

2023 PRAYER FOCUS: SALT & LIGHT

“Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven!”

Matthew 5:16

As we look ahead to the 2023 National Conference that will be held in Orlando, Florida, we embrace the theme of “Salt & Light.” These are certainly not new concepts to us, but like many truths in Scripture, we need to be reminded periodically of their importance. These are simple instructions, and yet they have Kingdom impact.

Let your light shine — don’t allow anything to dim your light — things like ungodly attitudes or unkind words or unconfessed sin or absence of good works. Our light is to shine as bright as possible so that others may see the works the Lord empowers us to do and we may glorify our heavenly Father. The light is not about us. The good works are not about us nor are they for our glory but for the glory of the Father.

Just as the moon has no light in itself but reflects the light of the sun, so we have no light in us except the light of Christ who shines in us and through us. He is the light of the world. Yet as He dwells in us, we become the light to the world.

To be the salt of the earth is to have a part in preserving the earth from moral putrescence and decay and preventing or curing the growth of that corruption that prevails in the world, and of seasoning men’s minds with wisdom and grace. Disciples of Jesus, through the communication of the divine truth, are used of God to oppose the spiritual corruption and powerlessness of men. It is the privilege of every Christ-follower to be the salt that preserves the earth from corruption and seasons it — to freshen and sweeten it.

JANUARY PRAYER FOCUS — INTIMACY WITH THE FATHER

The brightness of our light is directly related to the depth of intimacy with our heavenly Father. If our light grows a bit dim, it is likely because we have moved away from the Father. The same is true of our saltiness. It soon loses its savor if we move away from intimacy with Jesus and we no longer bring refreshing to those around us.

1. **FROM THE BEGINNING:** “And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden” (Genesis 3:8).

PRAYER: Father, we praise you that from the beginning it has been your desire that all of creation live in harmony with you and with one another. We confess that we have sometimes allowed our own ambitions and carnal desires to get in the way of our relationship with you. We pray that you will draw us ever closer and closer to you throughout this year so that our light might shine brighter, and our salt have greater impact. Be glorified in us.

2. **GOD'S PRESENCE:** "Then he said to Him, 'If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here'" (Exodus 33:15).

PRAYER: Lord, we praise you for the many assurances of your presence. We praise you that when we are walking in obedience, we can be assured that you are with us. Forgive us for the times we have launched out on our own to accomplish what we thought were good things even though they weren't the things you commanded us to do. We pray for your constant presence with us so that our light shines brighter and brighter. We pray that by your presence we will become saltier so we might be used of you to bring healing and to speak truth into the lives of those who need to know you.

3. **GOD'S POWER:** "He brought you out of Egypt with His Presence, with His mighty power" (Deuteronomy 4:37b).

PRAYER: We praise you, Lord, for the many demonstrations of your power throughout Scripture. It was your presence that brought Israel out of Egypt. It was your presence in the early Church that empowered them to change the world. We praise you that it was your presence that brought us from a place of darkness into fellowship with you. Remind us of those intimate moments when you spoke truth into our lives. Forgive us for the times we have forgotten that it is your presence that delivers, leads and empowers. We pray for your manifest presence in our lives so that others may see the light of Christ in us and so that you can use us to bring a different flavor to our communities — a flavor of sweetness and blessing instead of contentions and cursing.

4. **THE JOY OF THE LORD:** "... In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (Psalm 16:11).

PRAYER: Lord, we praise you that the closer we walk with you, the greater is our joy. Forgive us for thinking we could find joy in the pursuit of recognition or position or power or possessions. Forgive us for thinking that our greatest joy was in our "ministry accomplishments." Reminds us that we can do nothing apart from you. We pray that in your presence we will experience the fulness of joy so that our ministry will flow from that well and our relationships will demonstrate joy of the Lord so that our light will shine brighter and our salt will be saltier.

5. **HOLY SPIRIT:** "Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me" (Psalm 51:11).

PRAYER: Father, we praise you that you sent your Holy Spirit to be with us and to be in us. We praise you that the Spirit teaches us how to pray and equips us to be salt and light. Forgive us for trying to be salt and light without you. We pray that the light in us will be displayed as fruit of your Spirit so that your Church can truly be salt and light in the community. We pray for the leading of the Spirit so that we can speak truth into the community so that the community might know you.

6. **THE EARTH SHAKES:** "The earth shook; the heavens also dropped rain at the presence of God; Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel" (Psalm 68:8).

