

# Eight Days of Consecration

By Claude V. King

## The Purpose of Consecration

God has always known that His people would have a tendency to depart from Him. He prescribed seven days a year for sacred (or solemn) assemblies where His people would remember His mercies and blessings, renew their covenant commitments to Him, confess and repent of all known sin, and get right with God. But God is holy and we dare not rush into His presence without preparing ourselves. I've written *Consecrate the People* to help individuals and churches prepare themselves for a time of sacred assembly.

God wanted the people to prepare themselves to meet with Him in Joel's day; so He commanded, "Consecrate the assembly" (Joel 2:16, NIV). We see a similar command in Exodus 19 when God explained to Moses that He was coming down on Mount Sinai to give the Ten Commandments: "The LORD said to Moses, 'Go to the people and consecrate them'" (Exodus 19:10, NIV). Consecrating God's people is an important action for a spiritual leader to undertake when preparing them to meet with God or to renew their covenant relationship with Him.

In both Joel and Exodus, the Hebrew word for *consecrate* means *to make clean; to purify; to sanctify or to set apart from the common, profane, or unholy* (p. 5).

If we desire to have power with God in prayer and witness, we need to get right with Him.

## 1. A Tool to Help You Consecrate the People

*Consecrate the People* by Claude V. King (included in this download package) is an eight-day devotional guide designed to help Christian individuals, churches, and groups prepare themselves for a sacred assembly before their holy God. Though it can be used at other times, it is designed so a pastor can preach on a Sunday to issue a call to a sacred assembly. The booklet helps members prepare (consecrate) themselves during the week. Then the congregation gathers the following Sunday to renew their covenant commitments to Jesus Christ in a time of sacred assembly. The booklet comes in 10-packs for mass distribution to members. (A 10-Pack is Item #005354150; \$4.95). Purchase at [LifeWay.com](http://LifeWay.com) or by calling (800) 458-2772.

Contents include:

- Day 1: Call a Sacred Assembly
- Day 2: Prepare Yourself
- Day 3: Return to Your First Love
- Day 4: Remove the Idols in Your Heart
- Day 5: Humble Yourself and Put Away Pride
- Day 6: Be Holy as God Is Holy
- Day 7: Restore Your Broken Relationships
- Day 8: Renew Your Covenant with God

The copyright notice permits denominations and other Christian ministries to reproduce and/or translate the booklet for personal or church use.

## **2. Order or Download Other Tools to Guide Your Preparation and Preaching**

If you sense a need for additional helps for preaching and teaching on revival or sacred assembly, order them. Many resources are available for free on the internet. LifeWay recently released a revised and expanded line of resources titled, *Fresh Encounter: God's Pattern for Spiritual Awakening*. Henry and Richard Blackaby and I wrote this book to guide you in understanding revival and leading God's people in returning to Him.

For a tool to help your church prepare for and celebrate the Lord's Supper as a sacred assembly, see *Come to the Lord's Table*. A sample of this book is included in this download package.

## **3. Study and Apply the Message in *Consecrate the People* for Yourself**

Work through the eight daily devotionals in this booklet. Pray about how God would have you guide your people in their return to Him. Both godly sorrow and grief over sin (2 Corinthians 7:10) and God's kindnesses (Romans 2:4) can lead people to repentance. I've incorporated both in the devotionals, but you may choose to emphasize one over the other in your call to sacred assembly.

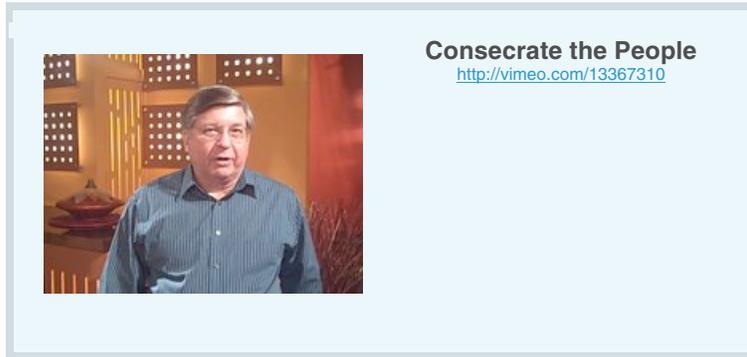
## **4. Determine Your Church Schedule for the Eight Days**

On the Awakening America website, you will find a number of different suggestions for prayer and sacred assembly during the week. Decide what you want to ask your people to do during the week. Print a schedule for the week on the back of one the card templates provided and distribute them with the booklets. Clear your church calendar of conflicting events so people can keep their focus on the consecration and sacred assembly emphasis. Consider:

- a. Sunday: Call a Sacred Assembly Message
- b. Labor Day Family Sacred Assembly. Encourage families to build a special time of sharing into their Labor Day festivities - picnic, outing, dinner, campfire, etc. Include such things as:
  - Recall God's blessings.
  - Remember how he saved you, share your personal testimonies.
  - Recall the valleys He has brought you through, times of protection, healing, deliverance from trouble.
  - Recall special family times: how Mom and Dad met, special vacations, special events.
  - Take time to thank Him for all these blessings, His provisions, and for your work.
  - Pray for those who do not have jobs or who are going through severe financial trials.
- c. Mid-week Sacred Assembly: "The Joy of the Lord Is Your Strength." Based on the example of the revival under Ezra and Nehemiah (Nehemiah 8-9) guide people to share with one another the ways God has demonstrated His love and faithfulness to them through the years. This should be a joyous sacred assembly.
- d. Corporate Prayer Experiences. See my suggestions for Corporate Prayer Experiences, included in this document. Consider providing a variety of prayer experiences to engage your people in prayer for one another, for your community, for our nation and the world. Consider using the prayerwalking training video to prepare your people for prayerwalking your community prior to and following the Noon prayer for Cry Out America on September 11.
- e. Cry Out America Noon Prayer Meeting
- f. Sunday Sacred Assembly: Renewing Our Covenant Commitments to Jesus Christ.

