

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR
CHRISTIAN UNITY



**COMPASSION
CONNECT**
uniting to serve

WE WILL SEEK THE LORD OF
ONENESS FOR THE UNITY OF HIS
CHURCH ACROSS ALL WORLDLY
BOUNDARIES:

GEOGRAPHICAL boundaries that ISOLATE.

DENOMINATIONAL boundaries that SEPARATE.

POLITICAL boundaries that INFURIATE.

PRIDEFUL boundaries that don't allow us to RELATE.

LET US GATHER AS THOSE WHO
SERVE THE KING OF KINGS. LET
US SEEK TO REFLECT HIS
RECONCILING HEART TO A
BROKEN WORLD. LET US APPEAL
TO GOD FOR HIS KINGDOM WILL
TO BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS
IN HEAVEN.

AN OCTAVE OF PRAYER

*FOSTERING A SPIRIT
OF UNITY AMONGST
THE PEOPLE OF GOD*



Dear Participant,

Thank you for joining with us as we intentionally pray through these 8 days, historically known as the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity. If you are reading this it's safe to assume you have a general idea of prayer, though, like me, when you first see “octave of prayer” you think: “Is that really a thing? What is this all about?” The vision of praying with others around the world for Christian unity compelled me to dig a little deeper into the title and history.

An octave denotes 8 days of intentional focus in the Church calendar. In 1908 a religious community outside of New York city started the “octave of prayer for Christian unity.” It has since grown to be celebrated worldwide by millions (although in ironic fashion...different dates for different denominations and hemispheres). The Catholic Church has blessed and encouraged it. The World Council of Churches participates as well as many other Protestant denominations.

The prayer of Jesus before going to the cross was one of unity for his followers. The imperative of oneness was so close to Jesus' heart that it found expression in His closing prayers on earth. Therefore, the heart and work of oneness in the body of Christ ought to find a comfortable home in all the ways we follow Jesus.


The octave of prayer for Christian unity will help us do just that. We will beseech the God of oneness to give us wisdom to see the body of Christ as he does. We will pray for insight, conviction, and repentance so that we might be a living answer to Jesus' prayer.

Yours in Christ,
Milan Homola
Compassion Connect Co-Founder & Executive Director



IDEAS FOR APPROACHING 8 DAYS OF PRAYER

- Commit to the 8 days. The devotional is a helpful tool to commit to going through. You may want to participate in some type of fast as well.
- View the 8 days as a sacrificial journey. You are sacrificing focus, time, etc that you might otherwise expend on something else. As with any journey, prepare, be present, and process. Prepare by asking God to till the soil of your heart and get you ready for an 8 day commitment. Be present by making sure your times each day are singular in quality and focus (void of rush/distraction). Process by listening well, journaling, and talking with others about what you read, hear, and sense.
- Invite or join others in corporate prayer during the 8 days. A commitment to prayer for Christian unity makes sense in the context of Christian community. Invite your church, small group, friends to pray together at a specific time each day or one larger gathering during the 8 days. You can also join us for optional Zoom prayer sessions each day.
- Stretch yourself and pray with diverse members of the body of Christ. Be a living anticipation in word, prayer, action of the coming scene of diverse worship found in Revelation ch.7
- Try to avoid an approach that only looks to gaining new head knowledge. Instead take a posture of surrender. Have a listening heart. Let the words of God and the prayers soak in your soul.



DAY ONE

CHARITY RATTRAY

Scripture:

“How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron’s beard, down on the collar of his robe. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.” Psalms 133:1-3

Devotional:

Historians suggest this Psalm was written after many years of conflict when all Israel united in Hebron to make David king. After conflict each ruling faction in Israel was compelled to unite and surrender to the anointed king and worthy leader. Even today, who is more worthy of unity than Christ Jesus? IN HIM we live together and we listen to his prayer for our oneness in John 17. IN HIM our posture is “I have need of you” and IN HIM conflict surrenders to common need especially within the Ecclesia.

