you are part of the “household of God” ([Eph. 2:19](#); [1 Tim. 3:15](#)), which is the church. You have been brought into the family by God’s sovereign choosing and given a new family identity through the blood of Christ, our mutual brother. That doesn’t mean you don’t have to wear a mask to church, but it does mean that our fundamental family priorities of sharing our lives and caring for one another are not derailed by a global crisis. Even if we have to fellowship over Zoom and pray together, the church is still a family.

9. The church has work to do.

Work-at-home is the new normal. For others, work has disappeared, leaving financial worries in its place. The church has work to do as well, and it hasn't changed because of a virus. Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" ([Matt. 28:19](#)). Declaring Christ, the Savior of sinners, to the lost and dying world is a task for the church, and we are all co-workers in this job. We each pray for kingdom workers to be sent out ([Matt. 9:38](#)) and to have gospel success ([Rom. 15:30](#)). We each contribute to the needs of gospel-preachers and other churches ([Phil. 4:15](#)). We each invite our friends and neighbors to "come, see" the Savior ([John 4:29](#)). Christ's important mandate is a job for us to do together.

10. The church has a glorious future.

These days, we may be discouraged by the apparent insignificance and smallness of our local churches. We might be tempted to wonder whether the church is going to dissipate.. But when the Lord allows us to glimpse the realities of eternity, we see that the best days of the church are yet to come. Listen to the words of the apostle John:

I [John] saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be with them as their God." ([Rev. 21:2-3](#))

The church has a future, and it is glorious.

Reference:

<https://www.crossway.org/articles/10-thin>

Supporting Children to Adjust with Life After COVID

Guess what?!...It's Getting Better!

We have endured so much through the Covid-19 pandemic. We've experienced stress, anxiety, frustration, grief and many other emotions during the past few years. Sure, Covid is still around and we have to adjust to this "new normal"; but we have the resources and knowledge on how to handle this virus much better than we have before.

So how can we support our children with adjusting with life after Covid? Children look to adults for guidance when experiencing all types of life-changing events. It is imperative to provide social and emotional support to children, as there can be a wide range of thoughts, feelings and reactions. We must focus on staying healthy and calm, talk with them about their fears and teach positive preventive measures to help reduce anxiety.

This is also a tremendous opportunity for adults to model for children problem-solving, flexibility, and compassion as we all work through adjusting daily schedules, balancing work and other activities, getting creative about how we spend time, processing new information from authorities, and connecting and supporting friends and family members in new ways (National Association of School Psychologists, 2020).

The following tips can help children cope and adjust with changes resulting from Covid-19.

- Stay calm and reassure them that they are safe
- Let them talk about their worries and check in frequently
- Create a routine and structure
- Teach coping skills, practice mindfulness and deep breathing
- Focus on controllable tasks, such as social distancing, wash hands, wear face masks, use sanitizers and disinfectants and getting vaccinated
- Encourage positive thinking and demonstrate lots of love and affection
- Seek professional help if needed

These may not be easy tasks, but our children are watching our actions. Let's be role models and lead by example! We must stay focused on what is possible in order to reinforce a sense of control and to reassure children that they are okay, and that the situation will get better!

Humbly,
Brittany M.C. Shider
Professional School Counselor (K-12)

Reference:

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/helping-children-cope-with-changes-resulting-from-covid-19>

Family Corner

Fasting with Children and Family Consecration

Many people ask, if it is okay for young children to fast? How will fasting affect their young growing bodies? Some parents do not force fasting traditions on their children for health and nutritional concerns. If you are interested in including or incorporating a family fast or consecration, listed below are some ideas that may be helpful.

- Incorporating a Daniel Fast
- Avoiding Sweets
- Avoiding Sugary Drinks
- Avoiding Playtime-including social media, video games etc...
- Avoiding Television

If you decide to restrict certain activities, this time can be replaced with personal bible study, family bible study, family prayer, family praise and/or worship.

If you decide that your child will abstain from food for certain periods of time, consult with your child's physician.