### 5. Call a Sacred Assembly

On the first Sunday of the emphasis, issue a call to a sacred assembly. “Call to a Sacred Assembly” will give you a background for sacred assemblies and the urgency for God’s people to return to Him. You may also want to study the article on [Solemn Assembly](#) by Richard Owen Roberts. “God’s Pattern for Revival” will help you understand the process for the emphasis. You may want to use or just be inspired by the following invitation to consecration:



### 6. Cry Out America!

Challenge your people to gather for prayer at your local county courthouse or state capitol at Noon on 9/11. If your county does not have a coordinator, enlist one from your church. Gather with other believers and let’s “Cry Out America!”

### 7. Renew Your Covenant Commitments to Jesus Christ

Develop a message and the service around Romans 12:1 and the Scriptures listed on page 16. Prepare an invitation for people to respond by surrendering their lives anew to be living sacrifices to Jesus Christ their Lord. Consider songs like: “Take My Life and Let It Be” by Frances Havergal, “I’ll Live for Him” by Ralph Hudson, “Draw Me Nearer” by Frances Crosby, or “Is Your All on the Altar” by Elisha Hoffman. See the song lyrics in this document.

### 8. Share Your Testimony and Insights with Others

As God works in lives and in your church or community, declare the wonderful deeds of the Lord. Let’s help each other learn how to lead God’s people in their return to Him.

# SOUND THE ALARM CALL A SACRED ASSEMBLY

By Claude V. King  
Coauthor of *Experiencing God*

The following call was written and distributed on March 17, 2003, as the United States stood on the verge of war in Iraq. The need for a Sacred Assembly has not diminished over the past years. As you read, allow God to speak to you about the need for us to return to Him.

© 2003 by Claude V. King. Permission is granted to distribute the following unchanged and in its entirety for non-commercial purposes only. It may be translated and adapted for use in churches and with other Christian groups. Major excerpts have been taken from *Come to the Lord's Table: A Sacred Assembly for the Church* by Claude King, (Murfreesboro, TN: Final Command Resources).

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible: New International Version, NIV* Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

Scriptures marked KJV are from the King James Version of the Bible. Underlining, italics, and bold face type in Scripture quotations are used by the author for emphasis and are not a part of the original Scripture text.

## Spiritual Readiness

Brothers and Sisters, we are at a critical time in our nation's history when God could very easily release His judgment on our nation for our sin and wickedness. Consider the following thoughts.

### **1. God has established a limit to the amount of sin He will tolerate before He brings judgment and wrath in response:<sup>1</sup>**

They always heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come upon them at last (1 Thess. 2:16).

“The sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure” (Gen. 15:16).

“Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers!” (Matt. 23:32).

According to Scripture, God has established a legal limit to sin. In one sense, God has a bowl to hold our sin that has a given measure. We cannot know exactly what that measure or limit is, nor do we know how close we may be to crossing that limit. When the sin of a nation or a people reaches that limit, God's wrath takes the place of His mercy. The only remedy is for a people to confess (agree with God about) their sin, and repent—turn from their sinful ways to God and His ways. When God forgives sin, He removes it from our account and keeps us at a distance from the limit to our sins. As God's people, we need to stand before God, confess *our* sins, turn from *our* wicked ways, and pray for mercy. The spiritual healing of the United States is waiting on the repentance of God's people:

“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chron. 7:14).

**2. The measure of judgment we use is the measure of judgment we will receive.** In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said:

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye” (Matt 7:1-5).

Essentially Jesus was not saying, “Don’t judge at all.” Rather, He was saying, “Be careful how you judge.” We must be spiritually right with God if we are to be effective in removing “the speck” from another’s eye. As our nation prepares to execute a measure of judgment on evil in our world, we need to be prepared to undergo the same scrutiny by a God who is holy, pure, and righteous. *Are the people of the United States guilty of sins that would justify God’s bringing judgment on us as a nation?* God’s examination is not based on what we believe is right and wrong, but what God has established as right and wrong. America is not spiritually prepared to withstand His holy examination. God says, “I will deal with them according to their conduct, and by their own standards I will judge them. Then they will know that I am the Lord” (Ezek. 7:27).

**3. Only those who are right with God are prepared for a time of God’s judgment.** Here is the word God sent to Ezekiel:

“If a country sins against me by being unfaithful and I stretch out my hand against it to cut off its food supply and send famine upon it and kill its men and their animals, even if these three men—Noah, Daniel and Job—were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness, declares the Sovereign LORD” (Ezek. 14:13-14).

We must be careful that we don’t trust in deceptive words that permit us to hold on to our sin and still try to claim the righteousness of Christ as our cover. Israel did something similar in the days of Jeremiah. They trusted in the fact that they were God’s people and had the Temple of the Lord in their midst. God said:

“Look, you are trusting in deceptive words that are worthless. Will you steal and murder, commit adultery and perjury, burn incense to Baal and follow other gods you have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house, which bears my Name, and say, ‘We are safe’ — safe to do all these detestable things? Has this house, which bears my Name, become a den of robbers to you? But I have been watching! declares the LORD” (Jer. 7:8-11).

