**Prayer Devotionals for FMCIC 21-Days of Prayer & Fasting** Sept. 10-30/21

(prepared by the National Prayer Team)

**Prayer & Renewal** (Week 1)

1. **Unless the Lord builds the house**

*“****Unless the Lord builds the house****, its builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.” (Ps.127:1)*

* **Note:** We were told by Dr. Steve Elliot at one of our pastor’s conference that on average the evangelical churches across Canada and the US are plateaued or in decline. We were also told that 60% of the children raised in our churches are leaving the church when they become adults. We cannot accept this as our “new norm”. Judah was facing a similar plight as the enemy closed in on them for the kill in King Hezekiah’s say, but he knew what to do. He called on the LORD to deliver them from evil. Dr. Elliot pointed out to us that while friendship evangelism and living godly lives are critical to reaching people for Christ, it is not nearly as effective without God confirming the gospel with signs and wonders. Prayer is the key that releases that power of God. We can polish our shields and sharpen our swords, but unless the LORD goes out with our armies, we will continue to have minimal results.
* **Quote:** *“The greatest answer to prayer is greater prayer.” (Jim Cymbala)*
* **Prayer Guide:** Pray that every aspect of our movement will flow out of prayer, that as a family of churches and churches of families we will not just be a church with prayer, but be a church of prayer…..it’s part of our spiritual DNA and becomes organic more than organized.
1. **My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations**

*“And as he taught them, he said, ‘Is it not written:* ***‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’****? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’” (Mk.11:17)*

* **Note:** When God brought His people back from exile to their inherited land, after 70 years in captivity, the first thing they did was to **rebuild the altar** and then they started to **rebuild the temple**. When I read the word temple, I read, “house of prayer”, because when Solomon dedicated that first temple to the Lord, he asked that it would be a place where God listened to their prayers, even the prayers of Gentiles. Jesus Himself declared the purpose of the temple to be that when He cleansed it. As we seek to build ourselves into a house of prayer, we must be sure that we first build the altar of sacrifice where we earnestly take stock of our lives to see where we are falling short of His glory, just as the seven churches in Revelation needed to, so that He will hear our prayers.
* **Quote:** **“***If we ever forget our basic character – ‘My house is a house of prayer’ - we might as well shut the church doors forever. For if we lose that emphasis, all the rest - dynamic of our corporate witness, the impact on society, the outreach existentially into the lives of men and women – will soon rot and wither and die.”  (James S. Stewart)*
* **Prayer Guide:** Ask God to help your local church and the FMCIC to discover how it can become a house of prayer that impacts your community, our country and nations significantly, so that He may receive glory for the evident results. Pray that you will have the faith to put legs under those prayers as well.
1. **Stand before me in the gap**

 *“I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and* ***stand before me in the gap*** *on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one.” (Ez.22:30)*

* **Note:** Nehemiah was deeply grieved by the devasted condition of Jerusalem – *“the gates have been destroyed by fire”* – and the trouble and disgrace of God’s people. He began to fast and pray about this and God gave him a plan of how to rebuild their protective walls, to keep their enemies from having their way with them. God helped them and in Nehemiah 4:6 it says: “*So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart”* and *“the gaps were being closed”.* As churches and a family of churches, we need to both work hard and pray hard…..but pray comes first if we want powerful results.
* **Quote: *“****You do not need great discernment to find fault. If you recall, you could find fault with life's imperfections even before you were saved. But if you want to grow in Christ's likeness, you must learn to be an intercessor, one who “stand[s] in the gap” (Ezek. 22:30). What is the gap? It’s the distance between the way things are and the way things could be if God answered your prayers. You stand in that envisioned yet unformed reality and pray for mercy, for forgiveness and for redemption to flood the area of need!” (Francis Frangipane)*
* **Prayer Guide:** Pray that God will stir us to join together in corporate prayer to stand in the gap for our movement to be of one mind, one love, one spirit and one purpose.
1. **They came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army**