Benefits of Family Consecration

- Promotes Healthy Eating Habits
- Promotes Self-Control
- Promotes Family Bonding
- Assists in building personal relationship with God

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Stress Management and Positive Mental Health for the Family

It is no secret that the enemy, Satan, has launched a full throttle attack on God's people and our children are not exempt from this attack. The enemy is attacking marriages, families and our children. Listed below are some tips to help children and teenagers who may be experiencing stress or stressful situations. It is not always easy for them to express their feelings and emotions. Lots of times, they may not even understand what they are feeling and do not know how to ask for help. Sometimes, as parents or guardians, when we see our children going through behavior problems, difficult things and changes, it can leave us with feelings of embarrassment, distress, and/or discouragement. But we must remember that God has never put more on than we can bear. God has also given us tools to help. And a little help can go a long way.

Listed below are a few warning signs and tips that you can try to help your children and teenagers. Never be embarrassed to discuss your concerns with your child's counselor or physician.

Possible Signs of Stress in Children:

- New or recurrent Bed-wetting
- Physical changes...ex. upset stomach, physical pains with no physical illness,
- Aggression
- Interrupted Sleep

Stress Management Tips for Children:

- Get Enough Sleep
- Exercise
- Playtime
- Consistent Schedule
- Be able to speak free to parents without fear of judgment

Possible Signs of Stress in Teenagers

- Increased complaints of headaches, stomach aches, muscle aches and/or tiredness
- Shutting down and withdrawal from people and activities
- Increased anger or irritability
- Anxiety and Nervousness
- Changes in Sleeping or Eating habits

- Difficulty Concentrating
- Experimentation with drugs and/or alcohol

Stress Management for Teenagers

- Talk to someone
- Take deep breaths
- Goal Setting
- Exercise
- Get enough sleep
- Time management

Scriptures for the Family

Forgiveness

Colossians 3:13

Ephesians 4:29-32

Love

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Proverbs 10:12

Mark 12:30-31

Conflict Resolution

James 1:19-20

Ephesians 4:29

1 Peter 3:8-11

Proverbs 15:1

Difficult Times

2 Corinthians 4:9-10

Psalm 91:1-4

John 14:26-27

SETTING THE ATMOSPHERE FOR WORSHIP

(Creating The Present Day Tabernacle Of David In Our Lives)

Submitted by XP Kai-David Hartwell

I will extol the LORD at all times; his praise will always be on my lips. My soul will boast in the LORD;

let the afflicted hear and rejoice. Glorify the LORD with me; let us exalt his name together.

Psalm 34:1-3

“And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: (24) Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. (25) And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. (26) And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed.”

Acts 16:23-26

This Bible story begins the unjust arrest of Paul and Silas. Because they had cast a spirit of divination out of a girl, the local Philippian authorities beat them and then threw them into a jail cell. Besides the trauma of the severe beating, they were fastened in stocks which clamped their arms and legs in an immobile position, causing cramps and loss of circulation. The atmosphere there was depressing. According to the standards of that day, a prison was more like the resemblance of a dungeon. A dark, damp, stench-ridden place, with no facility for waste or comforts of any kind.

Yet, in spite of the throbbing pain in their bodies and the disheartening atmosphere, at midnight Paul and Silas were heard praying and singing praises to God! What a strange sound this must have been to the other prisoners, who were used to only hearing the groans or cursings of those who had been beaten.

Then suddenly, there was an earthquake that shook the prison! The doors flung open, and amazingly, the bonds of Paul, Silas, and every other prisoner were released! What caused this mighty discharge of power?

Praise Elevates us into God's Presence and Power

Paul and Silas knew the secret of how to lift their hearts above their troubles and enter into God's presence and power. Through praise and worship their hearts were raised into the joyous presence and peace of God, and provided God a channel for his power to operate in their circumstances.

The Bible says that God inhabits the praises of His people (Psalms 22:3). In other words, God "dwells" in the atmosphere of His praise. This means that praise is not merely a reaction from coming into His presence - Praise is a vehicle of faith which brings us into the presence and power of God! Praise and worship is the "gate-pass" which allows us to enter the sacredness of His glory. The psalmist writes, "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name" (Psalms 100:4).

