

# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY OF PRAYER

2012

## ***“FAITH IN ACTION”***

Written by  
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SEVENTH-DAY  
ADVENTIST  
CHURCH

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My Dear Sisters,

At times of deepest need and darkest trial, the question may come to mind, "Why pray?" Yet it is at these times that we must pray without ceasing. The psalmist writes, "The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles" (Psalm 34:17). Truly, God is our help in time of trouble.

We live in a time when the world is hurtling headlong into darkness and chaos. Where is our strength? Where is our help? Only in God.

The theme for this Day of Prayer packet is "Faith in Action." My sisters, this is the time to put our faith in action. We live in a world where people need to see God in action. They need to feel God's loving touch. They need to hear God's words of love and care for them. God asked, "Whom can I send" (Isa. 6:8a). My prayer is that we can all resoundingly reply, "Here am I! Send me" (Isa. 6:8b).

God is looking for women who are willing to act out their faith in their daily lives, to show the world that He is real, and to commit themselves to serve others for Him.

The question is, "How can we do this when we have so much going on in our own lives?" The answer is, "Prayer." We must pray and pray and pray some more. Our ability to serve God and others in spite of our own trials depends on the strength we receive from God each day as we connect with Him each day through prayer.

I know you will find encouragement in this packet written by Claire Sanches-Schutte, WM director for the Trans-European Division.

Blessings and joy to you,

Heather-Dawn Small, Director  
Women's Ministries

## **ABOUT THE WRITER**

Clair (nee Schutte) Sanches was born in the Netherlands. At the age of 6 she immigrated with her family to Perth, Australia where she lived for 11 years. At 17 Clair returned to the Netherlands where she worked for the church as a secretary. From 1981-1986 she worked at the Trans-European Division office as secretary to the youth director. In 1986 Clair married John who had just finished his ministerial training. Together they worked as a local pastor's family, and later John was asked to be the Union Youth Director. Together they served the youth for 10 years. They have two boys, Dexter and Daryl. Clair was asked to head Children's, Teen and Women's Ministries at the Netherlands Union. At the last General Conference Session, 2010, Clair was asked to head the Women's, Children's and Clergy Family Ministries and also to serve as an associate to her husband in Family Ministries for the Trans-European Division.

## FAITH IN ACTION Children's Story

**Bible text:** Matthew 25:37-39

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’”

**Props:** some latex balloons of different colours

**Theme:** God wants us to put our faith into action. We should help others.

Look at these balloons I brought with me today. I like balloons. They remind me of birthday parties and having fun. Let me ask you something. Would this balloon make anyone smile if I just left it hanging here tied to a piece of string? No, of course not. I have to fill it with air to make it into a real decoration. I will do that right now. (inflate a balloon). Wow! This is a pretty balloon! What would happen if I do not tie the end of the balloon and let it loose? (Let it go and see what happens). Yes, it goes flying off wildly until all the air goes out. Blow up a new balloon. I will tie the end of this one so the air will stay in and then I can use it for a decoration. This balloon is like having faith that works. Let's read what the Bible says about our faith.

James 2:14-17

“What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, “Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”

James, told Christians to show their faith by putting it into action. Like a balloon without air, our faith doesn't mean much unless we put it to work. If we see a poor person who needs food and clothing, it is not enough to say “I hope things get better for you”. That would be like letting go of the untied balloon and letting all the air out. We would just be full of hot air and of no use to him. However, if we are able to help him, we should give him something to eat and clothes to wear. That makes our faith in God like a beautiful decoration, a tied balloon filled with air. That is faith that works. Many places in the Bible teach that we should help the poor and needy.

Listen to this story.

Acts 9:36

“In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which, when translated, is Dorcas), who was always doing good and helping the poor.”

Now Dorcas became ill and died. So Peter the disciple of Jesus was called. All the widows were crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made. Peter went into the room where Dorcas lay and kneeled down and prayed to God. He said: 'Tabitha, get up.' And she opened her eyes. Because of this miracle many people believed in Jesus."

