

A Sunday Morning Prayer Service Combined with Communion.

As part of leading your church family in prayer for revival and spiritual awakening, you might consider integrating corporate prayer with preparing the hearts of the congregation to observe Communion in a Sunday morning service.

In this writing you will find a sermon manuscript which focuses on some key elements of revival preparation and serve well for readying God's people for observing Communion.

Combining a prayer service with Communion can make it easier to lead the church in other focused prayer times on Sunday mornings such as a prayer service devoted to praying for revival. A prayer service dedicated to preparing to observe Communion is a great way to implement or expand Sunday morning prayer services. When a service like this has been experienced by the congregation, the way has been paved to expand Sunday morning prayer emphases to elements of revival, spiritual awakening and other pressing needs in the life of the church or nation.

This approach should work well in churches where Sunday morning "prayer meetings" are new. Conducting a full blown prayer service on Sunday morning can be intimidating. I found this to be an effective procedure to introduce or enhance praying together as a church family in that setting and aid churches already accustomed to extended prayer sessions during Sunday morning services.

When a church seeks to engage our Lord in services like these, it shows they understand the power and significance of prayer. It also reveals how acutely aware they are of the need of the hour for the church to experience revival and the nation to be spiritually awakened.

Below is the manuscript of a message, (with notes added), to help lead a Sunday morning prayer service in conjunction with celebrating Communion.

When we did this, the service was exciting, thought provoking and a special time with our Lord. I hope this writing gives some fresh ideas on leading your church family in Sunday morning prayer services as part of revival preparedness and church revitalization.

Preparing Our Hearts for Revival and The Lord's Supper.

Note: Begin the service with a congregational song that speaks well to either prayer, revival, or preparation for observing Communion. It may be good to announce how today's service will be different in that singing and prayer will be intermixed throughout the service.

In this message, we will primarily focus on two verses of Scripture. They are Jeremiah 33:3 and 2 Chronicles 7:14. Following these, we will observe the Lord's Supper.

Jeremiah 33:3 **“Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.”**

2 Chronicles 7:14 **“If my people, which are called by my name, shall 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.”**

From Jeremiah 33:3, the words **“great and mighty things”** speak of **“things”** beyond our control or ability to do or change.

We all have needs that only God can meet. When it comes to revival and salvation of the unsaved, we are helpless without God touching lives.

When you consider God having said He will **“shew thee great and mighty things”** and then connect them with, **“which thou knowest not”** you have Him telling His people He will do things for us that WE CANNOT do. Things that reveal more about Him than we have ever seen. What God promises is an enlightening revelation of Himself and a fresh display of His power.

But these are not all. When you add, **“Call unto me, and I will answer thee,”** you have God promising to do supernatural things that we cannot do and have never seen and these are in response to our prayers, which He promises to hear, if we will “call” unto Him. This morning I invite you to join with me and some of our leaders as we seek to **“call”** out to our God for revival, which definitely includes forgiveness of our sins and spiritual healing of our nation.

The Bible clearly teaches that prayer is the catalyst for the release of God’s power. This sounds so simple, too simple to be true, but it is. When a church couples faithfulness in personal prayer of her members and corporate prayer of the church family, God does extraordinary and exciting things.

Prayer is one form of “communion” with God and the Lord’s Supper is another. Therefore, the two go perfectly and powerfully together.

The Lord’s Supper is a special service. It is special to us because it is special to Him. According to His instructions, we are to share this meal often enough to keep fresh in our minds and hearts the high price He paid for us through His sacrificial suffering and death. And added to these, this meal declares that He is soon coming again.

We see these in 1 Corinthians 11:23 **“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 After the *same* manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.”**

The bread calls our attention to remember our Lord in light of His suffering when He gave His body for us. And the cup calls our attention to remember our Lord in light of His blood which He shed to atone for our sins. Both the bread and the cup together make a symbolic meal that is all about communing with our Lord while remembering Him in His death until He comes again. So, let's commune with our Lord in Prayer and then at His table.

The focus of our prayer sessions is designed to focus on our Lord and His will for us. They also serve to prepare our hearts for this meal and for revival that we so badly need. So, in our praying, let's cry out to our Father for spiritual renewal (revival).

The first focus in prayer is:

1. Invite God's Manifest Presence.

Song: "Holy Spirit You are Welcome Here." (This can be done by the congregation or as a solo. A solo can be powerful during this type of service). Or choose another song or hymn that speaks to inviting God's presence. A hymn like "I Need Thee Every Hour" can serve well at this point. Encourage those who sing to sing the songs passionately to our Lord.

2 Chronicles 7:14 "If my people, which are called by my name, shall 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."

Psalm 16:11 "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore."

The word "**face**" in 2 Chr. 7:14 & the word "**presence**" in Ps. 16:11 were translated from the same Hebrew word. So, 2 Chronicles 7:14 could read, "**If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my presence, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.**"

Let's join our hearts in asking our Lord to bless us with a fresh sense of His presence in reviving ways. What the church needs today more than anything is for God to manifest His presence among His people in extraordinary ways.