This corresponds with Jesus' teaching, that His presence will inhabit the gathering of believers who congregate in His name: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). A "gathering in His name" means that Jesus must be the focus, the center of the assemblage. He must be the one preached about, sung about — the one praised and worshiped. "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" (Hebrews 2:12). Consequently, Christ's presence, along with His virtue and anointing, is manifested in this type of gathering.

Have you ever noticed when "gifts of the Spirit" operate in a church service? The power and anointing of the Holy Spirit usually becomes evident, subsequent to a time of worship and praise. Some think that worship is a response after the Holy Spirit moves upon them. However, it's the other way around. God's presence responds when we move upon Him with worship! Lifting up Jesus Christ through praise and worship invokes the Lord's presence and power to flow in our midst.

What is Praise?

Praise means "to commend, to applaud or magnify." For the Christian, praise to God is an expression of worship, lifting-up and glorifying the Lord. It is an expression of humbling ourselves and centering our attention upon the Lord with heart-felt expressions of love, adoration and thanksgiving. High praises bring our spirit into a pinnacle of fellowship and intimacy between ourselves and God — it magnifies our awareness of our spiritual union with the most high God. Praise transports us into the realm of the supernatural and into the power of God. "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance" (Psalms 89:15).

There are many actions involved with praise to God — verbal expressions of adoration and thanksgiving, singing, playing instruments, shouting, dancing, lifting or clapping our hands. But true praise is not “merely” going through these motions. Jesus spoke about the hypocrisy of the pharisees, whose worship was only an outward show and not from the heart. “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me” (Matthew 15:8). Genuine praise to God is a matter of humility and sincere devotion to the Lord from within.

Unpretentious praise and worship pleases the Lord. He delights in the love and devotion of His children. According to the scriptures, the various expressions of praise bring blessing to the Lord. He eagerly awaits the fragrance of our affections, desiring to manifest His sweet presence and power in our midst. “...the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him” (John 4:23).

Praise to God is a Lifestyle

All too often, praise to God is something that many people leave at church, an event that happens only when they come together with other Christians. However, praise should be a part of a believer's lifestyle, inter-mingled as a part of their daily prayer-life. At work, in the car, at home in bed, or anywhere; praise to the Lord brings the refreshing of the Lord's presence, along with His power and anointing. “...I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth” (Psalms 34:1).

Praise is an expression of faith, and a declaration of victory! It declares that we believe God is with us and is in control of the outcome of all our circumstances (Romans 8:28). Praise is a “sacrifice,” something that we offer to God sacrificially, not just because we feel like it, but because we believe in Him and wish to please Him. “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name” (Hebrews 13:15).

Praise Sends the Enemy Running

Since praise manifests God's presence, we also realize that praise repels the presence of the enemy, Satan. An atmosphere which is filled with sincere worship and praise to God by humble and contrite hearts is disgusting to the Devil. He fears the power in the name of Jesus, and flees from the Lord's habitation in praise. “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God” (Psalms 50:23).

When the children of Judah found themselves outnumbered by the hostile armies of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, King Jehoshaphat and all the people sought the Lord for His help. The Lord assured the people that this would be His battle. He told them to go out against them, and He would do the fighting for them. So what did the children of Judah do? Being the people of “praise” (Judah actually means Praise), and knowing that God manifests His power through praise, they sent their army against their enemies, led by the praisers!

So on they went, ahead of the army declaring, “Praise the Lord, for His mercy endureth forever!” And the scripture says, “...when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten” (2 Chronicles 20:22).

When God’s people begin to praise His name, it sends the enemy running! I challenge you to become a person of praise, and you will experience the release of the power of God!