Later in the service we will hear a little more about Dorcas. What do you think? Were the people happy that Dorcas was alive again? Why do you think they were happy? Did you catch what happened? Because of this miracle many people believed in Jesus.

Proverbs 22:9

"A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor."

A person who is generous looks for opportunities to help others. That person is willing to share what God has given him with others. The Bible says that anyone who helps the poor will be blessed, or happy, because he is doing what God wants him to do. That is a great example of loving your neighbour as yourself. That is what James meant when he said not to simply hear the word of God, but to do something about it. (James 1:22)

**Let us pray.** Dear Lord Jesus, let me be like a pretty balloon and have faith that works by helping others. Amen.

(Since balloons may be a choking hazard to small children, please do not give balloons to the children.)

Adapted from Faith that Works [www.childrensermons.com](http://www.childrensermons.com)

## SERMON

### “FAITH IN ACTION”

By Clair Sanches-Schutte

**Scripture Reading:** 2 Peter 3:18 (Contemporary English Version)

“Let the wonderful kindness and the understanding that come from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ help you to keep on growing.”

Growing in faith is a command for the followers of Christ, not an option. As many realize, the Greek word insinuates “be constantly growing”. Never stop growing as a Christian. Never think that you have reached your full maturity.

Recently there was an advertisement from an insurance company on Dutch television. In it they showed the little Babushka dolls which fit over each other. The ad said, “You keep growing with every experience.” At the time I thought, how true this is for us as Christians. We grow when we have experiences with Christ. When we don’t merely *read* the word; we *live* it. When others can see in us a change.

In 2 Peter 1:3-11 we read: “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith **goodness**; and to goodness, **knowledge**; and to knowledge, **self-control**; and to self-control, **perseverance**; and to perseverance, **godliness**. And to godliness, **brotherly kindness** and to brotherly kindness, **love**. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is short-sighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. Therefore, my brothers (and sisters) be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Peter reminds us of the importance growing in goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness (devotion to God), brotherly kindness (concern for others) and love.

For a few people, these traits may seem to come naturally, but for most of us, we have to spend time with God, allowing Him to shape our characters. In Him we may grow each day, like the Babushka dolls.

Peter tells us that growth is essential if we are to escape the corruption in the world. (2 Peter 1:4). Peter knew what he was talking about. When we read the gospels, the disciple whom we see grow is Peter. In the beginning, he was a mere *pebble*, but as he spent time with Jesus, he was transformed into a *rock*. When we follow his life, we see that he is

impetuous--the first one to speak up, the first one out of the boat, the first one to deny Christ. But he also knew what it was to receive forgiveness and grace. He had experienced it first-hand. His heart, his life were transformed as he drew close to Jesus Christ. As we draw close to Christ our example, our hearts will be renewed by the Holy Spirit.

As Ellen White assures us, "The same law that was engraved upon the tables of stone, is written by the Holy Spirit upon the tables of the heart. Instead of going about to establish our own righteousness we accept the righteousness of Christ...Then the heart renewed by the Holy Spirit will bring forth 'the fruits of the Spirit.' Through the grace of Christ we shall live in obedience to the law of God written upon our hearts. Having the Spirit of Christ, we shall walk even as he walked." (*Our Father Cares*, p. 206)

This is how can we keep on growing into spiritual maturity. It will not happen if we do nothing more than sit in the church pews for a few hours a week. It will not happen if we live for ourselves and no one else. It will not happen if we don't spend time with God's word, in prayer and listening to Him. Some may say, "God is always with me." But how can a person say he or she knows God without spending time with Him? You would never think of not talking to your best friend. That person wouldn't be your best friend for long if you never communicated. Yet some Christians think that it is enough to just go to church, that nothing more is needed to have a faith that is growing, a faith that is rich, that fills and changes their lives.

