

Revival Preparation Guide

The purpose of this guide is to help you and your church prepare for revival. It is important to note from the outset that revival is not simply a series of evangelical meetings but is the work of the Holy Spirit, Whom God has sent to guide us into all truth. You can hold revival services without ever having true revival. A good revival meeting may draw a crowd but a revival movement concerns itself with crown and the Cross of Christ. It has been my experience that revival movements occur when God's people seek His presence and His power, which builds anticipation and expectation. I really believe that any church, of any size, in any place can have true revival if they sincerely desire to meet with God. This guide spells out *your* part in that process.

Examination

King David was described by the Lord as, *"A man after My heart, who will do all My will"* (Acts 13:22). I believe David was such a man because he invited godly examination:

"Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have walked in my integrity, And I have trusted in the Lord without wavering. Examine me, O Lord, and try me; Test my mind and my heart" (Psalm 26:1–2).

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way" (Psalm 139:23–24).

Spiritual examination is not simply a gloomy contemplation of regret or a casual justification of known sin. In order to move beyond reflection to action, we need to seek God where He directs us to find Him:

"For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite" (Isaiah 57:15).

Personal examination begins by asking, "Am I willing to intentionally submit my will to the authority of God's Word and to the conviction and correction of the Holy Spirit through confession and genuine repentance of sin revealed in my life?" The most aggressive opponent to personal revival is self. Until all rights, preferences, grudges, and gripes have been deliberately surrendered...self remains the ruler. I encourage you to use Colossians 3 as a guide for personal examination. It deals with the believer's mind, motives, mouth, and marriage.

Scripture is very clear that we are not to grieve or quench the Holy Spirit. We do this, however, when we say "yes" to sin, self, and Satan by giving in to temptation; or when we say "no" to God's leading regarding our sanctification or service.

Consider what grieves the Holy Spirit and why:

- He is the Spirit of truth (John 14:17) so anything false, deceitful, hypocritical, or critical, grieves Him.
- He is the Spirit of faith (2 Corinthians 4:13) so doubt, unbelief, distrust, trust, worry, and anxiety, grieve Him.
- He is the Spirit of grace (Hebrews 10:29) so that which is hard, bitter, ungracious, unthankful, malicious, unforgiving or unloving grieves Him.
- He is the Spirit of holiness (Romans 1:4) so anything unclean, defiling or degrading grieves Him.
- He is the Spirit of wisdom and revelation (Ephesians 1:17) so ignorance, conceit, arrogance, and folly grieve Him.
- He is the Spirit of power, love, and discipline (2 Timothy 1:7) so that which is barren, fruitless, disorderly, confused, and uncontrolled grieves Him.
- He is the Spirit of life (Romans 8:2) so anything that smells of indifference, half-heartedness, spiritual dullness, and deadness grieves Him.
- He is the Spirit of glory (1 Peter 4:14) so anything worldly, earthly, or fleshly grieves Him.
- He dwells within us to enable us "to grow up into him in all things" (Ephesians 4:15); to bring us daily into conformity to Christ's image (2 Corinthians 3:18) until we have reached "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13) so anything in us which hinders Him in carrying out this purpose grieves Him.

To knowingly and willfully permit anything to remain in our lives which is contrary to the Holy Spirit means that we love that sin more than we love Him. I realize what a strong statement that is, but refusing to obey God's revealed will constitutes a rejection of Him in favor of His enemy. Such unfaithfulness grieves the very heart of God and calls for personal revival.

Questions for Self-Examination

(From *The Revival We Need* by J. Oswald Smith)

- 1) Have we forgiven everyone? Is there any malice, spite, hatred or enmity in our hearts? Do we cherish grudges; and have we refused to be reconciled?
- 2) Do we get angry? Are there any uprisings within? Is it true that we still lose our tempers? Does wrath hold us at times in its grip?