Some Biblical Expressions of Praise

- Declaring of thanks (Heb. 13:15)
- Clapping hands and shouting (Psalms 47:1)
- Musical instruments and dancing (Psm. 150:4)
- Singing praise songs (Psalms 9:11)
- Psalms, hymns, & spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19-20)
- Making a joyful noise (Psalms 98:4)
- By lifting our hands (Psalms 134:2)
- By being still (Psalms 4:3-5, 46:10)
- By being loud (Psalms 33:3, 95:1-6)
- The Purpose Of Our Worship Of God

The purpose of our worship is to glorify, honor, praise, exalt, and please God. Our worship must show our adoration and loyalty to God for His grace in providing us with the way to escape the bondage of sin, so we can have the salvation He so much wants to give us. The nature of the worship God demands is the prostration of our souls before Him in humble and contrite submission. James 4:6, 10 tells us, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up". Our worship to God is a very humble and reverent action.

Jesus says in John 4:23-24, "But the hour is coming, and now is, when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit and

those that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." It doesn't say we can worship God anyway we want, but we "must worship Him in spirit and in truth". The word "must" makes it absolute. There is no other way we can worship God and be acceptable to Him. The word "must", according to Webster, expresses "an obligation, a requirement, a necessity, a certainty, and something that must be done". When "must" is used it means that it is not optional. Here the word "must" is expressing that in spirit and in truth is the only way to acceptably worship God.

God seeks true worshippers, and He identifies them as those who "worship Him in spirit and in truth". Worshiping God in spirit means that it must be done from the heart. Worshiping God in truth means that it must be done according as God has specified in the Bible. Worshiping God in spirit and in truth is a serious matter which must not be taken lightly. If we have any regard for our own souls, we will want to make sure we are worshiping God in spirit and in truth.

Since God is the object of our worship, He and He alone has the right to determine how we are to worship Him. We read in Jeremiah 10:23, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself, it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps." We are not granted the option of directing our own ways in religion. God is the One who we look to for guidance and direction in our lives.

Our very best in worship is due God and is prescribed by Him in the Bible. The worship God has prescribed is the only way we can be pleasing to Him in this life and finally attain everlasting life with Him in eternity. The Christian's worship is of the greatest importance.

Worship is a time when we pay deep, sincere, awesome respect, love, and fear to the one who created us. Acts 17:24-25 says, "God who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives life, breath, and all things."

God is the one who holds our eternal destiny in His hands. Philippians 2:12 tells us to, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Our salvation is a very serious matter and will not happen by accident. We must work it out "with fear and trembling". Our salvation depends on whether our worship is pleasing to God or not. On the Day of Judgment it will be too late to make any corrections

Worship should cause us to reflect on the majesty and graciousness of God and Christ, contrasted to our own unworthiness. God does not have to have our worship, but we must worship Him to please Him. Our singing, praying, studying His word, giving, and communion are designed by God to bring us closer to Him and to cause us to think more like He thinks, thus becoming more like Him.

James 4:8 tells us to, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."

Our worship not only honors and magnifies God, but it is also for our own edification and strength. Worship helps us develop a God-like and Christ-like character. We become like unto those we admire and worship. When we worship God we tend to value what God values and gradually take on the characteristics and qualities of God, but never to His level. As Philippians 2:5 says, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ." How do we take on the mind of Christ? In Romans 12:2 we read, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." We renew our mind as we study and meditate on God's word and worship Him.

When we worship God we develop such traits as forgiveness, tenderness, justice, righteousness, purity, kindness, and love. All of this is preparing us for eternal life in heaven with God and Christ. As we are told in Colossians 3:2 to, "Set your mind on things above, and not on things on the earth."

The Tabernacle of David in Scripture

Tabernacle of David being a type of the end-time church and about a transition between the two tabernacles, the Tabernacle of Moses and the Tabernacle of David. In the Bible, the Tabernacle of Moses lacked God's presence at the time the Tabernacle of David was being built, yet it continued to operate without presence. For a time, the Tabernacles of Moses and of David operated simultaneously. Dr. Painter said this represented the fact that during the end times there will be two tabernacles that also operate simultaneously. That is, the 'church' with unfaithful ministers and people who are content with empty ritual and the true end time church that is full of God's presence."