When God’s people had made His house a “den of robbers,” He brought His judgment on the nation at the hands of a Babylonian king in 586/7 BC. When Jesus wept over Jerusalem centuries later, He prophesied the destruction that would come at the hands of a Roman army in AD 70. He brought the same accusation against God’s people in His day: ““My house will be a house of prayer,” but you have made it a “den of robbers.””

Essentially, a den of robbers is where God's people live lives of sin all week long and then come before the Lord and say, "We're safe. We're God's people." A "den of robbers" in our day would be a church where God's people live and act like the rest of the lost world all week long and then come to church on Sunday and say, "I'm okay. I'm going to heaven when I die. I prayed the prayer. I joined the church." As we examine the lives of church members, I fear that most of our churches look more like a den of robbers than a house of prayer.

God's people must confess and repent (turn away) from our sin, if we are to receive the cleansing Christ has provided through His own shed blood. Only through repentance can we stand before God clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

**4. As God's people, we have a choice: We can either see the pending danger and return to the Lord before He brings judgment, or we can wait until after the disasters to cry out for mercy and repent.**

Throughout Scripture from beginning to end, God's people have had a tendency to depart from Him. Consequently, God prescribed regular times for His people to renew their covenant relationship with Him (Lev. 23). These times for renewing a right relationship with God were called sacred assemblies (or solemn assemblies, holy convocations). In the Old Testament we see two approaches to the use of sacred assemblies. One comes before the disaster and the other comes after the disaster.

**Before.** When King Jehoshaphat saw a vast army coming against the nation, he called for a fast and a time to seek help from the Lord (2 Chron. 20:1-30). God responded and saved the people. When Jonah preached a message of coming destruction, a wicked and pagan city and king repented and God withheld the disaster (Jonah 3). When King Josiah heard God's Word read, he tore his robes in anguish realizing how much his nation had offended God by violating His commands. When Josiah humbled himself before the Lord and then guided the people to repent, God spared that generation from destruction (2 Chron. 34:14-35:19).

**After.** In 586/7 BC, God used a wicked king of Babylon to execute judgment on Jerusalem and Judah, and Nebuchadnezzar carried God's people into exile in Babylon for 70 years. After experiencing such great judgment, Ezra and Nehemiah guided the people to stand before God in repentance so God would heal and restore the land (Neh. 8-10) — and God did!

**Call a Sacred Assembly**

In the Book of Joel, God's people had experienced great destruction from swarms of locusts. As a spiritual leader, Joel knew the remedy was to call God's people to return to Him in a sacred assembly. When the people responded, God heard, forgave, and restored the land (Joel 1-3). Brothers and Sisters, now is the time to call God's people in the United States and in our churches to repentance.

"Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?'" (Ezek. 33:11).

Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand (Joel 2:1).

Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the LORD your God, and cry out to the LORD.

Alas for that day! For the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty (Joel 1:14-15).

“Even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.”

Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing— grain offerings and drink offerings for the LORD your God.

Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children, those nursing at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber. Let the priests, who minister before the LORD, weep between the temple porch and the altar. Let them say, “Spare your people, O LORD. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’” (Joel 2:13-17).

If you sense, as I do, that God’s people must cry out to the Lord at a time such as this and seek His mercies, call the people you lead to a time of sacred or solemn assembly— a holy convocation. If you sense a need for help in guiding God’s people to repent in a time of crisis like we face, I’ve prepared the following suggestions to assist you. Most of the following is abbreviated and adapted from my book *Come to the Lord’s Table: A Sacred Assembly for the Church*. This book is a three or four week study to guide God’s people in returning to Him in preparation for Communion or the Lord’s Supper. But we may not have that much time to return to the Lord. Consequently, I’m providing the following suggestions to assist you in guiding an emergency sacred assembly to prepare the church for the crisis we are facing.

### **Background for Sacred Assemblies**

In 1989 Richard Owen Roberts of Wheaton, Illinois, introduced me and other leaders in my denomination to the biblical pattern for corporate repentance—the solemn assembly (or “sacred” assembly in the *New International Version*).<sup>1</sup> We began to study sacred assemblies in Scripture to see their connections to revival. Sacred assemblies were occasions for God’s people collectively to worship Him, to repent of personal and corporate sin, to remember His special blessings on them, and to anticipate future blessings. The prescribed sacred assemblies (or holy convocations) for Israel included the Sabbath (Lev. 23:3) and seven other days of sacred assembly: the first (Passover) and seventh days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:4-8), the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost, Lev. 23:15-21), the Feast of Trumpets (Lev. 23:23-25), the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:26-32), and the first and eighth days of the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:33-36).

Sacred assemblies were times for God’s people to confess and repent of their sins. They were times to renew the covenant relationship with the Lord and return to Him in faithful love and obedience. They were times for worship and sacrifice, feasting and fasting. Even with these regular opportunities to renew fellowship with God, His people tended to depart from Him and from obedience to His commands. Spiritual leaders knew that the sacred assembly was a time for corporate repentance in the face of God’s righteous judgments (see Joel 1–2). A number of national revivals in the Old Testament occurred in response to a sacred assembly.

The term “sacred assembly” is not used in the New Testament. However, Jesus and His disciples celebrated the Last Supper on one of God’s prescribed sacred assemblies—the Feast of Passover. The first disciples were celebrating a sacred assembly when the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost. The church of our day also needs regular opportunities for individuals and the church to renew their relationships with the Lord—to remember and renew the New Covenant relationship they have with Him. In light of the current crisis, we need to bring God’s people together for an emergency sacred assembly to hurry back to the Lord.

