

40 DAYS OF *prayer*



THEALLIANCE

40 DAYS OF prayer

INTRO

Dear Alliance family,

Welcome to 40 Days of Prayer! This prayer guide features daily devotionals and prayer prompts that are designed to lead you into the presence of God, to cry out to Him in prayer, and to listen for His still, small voice. It's not enough to hear about prayer, read about it, or even just learn about it. During these 40 days at the beginning of 2022, we need to engage in prayer—to perhaps do so with a frequency, fervency, and focus that is not normal for us. This year's theme is **Reawakening to Christ**. The aim of this 40-day focus is to fix our gaze on Jesus; remember who He is, what He has done, what He has given us to do, and what He will do in the future.

Look around at all that is happening in our nation and world. It is time to pray and to surrender to Jesus! Could it be that this 40 Days of Prayer could change us, change our prayer lives, change The Alliance, and even transform our nation and world? Let's step into this prayer experience with the anticipation that we will encounter the living God and fix our eyes upon Him. Let's pray with a spirit of expectancy that the Spirit of God will do great things in, among, and through us to the glory of Jesus Christ.

Keep the faith!



Terry D. Smith
Vice President for Church Ministries



THE ALLIANCE

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WEEK 1

REAWAKENING TO THE GLORY OF CHRIST

During His Incarnation, the glory of Christ is often veiled, and we see His humility. But His glory has existed from eternity past and will continue into eternity future. Even during His Incarnation, His glory is seen from time to time. This week's devotionals unpack various aspects of the glory of Christ so that we will find ourselves caught up in worship.

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THE ETERNITY OF CHRIST

MICAH 5:2

This is the story of God's love. A story in which the Heavenly Father stepped down into the limits of time, where a sweet, little visitor from heaven approached Bethlehem, a little town surrounded by crumbling walls.

The visitor was the baby in whom the greatness and glory of the Creator became a mere human. Throughout His life, the love of the Father took this visitor through the difficult trials of humanity. He experienced much pain, loneliness, and rejection. He was despised and cast out. But He was loved. Even more than that, *He was love*.

This visitor is also the Great Judge. He walked to the end of the road with the heavy weight of our guilt on His shoulders, ready to be humiliated, abandoned, slapped in the face, and rejected on a cross for our sake.

This humiliated visitor, resurrected and exalted, later regained control of all things, and as a tender shepherd, took care of His lambs and continues to do so. The greatness of His name leads us to the security of His eternal love that is safe and peaceful.

He came from eternity to humanity and back to eternity, making the great, if at all possible, greater still.

This is Jesus, our Lord. He is a great mystery—not fully understood, but believed and treasured by those who accept such a high-priced gift—unmerited, undeserved, and available only by grace through faith. He was brought by the Father to a decaying world that was and is in need of a touch from beyond time, from beyond humanity.



PRAYER POINTS:

1. Ask the Lord to help you delight in the unfathomable reality of the Incarnation.
2. Pray that He will lead you to be thankful and worshipful.
3. Ask Him to guide you into a life worthy of such love.

THE DEITY OF CHRIST

COLOSSIANS 2:9

I have noticed that most church traditions tend to lean toward an emphasis on either God's transcendence or His immanence. Like some of you, I have walked up the steps of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem and the synagogue in Chorazin. The stairs there are purposefully steep and uneven to slow people down and cause them to consider the sacred space they are entering. But most Sundays, I walk into a church building without stairs, where you can grab a coffee and take it into the sanctuary and where most people are dressed casually and have come late.

In Colossians 2:8, Paul alludes to a heresy simmering in the church around the depreciation of Christ. In verse 9, he contrasts this heresy with a bold and vital truth, "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form . . ." While it is right and good to recognize Christ's immanence and accessibility, we are also to honor His transcendence and deity.

Make no mistake, He is the image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15); in Him all things were created (1:16); and in Him all things hold together (1:17). We follow not merely a good teacher from Galilee but the Head of the Church (1:18), the first to be resurrected (1:20), and the Reconciler of all things (1:20–22).

What a difference this makes in how we approach Him, our posture before Him, our attitude toward His Word, and our lives of worship lived for Him.



PRAYER POINTS:

1. Picture yourself slowly climbing steep, uneven steps; meditate on entering the sacred space around Jesus.
2. Picture yourself bowing down before Him in all His majesty—or do it physically; be still and listen for at least five minutes.
3. Express your praise and worship of Him in all His deity.

» by Jen Ashby

THE SINLESSNESS OF CHRIST

HEBREWS 4:15

For over thirty years, Jesus lived a sinless life before God and mankind so that we could one day stand clothed before Him in the righteousness of His Son. Our sinless Savior never entertained a thought, never uttered a word, and never carried out an act that emerged from an impure or selfish motive. Jesus always obeyed and honored His Father in heaven as well as His father and mother on earth. He never stole, lied, or coveted. He never uttered a single word out of pride or sinful anger. He never gossiped, slandered, or deceived His neighbor. In other words, Jesus Christ submitted to every commandment of God. He loved His Father with all His heart, soul, strength, and mind, and He fully loved His neighbor as Himself.

In living this life of sinlessness as our representative, Jesus faced the same temptations and difficulties we face so that He might know and sympathize with our weaknesses and failures. He walked in our shoes, entered into our affliction, and then did the unthinkable by dying in our place.

When we hunger and thirst to know our Lord in a deeper and more intimate way, it is essential for us to meditate on His glorious perfection. When we struggle with our own sin and failure, we must remember the sinless One who was obedient unto death in order to find true forgiveness, hope, and assurance in Him.



