

# 40 DAYS OF *prayer*

## WEEK 6 CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

*Acts 1:8*

As we focus on the life of Christ, this week's theme is *Christ and His Church*. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus stated, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The Church represents the collective Body of Believers unified by His love and empowered by His Spirit to witness for Him and execute the mission entrusted to us by Jesus. Recognizing the significance of this unity, adversaries attempt to undermine the mission through deception and conflict. Jesus calls for strength, courage, and unity to overcome these challenges. He has established a clear purpose for His Church, inviting believers to be the salt and light of the earth. It is essential that our actions shine before others, so they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven. Let us persist in collaborating with our King as He builds His Church.

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- *How are you serving in your local church, and where might God be calling you next?*
- *Have you invited your neighbors to church before?*
- *How do you plan to pray for your church this week?*

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## THE BODY OF CHRIST UNITED IN LOVE

JOHN 17:23

In John 17:23, Jesus prayed, “That they may be brought to complete unity.” This means that the Church is not merely a gathering of people but has a role in showing the world the love of Jesus and the will of God the Father. Just as Jesus is one with the Father, believers should also love one another, be united, and become one.

When the Church is united, people in the world will recognize that God sent Jesus and that God’s love for Jesus is the same love He has for us. Therefore, the Church is not just a place where we gather to worship, but a community that reveals God’s love to the world.

Practically speaking, this means that church members should love and care for one another and make efforts to resolve conflicts. It is important to reduce disputes through forgiveness and reconciliation, to share each other’s burdens, pray together, and encourage one another. When the Church lives in this kind of unity, Jesus’ prayer will be fulfilled, and the world will experience God’s love through the Church. Therefore, we must strive to love one another and be united within the Church.

However, this cannot be achieved by our efforts alone. In fact, it is the Holy Spirit who makes all of this possible. Therefore, we must go deeper with the Holy Spirit, depend on Him more, and desire Him more earnestly. When we do so, the content of the Lord’s prayer will be fully accomplished.



### REFLECTION PRAYER

*Lord, guide the Church to be united so that we may reveal the love of Jesus and the will of the Father to the world. Melt away all division and conflict among us with forgiveness and reconciliation and help us become a community that loves and encourages one another. We confess that our own strength is not enough, so may the Holy Spirit bind our hearts together and fulfill the prayer that Jesus prayed. May the Holy Spirit, who powerfully came upon the Upper Room at Pentecost, come again upon all churches and believers today. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.*

## UNITY IN DIVERSITY THROUGH THE SPIRIT OF GOD

1 CORINTHIANS 12:13

Jesus prayed for it. The writers of the New Testament expressed the need for it. But this idea of developing unity is a lot harder than it seems. In many cultures, people cling to the idea of unity that includes self-preservation and independence in all relationships. We say we want unity, but do we understand what Jesus had in mind when He was praying for unity for His followers?

In John 17, Jesus gave the example of His relationship with the Father. In the Trinity, love, interdependence, and trust is perfected. Operating in the kind of unity demonstrated by the Trinity is easier said than done when we are placed in relationships where God has strategically surrounded us with people who look, think, act, and believe differently.

In any ecosystem, the greater the diversity, the greater the stability. This is why Paul describes the Church in 1 Corinthians 12 with a body illustration. There is great diversity in appearance, role, and function in our physical bodies, yet purpose and even life depends on the unity of those diverse parts.

The question is, how can significant diversity operate with increased unity? If the Holy Spirit doesn't shape us to look like the Son and His approach to relationships, we're lost. The kind of intimacy found in the Trinity is not produced without a continual increase in sacrifice, selflessness, vulnerability, and trust. If these are absent in our relationships, we will not experience the beauty of unity within our diversity.



### REFLECTION PRAYER

*Father, forgive me for the times when competition and comparison have defined my relationships with those who were "different" than me or who held a conflicting perspective. Pride creeps in, and I feel the need to be right. I desire to experience the kind of unity and intimacy that You desire for me; the kind that is found in the Trinity. I don't know how to get there. Please do the deep work that produces a humility that allows me the freedom to be who You created me to be and yet authentic and submissive in all my relationships. Amen.*

## THE BODY OF CHRIST UNITED IN FAITH

EPHESIANS 4:4-5

While driving home from work, I got stuck in the usual pocket of stop-and-go traffic. My typical 20-minute drive commute quickly stretched to 40. Through the lens of frustration, I looked at the variety of cars and drivers. How could there be so many humans driving on the same road at the very same time? Each of us headed to our individual homes yet forced to use the same roadway to reach our final destinations.

In an effort to diffuse my own road rage, my eyes wandered to the many different faces I was driving among. Such beautiful diversity! My moment of wonder quickly devolved into frustration as I was cut off by yet another car trying to speed around everyone.