**Examples.** The following are some examples of sacred assemblies in Scripture:

- Jacob assembles his family, Genesis 35:1-15
- Moses consecrates Israel, Exodus 19:10-19
- Joshua seeks the Lord following defeat at Ai, Joshua 7
- Samuel guides Israel to return to the Lord, 1 Samuel 7:2-13
- King Solomon and Israel celebrate Tabernacles and dedicate the temple, 2 Chronicles 5–7
- King Asa guides an assembly, 2 Chronicles 15:1-15
- King Jehoshaphat calls a fast, 2 Chronicles 20:1-30
- King Hezekiah celebrates the Passover, 2 Chronicles 30
- King Josiah renews the Covenant, 2 Chronicles 34:14-33
- Revival under Ezra and Nehemiah, Nehemiah 8–10
- Nineveh repents after the message from Jonah, Jonah 3

**Multiple Leaders.** Multiple leaders were characteristic in Old Testament revivals. I’d recommend you enlist other staff, elders, deacons, or other spiritually sensitive persons to assist you in planning and guiding the sacred assembly. If this is all new to you, you will find yourself walking by faith—and that is a good way to walk. Trust the Lord to guide you.

**Who should come?** In the Old Testament sacred assemblies they invited all who could understand. Older children, youth, and adults would certainly be included. Even younger children can benefit by seeing adults taking their faith and relationships with Christ and His church seriously. Call people to come for an open-ended period of time. You may want to hire some childcare workers for babies and preschoolers so every adult member can participate in the service. Or you may provide space in the back of your meeting room for parents to care for children and still be able to hear and participate.

**Fasting.** Fasting was commonly a part of the call to an emergency sacred assembly. The focus was perhaps three-fold: (1) deny self to seek the Lord, (2) don’t waste time eating when more important matters must be dealt with, and (3) emphasize the seriousness of the time. Encourage fasting the day of the sacred assembly for those who are physically able to fast.

**Pray.** Seek the Lord's directions as you plan for and conduct a sacred assembly. Enlist intercessors to pray for you as you prepare.

### **Service Elements**

Scripture does not provide a specific agenda for a sacred assembly, so ask the Lord to guide you in preparing for this service. Below I've suggested some elements that might be part of a sacred assembly. Customize a service for your church or group — you have great latitude in what the service is like. Include the elements you sense would be most helpful. Choose from the following elements to design your service or plan your own activities as God guides you.

**Music and Singing:** If you use music at all, sing hymns or provide special music related to God's holiness, God's provision for our sin, forgiveness and cleansing, repentance and so forth.

**Scripture Reading:** Read Scriptures related to the same topics. Include others that may call for members to deal seriously with specific sins. Consider responsive readings of Scriptures also.

**Message:** If you choose to preach, use a brief message on the nature and importance of repentance or on the place of a sacred assembly in returning to the Lord. Keep in mind that the focus of this service is on response to the Lord not just teaching and learning. Use the message to call for response and reserve most of your time for responding to the Lord.

**Guided Responses.** I've prepared some overhead transparency masters for you to use as needed during the sacred assembly. You have permission to reformat them for a PowerPoint presentation. The final page may be reproduced for people to take home and use to consecrate their home. If you use these guides, take time to guide responses through prayer or interaction with others after each segment. Knowledge is not the goal; responding to the Lord is the goal. Use them all, or select those that you know will be most helpful for your people.

**Prayer:** Provide for a variety of prayer experiences interspersed with Scripture reading or times for public response.

Provide soft music for a time of silent prayer and meditation.

Break into smaller groups of 4 to 8 (preferably members of the same sex). Invite members in each group to ask the question, "How may we pray for your spiritual needs?" Then have one or two in the group pray for each request.

Provide opportunity for people to come and share a need or confess a sin and pray with a pastor, a minister, elder, deacon, ministry team member, or intercessor. If appropriate, share some of these needs with the congregation and invite some members to come and surround the person with prayer.

**Public Confession:** The general guideline for public confession of sin is to confess the sin as broadly as the offense. Reserve public confession for sin that has become publicly known or sin that is against the church or many of the members. I recommend that the pastor personally screen each person's desire for public confession and make sure it is appropriate. Those receiving people for prayer should agree on a procedure to follow regarding public confession. Following a public confession of sin, guide the congregation to express their forgiveness, invite the person to pray aloud and ask God for forgiveness, invite some members to gather around him or her and pray for mercy and victory, or in some other way respond to the request for forgiveness.

**Reconciling Relationships:** Review the list of sins that may cause an offense. Then encourage members to go to each other to ask forgiveness or to be reconciled over offenses God has identified. Provide soft music. Ask those who are not sensing a need to reconcile to pray for their fellow church members who are needing to forgive and be reconciled. Don't rush this time. You may want to share guidelines similar to these:

If you are the offender, acknowledge your sin and say, "Please forgive me." Don't give excuses or try to justify your actions. Don't imply or make accusations about wrong on the other person's part. That is their responsibility.

If you sense a broken relationship exists and don't know what is wrong, say, "I sense that there may be a broken relationship between us, but I'm not sure I know why. Help me understand what I need to do to be reconciled with you."

If you miss getting to reconcile with anyone, contact him or her after the service.

