

2023 PRAYER FOCUS:

SALT AND LIGHT

Praise the Lord for those who have been salt and light in your life. Praise Him for those who shared the light of the Gospel with you when you were walking in darkness. Salt is sometimes used to draw out infections or to clear sinuses to help us breathe. Praise God for those who sprinkled salt in your conversations that brought healing or that brought the kind of correction that helped you breathe in the things of the Lord and exhale those things that were not of Him. Praise Him for those who have been sensitive to the Spirit's lead to know when to shine the light and when to sprinkle the salt.

Who are the people in your life who need to see their world with new light — who need to see their world through the lens of the cross and through the eyes of Jesus? Who are the people in your life who are anxious about ministry or about how to live this Christian life who need a word that will help them trust in Jesus and be able to take a deep breath? Who are those who are wounded, either by life's circumstances or by darts that have come because they were trying to serve Jesus. Pray that God will give you or someone the right time and words to be salt in their lives so that they can continue to mature in Him.

Are there believers who have become complacent who need to hear just the right word to nudge them to reengage in ministry? Remember, before trying to be salt and light for others, to ask the Lord to search your heart. Also, be ready to hear a word of correction, encouragement or instruction from another brother or sister in order that you might grow as a disciple of Jesus.

MAY PRAYER FOCUS — MAKING DISCIPLES

As you pray this month, praise the Lord that He has called you to follow Him and learn from Him – to be a disciple. Look for ways to grow as a Christ-follower and seek opportunities to disciple others. Look for others who will partner with you in making disciples.

“A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher” (Luke 6:40).

The goal of discipleship is to become more and more like Jesus and to lead others to also become more and more like Jesus – to continue multiply the number of people who are pursuing the life of Jesus.

1. **THE NEW BIRTH:** “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God’” (John 3:3).

PRAYER: Father, we praise you for new beginnings. We praise you that through the new birth we enter a new kingdom and you invite us into a life of deeper discovery of who you are and who you meant us to be. Forgive us for not being fully engaged in becoming more and more like

Jesus. We pray that you will remind us periodically of the road we once traveled so that we are even more motivated to pursue a kingdom lifestyle. Give us a hunger to know you more.

2. **CLEANSING:** “But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work” (2 Timothy 2:20-21).

PRAYER: Father, we praise you, not only for your saving grace but also your sanctifying, cleansing power. We are humbled by the reminder that you come to dwell in us. We praise you that you continue to work in us to make us holy disciples who live and talk more and more like Jesus. Forgive us for the “stuff” we have allowed into our lives that does not honor you. We ask that you cleanse us so that we are useful to you and prepared for every good work to which you call us. Fill us with your Spirit so that we might be ready to join others in making disciples of Jesus.

3. **FOR EQUIPPING:** “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 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 28:18-20).

PRAYER: Father, we praise you that we serve under your authority and have the assurance of your presence with us. We praise you for the privilege of being a part of what you are doing to advance the Kingdom. Forgive us for seasons of complacency and for denying your power to equip us. Give us the necessary boldness to go — to enter relationships and conversations that might initially be uncomfortable. Help us to be light to those who are walking in darkness and give us words of challenge and correction for those who are struggling in their journey with you.

4. **NEW LIFE:** “Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

PRAYER: Lord, we praise you that you have made us new. We praise you that you have shined your light into our lives and exposed our sins so that we could repent and surrender to you and be made new. Forgive us for the times we have avoided the light instead of seeking it so that your light continues to make us new. Remind us that making disciples is not about getting people to come to church or even to change behavior but to experience the life-changing power of Jesus. Equip us to walk with others that they might become new creations and begin a journey of becoming more and more like Jesus.

5. **DOERS OF THE WORD:** “At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did” (Acts 9:36).

PRAYER: Father, we praise you that Jesus modeled compassion — that He was full of good works. We praise you for the testimony of Dorcas — a follower of Jesus who modeled a Jesus lifestyle. We praise you that being disciples is not just about right belief but about right actions. Forgive us for the pride that kept us so focused on sound doctrine that it kept us from walking as Jesus walked. We pray that, as your disciples, we will not only be known for what we believe but also for living like Jesus. We pray that our lifestyle will serve as light to those around us.