IN HIM the faithful are characterized essentially by brotherly love, hands extended in welcome fellowship. In verse two, unity’s blessing is upon God’s people for holy service. And in verse three, unity’s blessing extends to the land for fruitfulness and an abundance of life. This passage provokes a personal question addressing our motives, “Is this for eternal glory?” Psalm 133 helps us understand true unity ultimately equips God’s people for holy service and will bring fruitfulness, a nod to Christ’s words in John 15 and evidenced in Acts 2:42-47. Where there is unity there is a commanded blessing.

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DAY ONE

CHARITY RATTRAY, CONT.

Prayer:

FATHER IN HEAVEN, Let the blessing of unity fall on us. Lord equip us for holy service and let fruitfulness characterize our work. In Christ unite us around our common KING taking down walls of hostility and creating peace. When and where we have excluded or sided with division, forgive us. When we have prioritized our own preferences, forgive us. May we invite all our fellow citizens, the whole family in heaven and earth to the table of Christ and HIS fellowship. You are worthy. Amen

Question to Consider: Where have I already experienced the blessing of unity? Under what circumstances?



DAY TWO

STEPHANIE PAGE

Scripture:

"I am in them and you are in me, so that they may be made completely one, that the world may know you have sent me and have loved them as you have loved me." John 17:23

Devotional:

In a world so divided by disagreements and hate, what if we as Jesus Followers chose to be unified around the one thing that has changed us from the inside out, our relationship with Jesus Christ? Would the world take notice of us if we could sit around the table, with others from different races, socio economic backgrounds, political beliefs, denominational beliefs, and in love listen to understand each other and the stories God is writing with our lives? Perhaps they would. It is a critical time for us to read the passage in John 17 and ask God that His Gospel be our foundation, our starting point, especially with each other. I know when I get to heaven and stand before a Holy God some of my passionate beliefs will be tweaked, together let's remember our humanity and in humility choose unity so that the world will see who God is and be drawn to know him.

Prayer:

Jesus, we are desperate for the truth of your salvation to be our foundation as we interact with each other. Holy Spirit, show us how and empower us to do the counter-human thing of uniting, listening, and loving. We want to be an example to a watching world of the power of God and what you did for us on the cross. Convict us where we have been wrong, we humble ourselves before you, show us how to walk in true unity and humility.

Question to Consider: Where in your life has the gospel ceased to be the foundation especially when it comes to unity with other Jesus Followers?



DAY THREE

JIM OLSON

Scripture:

"All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. 2 Cor. 5:17-20

Devotional:

God is at the center of the story of reconciliation and He invites us to participate with Him in this great work. As Ambassadors of the Kingdom of God we are re-presenting Jesus to a waiting world. We do this by leaning in to the brokenness and division that we find around us. We listen and learn as we recognize how Christ is already at work in the people and places we find ourselves in. We labor to bring the message of reconciliation through word and deed in the areas of influence where He has placed us as His ambassadors. Finally, we are compelled into this ministry by His love which has reconciled us so that we might be reconcilers in this wounded world.

Prayer:

Thank you Lord for reconciling the world to yourself and for reconciling us. Thank you for the privilege of joining You in this ministry. Help us to see those around us through your eyes and be your ambassadors of reconciliation. Please equip and empower us to re-present you well. Amen!

Question to Consider: Where has God uniquely positioned you to be an ambassador for His Kingdom? How might you re-present the King there this week in word or deed?



DAY FOUR

FATHER SPENCER HOWE

Scripture:

"It is **too little**, he says, for you to be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the survivors of Israel; I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth." -Isaiah 49:6

Devotional:

Our hearts are petty, our vision constricted. And as the Lord reminds us constantly, His ways are not our ways. That is for sure—we know our ways all too well! We often live by those ways and wonder why we do not bear fruit that remains. Jesus' Mystical Body, the Church, is called to continue the work of the Redeemer on earth, but we must be **stretched into the full stature of the Lord's call**. Especially when it comes to unity in being and action, we are called to more!

Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, **rescue me today** from the mentalities which keep me at peace with my own narrow ways of thinking and being. I know that I prefer what I know, but it is too little! Break through to me, shatter my illusions and remove the blinders from my eyes that prevent me from glimpsing and entering upon your high call to be light in the darkness of our world and to bring your warmth into the enduring chill of our world.