"Growing spiritually touches all aspects of your life. Every believer should seek to become disciplined in order to grow spiritually. Spiritual discipline is a continual process that helps the believer mature in Christ and know God's will. Specific spiritual disciplines may include Bible Study, prayer, worship, fellowship, service and witnessing.

"Spiritual discipline is essential for Christian growth and development. Though at first painful, spiritual discipline resulting from obedience and faith produces abundant blessings. In Hebrews 12:11 we read: "It is never fun to be corrected. In fact, at the time it is always painful. But if we learn to obey by being corrected, we will do right and live at peace." (*The Woman's Study Bible*, NKJV)

Many aspects of our lives tend to distract us from the spiritual disciplines. We live in a consumer society. Advertising tells us that we need more gadgets, more products, bigger cars and houses, more status, more leisure, and more excitement. No wonder many people experience chronic feelings of discontent! We are surrounded by messages to make us dissatisfied with what we have, where we live, and how we look.

The question is, what are we adding to our live? Are we adding compassion, self-control, grace? Are we growing in faith, in knowledge? If we want to grow spiritually, to know our Heavenly Father, are we doing it in the right way? Are we desiring the right things? Or are we desiring *things* rather than the *gifts* of the spirit? We should be striving to grow in goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love.

In the Bible we read stories of people who were striving to grow in faith. People, I expect, who were very much like you and me. They made mistakes, said the wrong thing, did some



terrible things, but it was their faith in God that mattered the most. We are encouraged when we read characters such as David who did not live an exemplary life but of whom God said, "The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14b). These stories give us all the assurance that God has mercy on us and loves us very much.

The story of one of the Bible characters that really speaks to me is found in the book of Acts. We spoke about her briefly during the children's story. Her name is Dorcas in Greek or Tabitha in Aramaic. Her name means gazelle. This suggests grace and beauty. Perhaps she was beautiful on the outside but she certainly was on the inside. Let's read her story in Acts 9:36-42.

"In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which, when translated, is Dorcas), who was always doing good and helping the poor. About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, "Please come at once!"

Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them. Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning towards the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called the believers and the widows and presented her to them alive. This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord."

It is not a long story but it says a lot. I like to think of Dorcas as a "disciple of the hands", someone who is the hands and feet of Christ here on earth. She cared for the widows and sewed clothing for them. The widows showed Peter what she had made, all the garments lovingly made. When Peter prayed, Dorcas returned to life. And we read that many people believed in the Lord because of this miracle. Her death and resurrection helped people make a decision to follow Christ.

Her life was an example of a living, growing faith. Using your talents to further the cause of God reveals a maturing faith. We may be humble, but we can learn from Dorcas. She wasn't a very important person. She didn't head any great committees, she wasn't a preacher, she didn't hold a high office, she didn't run a large company and she didn't write any books. No, she was an ordinary lady doing extraordinary things for widows and the poor. In Matthew 25:40 Jesus says, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me". That is one example of growing in faith. We can become examples of spiritual maturity. An example others can follow. An example others will want to follow. When people look at us, what do they see? Someone who is wholeheartedly committed to Jesus Christ or someone who has many other priorities?

The story of Dorcas may be short, but it tells us how important acts of kindness are. We all have talents, but are we willing to use them to further God's work? I would like to think of her work as a "religion of the hands". Unfortunately some may have a religion merely of the mouth. They may talk of spiritual values, but their lives do not demonstrate the fruits of

the spirit. A “religion of the hands” can be expressed in many caring ways. Its key aspect is that it shows God’s love. Creating, building, using our talents, blessing others, and praying for each other.

When you think of folks you know, you will call to mind many who have the “religion of the hands,” people working tirelessly in the background, helping wherever needed, spreading the gospel in their own unique way.

As they show the compassion and godliness that are fruits of the spirit, we see again what it means to grow in faith. Growing in faith means the Holy Spirit is changing us, creating characters that more and more exhibit the traits Peter lists: goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love.