PRAYER: Lord, we praise you that there is power in your presence. Just as you have power to shake the earth and to send rain, you have power to change lives. Forgive us for resisting the changes that you desire to make in our lives — changes that are essential for us to be salt and light. We pray for the power of your presence in our lives. Remove anything that would dim our light and hinder us from speaking the truth with credibility.

7. **THANKSGIVING:** “Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms” (Psalm 95:2).
PRAYER: Father, we praise you that the closer we draw to you, the more our hearts are filled with thanksgiving. Your presence fills us with joy. Forgive us when we drift from you and our sense of gratitude wanes. We pray you will continue to draw us close to you so that our ministry will flow from hearts of gratitude that will shine a light into the lives of those who are discouraged. We pray that as the salt of the earth, our gratitude will speak to those who continually grumble because they have not experienced your grace.
8. **THE FATHER’S HOUSE:** “He who works deceit shall not dwell within my house; He who tells lies shall not continue in my presence” (Psalm 101:7).
PRAYER: Lord, we praise you for the privilege of dwelling in your presence. We praise you that we can have this kind of intimate relationship with you. We confess that many have squandered the privilege. We pray you will cleanse your church of any deceit or of masks that cover sinful behavior. Revive your Church. Call us to a deeper intimacy with you so that our light will attract people to you and expose darkness. Call us to a deeper intimacy with you so that we will know the truth and be better suited to speak the truth to others.
9. **THE UPRIGHT:** “Surely the righteous shall give thanks to Your name; The upright shall dwell in Your presence” (Psalm 140:13).
PRAYER: Father, we want to be those people — the righteous and the upright so that we are always dwelling in your presence and giving you praise. We pray that as we grow in intimacy with you, we will become more and more like you. We pray that all through the year your presence will continue to transform us so that we can effectively serve as salt and light in our communities.
10. **IDOLS FALL:** “Behold, the LORD rides on a swift cloud, and will come into Egypt; The idols of Egypt will totter at His presence, And the heart of Egypt will melt in its midst” (Isaiah 19:1).
PRAYER: Father, we praise you that in your presence all idols must fall. Reveal any idols we have erected in our lives. May your presence destroy those idols and any that exist in the life of our church. We pray too that your presence will move throughout the world and destroy the idols that have captured the imagination of people. We pray that you will shine through us to expose idols and share the truth of the Gospel so that the world will know you, the only true God.
11. **NATIONS TREMBLE:** “Oh, that You would rend the heavens! That You would come down! That the mountains might shake at Your presence! As fire burns brushwood, as fire causes water to boil — To make Your name known to Your adversaries, *That* the nations may tremble at Your presence!” (Isaiah 64:1-2).
PRAYER: We praise you, Lord, that you opened the heavens and came down — arriving in a manger in Bethlehem. They called your name Immanuel — GOD WITH US! Your presence changed the course of history. It is your presence that changed the course of our lives. You established the Church. Lord, as the prophet prayed that you would show yourself powerful in his day, we pray you will show yourself powerful in our time so that your name would be praised and so that the world would see you. We pray for the global expression of the Missionary Church that we might be salt and light so that nations may tremble at your presence and believe.

