

## Pioneer Prayer Pack 2

### June 30-July 6, 2019

**Directions:** One day this week, in the sanctuary, outside under some trees, in a comfortable room that offers privacy and no distractions, or on a conference call, the leader will distribute prayer packets, welcome participants, and open with a short prayer. Group members take turns reading the “Testimony Handout” (pg. 2). After reading, the group leader will assign prayer topics below to participants in a clockwise fashion. Each should pray silently for a minute about their prayer request. The group leader may open the prayer by thanking God for every person in the room and asking that each heart will be blessed. Before someone prays for their assigned topic, they should try and agree with the previous prayer. The prayer topics below are taken from the “Testimony Handout.” Please keep individual prayers short, or less than two minutes each.

1. Pray that the church would wisely use the great power that the world’s Redeemer has given it in the case of Scriptural discipline.
2. Pray that God’s church on earth would hold together as a body, instead of going to fragments.
3. Pray that we understand the great importance of united prayer and the union of purpose.
4. Pray for 1000 Pioneer Prayer Groups to start in every division before General Conference Session 2020.
5. Pray that Jesus would reveal Himself to us, to change us as He changed Paul, to be chosen vessels to bear the gospel to others.
6. Pray for us to have a deep faith in Jesus as the Messiah, and that we humbly follow His direction.

[3-5 min. Open Prayer Time; Song leader sings first verse of SDA Hymn #348 to end open prayer time]

7. Pray that God shows us our duty, as He showed Paul, when he prayed, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”
8. Pray that we have close connection to, as Paul did, God’s organized church on earth.
9. Pray for us to persevere in prayer when we are in darkness of mind as to what is required of us, and that God answer us.
10. Pray that we would be filled with the Holy Ghost, and be baptized if that is needed, like Paul was.
11. Pray for us to tell others about Jesus as earnestly and zealously as we once lived for the world.
12. Pray that we repent and die to sin.

[3-5 min. Open Prayer Time; Song leader sings second verse of SDA Hymn #348 to end open prayer time]

13. Pray that the *Testimonies for the Church* may be introduced to every member of the church.
14. Pray for God’s Spirit to bless local churches, conferences, unions, divisions, and General Conference departments.
15. Pray for the Holy Spirit to bless those planning Annual Council 2019 and General Conference Session 2020.
16. Pray for the Holy Spirit to bless the delegates of General Conference Session 2020.
17. Pray for God’s Spirit to bless visitors, logistics, services, and business sessions of GC Session 2020.

[3-5 min. Open Prayer Time – Thanksgiving and Praise; Finish SDA Hymn #348; Leader Closes Prayer.]

## Testimony Handout 2 for Pioneer Prayer

Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 3, pp. 428-432

June 30-July 6, 2019

The world's Redeemer has invested great power with His church. He states the rules to be applied in cases of trial with its members. After He has given explicit directions as to the course to be pursued, He says: "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Thus even the heavenly authority ratifies the discipline of the church in regard to its members when the Bible rule has been followed.

The word of God does not give license for one man to set up his judgment in opposition to the judgment of the church, neither is he allowed to urge his opinions against the opinions of the church. If there were no church discipline and government, the church would go to fragments; it could not hold together as a body. There have ever been individuals of independent minds who have claimed that they were right, that God had especially taught, impressed, and led them. Each has a theory of his own, views peculiar to himself, and each claims that his views are in accordance with the word of God. Each one has a different theory and faith, yet each claims special light from God. These draw away from the body, and each one is a separate church of himself. All these cannot be right, yet they all claim to be led of the Lord. The word of Inspiration is not Yea and Nay, but Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus.

Our Saviour follows His lessons of instruction with a promise that if two or three should be united in asking anything of God it should be given them. Christ here shows that there must be union with others, even in our desires for a given object. Great importance is attached to the united prayer, the union of purpose. God hears the prayers of individuals, but on this occasion Jesus was giving especial and important lessons that were to have a special bearing upon His newly organized church on the earth. There must be an agreement in the things which they desire and for which they pray. It was not merely the thoughts and exercises of one mind, liable to deception; but the petition was to be the earnest desire of several minds centered on the same point.

In the wonderful conversion of Paul we see the miraculous power of God. A brightness above the glory of the midday sun shone round about him. Jesus, whose name of all others he most hated and despised, revealed Himself to Paul for the purpose of arresting his mad yet honest career, that He might make this most unpromising instrument a chosen vessel to bear the gospel to the Gentiles. He had conscientiously done many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. In his zeal he was a persevering, earnest persecutor of the church of Christ. His convictions of his duty to exterminate this alarming doctrine, which was prevailing everywhere, that Jesus was the Prince of life were deep and strong.