Recently in the book *Through the Eyes of a Child*, I read the following incident. An older boy was sent out to pick up a pizza for his family. On the way home, he saw a homeless person who had nothing to eat, and he gave him the pizza. When he arrived home empty handed, his family were furious. He couldn’t understand why. Puzzled, he said, “I have been taught we should share with people who have nothing. What are you upset with me?” This boy was living out his faith. Sometimes we adults talk about acting like Jesus Christ, but we don’t always do it.

The story of another Bible character who lived out her faith is found in 2 Kings 5:3. We hear her saying to her mistress, “If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.”

Yes, this was said by a little maidservant to the wife of Naaman. During a raid by Syria on Israel, the little girl was taken back to Syria and given in service to Naaman’s wife. This little girl could have been really distraught, feeling sorry for herself. But she showed wonderful compassion to her captors. She tells Naaman’s wife where her husband can go to be healed of his leprosy. And her words speak of absolute faith. She reveals no doubt that the prophet would cure Naaman of his leprosy. Not *perhaps* or *maybe* he will heal him. No, pure faith.

This captive maid must have received a godly upbringing. And this shone through even in captivity. She must have already been a wonderful example in that household because Naaman’s wife trusts her words. As a woman and a slave her word would generally not count for much. But it did in this case. And because she dared to speak up, she pointed someone to the way of healing. Although we don’t know her name, it is her act of compassion—and her complete faith in God--which speaks to us.

How confident are we in our faith? Are we growing daily in companionship with our Heavenly Father? And thus growing in faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and above all in love—for God and for all those around us? May the Holy Spirit fill your heart with the grace and love of Jesus as you become a man or woman of faith, growing daily in your walk with God. God bless you as you continue to grow in Him.

## **Closing Prayer**

Let the wonderful kindness and the understanding that comes from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ help you to keep on growing. 2 Peter 3:18

## AFTERNOON ACTIVITY

“Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs on your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. ‘The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.’ James 5:11.

“His heart of love is touched by our sorrows, and even by our utterances of them. Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in your experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of his children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. ‘He healeth the broken in hearts, and bindeth up their wounds.’ Psalm 147:3. The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watch care, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son.” (E.G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 100)

Prayer is vital to a growing, flourishing spiritual life. The Bible is full of verses about prayer. This afternoon you will be visiting four stations which have to do with prayer.

### STATION 1

**Names of God.** For this activity, we will use cards and Bibles. First look up the text and discover what name for God is given there. Once you have discovered what the name is, discuss together why God would be called this name and what the name suggests to you. (*Directions to leader:* Print the verses from PowerPoint using the handout possibility. This will give you cards to cut out and use. If you don’t have the possibility of doing this, just write the names on cards.)

### STATION 2

**The characteristics of God.** For this we will have a card game. Draw a card, look up and read the text given on it. What characteristics of God is given? Talk together about about what the various characteristics of God mean for us today. (*Directions to leader:* As before print the verses from PowerPoint using the handout possibility. This will give you cards to cut out and use. If you don’t have the possibility of doing this, write the texts on cards.)

### STATION 3

**Forgiveness prayer.** This activity is based on forgiving and letting go. Think about a time you have hurt someone, or someone may have hurt you. You still remember and replay this incident. You haven’t been able to let it go. Holding onto the hurt harms us more than it does the other person. God wants us to forgive—as much for ourselves as for the other person. As an illustration of forgiveness, let’s watch this display. (*Leader:* Take a tablet let it fall into the water and dissolve.) As we see the tablet dissolve and disappear, we can pray for strength to forgive, to let the hurt melt away and disappear. Ask God to forgive you and forgive the other person. Pray in silence. (*Directions to leader:* For this station you will need a large glass vase or something similar. Buy soluble vitamin tablets, the ones that bubble and dissolve.)

#### STATION 4

**The model prayer.** Let's make a Lord's Prayer bookmark together to remind us of the model prayer by which Jesus showed us how to pray. (*Directions to leader:* provide material for each person to make a bookmark. Suggested materials include: cardstock cut the width of a bookmark; enough copies of the Lord's Prayer of the right size to glue onto the bookmark, or pens to write it on the bookmarks; stickers, small pictures, and/or colored markers to decorate the bookmarks; glue sticks.)