David appointed 24 groups of 12 musicians (a total 880) who were set apart for prophetic worship. It is assumed from this that these musicians served around the clock (24/7) every day.

An unnamed writer on the internet concludes the following: "Now, in these last days ... the TOD is going to be restored. As it was in David's time, once again God's people will have free access to His presence. Whenever the people of God gather to minister to God in worship and praise, He will be pleased to come in His mighty presence to meet with them."

The above quotes express the various common themes of TOD teaching. Diverse versions of TOD teaching are now widely dispersed in Charismatic circles. As various elements of this teaching move from person to person and group to group certain aspects are picked up or left out so that many who employ different versions of this teaching are not aware that TOD is the source of these ideas.

Nevertheless there seem to be four central ideas within TOD teaching.

1. TOD is a part of the present-truth/restoration view of church history.
2. TOD enhances and endorses the ministry of restored apostles and prophets.
3. TOD invokes (attracts) the manifest presence of God.
4. TOD is a powerful weapon of spiritual warfare.

Does TOD Worship Attract the Manifest Presence of God?

The addition to physical manifestations in the current revival is often linked directly to TOD type worship. It has been pragmatically discovered that long extended and repetitive worship will usually cause God to "show up." So worship techniques often become the prelude for God showing up in power. "Showing up" is shorthand for the whole catalog of physical manifestations associated with the current revival. The right kind of worship will attract the manifestations which are a sign that God has shown up. Much of the teaching that praise attracts and brings God's presence is based on an obscure verse in the OT which I believe has been misinterpreted. The KJV of Psalm 22:3 states: "But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel."

Does this verse really teach that if we praise God then God will come in His manifest presence to "inhabit the church" - sometimes as a visible glory cloud of blue haze or an overwhelming sense of heaviness (glory), or whatever?

Does this verse even suggest that God "inhabits" praise in some unique and extraordinary way?

First of all, most modern Hebrew translations prefer "enthroned" to "inhabit." Furthermore, the Hebrew Grammar is not in favor of the traditional understanding found in the KJV. The Hebrew literally reads, "But Thou/Holy/enthroned/the praise of Israel." The NIV translates it "Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the praise of Israel." Thus the phrase probably means, "You are the One Israel praises." In context this fits well because in vs. 3-5 it is God who is the One in whom "our fathers put their trust." Bruce L. Johnson has summed the thought in this way: "But note that David's appeal is to God. He is not calling God's people to praise Him so that God will 'show up' or act on their behalf. He is not saying, 'God comes [fights, acts for us, etc.] because we praise Him, so praise him and he will act', rather, he is telling God (and indirectly, telling us), that He is the one we praise and boast in because he HAS shown up for us!"

Is TOD really a Spiritual Warfare Technique?

Michael Moriarity has responded to the TOD teaching as spiritual warfare:

"The new charismatics believe that God is teaching certain present-truth Christians 'new insights' to help the church in her struggles against spiritual darkness ... One way to accomplish all of this is through certain forms of worship ... God is putting together a present-truth army of believers that will worship Him with such power that all non-Christian philosophies will ultimately be wiped out and demons will be left trembling."

Bill Hamon, who is a fellow apostle with C. Peter Wagner, in the International Coalition of Apostles, and a long time Latter Rain writer, describes the power of praise choruses in this way:

"These praise choruses convey the words and spirit of a militant army ready to possess their promised land. The "Joshua Generation" has crossed over their spiritual Jordan restorationally. They are now marching around Jericho, preparing to fulfill their predestined purpose as one of the restorational, present-truth tribes that will be joined together in spirit and truth to drive out the 'ites' of Canaan."

Indeed, there are references to spiritual warfare in the NT, but there are no references to worship warfare. By stressing TOD as a warfare technique, TOD teachers have reduced it to a formula. The purpose of worship, however, personal or corporate, is not to employ a spiritual warfare tactic. I recently heard a sermon in which the pastor asserted that every time we clap or beat the drum it allows God to beat on the devil. We however, do not clap, shout etc in order for God to be freed to defeat the devil. Rather we praise God because he has defeated the evil one and we have been rescued from his domain. There is no power in any worship technique. The power is in God Himself.