**Testimonies:** Invite individual testimonies about ways God has been working in lives during the service including experience of God's love and grace, a spiritual breakthrough, a victory over a besetting sin, reconciled relationships, confession of newfound faith in Christ, and so forth.

**Invitation to Receive Christ:** Often in history, people have been converted during a time of sacred assembly. With the uncertainty in our land and the threats being made, some may sense a new or special urgency to reconcile with God. Extend an invitation for those who want to place their faith in Christ and provide a place with counselors who can assist those who respond.

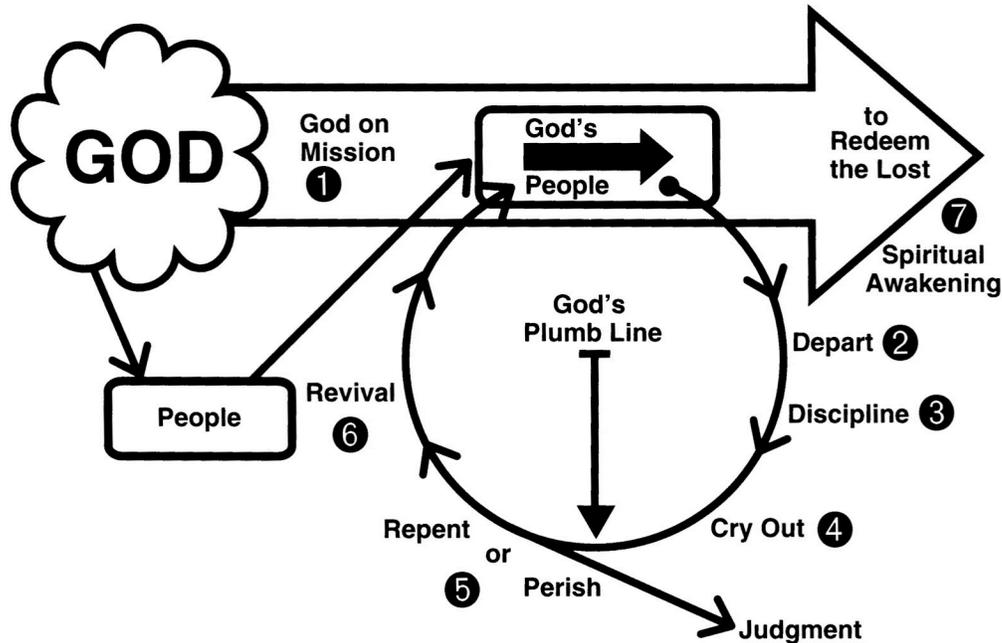
**Open-ended Closing:** As you close the service, invite members to continue responding to the Lord as long as needed. They may want to remain for prayer, continue seeking to reconcile relationships, or to seek out prayer with one of the leaders.

I'm indebted to Richard Owen Roberts for the concept of the legal limits of sin. See his pamphlet on the topic.

For additional helps on Solemn Assemblies see the message by Richard Owen Roberts.

## God's Pattern for Revival and Spiritual Awakening

The following excerpt is adapted from *Fresh Encounter: God's Pattern for Revival and Spiritual Awakening* by Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 1993), 22-23. Used by Permission.



**Phase 1: God is on mission to redeem a lost world. He calls a people into a relationship with Himself, and He accomplishes His work through them.**

God has called the churches to be His people. He wants to work through them to proclaim Christ and bring lost men, women, and children to faith in Him.

**Phase 2: God's people tend to depart from Him turning to substitutes for His presence, His purposes, and His ways.**

Churches tend to depart from the Lord and begin to accept substitutes for God, His purposes, and His ways. For instance some churches made a subtle shift from depending on God to depending on a key leader or a program for "successful church growth." That shift can be fatal.

**Phase 3: God disciplines His people because of His love for them.**

God knows that churches can only experience fullness of life in a right relationship with Him. Because of His love, He disciplines wayward Christians and churches to bring them back to Himself. He also disciplines because His plan for world redemption slows down when His people have departed.

**Phase 4: God's people cry out to Him for help.**

God's discipline becomes more and more intense until His people cry out to Him. He is patient and longsuffering. Like the Father of the Prodigal Son, God waits eagerly for His children to return to Him.

**Phase 5: God calls His people to repent and return to Him or perish.**

God clearly defines the requirements for repentance. He doesn't give options. Churches can return to Him or suffer the consequences of their sin. He sets before His people a choice of life and death. When a church continues to refuse to repent, it is no longer of any use for the Kingdom. Like the church at Ephesus, God may remove the church from usefulness or existence.

**Phase 6: God revives His repentant people by restoring them to a right relationship with Himself.**

God stands ready to receive His people when they return. He cleanses and forgives. He gives a new heart to serve Him and fullness of the Holy Spirit to empower them for His work. He restores the joy of being in the family of God.

**Phase 7. God exalts His Son Jesus in His people and draws the lost to saving faith in Him.**

When God has a people rightly related to Him, He is able to display His glory to a watching world. When a people experience the mighty power of God bringing wholeness to their lives, others will notice and want a similar experience of life. Spiritual awakening becomes a natural by-product of a revived people.

# Invitation to a Fresh Encounter with God

By Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King

The following excerpt is adapted from *Fresh Encounter: God's Pattern for Revival and Spiritual Awakening* by Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 1993), 8-10. Used by Permission.

## God Is at Work

Many Christians and churches seem to be in great despair over the spiritual and moral condition of our nation and our churches. Conditions are desperate. Don't be discouraged, however. Rejoice! Never have I seen a deeper or more profound hunger among the people of God for a spiritual revival than I see right now. God is at work stirring the hearts of His people to pray and seek His face.