Let's join together in a "sacred" moment of inviting our God to manifest His presence in ways that bring us to full repentance and surrender to Him.

Prayer of Inviting God's Presence in Reviving Ways.

Note: This can be pastor led or he can call on someone to lead who understands what it means for God to encounter His people in reviving ways. This person should be prepared to lead this part of the corporate prayer time.

When I led this service, I asked everyone to pray silently for a moment asking God to manifest His presence in reviving ways to each individual and then to the our church family corporately. Then I asked the congregation to pray with me in inviting God's Manifest Presence.

Another option is to divide the congregation into sections and have a respected member assigned to lead each section in prayer. This will have the sections being led in prayer simultaneously. This adds another dynamic that can be fresh and powerful.

Be sure to instruct the prayer leaders to pay close attention to the set time of each prayer session and the pastor should be ready to call each prayer segment to a close, so as to fit the service into the allotted time. However, if our Lord moves in significant ways, be ready to yield to Him by continuing to pray and by offering an invitation for people to respond to the things our Lord might be saying to them.

The second focus of prayer is:

2. Return to God through Repentance.

Song: Choose a song that speaks to repentance. Again, someone doing a solo works well or the congregation singing a song they know.

2 Chronicles 7:14 **"If my people, which are called by my name, shall 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."**

The Hebrew word for "turn" is often translated "return" thus we are called to return "from" ways that have crept into our lives which are sinful and have become a pattern in our lives or nation, thus common place. Both the Lord's Supper and prayer for spiritual renewal call us back to our Lord in very intense and specific ways.

In response to God and His Word, let's join our hearts in repentance by asking our Lord to forgive and cleanse us from all of our sins as we confess them. We have some wonderful promises in 1 John 1:9 **"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** Therefore, I encourage you to name your sins specifically as you pray silently. Calling sins by specific names helps us be more accountable to not return to them.

In this special moment with the elements of the Lord's Supper before us, let's consider our Lord, His suffering, His death and His love for us and let us come clean with Him in all honesty, purposing to forsake our sins with all that is within us. Consider your sins and then let's join together in a "sacred" time of confessing them.

Prayer of Confession and Repentance.

Note: Again the pastor may lead or have a church leader prepared to lead. This must be someone who is passionate about purity and holiness in life and who knows how to call out to God in fervent prayer.

The final focus of prayer before we celebrate our Lord through His supper is:

3. Submitting to God through Surrender.

Song: "I Surrender All" is certainly a good one.

2 Chronicles 7:14 **"If my people, which are called by my name, shall 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."**

The instruction to **"humble"** ourselves is a call to surrender to our Lord because we recognize our selfish ways have brought us to a bad place in life. Living selfishly doesn't work out for good. Selfish living destroys contentment and significance in life. The need of the hour is to **"humble"** ourselves in prayer, repentance and full surrender.

The meaning of "humility" in its purest sense is *to put someone, or his/her needs and will, before your own*. Humbling ourselves before our Lord happens when we heartily put ourselves in submission to Him and His will.

God gave this call to **"humble"** ourselves, **"pray," "seek"** His presence and **"repent"** in context of whenever we discover He is withholding blessings from our nation, thus our nation is under judgement.

This verse speaks to the response God expects from His people when we see our nation has turned away from Him. This is certainly what God expects from us now. Then it ends with specific promises. God calls us to do specific things, which are **"humble"** ourselves, **"pray," "seek"** His presence and **"repent"** of all wickedness, and in response He will do specific things for us. Namely, He will **hear** our prayers, **"forgive"** our sins, and **"heal"** our nation.

The way this verse is written lets us know there are things God will do **"IF"** we will do as He instructs. It also means we can miss seeing Him do some things **"IF"** we are not willing to do what He says.

Let us NOW humbly surrender ourselves to our Lord and His determinations concerning how to return to Him, then He will **"hear from heaven," "forgive"** our sins and **"heal"** our nation. He can't hear us if we do not pray as He instructs, therefore, it is imperative for our church family to do all we can in becoming more-and-more a people prayer both personally and corporately.

Such full surrender has been stated, "Dear Lord Jesus, I give ALL I understand me to be, to everything I understand YOU to be. I surrender my ALL to YOU as Lord of my life." This certainly means ceasing from pursuing sins to pursue Him and His will.

When you think of "full surrender" of your life to God, does anything come to mind where you know you are not submitted? If so, surrender NOW!

Let's join together in a "sacred" moment of full, submissive surrender.

Prayer of Submissively Surrendering Yourself to God.

Through our whole-hearted striving in **Inviting God's Manifest Presence**, **Returning to Him through Repentance**, and **Submitting to Him through Surrender**, we trust that we are ready to gather around our Lord's table to share this special meal together.

Invitation followed by administration of the Lord's Supper.

Article and message by Larry White, Pastor, First Baptist Church, Cherokee Village.