6. **NEW COMMANDMENT:** “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35).
PRAYER: Father in heaven, we praise you that you created us for community — to be in relationship with other believers. Forgive us when we have not loved others as you commanded. Forgive us for allowing petty differences to divide us. Teach us to love other disciples. Show us those who need to be in community with others. Give us the grace to reach out to include them. We pray the love within the body of Christ will be such that the world will know that we are disciples of Jesus. We pray they will know it is because of Jesus that we love one another.
7. **ABIDING IN CHRIST:** “Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free’” (John 8:31-32).
PRAYER: Lord, we praise you for your life-giving Word! We praise you that your Word puts light and salt in our lives. Your Word exposes our sin and teaches us how to follow Jesus. It is also sometimes salt that heals, and corrects, and warns so that we might walk as disciples of Jesus. Forgive us for the times we have skimmed over those passages we did not like because they addressed an area that was out of sync with Jesus. Give us a greater hunger and love for your Word so that we can more faithfully walk as Jesus walked and be better equipped to be salt and light for others.
8. **MAKING DISCIPLES:** “As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ So he arose and followed Him” (Matthew 9:9).
PRAYER: Father, we praise you that you call people from all walks of life to follow you. We praise you that you call society’s outcasts to follow you. Forgive us for the times we have discriminated against someone because they didn’t measure up to our standards. Remind us that we may once have been a surprise follower of Jesus to others in the Christian community. Shine your light into our lives — into those places where we wrongfully judge. We truly desire to be salt and light, but we need you to continue to mold us into your image.
9. **FISHERS OF MEN:** “Then He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ They immediately left *their* nets and followed Him” (Matthew 4:19-20).
PRAYER: Lord Jesus, we praise you for the day you said to us, “Follow me.” We praise you for the privilege of walking with you. We praise you for the privilege of being salt and light in a dark and hurting world. We acknowledge the seasons of discouragement when it seems we are making no difference — times when we have fished all night (or longer) and caught no fish. Show us where to shine your light and sprinkle your salt so that others might see and experience new birth and the healing that comes from knowing you.
10. **NO PHARISEES:** “‘Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves’” (Matthew 23:15).
PRAYER: Father, we praise you that we have the privilege of being a part of seeing the lives of others transformed. We praise you that you are transforming us. Keep us from being like the Pharisees. Make us authentic disciples of Jesus so that others will truly follow you. Guard our hearts and minds from ever thinking we are better than those around us. Help us teach others to walk as Jesus walked (1 John 2:6). Help us focus more on relationship than on rules.

11. **TEACH OTHERS:** “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2).

PRAYER: Lord, we praise you for those you put in our lives who not only taught your Word but who also modeled a lifestyle of obedience to you. We praise you for the generations who have gone before us who have faithfully passed the Word on to us. Forgive us for those times when we have not modeled obedience. Renew our resolve to invest in the next generation. Open our eyes and hearts to those with whom you want us to entrust the Gospel. Teach us to walk in obedience so they not only hear the words of Scripture but see it lived in everyday life.

12. **REFLECTING JESUS:** “A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher” (Luke 6:40).

PRAYER: Lord, you have called us, not just to be followers, but to be like you. That is almost too great to comprehend. We praise you for the hope that we can be more and more like you. Forgive us for settling for anything less than becoming like you. Remind us that the way we follow you will impact the way others follow you. Remind us that we are inviting them to a life with you and to a goal of becoming like you. Help us to be good teachers.

13. **TRANSFORMED:** “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:1-2).

PRAYER: We praise you, Lord, that you take worldly, ungodly people and transform them so that they can demonstrate what is your perfect will. Forgive us for our reluctance to present ourselves fully to you. Forgive us for those times we have resisted your transforming power and settled for looking more like the world around us. Lord, today, we present ourselves to you as fully as we know how so that we can be salt and light in our communities.

14. **THE GLORY OF CHRIST:** “This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him” (John 2:11).