Question to Consider: How do I set limits on the Lord's plans and purpose? Can I allow the Lord to lead me out of my 'too little' and into His 'more'?



DAY FIVE

BILL BERRY

Scripture: "For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave voluntarily, begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God." 2 Cor. 8:3-5

Devotional: The saints in Jerusalem were suffering, so Paul shared this need with those in Corinth and Macedonia. The believers in Macedonia united themselves with their brothers and sisters in Jerusalem, giving sacrificially for the sake of those suffering. This global pandemic has caused me to see the needs of my brothers, not just in my congregation or community, but globally. I have been fairly comfortable through the pandemic, but my brothers and sisters in India and Africa have truly suffered financially. The Lord awakened me to this passage in 2 Corinthians. It was now more than Scripture, but an invitation. I can leave it as a good thought and a good intention, or I can make the sacrifice and give. I can embrace the kingdom reality that we are one body and one family, sharing in the same body, blood, and Spirit.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, we are part of a global community. Forgive me for not seeing the basic global needs of my real brothers and sisters that compels me to make a sacrificial offering for their needs. Forgive me for not holding them deeply in my heart and recognizing their suffering and suffering with them through sacrifice for them. Lord let me see more clearly our oneness, not as an idea but as a participation in their life. Teach me the way of love.

Question to Consider: Is there a brother or sister you see suffering? How is the Lord inviting you to become one with them in their suffering through your act of sacrificial giving?



DAY SIX

NAMITHA CROW

Scripture:

"After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." Revelation 7:9-10

Devotional:

Pure visible light is the presence of all of the colors of light. This passage has always been the picture of Heaven for me. Heaven is where we will see the fullness of the glory of God. Our God is fully reflected when all of his children in their unique traditions, cultures, world-views, song, and languages come together as one to praise their Father in Heaven. As his Church, our unity is a glimpse of his fullness here on Earth. As we share in the worship and communion of our God, together in our vast diversity and in perfect unity, the world will see his glorious light.

Prayer:

Father, we stand in awe of the beauty of Your Kingdom. You have chosen all of us, diversity in unity, to reflect your image. We pray for humility to stand arm-in-arm with those least like us, across nations and tribes. That You may be made fully known. We want to display Your glory. You are so worthy of our unity.

Question to Consider: In my community, what opportunity do I have to experience the fullness of his glory, or what opportunity can I help foster?



DAY SEVEN

JONATHAN FRIZ

Scripture:

"God has composed the body by giving more abundant honor to the members that lacked it so that there should be no division in the body but that the members should have the same care for one another." 1 Cor. 12:24-25

Devotional:

The power released through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has created a new humanity (Eph. 2:15). Those who are in Christ are no longer alienated from one another but are fundamentally one. Just as our spirit inhabits our bodies, so the Holy Spirit inhabits us all, making us "one Body" and "one new humanity". This is not unity in name only, not a sentimental unity, and not a political or religious talking point—this is the deepest kind of oneness imaginable.

When we live out of our new humanity, we shower "abundant honor" on our fellow believers and we "have the same care" for one another that we have for our own bodies. When we give abundant honor to our brothers and sisters who lack it, this shows that we truly understand who we are in relation to one another in Christ. We are no longer alienated or separate—we are truly One!

Prayer:

Father, I glory in the reality that I am a member of the body of your Son Jesus Christ! Let me perceive this unseen reality more keenly in myself—I am in Christ, and He is in me. Just as my spirit inhabits my body and I can move all my members with ease, so Your Spirit inhabits me.

Prayer continued on next page >>



DAY SEVEN

JONATHAN FRIZ, CONT.

Father, open my eyes to see the other members of Christ's body all around me. The same Holy Spirit is in each one of us, animating our movements. While I am significant in the Body, I am not sufficient or independent of the Body. I have need of each of my fellow believers, even the ones who seem "insignificant". Enable me to share "abundant honor" with the members that lack it. Allow me to have the "same care" for members of Christ's body that I have for myself.