*“Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.’”****10****So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them;* ***they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army****.” (Ez..37:9-10)*

* **Note:** In some ways we are like the lifeless bodies in the valley. We have heard the gospel preached and have been transformed from dry bones to corpses, perhaps like the early church before Pentecost. We too need the breath of the Spirit to breathe His empowering life into us to enable us to become a mighty army to advance the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven.
* **Quote:** *“Nothing short of renewed emphasis on the empowering and purifying work of God’s Holy Spirit will salvage the work of Christ in North America” (Dr. Steve Elliot)*
* **Prayer Guide:** Earnestly call upon the Lord to help our pastors to clearly and bravely teach the word of God so that we will become a mighty Spirit-filled army with fresh power, holiness of life, boldness of sharing, obvious love.
1. **That petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people**

***“****I urge, then, first of all, that* ***petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people****— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior,**who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. (1Timothy 2:1-4)*

* **Note:** Paul encourages 4 Kinds of Prayer: Supplications: refers to humbly

petitioning God for a particular need; Prayers: plural form means the broad scope of prayer including prayers of blessing, praise, joy and repentance. Intercessions: the act of seeking God’s presence to hear His heart on behalf of individuals, churches, communities, institutions, people groups, nations and/or denominations and; Thanksgiving: needs no explanation- we come to recognize that it is indispensable – lifting one’s spirits after pouring out our hearts for the needs of others.

* **Quote: “**Remember that grace and truth cannot finally be crucified. Remember that all the high things that make humanity beautiful cannot be forever laid in the dust, spattered with blood. And most of all, remember that He who rose from the dead, rose to pour out His Holy Spirit into human lives, and, by that Spirit, to make available to any individual all the fullness of Himself, twenty-four hours a day.” (Ray Stedman)
* **Prayer Guide:** Ask the Lord to grant our leaders and pastors a growing relationship with Himself. That He would renew any that are discouraged and ready to quit. That those who are struggling with moral failure will seek help and be set free to serve God with clean hands and heart. That He would grant them His strategy for making disciples that will be able withstand the difficult days ahead.
1. **I keep my eyes always on the Lord**

*“David said about him: ‘I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken’” (Ac.2:25), and* ***“I keep my eyes always on the Lord.*** *With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.” (Ps.16:8)*

* **Note:** The right hand is place of extreme honour. Setting before me is an intentional act of choosing/ honouring… At the start of the COVID pandemic I heard that Netflix subscriptions skyrocketed. We Canadian set entertainment before us. In the same way we intentionally set thet Lord before us through spiritual practices (prayer, worship). King David says that when we do that we too shall not be shaken…moved.
* **Quote:** *“For of all things, contemplating and loving the Creator made my soul seem less in its own sight and filled it full with reverent fear and true meekness and with much love for my fellow Christians.” (Julian of Norwich)*
* **Prayer Guide:** Thatas God’s people we would not be distracted by the pleasures of this world, but give our best attention to seeking the face of God so that we might know Him and be filled with His joy, peace and love.
1. **Isaac reopened the wells that had been dug in the time of his father Abraham**

*“****Isaac reopened the wells that had been dug in the time of his father Abraham****, which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham died, and he gave them the same names his father had given them.” (Gen.26:18)*

* **Note:** As I think about the prayer ministry of the FMCIC being deepened, I see it as re-digging the wells of revival that our movement has experienced in the past. In those times a spirit of prayer and supplication was upon the church that invited the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that sanctified the believers and swept thousands of the lost into the Kingdom of God. The form of revival may not look like it did in the past (it usually doesn’t), but the results are the same. Just as Isaac re-dug the wells that his father had dug - wells that represented the promised blessing of God (Gal.3:14) that had been stopped up by the enemy – renewing the prayer life of our movement is digging down to those springs of living water again.
* **Quote:** “Revival is the acceleration of the normal work of the Holy Spirit.” (unknown)
* **Prayer Guide:** Pray that we do not become satisfied with the new normal. Pray that our next generation will develop a heart of prayer that will cause them to dig deep to the source of living waters and experience a new outpouring of the Spirit that will enable them to take the gospel to the ends of the earth that will amaze us.