PRAYER: We praise you, Lord, that you show your power and glory in different ways to different people. The disciples saw your glory when you turned water to wine, and they believed. We too have believed because we saw your glory in some fashion. Forgive us for the times we have wanted you to reveal yourself to us in the same way you made yourself known to others. Use us to be salt and light in our communities so that others will see your glory and believe in you. Keep us focused on you and not on methods so that they truly put their faith in you.

15. **FOLLOW JESUS:** “Then He said to *them* all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me’” (Luke 9:23).

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, we praise you for the invitation to follow you. Remind us that in denying self we gain a relationship with you. We acknowledge that we have not always followed well, and we have struggled with denying ourselves, and yet your invitation is clear. Remind us that this is a daily commitment. Remind us that your journey was to the cross and a cruel death and that talking up our cross involves dying to self. As we disciple others, help us communicate not only the blessing but also the cost of discipleship.

16. **TEACH THE WORD:** “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

PRAYER: Father, we praise you for your Word. We praise you that it provides the correction and instruction we need to live righteously. Forgive us for those times we have side-stepped portions of your Word because they made us uncomfortable. Give us insight and grace to understand your Word and to follow it. We pray your Word will become so much a part of us that we will truly be salt and light and that others who follow will not falter.

17. **SONS:** “To Timothy my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord (1 Timothy 1:2).

PRAYER: Father, we praise you for the people who invested time and prayer in us as Paul invested in Timothy. Paul refers to him in other places as co-worker, son, brother, servant and one who has proved himself. We praise you for Paul’s example of developing Timothy as a disciple. Forgive us for missed opportunities to invest in others. Forgive us for being too busy or failing to see the potential in the next generation. Give us the passion to see the next generation become spiritual sons, co-workers, brothers and sisters, servants and people who have proved themselves as true followers and disciple-makers. We pray you will put Timothys in our lives.

18. **ALL OR NOTHING:** “For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?” (Luke 9:24-25).

PRAYER: Father, we praise you for the clarity of your Word. We praise you that you are the giver of life. We praise you that in losing ourselves in you, we find life. You call us to a life of full surrender. We confess that there have been times when we have wanted to compromise and take an easier way. Forgive us. We want to be lost in you. As we disciple others, show us how to teach them that this “all or nothing” life is worth the investment. We pray those who follow us will see our abandonment to Christ.

19. **IMITATORS OF GOD:** “Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma” (Ephesians 5:1-2).

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, we praise you for the love you have shown to us. You have called us to imitate this love for others. Forgive us for the many times we have not reflected that love. As earthly children want to imitate the behaviors of their parents, increase our desire to imitate our Heavenly Father. We pray that your love for us will so transform our view of others that we will love them as you love them. We pray you will give us the strength and grace to imitate you so that others will also follow you. We pray that we will never walk in such a way that others are turned away from you.

20. **KNOW THE COST:** “Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, ‘If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple’” (Luke 14:25-26).

PRAYER: We praise you, Lord, that the expectations you have of disciples are very clear. These are hard sayings, and we want to gloss over them; but you are clear that our love for you must exceed our love for anyone else. Forgive us for putting anything or anyone ahead of you in our lives. We affirm today that you are first in our lives. As we invite others to walk with you, we

pray that they will understand the cost and that they will also grasp the blessings. Give us strength to follow even when the choices are costly.

21. **IMITATE ME:** “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1).

PRAYER: We praise you, Lord Jesus, that you have given us a life worth imitating. We praise you for the grace, mercy, and compassion that you have modeled for us. We acknowledge that we have not always provided a good model for others. Paul’s instructions reflect a confidence in His relationship with you. Teach us to be more faithful imitators of you so that we can say to others “Imitate me as I imitate Christ.” We pray you will continue to expose those places where our lives are not worth imitating.

22. **FAITHFUL STEWARDS:** “Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God” (1 Corinthians 4:1).

PRAYER: We praise you, Lord, that you have entrusted us as your servants and stewards of the mysteries of God. We are humbled that you have charged us with sharing the mysteries of the Gospel with others. Keep us from treating that charge lightly. Move us to faithfully study your Word, and then equip us to share those incredible mysteries with those you have put in our lives. We pray you will continually give us insights into those mysteries so that we might grow in faith and encourage others with your Word.

23. **EXAMINE YOURSELVES:** “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? —unless indeed you are disqualified” (2 Corinthians 13:5).