- 3) Is there any feeling of jealousy? When another is preferred before us does it make us envious and uncomfortable? Do we get jealous of those who can pray, speak and do things better than we can?
- 4) Do we get impatient and irritated? Do little things vex and annoy, or, are we sweet, calm and unruffled under all circumstances?
- 5) Are we offended easily? When people fail to notice us and pass by without speaking does it hurt? If others are made much of and we are neglected how do we feel about it?
- 6) Is there any pride in our hearts? Are we puffed up, do we think a great deal of our own position and attainments?
- 7) Have we been dishonest? Is our business open and above reproach? Do we give a yard for a yard and a pound for a pound? Are we honest in our statements. or do we exaggerate and thus convey false impressions?
- 8) Have we been gossiping about people? Do we slander the character of others? Are we talebearers and busybodies?
- 9) Do we criticize unlovingly, harshly, severely? Are we always finding fault and looking for the flaws in others?
- 10) Do we rob God? Have we stolen time that belongs to Him? Has our money been withheld?
- 11) Are we worldly? Do we love the glitter, the pomp, and the show of this life?
- 12) Have we stolen? Do we take little things that do not belong to us?
- 13) Do we harbor a spirit of bitterness towards others? Is there hatred in our hearts?
- 14) Are our lives filled with lightness and frivolity? Is our conduct unseemly? Would the world by our actions consider us on its side?
- 15) Have we wronged any one and failed to make restitution? Or, has the spirit of Zacchaeus possessed us? Have we restored the many little things that God has shown us?
- 16) Are we worried or anxious? Do we fail to trust God for our temporal and spiritual needs? Are we continually crossing bridges before we come to them?
- 17) Are we guilty of lustful thoughts? Do we allow our minds to harbor impure and unholy imaginations?

- 18) Are we true in our statements, or do we exaggerate and thus convey false impressions?
- 19) Are we guilty of the sin of unbelief? In spite of all He has done for us, do we still refuse to believe the promises of His Word?
- 20) Have we committed the sin of prayerlessness? Are we intercessors? Do we pray? How much time are we spending on our knees? Have we crowded prayer out of our lives?
- 21) Are we neglecting God's Word? How many chapters do we read each day? Are we Bible students?
- 22) Have we failed to confess Christ openly? Are we ashamed of Jesus? Do we keep our mouths closed when we are surrounded by worldly people? Are we witnessing daily?
- 23) Are we burdened for the salvation of souls? Have we a love for the lost? Is there any compassion in our hearts for those who are perishing?

Intercession

Seeking God in prayer, on behalf of yourself and others, is vital for genuine revival. Again, effective intercession is the product of a humble heart in right fellowship with God. It also depends upon doing everything possible to be at peace with fellow believers. You are only accountable for your obedience - not the response of others.

The teachings of Scripture guide us regarding how to pray in preparation for revival. After preaching, Jesus often said, "He who has ears, let them hear." He wasn't questioning their attention to what He taught but wanted His listeners to apply what they heard in their daily lives. Isn't that what followers of Christ still need today? Pray that those who already profess faith in Christ would have ears to hear during the revival services. We often think of revivals as purely an evangelistic tool for the lost, but the word "revival" literally means "to revitalize" and "to resume". Christians need times of restoration and renewal to stimulate faith that has grown lukewarm or cold. Paul's intercession for the church in Ephesus is a powerful and practical guide in praying for revival within the church (Ephesians 1:15-23).

We should also pray for those outside of Christ to have ears to hear. *"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ"* (Romans 10:17). I strongly encourage you to make a list of nonbelievers and to pray over it daily, then look for an opportunity to personally invite them to attend. It's more than okay if several people invite the same person!

In interceding for the lost:

- Pray that their hearts soften to receive the Word of God.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would open their blind eyes to the love of Jesus.
- Pray that they would be broken by their sinfulness.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would continually draw them to Christ.

A model prayer for the lost:

God, I know that You truly love _____ and gave Your only Son, Jesus, for _____. I pray that _____ would place their trust in You so that _____ would not die and spend eternity in Hell forever. Thank You for hearing my prayer and for sending Your only Son to rescue _____.

Conclusion

I am very grateful to have the opportunity to serve your church. My prayer is that you would prepare with a sense of expectation that God can and will do a mighty work in your church and in your community. Please know that I am praying specifically for your body of believers and for these services.