



DAILY DEVOTIONS FOR

21 DAYS OF PRAYER FOR REVIVAL



WEEK ONE:

PERSONAL REVIVAL



DAY ONE:

DESIGNED FOR INTIMACY

INTRODUCTION

When tracing any theme through Scripture, it is always wise to check out how it all started. What were God's original intentions? To do this we have to return to the beginnings. So our Scripture reading today goes right back to revival in the Garden. Except that it wasn't called "revival" because there was nothing to revive at that stage. No-one had slipped backwards. That comes in this Scripture reading. We find God's plan for our relationship with him and how that all got messed up in this passage. You may have to read between the lines a little to discern God's intentions, but I am sure you can see it.

SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 3:6-10

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree [of knowledge of good and evil] was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the Garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the Garden. But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"

He answered, "I heard you in the Garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

DEVOTION

A lot is made of nakedness in this passage so perhaps we should start there. Up to this point in the narrative, Adam and Eve had been completely naked and completely unashamed. They were not the same and they were certainly different from God, but this had no impact on their relationships. They were open books. Nothing to hide. No shame. No embarrassment.

This certainly applied to the relationship between Adam and Eve, but it also characterised their relationship with God. It appears that God would walk in the Garden and they would share and chat with him. These were special times. Just Adam and Eve and God walking and talking together. They would have learned so much and experienced how deeply God loved them. This was always God's plan. To have a deep, open, unashamed, loving relationship with his children.

In many ways this is a glimpse of what happens in revival. God restores the intimacy and tenderness of the



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Garden. We want to be close to God. We want to share with him. We want to walk by his side. We love his presence. We enjoy his freedom. We are saturated with his love. We drink deeply of his wisdom. This is what we are praying for over the next 21 days.

As the Scripture makes clear, Eve and Adam's disobedience wrecked all this. They thought they could be wise like God and so would not need him around all the time. And all they succeeded in doing was recognising how different and shameful (naked) they were – hence their need to hide from each other (fig leaf coverings) and especially to hide from God. All intimacy was lost at that moment.

Sin continues to have this impact. It does not break our relationship with God which Jesus has achieved for us. But the shame kills our intimacy. So as we will find, confession and repentance are keys to revival, restoration of our closeness to God. Thank goodness our sin does not have to separate us from God's love and intimacy.

PRAYER RESPONSE

I honestly want to be close to you Lord. I want to share my life with you. I want to be free of shame. I long to drink in your love for me and sense your presence. I dream of walking and talking feely and intimately with you. No shame. This is my heart cry.

PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

We live in a shameful and shame-filled world. Wherever I look there is pain, distress, brokenness, disappointment, arrogance, rebellion, oppression, fear. Our world bears all the marks of life without you Lord. Please bring your hope and healing and peace. We are desperate.



DAY TWO:

THE PRESENCE OF GOD

INTRODUCTION

It looked like the failure of Adam and Eve had closed the door to deep human intimacy with God. Ejected from the Garden, people were forced to make their own way. Sure, God would still speak and guide, but it was more as a wise teacher than an intimate friend. But this was not the whole story. In the Old Testament, we find occasional characters who were incredibly close to God. Oh, not everyone by any means. These companions of God stand out. One of them was Moses. Ex. 33:11 says, "The Lord would speak with Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend." At one point, Moses asked God, "show me your glory" (Ex. 33:18). Well he got his wish and experienced the lost intimacy and beauty and glory of the Garden. and he was so full of this glory that all his followers could see it.

SCRIPTURE: EXODUS 34:29-35

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the Lord. When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them; so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and he spoke to them. Afterward all the Israelites came near him, and he gave them all the commands the Lord had given him on Mount Sinai.

When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face. But whenever he entered the Lord's presence to speak with him, he removed the veil until he came out. And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, they saw that his face was radiant. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with the Lord.

DEVOTION

I wonder what Moses looked like after spending time with God. His appearance changed so much that people were afraid to come too close to him. But Moses' radiant face was merely a symbol of the beauty and power and holiness of God that rubbed off on him as he talked with God his friend. He was transformed by the presence of God and his followers could plainly see it.

But inevitably the radiance faded. Moses set up a special tent where he would go to meet with God. But in between these intimate conversations, he found that God's presence slowly faded away in his life. That is why he



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wore a veil (2 Cor. 3:13). He did not want people to see that he no longer reflected God's glory as much, that the radiance was disappearing.

There are at least two truths that are reflected in this narrative. The first is that the presence of God is both possible and transformative. If Moses could be a friend of God, so can we. We're children and heirs of God, which is even better. As we spend time with our friend, it makes a huge difference in our lives. We live better. We believe better. We love better. We lead better. This is personal revival. God's presence and glory filling our lives. And it will show.

The second truth is that God's presence fades. The grubbiness of our world rubs off on us. Our tendency to live independently increases. The attraction of sin grows. And so the glory of God in our lives dwindles. Fortunately, we do not need to head off to a tent to meet with God. But we do need to intentionally live in his presence or God's reviving glory will wane.

PRAYER RESPONSE

Lord, may I be a Moses who is so filled with your glory that other people notice you in my life. I really do want to be transformed by your presence so please give me strength to live close to your heart. Right now may your presence fill me as I talk with you my friend.

PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

There are many people in our community looking for hope and reality. They don't know it yet, but they are searching for you. Please unify your church and fill us with your presence so that our community may see your grace and goodness and power and love through us.



DAY THREE:

CLEANSING AND JOY

INTRODUCTION

One of the encouraging things about the Bible is that it describes its heroes warts and all. Great men and women of God are seen as deeply flawed. King David is one of these godly heroes. Although the Bible says that he was a man after God's heart, many of the stories indicate he had significant weaknesses. But in the songs David wrote, we get a glimpse of his true heart. He certainly did a lot wrong. Preceding the writing of Psalm 51, David had committed both adultery and murder. And God was not pleased. David would live with the painful consequences of these sins for the rest of his life. But in Psalm 51 we find David seeking God's forgiveness and pleading for cleansing and a revived purity and goodness and joy.

SCRIPTURE: PSALM 51:7-12

*Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.*

*Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.*

DEVOTION

You cannot separate repentance and revival. Because personal revival brings a new holiness and closeness with God, it is always preceded by repentance and maintained by repentance. As James said, "friendship with the world is enmity with God" (Jam. 4:4). So we can't be close friends with God and allow the world into our lives. The only way to stop sin getting a grip and destroying our friendship with God is continual repentance. This might sound like hard work, but it is actually incredibly freeing.

David refused to deal with his sin for over nine months and he found that it crushed his bones (51:8). I am not sure how you picture crushed bones, but having had a few broken bones in my time, it sounds incredibly painful to me. He felt ashamed. He lost his joy. And most significantly, he no longer knew the presence of God. He was even fearful of losing God's Spirit forever. Yet he still ignored and justified his sin until God finally broke through. Satan just loves to squash us and keep us imprisoned by our pride and shame.



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But as David repents of his sin, you can see the incredible freedom and life that he believes will flow from God. Cleanness (51:7). Purity – whiter than snow (51:7, 10). Joy (51:8). A new heart and spirit (51:10). Fresh faithfulness and obedience (51:10,12). This is the way to live.

The following illustration is a little gross, but then so is sin, so bear with me. I hate vomiting. I will fight so hard to hold it back. No matter how sick I feel, I will not give in. I am determined not to let that food come back up. Maybe it's fear or maybe it's pride. I do not know. But when I can finally hold it back no longer and I vomit, I feel really good (at least for a while). The wretched rubbish has been expelled. Sin is like that. We fight so hard to ignore it, or justify it, or hold it at bay, or pretend it is not too bad. We feel that nothing can be done about our sin and so we hold it in. But when it comes to the crunch and we admit, confess and repent, oh the joy and freedom that flows.

Personal revival involves giving up the deception of our goodness and letting Jesus take our sin and guilt away. We do not have to pretend anymore. We keep on repenting and are free through Jesus.

PRAYER RESPONSE

Read this Psalm again a few times and make it your personal prayer.

PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

Lord, sin is a terrible blight on our community. It touches everyone. It invades everything. It squashes our hope. It wrecks our peace. It crushes our bones. And it keeps us from friendship with you. Please bring your conviction like you did for David. May Satan's lies be exposed. May good grief and sorrow over sin lead to new life and freedom, and your revival.



DAY FOUR:

REMAINING IN CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

In today's Scripture, Jesus uses an agricultural illustration to explain his relationship with his followers. I am sure you will understand what Jesus is getting at but let me try to illustrate the truth in this passage with a different illustration. I have some preschool grandsons that love mowing the lawn with me. They are really keen to help. The problem is that our lawn is very thick and they have no chance of pushing the mower through it. So we come to a compromise. They will let me help them. We both push together, and the lawn gets mowed. We work as a team. They do not know it, but I am really mowing the lawn. Once I stop pushing, they are cactus. They need me to provide the muscle. With my support, we together get a well-mown lawn. Without my support, all their efforts are a waste of time. Now read Jesus' story.

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 15:5-8

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

DEVOTION

At first glance, this illustration has little to do with personal revival. Jesus is challenging the Jews to get linked in with him or otherwise God will discard them and leave them on the scrap heap despite all their religiosity and history. Without Jesus there will be no life or fruit for them.

But there are two themes in this passage that link with what we are learning about personal revival. The first is the emphasis on remaining in the vine. The more we stay connected with Jesus, the more fruit we will see. What does it mean to remain in Jesus? It is staying closely connected with Jesus so that we hear and obey his voice (15:7). It is having Jesus as an intimate friend. It is staying right with God and loving to follow him. These are the foundational elements of personal revival. We need to remain in Jesus.

The second theme in the Scripture is the power that flows from remaining in the Jesus vine. It is not just that we have a pleasant relationship with Jesus and are kept safe from the fire. We will bear "much fruit" and find that whatever we ask for will be answered. Wow. Now this is getting exciting. Revival not only brings freedom from sin through repentance and deeper intimacy with Christ, but it also results in more fruit, greater power and



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answered prayers.

Going back to my mowing illustration. The more we recognise our own weakness and get in sync with Jesus, the quicker and better that lawn will be mowed. Of course, staying with the allegory, Jesus could mow the lawn better and quicker by himself. But in his grace, he chooses to work through us. Jesus wants us pushing that mower with him as long as we realise that he is providing the muscle.

PRAYER RESPONSE

I recognise that I am hopeless and helpless without you Jesus. All my effort will produce nothing if you don't flow through me. To see "much fruit," I need to know your heart, hear your voice and rest in your strength. Draw my heart closer to you. May I be a channel for your authority and influence. May you produce much fruit through me.

PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

There are a lot of perishing branches all around me Jesus. On the surface, people look like they are flourishing but are dying everywhere. In my church. In my workplace. In my neighbourhood. Among my friends. People are cut off from you and slowly withering. If you don't do something, they are going to be thrown into the fire. My prayer is that you will bring the dead to life. That you will awaken. That you will revive. Please flow in us and through us.



DAY FIVE:

JESUS IS IN CONTROL

INTRODUCTION

Paul's letters were not adlib scribblings but very carefully constructed documents. It cost a lot of time and money to write a letter in Paul's day, so you had to be sure that you were not wasting words. In our Scripture reading today, when Paul outlines a prayer that he prays for those he is writing to, don't think that he is making it up as he goes. Every word counts. Every phrase matters. We are going to spend two days on this prayer because it is crucial for understanding two key steps in personal revival. I think this prayer relates to personal revival because it ends up with God doing "immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine by his power at work within us" Eph. 3:20. See if you can pick two steps to personal revival in this rather complex passage.

SCRIPTURE: EPHESIANS 3:14-21

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

DEVOTION

Paul is praying for something to happen in the inner being/heart of the Ephesians. For us, the word heart epitomises the centre of our emotions. It is the place where we feel. But for the Hebrews, it was much more. It was the centre of everything. Your heart controlled your thinking, your decisions, your opinions, your motivations, and your morality, as well as your feelings. So when you become a Christian, the Holy Spirit comes and positions himself in your "heart," at the centre of your life. In this prayer, Paul is praying that the Holy Spirit would do a powerful work in hearts of the Ephesians, so that Christ could live there.

But wait a minute, if we are Christians then surely Jesus is already living in us, along with the Holy Spirit. So why does the Spirit need to work powerfully to enable Jesus to dwell in our hearts? It all hinges around the word "dwell" which means live permanently, really settle down there. Deb and I are stayers when it comes to homes. We lived in our last large family home for over 20 years. We settled down there. We outlasted the kids who left,



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came back and moved out again. We eventually got all their gear out too. It became well and truly all our place. We owned it in every way. We “dwelt” there.

The trouble with our heart is that it is a crowded place with lots of tenants. Jesus lives at the centre of our lives, but so do our fears, our curses, our idols, our passions, our pain, our habits. So when it comes to making decisions that govern how we will live, there are many residents having their say in our heart. Sometimes we listen to Jesus, but our choices are also driven by the other voices at our very centre. They make it difficult to love and follow Jesus wholeheartedly.

Paul is praying that the Spirit would work powerfully so that the other tenants would be driven out completely. Then Jesus could have the whole place. Then he could speak without confusion. Then he could work powerfully through our lives. This is not a matter of willpower. I am sure you have tried. It is the freeing work of the Holy Spirit that we pray for. This is a key step in personal revival.

PRAYER RESPONSE

I do not know how this is going to happen, but I pray Holy Spirit that you will work in my heart to get rid of all that Jesus doesn't want there. Jesus, I really want you to dwell in me, all of me. I want to love you and follow you and be full of you. Holy Spirit, please root out all that opposes Jesus in me.

PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

There are so many places in our world that you do not rule Jesus. Please extend your kingdom. Take charge. Show your power. Drive out the evil forces and establish your authority. We need you Jesus.



DAY SIX:

KNOWING CHRIST'S LOVE

INTRODUCTION

I have quite a few grandchildren. So far, they like me most around the one to three age range. That is when I'm at my peak. I'm fun, entertaining, cool, enthusiastic, with lots of sweets. I can only do about an hour of babysitting because it is hard work being that exciting, but it is a great hour for a two-year-old. Our grandson Tate is two and it is his turn to like grandpa. Recently when I was minding him overnight, I woke in the morning to find Tate lying quietly on a pillow on the floor beside my bed just waiting for grandpa to wake up. But he has no idea how much I love him. He did not know that I watched him for 10 minutes as he lay there. Loving him, praying for him. He will find better heroes soon. Maybe he will never understand just how much I care for him. God is watching you now. You have no idea how much he loves you.

SCRIPTURE: EPHESIANS 3:14-21

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

DEVOTION

As Paul points out, Christians have a strong foundation in God's love (3:17). The gospel is saturated with God's love for us and his grace in sending Jesus to live, die and rise for us. We do not become Christians by doing good stuff, but by receiving God's love in Jesus. Saving love is our foundation. But it is only the start. There is so much more to grasp about God's love.

Eugene Peterson translates Paul's prayer: "And I ask him that with both feet planted firmly on love, you'll be able to take in with all followers of Jesus the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love. Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights!" Paul is praying that the Lord will open their eyes of the Ephesians so that they will know Christ's colossal love for them and their community and their world. That they would be saturated with the joy of his magnificent love. That they would revel in the deep security of being



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loved eternally. That they would see how desperately God loves their community and the people they serve.

I think there is a progression in this prayer. The pathway to personal revival first involves Jesus being Lord of our lives. Then with Jesus firmly in control, we can begin to explore and appreciate and celebrate and delight in how deeply he loves. This does not happen naturally. As Paul says, the love of Jesus "surpasses knowledge." So it has to be a work of God's Spirit to open our eyes to his love. This revelation is the second step in personal revival.

Appreciating the love of Jesus is vital in revival. If we are not saturated with God's love, revival quickly becomes another set of rules that we have to keep to ensure that we maintain God's approval and blessing. Revival can become a legalistic prison for us as we try to avoid sin and do right. But when revival is drenched in God's love and grace, it becomes an exciting journey with Jesus as we see the kingdom of God on the move in us and through us.

PRAYER RESPONSE

This seems impossible to me Lord, but I want so much to be saturated with your love. I want to experience the breadth and plumb the depths of your immense and incredible and eternal love. Open my eyes to your love for me, fill me with your love. Let me feel that I am loved like I've never felt love before.

PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

We live in a world short on love. In families, in workplaces, in governments, in communities. There is plenty of action but little love. Please pour out your love in new ways. Open eyes. May your love be seen.