*To Leaders:* Size of groups--We suggest that you have no more than 10 people per station. If you have a large church make several of the same stations so that the program keeps flowing. However, if you have a small church, we suggest that you do every station together. As with any program, you have to decide what will work for you. If you think only two of the stations will work do only two.

May God bless us all as we think about the wonderful gift of prayer and its importance to a growing life of faith which more and more reveals the fruits of the spirit.

# PRAISING GOD

“Begin to educate your tongues to praise Him and train your hearts to make melody to God.”

## 1. Gratitude and praise should be cultivated – 1 Chron. 16:8-36

“When the ten lepers were healed, only one returned to find Jesus and gave Him glory. Let us not be like the unthinking nine, whose hearts were untouched by the mercy of God” (5T 315).

“Let us educate our hearts and lips to speak the praise of God for His matchless love” (MH 253).

**NOTE:** Ellen White suggested to publishing house employees that “as often as once a week a praise meeting should be held” (4T 461). At camp meetings a simple service of thanksgiving should be held daily (6T 62).

## 2. The power of praise – 2 Chron. 20-30

“Begin to educate your tongues to praise Him and train your hearts to make melody to God; and when the evil one begins to settle his gloom about you, sing praises to God. When things go crossways at your homes, strike up a song about the matchless charms of the Son of God, and I tell you, when you touch this strain, Satan will leave you” (RH 8/5/1900).

“Unbelievers are often converted as they listen to pure words of praise and gratitude to God.” (MYP 424). “No more effective means (*telling about and praising God for blessings received*) can be employed for winning souls to Christ.” (COL 300).

“Let there be singing in the home, of songs that are sweet and pure, and there will be fewer words of censure, and more of cheerfulness and hope and joy. Let there be singing in the school, and the pupils will be drawn closer to God, to their teachers, and to one another” (ED 168).

## 3. Some of the benefits of praise – Prov. 17:27

- Increased joy (MH 253)
- More power in prayer (5T 317)
- More bestowed to praise God (5T 317)
- Greater realization of God’s love (5T 317)
- Banishment of discouragement (MH 254)
- Health of body and soul promoted (MH 251)
- Steady increase of courage, hope, and faith (PK202)

**NOTE:** “No tongue can express, no finite mind can conceive, the blessing that results from appreciating the goodness and love of God: (MH 253).

## 4. A few of the many things to praise God for – Lam. 3:22, 23



**“Revival and Reformation:  
A Call to All of Us”**

*Dear Sisters,*

*As Seventh-day Adventist Church members around the world respond to the call for revival and reformation, we encourage all our sisters to participate fully in this important spiritual quest. Please read the following thoughtfully and prayerfully as we invite the outpouring of God’s spirit in each of our lives.*

.....

**G**od is waiting to pour out His Spirit upon His remnant people. The Holy Spirit will empower them to complete the work of preaching the three angels’ messages. The work done by the disciples must be done by us, only in a greater degree. We cannot receive this power unless we are willing to move out of our comfort zones and allow the Spirit to do the work within us that will place us in a position to receive the power.

**T**he question remains to be answered, are we willing to climb out of our comfort zones and confess and forsake our sins, to pray earnestly by ourselves and with our brothers and sisters for the promised power, and to consecrate ourselves to God and to God alone? Only you and I can answer this question for ourselves.

**Revival and Reformation Begins with Me**

**“**Christians should be preparing for what is soon to break upon the world as an overwhelming surprise, and this preparation they should make by diligently studying the word of God, and striving to conform their lives to its precepts.... God calls for a revival and a reformation. *Prophets and Kings, p. 626. (ChS 41.3)*

A revival and a reformation must take place under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. To fully understand, it is helpful to recognize that *revival* and *reformation* are two different things.

**Definitions**

- *Revival* signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from the spiritual death.
- *Reformation* signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices.