

When the Church Needs to Come Alive

Best Prayer Practices for Revival

By **Jamie Morgan**

The wedding guests stand to their feet as the double doors swing open and the cellist plays the processional. Some people crane their necks with eager anticipation, while others impatiently tap their feet. However, all are aghast when they catch a glimpse of the bride starting down the aisle. She appears to be dying.

The bride's wavy hair hangs matted to her shoulders. She has dark circles under her eyes, pale skin, and sunken cheekbones. Her bridal gown is soiled and torn. Every few steps, she holds onto the end of a pew to catch her breath. The worst part of this horrific scene is the groom's reaction. Overcome by grief, he sobs uncontrollably.

This shocking portrait illustrates the bride of Christ in the twenty-first century and the anguish of Almighty God over the spiritual condition of His people. The American Church desperately needs revival. Although we see glimpses of gospel impact in some communities, spiritual revival remains the only hope for the lukewarm, worldly, and powerless bride of Christ.

Fully Alive

The term revival means to live again. Spiritual revival begins with the people of God coming back to life through an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. When revival bursts forth, sleepy and apathetic Christians wake up and live as if the Bible is true. The church in Ephesus illustrates a church in

the throes of revival, and in desperate need of revival.

All the essential ingredients for revival occurred in Ephesus (Acts 19): the gospel preached, people saved, missionaries sent forth, churches planted, miracles performed, and hearts gripped by the fear of the Lord. In addition, the Ephesian Christians repented of their sins, even burning expensive magic arts paraphernalia in a common bonfire. To show their love for Jesus, no price was too great. What a picture of a fully alive church!

Decades later, as Revelation chapters 2–3 relate, five churches became the epitome of churches needing revival—the church in Ephesus among them. The Ephesians had lost their first love and needed to repent (Rev. 2:2–5). In this passage, the Lord severely rebuked them. Dire consequences would ensue, He warned, if the church in Ephesus failed to heed His warning.

Urgent Need

While flickers of revival fire can be identified in certain regions of our nation—churches, leaders, houses of prayer, and worship movements are rising up right in the middle of chaos to permeate the spiritual atmosphere with the presence of God—today’s Church has also fallen into spiritual decline and urgently needs revival. Every 60 seconds in America, abortion kills two unborn babies. Yet most Christians seem unmoved. Entire denominations have modified their definition of marriage to include homosexuality. Yet most pastors and church leaders stay silent about this sin. Racism remains in the land, yet many Christians seem indifferent.

Countless American churches boast the finest facilities, technology, and seating capacity, yet our country is self-destructing. A multitude of spiritually lost people are in the “valley of decision” (Joel 3:14), but most believers regard evangelism with apathy—or someone else’s job. Christians

around the world are dying martyrs' deaths, yet many in the American Church possess a love grown cold toward their persecuted brothers and sisters.

But here's the good news: God longs to send revival much more than the Church wants to receive it. Historically, from the fall of humankind in Genesis to the letters penned to the sin-filled churches in Revelation, God's people have cyclically needed reviving, and God has faithfully answered their revival cries. The people of God must, once again, cry out for God to pour His Spirit upon the Church to bring her back to life.

The great hunger and thirst for God boils down to one word: prayer. Prayer precedes revival. In Acts 2:1–4, the disciples longed for the presence of their beloved Jesus, who had just ascended to heaven. So, they gathered together, constant in prayer. As instructed, they waited. In answer, the Holy Spirit filled both the place and the people of prayer, igniting the greatest recorded revival in history—Pentecost.

Crying Out

As in the Book of Acts, through the ages God's people have inescapably cried out in prayer for revival. And God has faithfully answered their heartfelt pleas. But how do we effectively pray for the Church's revival?

Here are ten prayer points to pray for the Church—for your church! Include them in your daily prayer repertoire. Use them as launching pads to additional Spirit-led prayer for revival:

- Lord, send revival and let it begin with me.
- Lord, give Your bride a holy desperation for revival.
- Lord, send a prayer awakening to the Church.
- Lord, pour a spirit of repentance upon the people of God.
- Lord, restore the fear of the Lord to the Church.
- Lord, give Your children hearts that burn with passion for Jesus.

- Lord, rekindle the Church's love for the Truth of God's Word.
- Lord, restore Your people's passion for the lost.
- Lord, fill the Church with Your tangible presence.
- Lord, give Your Church both prayer and action strategies to combat the prevalent societal ills in our world today.

Picture a bride dressed in sparkling white, zealously in love with her future groom. Her burning heart beats wildly with every thought of him. She loves him not for what he can do for her but simply . . . for him. She has kept herself pure and chaste, without blemish or wrinkle. Her eyes remain fixed on him alone. The world has completely lost its appeal.

Now imagine the bride running passionately down the aisle, full of life, to meet her groom. Revived, the bride of Christ is now ready for His Second Coming.

Lord Jesus, send revival, and let it begin with me!

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