12. **OUR HOPE:** “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?” (1 Thessalonians 2:19).
PRAYER: Lord, we praise you that you work in and through us so that others can know you. With Paul, we can say that our hope and joy and crown of rejoicing are the thoughts of those we love being in your presence when Jesus comes. We pray that our love for you will continue to grow deep and remain deep so that we will not lose the joy of seeing others born into the Kingdom. Forgive us for being content with building institutions rather than disciples. May our light shine bright into the lives of others and may our words be flavored with salt so that those in our lives with know the truth.
13. **EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION:** “These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power” (2 Thessalonians 1:9).
PRAYER: Our relationship with you has given us a taste of the peace and joy we will experience in your presence for all of eternity. The greatest punishment of all would be to spend an eternity apart from your presence. We pray that you will break our hearts for those who have never experienced your presence and who are destined to miss your presence for all of eternity. Forgive us for becoming complacent toward the lost. Use us as salt and light to bring an awakening to the lost around us so that they are never separated from you.
14. **KEEP US:** “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen” (Jude 24-25).
PRAYER: Father, we praise you that you are able to keep us from stumbling and more than that, you are able to complete a work in us that you began when we first believed. We confess that we sometimes lose sight of the fact that you are still working on us. We praise you for those who have been salt and light in our lives — people you have used to speak truth into our lives. We pray you will trim the wick in our lives that we might shine brighter.
15. **HE DWELLS WITH US:** “And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God’” (Revelation 21:3).
PRAYER: We rejoice in the assurance that your tabernacle is with men. You dwell with us. We are your temple — the place of worship. We praise you that you choose to be with us. Make us fit vessels. Fill our hearts with songs of praise and worship. In those quiet moments when no one else is around, remind us that you are there, and help us rest in you. Forgive us when we have become dull of hearing your voice. Give us ears to hear your slightest whisper so that we are reminded of your presence. Use us as salt and light to share with others the incredible privilege of your indwelling presence.
16. **HE MEETS WITH US:** “...The Lord God of the Hebrews has met with us...” (Exodus 3:18).
PRAYER: Lord, we are reminded that these are the words given to Moses when he was in your presence at the burning bush. Having been with you gave him authority to speak to Pharaoh and demand the release of the Israelites. It is in your presence that we receive authority to speak. Forgive us for speaking on our own. As we dwell in your presence, we pray that our witness for you will have authority because we have been with you. We pray that those around us will be able to tell that we have been with you. As disciples of Jesus, help us walk in your presence so that we can minister with confidence and an authority that only comes from you.

17. **GOD IS WITH US:** “Take counsel together, but it will come to nothing; Speak the word, but it will not stand, For God is with us” (Isaiah 8:10).

PRAYER: We praise you, Lord, that the counsel of kings can never thwart your plans. Father, we know there is an enemy who constantly plots to defeat followers of Jesus and who seeks to divert the ministry of the Church. We take great comfort in the assurance that you are with us. Help us to be faithful to seek your presence in the midst of the battles. Guard our hearts from allowing the culture to shape what we believe about you. We pray that you will enable us to be salt and light so that you can use us to shape the culture.

18. **GOD'S PRESENCE:** “Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you” (Zechariah 8:23b).

PRAYER: We praise you, Lord, that your presence makes a distinct difference in the lives of believers. We pray that our lives will so clearly reflect your presence that others will want to walk with us. We pray that as they walk with us, they will encounter you and that you will be with them as you are with us. Forgive us when we have walked in such a way that others do not recognize your presence. We pray that our light will shine so bright that the world will see our good works and glorify you. We pray the power of the truth in our lives will cause others to desire to know you.

19. **FEAR NOT:** “Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10).

PRAYER: Lord, as we navigate this new year, we thank you for the assurance of your strength and help. We praise you that you uphold us with your righteous right hand. We praise you that because you are with us, we need not fear whatever life may bring. You are our strength and help. Forgive us for the times we have been fearful because we have taken our eyes off of you. We pray that as you uphold us, our strength will be a witness to those who are dismayed and troubled. We pray our strength will shine a light into the lives of the fearful so that they might trust in you.

20. **THE COMMAND:** “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen” (Matthew 28:19-20).

PRAYER: Father, we praise you for the promise that you will be with us to the end of the age. We know that in order for us to be effective in obeying the command to make disciples we must remain in a close relationship with you. We also know that we cannot fulfill the command on our own. We need one another. Forgive us when we have tried to make disciples in our own strength. We pray for your continued presence so that we might be salt and light in the world that others might know you.

21. **HE IS THE VINE:** “I am the vine; you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

PRAYER: Father, we praise you for this unique relationship. It is only as we abide in you and you abide in us that we can bear fruit. As we abide in you, nourish us; give us strength; prune us when necessary. Forgive us when we fail to abide. Restore us so that the light of Christ will shine through as we abide in Him.