Paul verily believed that faith in Jesus made of none effect the law of God, the religious service of sacrificial offerings, and the rite of circumcision, which had in all past ages received the full sanction of God. But the miraculous revelation of Christ brings light into the darkened chambers of his mind. The Jesus of Nazareth whom he is arrayed against is indeed the Redeemer of the world.

Paul sees his mistaken zeal and cries out: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Jesus did not then and there tell him, as He might have done, the work that He had assigned him. Paul must receive instruction in the Christian faith and move understandingly. Christ sends him to the very disciples whom he had been so bitterly persecuting, to learn of them. The light of heavenly illumination had taken away Paul's eyesight; but Jesus, the Great Healer of the blind, does not restore it. He answers the question of Paul in these words: Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." Jesus could not only have healed Paul of his blindness, but He could have forgiven his sins and told him his duty by marking out his future course. From Christ all power and mercies were to flow; but He did not give Paul an experience, in his conversion to truth, independent of His church recently organized upon the earth.

The marvelous light given Paul upon that occasion astonished and confounded him. He was wholly subdued. This part of the work man could not do for Paul, but there was a work still to be accomplished which the servants of Christ could do. Jesus directs him to His agents in the church for a further knowledge of duty.

Thus He gives authority and sanction to His organized church. Christ had done the work of revelation and conviction, and now Paul was in a condition to learn of those whom God had ordained to teach the truth. Christ directs Paul to His chosen servants, thus placing him in connection with His church.

The very men whom Paul was purposing to destroy were to be his instructors in the very religion that he had despised and persecuted. He passed three days without food or sight, making his way to the men whom, in his blind zeal, he was purposing to destroy. Here Jesus places Paul in connection with his representatives upon the earth. The Lord gave Ananias a vision to go up to a certain house in Damascus and call for Saul of Tarsus; "for, behold, he prayeth."

After Saul was directed to go to Damascus, he was led by the men who accompanied him to help him bring the disciples bound to Jerusalem to be tried and put to death. Saul tarried with Judas at Damascus, devoting the time to fasting and prayer. Here the faith of Saul was tested. Three days he was in darkness of mind in regard to what was required of him, and three days he was without sight. He had been directed to go to Damascus, for it should there be told him what he should do. He is in uncertainty, and he cries earnestly to God. An angel is sent to Ananias, directing him to go to a certain house where Saul is praying to be instructed in what he is to do next. Saul's pride is gone. A little before he was self-confident, thinking he was engaged in a good work for which he should receive a reward; but all is now changed. He is bowed down and humbled to the dust in penitence and shame, and his supplications are fervent for pardon. Said the Lord, through His angel, to Ananias: "Behold, he prayeth." The angel informed the servant of God that he had revealed to Saul in vision a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him that he might receive his sight. Ananias can scarcely credit the words of the angel, and repeats what he has heard of Saul's bitter persecution of the saints at Jerusalem. But the command to Ananias is imperative: "Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."

Ananias was obedient to the direction of the angel. He laid his hands upon the man who so recently was exercised with a spirit of the deepest hatred, breathing out threatenings against all who believed on the name of Christ. Ananias said to Saul: "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized."

Jesus might have done all this work for Paul directly, but this was not His plan. Paul had something to do in the line of confession to the men whose destruction he had premeditated, and God had a responsible work for the men to do whom He had ordained to act in His stead. Paul was to take those steps necessary in conversion. He was required to unite himself to the very people whom he had persecuted for their religion. Christ here gives all His people an example of the manner of His working for the salvation of men. The Son of God identified Himself with the office and authority of His organized church. His blessings were to come through the agencies that He has ordained, thus connecting man with the channel through which His blessings come. Paul's being strictly conscientious in his work of persecuting the saints does not make him guiltless when the knowledge of his cruel work is impressed upon him by the Spirit of God. He is to become a learner of the disciples.

He learns that Jesus, whom in his blindness he considered an impostor, is indeed the author and foundation of all the religion of God's chosen people from Adam's day, and the finisher of the faith, now so clear to his enlightened vision. He saw Christ as the vindicator of truth, the fulfiller of all prophecies. Christ had been regarded as making of none effect the law of God; but when his spiritual vision was touched by the finger of God, he learned of the disciples that Christ was the originator and the foundation of the entire Jewish system of sacrifices, that in the death of Christ type met antitype, and that Christ came into the world for the express purpose of vindicating His Father's law.

In the light of the law, Paul sees himself a sinner. That very law which he thought he had been keeping so zealously he finds he has been transgressing. He repents and dies to sin, becomes obedient to the claims of God's law, and has faith in Christ as his Saviour, is baptized, and preaches Jesus as earnestly and zealously as he once condemned Him. In the conversion of Paul are given us important principles which we should ever bear in mind. The Redeemer of the world does not sanction experience and exercise in religious matters independent of His organized and acknowledged church, where He has a church.