Every mighty movement of God has been preceded by terrible conditions, a heart cry for revival, and a sweeping movement in united, concerted, extraordinary prayer. Without a doubt, that is the order of the day. Leaders across America and in various denominations believe we are in the midst of the greatest movement of prayer ever in human history. Nothing equals what is happening now in united prayer worldwide, in cities, among pastors, in churches, on college campuses, in homes, and in individual lives. When God finally gets His people to praying like this, revival is on the way.

## God's Ideal: A Love Relationship

God created you for an intimate and personal love relationship with Himself. Jesus said the most important commandment of God is this:

“Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30, NIV).

More than anything, God wants you to love Him. This is God's ideal for your life--a love relationship with Him. Those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ's saving grace and have surrendered their lives fully to Him as Lord have new life in Him. Jesus said, “This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (John 17:3). You come to know God when you experience the love relationship with Him for which you were created.

Another aspect of the greatest commandment in Mark 12:30 is that it is addressed to God's people, not to individuals. The full dimension of God's love is experienced within the context of God's people. God has fashioned His people into a living body of Christ--the church. His ideal is for His people to love Him with their total being. In that love relationship, God will reveal Himself and His mighty power. In a love relationship with God, God's people will have a similar quality of love for one another revealing to the world that they are Jesus' disciples.

## Sin Brings Discipline

Even if you have a love relationship with God, because of sin, you and your church will tend to depart from that relationship. You break the intimate fellowship with God. Churches also can sin breaking fellowship with God. But God is love. He continues to love His people even when they rebel against His lordship--His rule over them.

When you move out of fellowship and away from the love relationship with God, He disciplines you. Because of His holiness and His justice, God must punish sin and rebellion. God disciplines individuals, families, and churches so they will come back to the love relationship that brings abundant life.

“My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son” (Hebrews 12:6, NIV).

He disciplines His children because of His love. God knows that the best life possible for you is found only in an intimate love relationship with Him. God’s rebuke or discipline is His invitation for you to return to Him. Are you experiencing the discipline of the Lord? Is your church experiencing the rebuke or punishment of God? God only disciplines those He loves. The discipline is God’s invitation for you to return to Him.

### **God’s Invitation: Return to Your First Love**

In His first letter to the churches in Revelation, the risen Christ extended an invitation most of us need to hear and respond to. The letter was to the church in Ephesus. Jesus commended their hard work, their perseverance, and their intolerance of evil. Yet they had a fatal flaw.

“Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God” (Revelation 2:4-7, NIV).

The primary reason we need revival is that we have forsaken our love relationship with God - our first love. God’s invitation is for us to repent and return to our first love. His word to the church at Ephesus indicates that failure to repent is fatal. He said he would remove their lampstand (representative of the church) if they refused to return to their first love for Him. To the extent that we fail to return to our first love, we will miss out on the abundant life He intends for His people.

### **God’s Plumb Line**

In Scripture God uses the idea of a plumb line to describe what He is doing with His people. God built His people like a straight wall--true to plumb. When we depart from Him, one of our problems is that we do not realize how far we have departed. We often don’t understand how seriously we have strayed from Him. We may not realize how close we are to complete collapse or destruction. In order to help His people God holds a plumb line beside His people so they can see how far they have departed.

The Leaning Tower of Pisa is a physical example of our problem. A bell tower was built in Pisa, Italy. The tower is 177 feet tall and made from solid marble. The ground beneath the tower was not solid enough to support the weight of the tower, and it began to sink on one side. Now the tower leans over 17 feet off center. The walls are straight, but the whole building is leaning. The problem is with the foundation. If the foundation were firm and in line the walls would be in line as well. If we had a huge crane that could pull the walls to plumb again, the problem would still exist just as soon as we let the tower loose. Without a solid foundation the tower will fall right back to its crooked state.

In a similar way your spiritual life has its foundation in a love relationship with God. The way you live your life, your practice of your faith, your obedience to God's commands can be represented by the tower. If your life is out of line with God's plan, that is only the visible symptom of a root problem. The problem is in your love relationship. Jesus said, "He who does not love me will not obey my teaching" (John 14:24, NIV) but "if anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching" (John 14:23, NIV).

God's Word reveals God Himself, His purposes, and His ways. The Scriptures serve as His plumb line for us. When we can see that we have departed from His ideals, His purposes, His ways, and His commands, we can know clearly that we have a problem. The problem is that we have left our love relationship with Him. You cannot love God correctly and not obey Him. It is spiritually impossible. If you are not obeying Him, it is because you do not love Him.

### **Revival**

Genuine revival does not come simply by reforming your behavior. Just changing your ways is not sufficient. Unless your love relationship with God is repaired, you will eventually go back to your old ways of living. The only lasting motivation for obedience to God is a sound love relationship with Him. If your love relationship with God is right, your life will line up with His standards.

Do you see the connection? A right love relationship with God is the requirement of genuine revival. Correct behavior comes because of the love relationship. To reform behavior without a change in the relationship with God is only temporary and superficial. Revival requires a change of heart.

Revival means to restore or renew life. Revival is for God's people who need a fresh encounter, a fresh love relationship with Him. Revival is God putting the plumb line of His Word right down the middle of His people. He calls us to repent and return to a holy love relationship with Himself. When we repent and return to Him, He turns our hearts back to Himself. He forgives. He cleanses. He restores life. This is revival. He gives renewed life. He is our life.