At the time of David, the "Tabernacle of Moses" was still in place in Gibeon, and was still fully functioning with all its sacrifices, etc. Interestingly enough though, the Ark of the Covenant (which was a symbol of God's presence) was not there, because it was captured by the Philistines. Now here came David, he took the Ark of the Covenant, but to the amazement of all, he did not return it to Gibeon, where the Tabernacle of Moses was, but decided to build a new Tabernacle in Zion, Jerusalem, and called it: The Tabernacle of David. Then he put the Ark of the Covenant there.

We desperately need the presence of God (Exodus 33:15). The Ark of the Covenant was where the presence of God was in the Old Testament. We need the presence of God for us to go into battle and to subdue cities and kingdoms (Joshua 6:6).

The first thing David did after taking Mt. Zion was that he fortified it and sought to bring the Ark of the Covenant back to him (1 Chronicles 13). He set up a tent and established a new order of worship where God ministered to 24 hours a day (1 Chronicles 15- 17). After this, he then went out with his army and subdued his enemies all around and he gathered the spoils in order to enable the next generation (Solomon) to build the temple of the Lord (1 Chronicles 18 - 22).

So how does this apply today? Every person in the body of Christ needs to rule and reign in order to establish the kingdom of God within their sphere of influence and authority. Every saint needs to function in the kingly anointing in their jobs, their business, their homes and their governmental job. The most effective way to do that is to follow David's example.

First, we need to minister to the Lord and seek His presence personally and corporately. We need to be in one accord just as they were in the book of Acts (Acts 1:14, 2:1, 2:46, 5:12). David established a new order of worship. He assigned a certain number of Levites to minister unto the Lord 24 hours per day. Why the Levites? Because that is what God chose to do.

Numbers 8:19 And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the work for the children of Israel in the tabernacle of meeting, and to make atonement for the children of Israel, that there be no plague among the children of Israel when the children of Israel come near the sanctuary." NKJV

Numbers 18:6 Behold, I Myself have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel; they are a gift to you, given by the LORD, to do the work of the tabernacle of meeting. NKJV

Who can go into the presence of the Lord today like Aaron did? Every believer today has access to the throne of Grace through the precious blood of Jesus. Every Christian is part of the spiritual Aaronic priesthood today. So, who are the types of the Levites in the New Testament?

Ephesians 4:8-13 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: KJV

The five fold ministry is a type of Levite. It says in 1 Chronicles 15:2, 12, 14 and 15 that the Ark of the Covenant (presence of the Lord) was to be born on the shoulders of the Levites. In scripture the

shoulder is symbolic of government.

So let's take a quick look to see how they worshiped the Lord in David's Tabernacle. The Ark of the Covenant was brought back via a procession. This procession included King David as king and commander, the Elders of Israel, the Captains of Israel, the High priests and the Chiefs and Levites, singers, musicians and the whole congregation of Israel following (1 Chronicles 15), Psalm 87:7, Psalm 68:25). Once the Ark of the Covenant went out of the Tabernacle of Moses, it never returned.

So what was the divine order of worship? They were to worship in spirit and in truth. King David was a man after God's own heart. He was a king and yet he ministered unto the Lord as a priest. Yet, while he was out performing his kingly duty he made sure that the Levites ministered unto the Lord continuously (24 hours a day) They worshiped and served the Lord through:

- Singers and singing (1 Chronicles 15:16-27 & 25:1-7)
- Musicians and instruments (1 Chronicles 23:5, 25:1-7)
- Ministry of Levites before the Ark (1 Chronicles 16:6,6,37)
- Recording (1 Chronicles 16:4, 28:12, 19)
- Thanking the Lord (1 Chronicles 16:4, 8, 41)
- Praise (1 Chronicles 16:4, 36)
- Psalms (1 Chronicles 16:9, Psalms 98:6)
- Rejoicing and joy (1 Chronicles 16:10, 16, 25, 31)
- Clapping hands (Psalm 47:1, 98:8, Isaiah 55:12)
- Shouting (1 Chronicles 15:28, Psalms 47:1, 5; Isaiah 12:6)
- Dancing (1 Chronicles 15:29; 2 Samuel 6:14, Psalms 149:3; Psalms 150:4)
- Lifting up hands (Psalms 134: 141:2) (Lamentations 3:41)
- Worship (1 Chronicles 16:29, Psalms 29:1-2, 95:6)
- Seeking the Lord (1 Chronicles 16:10-11, 2 Chronicles 7:14)
- Spiritual sacrifices (Psalms 27:6, 1 Peter 2:3-5, Hebrews 13:15,16)
- Saying Amen (1 Chronicles 16:36)

That was so revolutionary! If somebody does that today, it would be a great thing, but please notice that David did it in the Old Testament. The "Tabernacle of Moses" was still there, and priests still functioned there, and offered animal sacrifices for the sins of the people, but David saw much ahead of His time and saw that the Heart of God desired and yearned for something more of His people, and that was their heart Praise and Worship! That's the symbol of The Tabernacle of David. He lived at least a 1000 years ahead of his time, and he managed to see God's heart.

That's what the Lord meant in Acts 15, when He said that He wanted to build up again the Tabernacle of David (not the Tabernacle of Moses). That means God's biggest desire still is His people to seek Him, to Praise and Worship Him, to Adore Him, and to give Him the Glory 24 hours a day. Every breath we take comes from Him, and we must Praise and Worship Him for that! Only when we do that with our whole hearts, the residue of men and the Gentiles will turn to God, and say: "We want that Glory as well". You see, Psalm 85:9 says that the Lord has saved us, so that His Glory may dwell in our land. That's the purpose of our salvation on this side of heaven – to spread His Glory. But for us to be able to spread it, we must first experience it ourselves, and that only comes by opening our hearts before Him in Praise, Worship, Adoration, and True Love, which requires our heart attitude and our actions.

30 Days of Reviving, Resetting and Reshifting

Living a Righteous and Godly life requires commitment, discipline and consistency. We often need to replenish and rejuvenate our spirits. We are striving to have a committed, consistent and consecrated relationship with God. You should always pray that God leads you when fasting during any type of consecration. Please don't be hesitant in fasting or praying because God will see your heart and honor your sacrifice.

Day One -Hunger for Word

Day Two - Reset our Leadership

Day Three - Reset our Community and Government

Day Four - Restore Relationships with Family, Friends, Enemies, Associates and co-workers

Day Five - Restoration of NBSOP Finances and ministries

Day Six - Restoration of National SOP Vision and Leadership

Day Seven - Restoration of Hope

Day Eight - Resetting of Oneness Mind and Speech

Day Nine - Restoration of Uncommon Love and Acceptance of One Another

Day Ten - Resetting and Restoration of the Saints

Day Eleven - Restoration of Church Growth and Power to Connect

Day Twelve - Restoration of the Leadership of the Holy Spirit

Day Thirteen - Reset your Faith and Faithfulness

Day Fourteen - Reset your Mindset

Day Fifteen -Reset your Love

Day Sixteen - Reset your Purpose

Day Seventeen - Reset and Restore Relationship with God

Day Eighteen - Restore your Peace

Day Nineteen - Restore your Joy

Day Twenty - Restore your Desire to Finish the Race

Day Twenty One - Reset your Commitment to Christ

Day Twenty Two - Reset your Obedience

Day Twenty Three - Restore your Praise

Day Twenty Four - Restore your Worship

Day Twenty Five - Reset and Restore your Prayer Live

Day Twenty Six - Reset your Forgiveness of yourself and others

Day Twenty Seven - Restore your Vulnerability to Christ

Day Twenty Eight - Evangelism

Day Twenty Nine - Restore your Discernment

Day Thirty - Reset your Expectations

Day Thirty One - Reset and Restore your Vision for your life and family