22. **THAT THEY MAY BE ONE:** “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that You sent Me” (John 17:20-21).
- PRAYER:** Lord, remind us that there is so much at stake regarding our relationship with you. We echo your prayer and ask that we would be one with you in order that the world might believe. Forgive us for the broken relationships we have made no attempt to repair. Forgive us for our part in destroying relationships. We pray for unity in the body of Christ. We pray for those who will believe because we have been salt and light. Bless them. Help us welcome them into the Body of Christ.
23. **MY ONE DESIRE:** “One thing I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple” (Psalm 27:4).
- PRAYER:** Lord, just a few weeks ago we celebrated the birth of Jesus. Shepherds were captivated by a heavenly host and excited to go and see the Christ child — to look on His beauty. Wise men traveled from distant lands because they, too, desired to see this King. We pray that you will put within each of us this longing to see you and to dwell in your presence. It is here that we are renewed and empowered to share the story. It is in dwelling in your presence that our love for others in the body of Christ grows and our commitment to the great commandment increases. We pray that as we are captivated afresh by the story of Jesus, it will serve as light to our community so that they will be drawn to your presence.
24. **CHOOSING THE BETTER THING:** “And Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her’” (Luke 10:41-42).
- PRAYER:** Lord, we praise you that you welcome our acts of devotion and worship. We praise you that you delight in having us in your presence. Forgive us for filling our days and nights so full that we have little or no time to relax in your presence and enjoy your company. Thank you for the reminder that Mary chose your presence over busyness. May our hearts desire you more than anything else. We pray that our desire for your presence will speak to those who do not yet believe.
25. **DO YOU LOVE ME:** “So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?’” (John 21:15).
- PRAYER:** Father, we praise you that you care about our love for you. We praise you that you are not an impersonal God but that you are a God full of love and compassion. We confess that we love many things — good things. We love doing ministry. We love the Church. We love your Word. The real test of our intimacy with you is our response to the question, “Do you love me?” We pray that our love for you will grow throughout the year. We pray for those intimate conversations with you in which you ask us again about our love for you. We pray from that love relationship with you our light will grow brighter and we will become saltier so that you might use us to reach lost people.
26. **SEEK HIM:** “But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deuteronomy 4:29).
- PRAYER:** We praise you, Lord, that you are discoverable and approachable. You desire to be found. Remove any distractions or even impure motivations that would keep us from seeking

you with everything we are. We pray you will help us seek a deeper relationship with you daily so that we can see more clearly how to partner with others for the advancement of the Kingdom. We pray that as we seek you, our light will show the way to others so that they might find you.

27. **ZEAL:** "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts" (1 Kings 19:10a).

PRAYER: We praise you for men like Elijah and David and others who give us examples of men who had a zeal for you. We know that our zeal can take us in many directions. We can be zealous for personal advancement, zealous for personal gain, zealous for ministry, or zealous for any number of good causes. We pray that our first zeal will be for you. Give us a longing — a zeal for intimacy with you so that we know what is on your heart and how we can fulfill your mission. We pray that zeal will fuel our light and increase our saltiness so that others might be drawn to you.

28. **SEEK THE LORD:** "Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God" (1 Chronicles 22:19a).

PRAYER: We praise you for leaders like David who wanted his leaders to set their hearts to seek you. Father, David's instructions to his leaders are just as important for us today. As we focus on making disciples, remind us that the greatest challenge we can give to those we are walking with is to set their heart and soul to seek the Lord. Keep us from settling for giving disciples information about you instead of urging them to seek you and your presence. As disciples of Jesus, help us walk in your presence so that we can be salt and light to those around us.

29. **DESIRE FOR GOD:** "Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You" (Psalm 73:25).

PRAYER: We praise you that there is no one who can satisfy the longing of the soul besides you. Father, give us that singular desire — the desire for you, for your presence. We pray nothing on earth will ever overshadow our desire for you. We pray that our desire for your presence will serve as a light to others — leading them to trust you. We pray that our desire for you will give us a heart to speak into the lives of others that they, too, will put their trust in you.

30. **DENY SELF:** "Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me'" (Matthew 16:24).

PRAYER: Lord, following you means no distractions. We cannot take up your cross while carrying our own stuff. This is perhaps the greatest gesture of our desire to identify with you and to be in your presence. This level of intimacy with you means we have counted the cost and decided that you are more important than all other pursuits. We pray you will give us the strength and resolve to carry this cross so that we might know you more. We pray that from under the cross you give us to carry, a bright light will shine to others so that they desire to follow after you.

31. **HIS FERVENT DESIRE:** "Then He said to them, 'With *fervent* desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer'" (Luke 22:15).

PRAYER: We praise you that you desire to dine with us. Thank you for reminding us, Lord, that as much as we may desire deep fellowship with you, your desire for us is even greater. You have invited us to enter your presence and dine with you. We pray that throughout the year we will find ourselves dining in your presence. We pray that as we dine with you we will be able to share with others your great desire to dine with them. May our light show them the way to the table and our words encourage them to dine with you.