**Freedom in Christ** (Week 2)

1. **It all starts with the message of the cross that brings freedom**

*“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:18)*

* **Note:** There are many messages in the world today. Messages of self-improvement, self care, looking after self. However, there is only one message that brings everlasting improvement, everlasting hope and everlasting life. And that one message is the message of the cross, the message of Jesus Christ dying on the cross for the sins of the world. And that message includes the message of the resurrection. Therein lies our hope, our salvation and power. The temptation today is to tell the world something apart from the cross. If the preachers preach a message without the cross, there will be no salvation and no power to walk in freedom from our sins. Every day we must remind ourselves that the message is the cross and we preach Christ crucified.
* **Quote***: “A cross-less Christianity isn’t just a deficient Christianity; it’s the same old satanism of human striving.” (Russell D. Moore, Tempted and Tried: Temptation and the Triumph of Christ)*
* **Prayer:** Heavenly Father, it is in the cross of Christ that I glory. Thank you for the message of that cross that brings repentance and salvation; freedom and power. May I never forget my calling to always preach Jesus crucified. Be glorified in my words today. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.
1. **The cross is the sign of God’s love to us and the world**

***“****God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him.**This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.” (1 John 4:9-10)*

* **Note:** On July 7th, 1967 the Beatles released their monster hit, “All You Need is Love”. And its true – love is all we need. Unfortunately, the love suggested by the Beatles and the world is an emotional self-serving love. This is not the love that can save us from sin, despair and destruction, from hell itself. Real love is not a feeling, its an action. And this is what John is driving at: God loves by sending His Son to die on the cross. This is love, love in action. And this “real love” is not something that we do, but its what has been done by God and we receive by faith. When we tell people that God loves them, what are we telling them? Are we telling them that God has “mushy” feelings for them, like puppy love, or are we in fact telling them that God loves them by what He has done with His Son on the cross? By this love we can know that we are free from sin.
* **Quote:** *“The shape of true love isn’t a diamond, it’s a cross.” (Alicia Bruxvoort, Guideposts)*
* **Prayer:** Heavenly Father, thank you for the cross, the greatest demonstration of your love to the world. Thank you, Holy Spirit, for revealing this love to me in Christ and for enabling me to receive Christ as my Lord and saviour. Jesus, as you died and lived for me, may I die and live for you today, demonstrating your love to the world. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.
1. **Knowing His love on the cross for us, by grace through faith, we can know His freedom**

***“****For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin.” (Romans 6:7)*

* **Note:** In every home there is electrical power. It is this power that runs our homes. We plug in a lamp, turn it on and we have light that floods the room. We plug in a television and we can be entertained, informed or distracted. We have electrical stoves that we can turn on and we can cook a meal. It is a wonderful “power”. There is another power, however, that is destructive and we can’t turn it off. That is the power of sin. It is a power that runs and ruins our lives. And no matter how much we try, we cannot turn that power off. We are controlled by this power in our selfishness, mistakes, rebelliousness and behaviour that is destructive. And while we can’t turn it off, there is Good News, because “when we died with Christ, we were set free from the power of sin.” The moment we believed and received Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, we were crucified with Christ and the power was switched off and we were set free from the power of sin. This is because at the cross and on the cross, Jesus dealt the death blow to the power of sin that controls us.
* **Quote:**  *“Christian liberty is freedom from sin, not freedom to sin.” (A.W. Tozer)*
* **Prayer:** Heavenly Father, thank you for the Good News that not only was my sin debt paid at the cross by the life and blood of Jesus, the power of sin was broken and now in Christ I am free. May I not take your freedom for granted, but seek to live in that freedom by abiding in Christ. Be glorified in all that I am and do today. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.
1. **In Christ we have been truly set free, and can walk in that freedom**