When your love relationship is right, your obedience and faithfulness will follow. Jesus said, "If you love me, you will obey what I command" (John 14:15, NIV). Repentance and revival are not just a reform of behavior. Revival has not taken place unless a change of character has occurred, not unless a change of heart has taken place. When your love for the Lord compels you to obey Him, then revival has occurred.

### **Spiritual Awakening**

When people turn to Christ for salvation in large numbers, spiritual awakening is taking place. Spiritual awakening of the lost to saving faith in Christ is a by-product of the revival of God's people. During the following six weeks together we will examine seven phases in God's pattern for revival and spiritual awakening. They are described on the inside back cover of this book.

God has a plan to redeem the world, and He has chosen a people through whom He will work to carry out that plan. When God's people sin and leave the right relationship to Him, He disciplines us. When we cry out to Him and repent, He revives His people, exalts His Son Jesus, and brings healing in the land. Here is the promise of God for revival of His people and spiritual awakening in the land:

“When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:13-14, NIV).

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

The healing of our nation is waiting on the repentance of God’s people. For the sake of God’s glory, because of His Love, to honor His Son Jesus in His body--the church, for the sake of our children and relatives, for the sake of our neighbors and friends, for the healing of our nation . . .

Let us, as God’s chosen people:

- humble ourselves
- pray
- cry out to Him and seek His face
- turn from our wicked ways
- and fall deeply in love with Jesus again!

[View and purchase the revised \*Fresh Encounter\* resources by Henry and Richard Blackaby and Claude King on LifeWay.com.](#)

## Corporate Prayer Suggestions

By Claude V. King

The following testimony comes from the Forward to Andrew Murray's book *The Prayer-Life* (1913) regarding Pentecost Prayer Meetings.

I wish to add one word more, in regard to "the Pentecostal prayer-meetings" held throughout our Church [Dutch Reform Church of South Africa]. These have had a very interesting and important place in our work. At the time of the great Revival in America and Ireland in 1858 and following years, some of our elder ministers issued a circular urging the Churches to pray that God might visit us too. In 1860 the revival broke out in various parishes. On April, 1861, there was very deep interest shown in the Paarl, in one of our oldest congregations. During the week preceding Whitsunday the minister, who ordinarily preached only once on a Sunday, announced that in the afternoon there would be a public prayer-meeting in the Church. The occasion was one of extraordinary interest, and many hearts were deeply touched. As one result the minister suggested that in future the ten days between Ascension and Whitsunday should be observed by daily prayer-meetings. This took place the following year. The blessing then received was such that all the neighbouring congregations took up the suggestion, and now for fifty years the ten days of prayer have been observed throughout the whole Church. Each year notes were issued as subjects of addresses and prayer, and the result has been that throughout our whole Church Christians have been educated in the knowledge of what God's Word teaches regarding the Holy Spirit, and have been stirred to seek and to yield themselves to His blessed leading. These ten days have often proved the occasion for special effort with the unconverted, and of partial revival. And they have been the means of untold blessing in leading ministers and people to recognize the place that the Holy Spirit ought to have of the Godhead in the heart of the believer, in the dealing with souls, and in consecration to the service of the Kingdom.

There is still very much indeed lacking of the full knowledge and power of the Holy Spirit, but we feel that we cannot be sufficiently grateful to God for what He has done through His leading us to dedicate these days to special prayer for the movings of His Holy Spirit.

I have written this with the thought that there may be some who will be glad to know of it, and in their sphere to unite in the observance.

During the eight days of consecration, plan for some corporate prayer experiences. Provide specific suggestions for a variety of prayer emphases during the week or for each day. Where appropriate incorporate a brief message and music, only don't substitute them for an extended time for prayer each day. Prayer should dominate your time together. The following are some suggestions for your consideration.

- *Concert of Prayer*—Members in small groups (of three or four persons) throughout the room are guided to pray about a variety of topics by the concert of prayer director. The director gives instructions and a topic for prayer. Following a season of prayer a new topic is presented for prayer.
- *Cottage Prayer Meetings*—Members gather in private homes or apartments and use conversational prayer to present their requests to the Lord and surround them with intercession.
- *Focused Prayer Groups*—Identify several topics for prayer and enlist a leader for each topic. Ask each leader to prepare a banner or sign to identify his or her topic. Invite members to move to the topic of choice and join others in praying for that topic. Members could stay focused on one topic for the evening or rotate to two or three during the evening. Consider using the prayer topics presented in “Heart & Soul Prayer Guide.”
- *Congregational Praying*—Members gather in one large group for prayer. One member at a time prays as the congregation listens and joins in agreement.
- *Small Group Praying*—The congregation is divided into small groups of six or eight persons. These use conversational prayer to focus on the prayer emphasis of the evening and/or on requests offered by those in the group.
- *“How may we pray for you?” Praying*—In small groups (four to eight people depending on the time available) ask one person at a time “How may we pray for you?” After hearing the request, let one or more people pray for that person. Then ask a second person for their prayer request and pray for him or her. Continue until each person has been prayed for by the group.
- *Topical Prepared Praying*—In advance develop a list of topics of concern and assign each topic to a different person who will then lead the group in a corporate prayer for that topic. These could include prayers of confession and repentance.
- *Prayerwalking*—Members in groups of two or three walk and pray “on site with insight” in their neighborhoods or areas of the community of special burden or interest (or Prayer Driving—same focus in a car, van, or bus). For a 23-minute downloadable video to train people to use prayerwalking to take prayer to the streets of your city go to: <http://tinyurl.com/prayerwalking>