PRAYER POINTS:

1. Spend a time treasuring Jesus, the sinless One, and praising God for the spiritual blessings you have in Christ.
2. Ask Jesus to release the power of His sinless, saving, and sanctifying life into your heart by the Spirit so that His very life can become your own.
3. Reflect on any weaknesses, temptations, or difficulties you may need to bring to Jesus today.

» by Tom Myers

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST

MATTHEW 17:1-8

Jesus led three of His disciples up a high mountain. There, He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. Such glory the Lord showed His disciples!

Jesus has led us as a family in the C&MA. For the past 140 years, He has shown His glory to the world through us. Countless lost souls have been rescued, and the Kingdom of God has expanded to the ends of the earth through our obedience to His call.

Peter, having seen the Lord's glory said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here" (Matt. 17:1), expressing his desire to stay and remain in the status quo. In parallel, the C&MA, having experienced His glory for so long, might now be tempted to say, "Lord, we have had effective ministry, produced excellent fruits, and thus we want to continue our work with the same strategies and methods that have proven successful."

However, our current reality is unique and challenging. COVID-19 has invaded the entire planet with merciless fury. Churches had already been feeling turbulence prior to the pandemic. Congregations are experiencing sharp declines in attendance. Youth and children are dissipating and the remaining members are aging by the day. These are frightening times!

These times demand that we get up and move boldly toward the world with a new paradigm. "Listen to Him!" (Matt. 17:5). Let's listen to Jesus for a new paradigm and follow His Spirit's guidance toward greater revival. Yes, His glory is near!



PRAYER POINTS:

1. Pray that the Lord will let you see and experience greater revival in your time.
2. Ask Him to shower you with His Holy Spirit and anoint you with holy oil.
3. Pray that He will equip the C&MA with a new paradigm to rebuild and renew our churches.

THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST

ACTS 1:9-11

Have you ever caught yourself just ‘standing around?’ At times, standing around is purposeful. You might be waiting for the bus or train. Perhaps you’re waiting for the person in front of you to place their order so that you can place yours. These few examples alone should be enough for you to recognize that this kind of standing around is not in vain.

But what about when you find yourself standing around in an emotional, mental, or spiritual state of paralysis? Life is happening all around you, and though you are physically moving, you feel . . . stuck. Again, I ask you, have you ever caught yourself ‘standing around?’

Two angels ask the disciples why they are standing and looking up toward the sky. Isn’t it obvious? They are staring up toward their hope. Jesus is leaving again; yet this time, no one is running or hiding for their lives. Jesus ascends to heaven, and though I would imagine the disciples experience a bit of grief, they also have hope. This is an example of actively standing and waiting. Their eyes are transfixed on their King who is leaving; but this time, He is leaving in victory, not breathing out His final breath on the cross. Their beholding will not be in vain—Jesus will one day return in the same way they saw Him ascend.

Our standing and waiting need not get in the way of our active participation of Jesus’ will for this world. The disciples beheld and got to work. We are challenged to do the same.



PRAYER POINTS:

1. Pray that the Lord will reveal to you areas that you might be standing around and not trusting in the victory of Jesus Christ.
2. Are you lacking in beholding or in actively participating? Ask God to give you strength and wisdom to become an active participant.
3. What would change in your life if you truly believed He will return in the same way He ascended? Ask Jesus to grow your faith.

» by Omar Niebles

THE COMING OF CHRIST IN GLORY

MATTHEW 24:30-31

The glorious return of Christ will be terrible and wonderful. His sign in the heavens will appear at the apex of tribulation on the earth followed by His visible return on the clouds. The glory of Christ the King will become evident to all peoples of the world without exception.

For too many, the vision of His coming will trigger the mournful recognition of a lost opportunity for salvation. But for the elect—that great crowd from every tribe, tongue, and nation who have hoped in Jesus (see Revelation 7:9)—it is a rescue unto eternal life.

Christ's wonderful salvation, made available for all peoples, will be beautifully displayed as he dispatches angels to gather to Himself believers from every direction the winds blow.

May the wonder of this dramatic scene-to-come draw us deeper in devotion to our Savior and King. May that devotion draw us deeper into our commitment to His purpose of preparing a people for Himself from every nation.



PRAYER POINTS:

1. Pray that your heart will be captivated anew by the glory of salvation.
2. Pray fervently for the thousands of people groups that are without believers or witnesses to Christ among them.
3. Pray that a great harvest will be reaped as workers are sent to all peoples.

» by Tim Crouch

THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

The glorious, majestic One who was with the Father before the world existed emptied Himself so that He might rescue us from sin and restore us to God. As He labored in Gethsemane under the crushing weight of what He was about to endure on our behalf, He prayed for us. He asked that we would be one with each other, as He is one with the Father, so that the world might know that He is the Son of God. It is the commandment that He repeatedly gave us: *love one another*. The most evident way to display that love is by treating others as more important than ourselves.

Jesus didn't just tell us to do this, He lived His life as the very example of sacrificial love. He had every right to assert Himself and claim His rightful place, but He flipped conventional wisdom on its head by going low in order to be high.

We sing songs about wanting to see Jesus exalted and lifted high, and He loves and deserves the praises of our lips; but He is also glorified by the obedience of our lives. Let's go low by loving one another well so that we might lift Him high; then, the world might smell the sweet fragrance of Christ in us!



PRAYER POINTS:

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart and reveal places of pride and selfishness. Repent.
2. Ask the Father to grant you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the deep and intimate knowledge of Him so that you might catch a glimpse of His glorious majesty and brilliant beauty. It is as we gaze upon Him that He transfigures us into His image.
3. Thank Jesus for the freedom and privilege you have to speak His name with power and authority, the Name that is above every name!

» by Mary Petty