*“So, Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don’t get tied up again in slavery to the law.” (Galatians 5:1)*

* **Note:** When a criminal is charged and is found guilty of their sin, they are sent to prison to “do their time”. All of us stand guilty of sin before God and should have to “do time”. But the Good News is that Jesus did our time and cross, and by His blood we are forgiven and by faith and trust in Him we have been pardoned and set free. Now we have to remain free. How do we do that? Oftentimes we think “we have to stay free”. But the reality is that we are already free in Christ. Christ has set us free, and we remain free in Him as we daily surrender to Him who is our freedom. Its not a matter of living out our freedom for Him, rather it is letting Jesus live freely in us. As Paul said previously in Galatians 2:20, “it is no longer I who lives but Christ who live in me”.
* **Quote**: *“Christian freedom does not mean being free to do as we like: it means being free to do as we ought.” (William Barclay)*
* **Prayer:** Heavenly Father, thank you for the Good News that Jesus paid our sin debt in full and by faith and trust in Him I have been pardoned and forgiven. Thank you, Lord, that it was for freedom that I have been set free. I surrender daily to you so that you might rule and reign in me and I will not fall back into ungodly living. Be glorified in and through me today. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.
1. **We are also free from the forces of the evil one**

*“You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world.” (Colossians 2:20)*

* **Note:** Jesus describes the devil as the ruler of this world (John 12:31) and the father of all lies (John 8:44). The way that the devil exercises his “power” in this world is through the lies that he whispers. He whispers lies that appeal to our pride, to our ego, to our desire for self-autonomy, self-sufficiency, self-aggrandizement, self-centeredness and selfishness. And it is the sinful human belief in these lies that give the devil power over our lives and this world. It is this power that is destructive and alienates us from God. It is this power that resulted in Adam and Eve being removed from the place of relationship with God. And so, the whole world was cast into a dungeon of lies, of which the devil was the warden. But something happened the day when Jesus was nailed to the cross. The devil and all his powers were disarmed (Colossians 2:15). Something happened the day we received Jesus as Lord and saviour and the blessings of truth and forgiveness were applied to our lives. Not only were we set free from the lying power of sin, we were also set free from the lying, deceptive power of the devil and all his influences in the world. And since Jesus is the truth, and His truth is in us, we are able to hear the lies of the devil and not fall back into darkness.
* ***Quote:*** *“The devil will trick you into thinking that you’re still struggling with what God has freed you from”. (Jonni Nicole, Christian musician*)
* **Prayer:** Heavenly Father, thank you for your love on the cross in Jesus. And thank that by receiving Jesus as my Lord and saviour, His blood on the cross has pardoned me and forgiven me. Thank you also for the Good News that I have been set free from the devil’s lies and his power. Thank you that because I am in Christ, I am free in Christ and free from the devil, his power and his lies. May I glorify you today with this freedom. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.
1. **We are free to live in the power of the Holy Spirit**

***“****By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world’s corruption caused by human desires.” (2 Peter 1:3-4)*