PRAYER: Father, we praise you for assurance of Christ in us. Remind us to continually examine ourselves to determine if we are truly walking as Jesus walked. Give us the courage to ask those we disciple to examine themselves against your Word. We pray you will put ministry partners in our lives who will continue to challenge us to examine ourselves. Lead us to make disciples who are people of integrity who are unafraid to examine their own hearts.

24. **BEAR FRUIT:** “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples” (John 15:8).

PRAYER: We praise you for the privilege of abiding in you. We praise you that from you flows life. We know that it is only as we abide in you that we can truly bear fruit. Prune us. Remove anything that would prevent fruitfulness. We pray that our abiding in you will not just produce some fruit but much fruit. As we disciple others, and teach them to abide in you, we pray they will begin to see fruit. Keep us from focusing more on methodology than on abiding. We can’t produce fruit apart from you. Teach us to truly abide so that you can produce much fruit.

25. **JOSHUAS:** “And the LORD said to Moses: ‘Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation and inaugurate him in their sight’” (Numbers 27:18-19).

PRAYER: We praise you, Lord, for the privilege of partnering with you in raising up another generation of disciples. Forgive us for those times when we have lived as though this faith was only for us. Open our eyes to see the Joshuas you want to walk with us that they may become disciple-makers. Show us how to affirm them as disciple-makers. Teach us to bless them and empower them for this work to which you have called us. Give us the courage and wisdom to release ministry to them.

26. **RESTORATION:** “But again he [Peter] denied with an oath, ‘I do not know the Man!’” (Matthew 26:72).

PRAYER: Father, we praise you for grace. Like Peter, we too have denied you. We praise you that even though Peter denied you, you restored him. Thank you for your forgiveness and restoration in our lives. We pray that your forgiveness and restoration will result in humility. Give us grace and humility as we disciple others, knowing they will stumble and struggle at times. Teach us how to walk with them to see them restored.

27. **TEACH TO PRAY:** “Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, *that* one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples’” (Luke 11:1).

PRAYER: Father, we praise you for the privilege of prayer. We praise you that you invite us to come. We also join our voices with those first disciples and ask that you teach us to pray. We are novices. Teach us to pray Kingdom prayers. We pray that those we disciple will learn to pray. Teach us how to teach others to pray. Help us to model dependence on you through a lifestyle of prayer.

28. **PASS IT ON:** “Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes” (Matthew 14:19).

PRAYER: Lord, we thank you for this picture of discipleship. You gave bread to your disciples, who gave to others so that they could pass it on to others. Forgive us for keeping the Bread to ourselves. We pray you will continue to give to us what others need. Continue to equip us to be distributors of the Bread of Life so that others might follow you. Forgive us for thinking we have too little or know too little. As you multiplied the loaves and fish, you can multiply the impact of our witness.

29. **MULTIPLICATION:** “Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7).

PRAYER: We praise you, Lord, for the New Testament account of the multiplication of disciples. We praise you that you have multiplied disciples for generations. Forgive us for being content with addition. Multiply disciples in our day, in our town, through our church, and through us. We pray for an awakening in this country so that millions come to faith in you.

30. **THE UNLIKELY:** “Now it happened, as He was dining in Levi’s house, that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him” (Mark 2:15).

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, we praise you that you are willing to hang out with sinners. Thank you for coming to us when our lives were still messed up. Forgive us for the times we have pulled away from “sinners” because they made us uncomfortable, or we were afraid of what other believers might think. Give us courage to engage those who are not yet followers of Jesus and imagine what great disciples they might be. Show us those people who are ready to follow. Give us discernment to know when and how to engage those who are unbelievers or even anti-Christianity.

31. **SENT:** “So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you’” (John 20:21).

PRAYER: We praise you, Lord, that you have given us a clear assignment – a purpose. As you came to make disciples, you send us to do the same. Forgive us for any reluctance we may have and for any sense of inadequacy. Forgive us for filling our lives so full that we have no time for these important relationships. Remind us that we go under your authority and your power and have the assurance of your presence. Remind us, too, that being sent as Jesus was sent meant a life of full obedience but also a life of incredible fruitfulness.