

MAY 2022 PRAYER FOCUS:

ONE MISSION – ONE TEAM

We live in a culture that is not just divided; it is fragmented. When I think of a divided culture, I think of two sides pulling in opposite directions. Our culture is fragmented. We have factions pulling in multiple direction. That division and even the fragmentation has penetrated the church. There is polarization over political affiliations; cultural issues; climate change; and how we should respond to the LGBT community. Each of those fragments can become a mission in themselves.

With that level of fragmentation, how can we become one team? Instead of spending time defending our position on those various cultural issues, the Lord has called us to focus on ONE MISSION – the mission of multiplying disciples. When we begin to focus on the one mission, He will unite hearts and make us one.

The first step toward one mission is to be so fully devoted to Christ that we allow Him to set our agendas and order our steps. We allow Him to focus our attention and what really matters to Him – making disciples who make disciples. As we focus on that one mission, we will find ourselves drawn to others who share that mission. We will begin to look for ways to partner with others to see that mission fulfilled. In doing so, we become ONE TEAM with ONE MISSION serving under one LORD.

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.

“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.’” – Matthew 28:18-20

The following Scriptures and prayers remind us of the command of Jesus to make disciples of all nations. It is not the responsibility of my church but my responsibility to make disciples. They are also a challenge to live as disciples 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 the new birth, for the privilege of being born again – not of the flesh but of the Spirit. We praise you that you give us a new beginning with purpose. Forgive

us for being distracted by the things of this earth. Renew our focus on the matters of the Kingdom of God. Equip us to share the good news with those who are not yet disciples so that they can experience a new life and become followers of Jesus

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 praise you that you continue to work in us to make us holy disciples. 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. We pray that you will teach us that we may teach others. Help us be disciple-makers. Show us who you want us to invest in. Lead us to those ministry partners with whom we can labor for the Kingdom.

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: We praise you, Lord, that you have the power to make us new. We praise you for the new life we have in you. We praise you that you change us from the inside. Forgive us for the times we have tried to hold on to some of the “old things.” 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. Open doors for us to build relationships with those who do not yet know you so that we might share the Good News.

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: We praise you, Lord, that you have not just called us to “be” something, but you have called us to action. You have called us to be doers of your Word. Forgive us for settling for just believing the right things. We pray that, as your disciples, we will not only be known for what we believe but also for the good that we do. We pray that our good works will bring people to glorify our heavenly Father so that they will also seek to follow you.

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.

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 is true and that it is in knowing your Word we are free. Forgive us for the little time we have spent studying your Word. We can’t possibly abide in something we do not know well. If we are to make disciples, we need first to walk as disciples. Teach us to abide in your Word so that we might teach others to abide in you. Put people in our lives who will continue to challenge us to abide in you.

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 – all professions and backgrounds – to follow you. To many, Matthew would not have seemed like a good candidate for discipleship and yet you called him. Forgive us for considering some unworthy to be disciples. Open our eyes that we might see as you see. Lead us to invite the unlikely to become your disciples.

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 confess we often focused on the invitation and not the promise. We thought it was just about following you to be “saved.” From the beginning, you intended for us to be fishers of men. Help us not lose sight of the promise that you would make us fishers of men. Teach us how to fish. Give us fishing partners.

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: We praise you, Lord, for the teachers, pastors, parents, and friends who taught us your Word. We praise you for their godly examples. Remind us to thank them for their part in pointing us to you. Forgive us for only being a sponge and soaking it all in and not following Paul's instructions to Timothy to entrust those truths to faithful men who could in turn teach others. You have entrusted the message and mission to us. Open our eyes to see those people with whom you want us to entrust the Gospel so that they can teach another generation. Show us how to walk with them so that they develop the faith and courage to invest in others.

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 that 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. Remind us that we need others to labor with us.

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. We pray that you will indeed transform us so that you can use us to introduce others to your mercy and grace.

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. As we make disciples, keep us from insisting that their experience be just like ours. Reveal yourself to these disciples in ways that will cause them to believe 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. 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 the times we have tried to live out our faith in our own wisdom. Give us a greater love for your Word. Increase our understanding and our commitment to obedience. Help us instill a hunger for the Word in the lives of those we disciple.
17. SONS: "To Timothy my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord (I 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. We pray you will put Timothys in our lives. Give us the privilege of seeing them become spiritual sons, co-workers, brothers and sisters, servants and people who have proved themselves as true followers and disciple-makers.
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.
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 that our commitment to make disciples will be fueled by our love for you and our love for others.
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 but that they will also grasp the blessings.

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."

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.

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.

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.

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.

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. GIVE US GRACE 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. HELP US TO MODEL DEPENDENCE ON YOU THROUGH A COMMITMENT TO 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.

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.

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.

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.