Question to Consider: What is it about giving honor to others that stops division in its tracks? What does it look like to show honor to my brother or sister in Christ? Father, show me a fellow member in Christ who "lacks honor" so that I can be part of your plan to show them "abundant honor."



DAY EIGHT

MILAN HOMOLA

Scripture:

"He made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ." Ephesians 1:9-10

Devotional:

Not only is the goal of God to redeem and rescue but also to unite together (reconcile). This passage has made me wonder "how often does "the coming future" influence how I see my fellow Christian today?" We have been gifted a glimpse into God's mysterious will and found oneness at its core. It's as though God has called a family meeting at the table and whispered in our ear "I love you all and your love of one another is a foretaste of what I'm developing in the future Kingdom." God's plan for the fullness of time involves oneness therefore our acts of isolation and apathy towards one another reveal where we are misaligned.

Prayer:

God, the Almighty, I declare that you are faithful and true. Please soften my heart toward all brothers and sisters in Christ. I confess that I have stood at a distance and judged. I have contributed to the divisiveness in the world. Please grant me humility and strength to love well as you have first loved me. Amen.

Question to Consider: If oneness and diversity are Kingdom normal in the fullness of time, how do I take a step to reflect tomorrow's normal today?



GUEST CONTRIBUTORS

Bill Berry (Pennsylvania) Bill served in pastoral ministry in a congregation in California for 38 years; 31 of those years as lead pastor. Presently Bill is executive director of Visible Unity assisting to foster the unity of the body of Christ in cities and regions; predominately in South Asia, where he serves as a member of a South Asia Leadership Team and also in Kenya and Tanzania.

Namitha Crow (Oregon) Namitha was born and raised in India and moved to Portland when she was 10 years old. After college, she lived in Uganda for 3 years, starting up a community-based health education project. Her passion is to see people around the world transformed by community members connecting to serve their neighbors. Jesus is the center of her life and she seeks to be His vessel in pouring out his Love to the world around her. www.compassionconnect.com

Jonathan Friz (Massachusetts) Jonathan is the visionary and founder of the 10 Days movement (2004-present). Based on the 10 “Days of Awe” on the Biblical calendar from the day of Trumpets to the day of Atonement, 10 Days is an annual opportunity for united prayer, repentance, and humility before God. Learn more: 10days.net

Father Spencer Howe (Minnesota) Fr. Spencer Howe is a Roman Catholic Priest currently serving as Pastor of Holy Cross Parish, in the mission field of the historic NE Minneapolis neighborhood. Raised at North Heights ELCA, he made a decision to become Catholic during high school. He studied Philosophy and Classical Languages at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, MN and Theology and Church History in Rome, prior to his ordination in 2013. He understands his priestly ministry in an apostolic and missionary key. Find more about Holy Cross Parish at www.OurHolyCross.org. As the world spins, the Cross stands firm!



GUEST CONTRIBUTORS

Milan Homola (Minnesota) Milan Homola is Co-Founder and Executive Director of Compassion Connect. He has been working in local missions with the imperatives of Unity and Compassion for 15 years. He and his family live in Minnesota. www.compassionconnect.com

Stephanie Page (Minnesota) Stephanie Page is Co-Founder and Executive Director of Stories Foundation, a non profit organization using social impact business to fight human trafficking by supporting awareness, collaboration and opportunities for survivors and those vulnerable. She is passionate about pursuing Jesus and living out his heart for justice. www.storiesfoundation.org

Jim Olson (Minnesota) Jim Olson is the President of the Pilgrim Center for Reconciliation. The Pilgrim Center brings hope and healing in the USA, Eastern Africa, and beyond by renewing individuals, restoring relationships, and revitalizing communities through the ministry of reconciliation. (www.pilgrimcenter.org)

Charity Rattray (Idaho) Charity Rattray serves on strategic teams both regionally and internationally collaborating for unity in the target cities she is called to serve. Charity Rattray is the Founder of United By Love International, an organization where people of various denominations and backgrounds come together in the common mission of demonstrating the selfless love of the gospel. You can find her at unitedbyloveinternational.org/ and mrscharityrattray.com