DAY SEVEN:

OPEN THE DOOR

INTRODUCTION

We finish our week on praying for personal revival in the last book in the Bible. Revelation 3:20 was a prominent verse in my childhood. It was often quoted by travelling evangelists. They would conclude their message with the image of this verse - Jesus standing at the door of our hearts knocking and asking to come in. All we had to do was open the door and Jesus would enter and we would become his children. That's an attractive picture and God graciously used it to draw many into his family, but it's not what this verse is really saying. Jesus is not addressing non-Christians with his appeal to enter and eat but lukewarm Christians. He is speaking to those he loves and disciplines. See for yourself.

SCRIPTURE: REVELATION 3:14-21

To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: "These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne.

DEVOTION

Laodicea was the wealthiest city in its region with a burgeoning financial sector, extensive textile industry and famous eye salve. You will find allusions to these aspects of Laodicea in this passage. The main problem for the Christians was that their wealth was making them self-reliant. They could not see their spiritual poverty. They were lukewarm. Sure they spoke of Christ and acknowledged his salvation and worshipped together, but for most of the time they pretty well did what they wanted. And this made God sick.



DAY SEVEN:

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This church's problem is probably true of much of the Western church. We have so much materially and so little spiritually. We are lukewarm. But God has not given up on us and he hasn't given up on you. Jesus stands at the door of your heart and is knocking. He is appealing for you to listen for his voice and let him take over. He wants to bring personal revival to you. He wants to make you spiritually hot.

You can see many of this week's themes reflected in the passage. The invitation is to deep friendship. Jesus wants to eat with you. To spend time with you. To encourage you. To relax with you. To do life with you. To love you. This is personal revival.

The entry of Jesus requires acknowledgment of our lukewarmness and deep repentance. Revival is not an added dimension to strengthen our spiritual walk but a new passion and friendship with Jesus based on acknowledging our brokenness ("wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, naked") and turning away from our self-sufficiency.

Jesus is knocking on your heart right now. He wants to share your whole life. He wants to cleanse you of your self-reliance. He wants to "dwell" in you. He wants to reveal the immensity of his love for you. He wants to set you free to be his completely. You can hear him calling. It is time to open the door.

PRAYER RESPONSE

I am hungry for more of your presence Jesus. I have heard you knocking and calling. I am ready to open the door. I confess that I am broken and self-reliant and lukewarm. I desperately want you to fill all my life.

PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

Lord much of the church in our country is lukewarm. We think we are doing okay but we are not. Please forgive us and heal us. Put a new fire in us. Work in fresh power. Please revive us in your grace.



WEEK ONE

SMALL GROUP RESOURCES

We have started our 21 Days of Prayer for Revival focusing on Personal Revival. Even if God does not work in revival power in our nation as we believe that he will, we can still personally experience revival in our relationship with God. Community revival begins with individual revival.

Study the passage carefully but allow sufficient time for the prayer exercises at the end. These 21 days are all about prayer for revival so make sure your group actually prays together.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Share a time in your life when you really felt close to God and had a deep desire to obey him. What brought this about? What did this look like for you? Did anything special happen?
2. Read Ephesians 3:14-21.
3. Paul is praying from prison for the Ephesians. 3:14-15 sets the context for his prayer. What do these verses tell us about Paul's passion and beliefs as he approaches God in this prayer for revival for the Ephesian church?
4. Have you seen God do "immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine" (3:20). Share a few stories. What do you think may happen if God works in revival in your life? What do you think may happen if God works in revival in your church?
5. What do you think might be preventing God working in greater power in your life and in your church? If God is able to work so powerfully (3:20), why do we not see more of "his power at work within us" (3:20)?
6. Paul has two major prayer points for the Ephesians (3:16-19). Can you summarise what they are? Don't worry if you can't make sense of everything in this Scripture. We cover this passage in Day 5 and Day 6. (By all means look at the devotions for these days if you want some help.)
7. Personal revival might seem a long way away for you. What do you think is the next step forward in drawing you closer to Jesus and more willing to follow him?

PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

1. Have someone pray Paul's prayer aloud over the group twice. If possible, use a translation that is easy to understand.
2. Together pray for God's powerful work in your church family.
3. Divide into pairs. Share again your responses to question 7 and pray for each other.