- *Prayer Triplets*—Ask members to group themselves into triplets (groups of three). Lead members to identify people in their circles of influence who do not have a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. Take turns identifying a person who needs Christ and then praying together for the person's salvation. These triplets may want to enter into a short- or long-term covenant to pray for these lost friends, coworkers, family members, and relatives. Triplets can gather periodically to pray or use a conference call weekly to pray together.
- *Lighthouse Movement Praying*—Families meet in their respective homes to join in praying for their neighbors (five neighbors to the left, five to the right, and ten across the street). Launch Lighthouse praying and follow the pattern of pray, care, and share.
- *Prayer Vigil*—(or Watchnight) Gather a group to spend the night in prayer. Using other prayer ideas described here, schedule a variety of prayer emphases throughout the night.
- *Watchman Praying*—Enlist members to agree to pray for one hour (probably at home) during the Watchman Prayer Emphasis. Depending on the size of your congregation decide to pray around the clock for one day (24 hours), a weekend (3@24 or 72 hours), or for all eight days (8@24 or 192 hours). Watchmen may sign up for one hour or for the same hour of each day during the emphasis. Provide a prayer guide to help direct the hour of praying in conjunction with the Christ Awakening themes. Provide a printout of watchmen with a contact phone number for each. Ask each watchman to call the person on the list who has agreed to pray the next hour to make sure they are up and on the watch. An hour could be taken for prayer by an individual or by a couple, a family, a class, or a cell group who will agree to meet and pray at the designated time.
- *Invitational Prayer*—Persons come forward to request prayer for specific needs. The leader invites other members to circle around this person (couple or family) and join in intercessory prayers for the request. This especially may be needed for those who are struggling with gaining victory over some sin area.
- *Prayer Ministry Line*—Intercessors, ministers, and/or other church leaders stand in a line facing the congregation and make themselves available to pray with those who desire prayer. Individuals, couples, or families may approach a prayer minister at the front for prayer. This approach can be combined with the invitational prayer approach to give opportunity for either public or private requests for prayer to be made.

# Consecrate the People - Song Lyrics

All of the following lyrics are in Public Domain.

## Take My Life and Let It Be

Frances R. Havergal, 1874

1. Take my life and let it be  
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;  
Take my hands and let them move  
At the impulse of Thy love.
2. Take my feet and let them be  
Swift and beautiful for Thee;  
Take my voice and let me sing,  
Always, only for my King.
3. Take my lips and let them be  
Filled with messages from Thee;  
Take my silver and my gold,  
Not a mite would I withhold.
4. Take my moments and my days,  
Let them flow in endless praise;  
Take my intellect and use  
Every pow'r as Thou shalt choose.
5. Take my will and make it Thine,  
It shall be no longer mine;  
Take my heart, it is Thine own,  
It shall be Thy royal throne.
6. Take my love, my Lord, I pour  
At Thy feet its treasure store;  
Take myself and I will be  
Ever, only, all for Thee.

# I'll Live for Him

[Ralph E. Hudson](#), 1882

1. My life, my love, I give to Thee,  
Thou Lamb of God who died for me;  
Oh, may I ever faithful be,  
My Savior and my God!

Refrain:

I'll live for Him who died for me,  
How happy then my life shall be!  
I'll live for Him who died for me,  
My Savior and my God!

2. I now believe Thou dost receive,  
For Thou hast died that I might live;  
And now henceforth I'll trust to Thee,  
My Savior and my God!
3. Oh, Thou who died on Calvary,  
To save my soul and make me free;  
I'll **consecrate** my life to Thee,  
My Savior and my God!

# Draw Me Nearer (Crosby)

[Frances J. Crosby](#), *pub.* 1875

1. I am Thine, O Lord, I have heard Thy voice,  
And it told Thy love to me;  
But I long to rise in the arms of faith  
And be closer drawn to Thee.

Refrain:

Draw me nearer, nearer blessed Lord,  
To the cross where Thou hast died;  
Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer blessed Lord,  
To Thy precious, bleeding side.

2. **Consecrate** me now to Thy service, Lord,  
By the pow'r of grace divine;  
Let my soul look up with a steadfast hope,  
And my will be lost in Thine.
3. Oh, the pure delight of a single hour  
That before Thy throne I spend,  
When I kneel in prayer, and with Thee, my God  
I commune as friend with friend!
4. There are depths of love that I cannot know  
Till I cross the narrow sea;  
There are heights of joy that I may not reach  
Till I rest in peace with Thee.

# Is Your All on the Altar?

[Elisha A. Hoffman](#), 1900

1. You have longed for sweet peace,  
And for faith to increase,  
And have earnestly, fervently prayed;  
But you cannot have rest,  
Or be perfectly blest,  
Until all on the altar is laid.

Refrain:

Is your all on the altar of sacrifice laid?  
Your heart does the Spirit control?  
You can only be blest,  
And have peace and sweet rest,  
As you yield Him your body and soul.

2. Would you walk with the Lord,  
In the light of His word,  
And have peace and contentment always?  
You must do His sweet will,  
To be free from all ill,  
On the altar your all you must lay.
3. Oh, we never can know  
What the Lord will bestow  
Of the blessings for which we have prayed,  
Till our body and soul  
He doth fully control,  
And our all on the altar is laid.
4. Who can tell all the love  
He will send from above,  
And how happy our hearts will be made;  
Of the fellowship sweet  
We shall share at His feet,  
When our all on the altar is laid.