Like congested roads, church can feel crowded with competing personalities and agendas. Everyone is moving toward the same ultimate destination yet struggling to move forward together. God continuously calls for oneness among His Body of believers. The term “one body” should urge us toward unity, but it does not push us into uniformity. The Body of Christ is made up of individuals shaped by cultures and backgrounds who bring different perspectives. Yet what binds us together is far stronger than what separates us: our shared faith in Jesus Christ.

The diversity within the Church is a strength when it is surrendered to Christ. Satan is continuously working to divide us through fear, pride, and misunderstandings. The Church is strongest when we choose grace over grievance and mission over division.



### REFLECTION PRAYER

*Heavenly Father, protect my heart from division. Soften me where I have held too tightly to my own personal views. Teach me to value others as You do. Help me reflect You in word and action, choose grace over grievance, patience over irritation, and unity over personal comfort. Bring us together as Your Church in faith, mission, service, and love. Amen.*

## ONE BODY IN CHRIST, UNITED BY DIVINE PLAN

EPHESIANS 1:11-12

In working with the elderly and dying over the years, a conversation about inheritances occasionally takes place. Most often, the person anticipating the end of life shares their wish to leave something valuable to a family member whom they treasured and loved. The heartfelt desire is to leave loved ones something that will make a difference in their life after they are gone.

In Ephesians 1:10–11, Paul has just told believers how they became God’s people. Now the next question is why. Because “we have obtained an inheritance” (Eph. 1:11, NASB). We have gained an eternal inheritance because someone shared their faith in Christ with us while they were still living. Our inheritance received from Christ is meant to be shared now, in unity with the Body of Christ to a lost world. How are we passing on our spiritual inheritance today while we are living?

John R. W. Stott, a distinguished scholar, reminds us “to live to the praise of the glory of his grace is both to worship him by our words and deeds as the gracious God he is, and to cause others to see and praise Him too.” This can certainly come through the life of an individual; but much more so through the life and testimony of a whole community in relation with each other and with God as their focus, a community giving daily of the inheritance each of us have in Christ while we live to the praise of His glorious grace.



### REFLECTION PRAYER

*O God, let the joy of what I have inherited through faith in Your gracious salvation daily flow over into my words and actions. Let our hope in You as a Church bring love to a lost world, resulting in the beautiful song of praise to Your glorious grace. Let my spiritual inheritance be shared today to make an eternal difference. In the name of my Redeemer and Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.*

## ONE BODY IN CHRIST, PREDESTINED BY HIS GRACE

EPHESIANS 1:5-6

When Jesus spoke these words in Acts 1:8, He wasn't just giving a command—He was giving a promise. The Church would not be built by human strength or clever strategies but by the power of the Holy Spirit. This power would enable ordinary people to do extraordinary things: to witness, to serve, to love, and to build a community that reflects the heart of Christ.

Jesus also said in Matthew 16:18, “I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” This is a declaration of victory. The Church is not a fragile institution—it is a Spirit-empowered force, advancing the Kingdom of God in every generation.

You are not just a member of a church—you are a part of Christ's Body. You have been given gifts, a purpose, and the Spirit's power to make a difference. Whether you serve by teaching, encouraging, praying, or simply showing up with love, you are helping to build what Jesus started. What are your personal giftings of the Spirit? He has given them to you, on purpose . . . to be His witness!



### REFLECTION PRAYER

*Dear God,*

*Thank You for never leaving us on our own.*

*You have given us Your Spirit to empower and guide Your Church.*

*Thank You for the privilege of being part of Your Body—*

*whether our role feels big or small, You have asked us to be faithful to it.*

*We trust that Your plans will prevail,*

*for Your Holy Spirit has sealed them with power and purpose.*

*Yet we still ask: bring unity to our local church,*

*and let Your presence cause our communities to flourish.*

*In Jesus' powerful name, amen.*

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## BIOGRAPHIES OF THE WRITERS

### WOODLER ALEZY

Woodler is senior pastor of Bethesda Tabernacle in Florida, with decades of ministry and business leadership. Licensed in 1994, he also serves as a chaplain, professor, and president of the Haitian C&MA Association, and is a widely recognized preacher, teacher, and mentor.

### CHARLES CHAPMAN

Charles serves as the candidate development specialist for Alliance Missions. In high school, Charles felt a call to ministry that led him to start a Christian ministry that served the homeless. After 20 years, Charles and his family moved to Columbus to help prepare the next generation of mission candidates.

### CHRISTI CHRISTNER

Christi currently works as an events coordinator at the C&MA National Office.

### JAE CHUNG

Jae is the district superintendent of the Korean District.