* **Note:**  We have seen that there are many sources of power by which we can live and how we can have an efficient life. We have electric power, we have political power, we have self-power (self-empowerment) we have physical power and emotional power and of course there is the devil’s power. However, we have seen that none of these “powers” can save us from sin, or give us the life that only God can give. The power that we need is the power that comes from the cross, from the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. By faith through grace, we have been set free from all those insufficient and false powers. By faith in Jesus Christ, we have been given another power by which we can live. And this power is called “divine power”. It is “dunamis” power, the same power from the Holy Spirit that was poured out upon the disciples at Pentecost. It is the power of the Holy Spirit in us that enables us to live the godly life that reflects and radiates both Jesus and the freedom we have in Christ. By this power of the Holy Spirit, we are conformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ by which we become living witnesses to the world of true life found only in Jesus.
* ***Quote:*** *“It is the Holy Spirit that sheds the love of God abroad in their hearts, and the love of all mankind; thereby purifying their hearts from the love of the world, from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. It is by Him they are delivered from anger and pride, from all vile and inordinate affections.” (John Wesley)*
* **Prayer:** Heavenly Father, thank you for the power of the blood, the power of the cross, and for the power of the Holy Spirit by which I can live your godly life in Christ. Lord, as I submit all that I am to you, Holy Spirit release that power in me to live freely today with fullness, with completeness and with victory. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.
1. **Free to live as we want**

*“For in my inner being I delight in God’s law;**but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?” (Rom.7:22-24)*

* **Note:** In our generation there is a great desire for a clean and healthy environment. We are prepared to expend great discipline and expense to have natural foods, clean air and wate and minimal man-made climate change; to return to a pristine environment as God created it. Yet, we seem oblivious to the fact that we need to put just much effort, and more, into returning the God’s moral order, called holiness. And even when we do get glimpses of what that would be like, if we are honest, we realize that we are unable to achieve this kind of purity in our own wisdom and strength. We need a holy Saviour (not an unholy antichrist saviour) who laid down His life to rescue us from ourselves. That is what Jesus meant when He declared that He had come to usher in the year of the Lord’s favour, the year of Jubilee, the year of setting the captives free, forgiving debts, and reinstating inheritances as they children of God.
* **Quote: “**The same lips which spoke us into existence, have spoken the laws by which we are to govern our existence.” ⏤ Charles Spurgeon
* **Prayer:** Father, revive and recreate us so that we can preach a Scriptural holiness that is good news to the poor, proclaims freedom to the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind and releases the oppressed through the name of Jesus.

**Love and Unity** (Week 3)

1. **The cross is the sign of God’s love to us and the world**

***“****God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him.****This is real love****—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.” (1 John 4:9-10)*

* **Note:** On July 7th, 1967 the Beatles released their monster hit, “All You Need is Love”. And its true – love is all we need. Unfortunately, the love suggested by the Beatles and the world is an emotional self-serving love. This is not the love that can save us from sin, despair and destruction, from hell itself. Real love is not a feeling, its an action. And this is what John is driving at: God loves by sending His Son to die on the cross. This is love, love in action. And this “real love” is not something that we do, but its what has been done by God and we receive by faith. When we tell people that God loves them, what are we telling them? Are we telling that God loves them by what He has done with His Son on the cross? By this love we can know that we are free from sin.
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* **Prayer:** Heavenly Father, thank you for the cross, the greatest demonstration of your love to the world. Thank you, Holy Spirit, for revealing this love to me in Christ and for enabling me to receive Christ as my Lord and saviour. Jesus, as you died and lived for me, may I die and live for you today, demonstrating your love to the world. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.
1. **Sanctified and Unified by the Truth**

*“I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.**I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.****Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.****” (John 17:14-17)*

* **Note:** In communication with His Father, Jesus prayed this prayer over His disciples not long after washing the disciple’s feet and hours away from His crucifixion. This was a prayer for their protection from Satan as well as their sanctification, but why was it needed? Jesus had made two things clear. First, the disciples were not going to live a life free from opposition, they were going to be hated by the world just like He had been before them (John 15:18). Second, Jesus knew that the disciples were not going to live in isolation from the world, but were to bump shoulders with it. They were not to form a holy club and hide out, but live as the salt and light that Jesus intended (Matthew 5:13-14). How were the disciples to survive such on onslaught and the devil’s tactics? They were to be set apart and consecrated in the truth of God’s word.
* **Quote:** *“Make the word of God the arena in which you live” (Joe Dongell)*
* **Prayer Guide:** As humans, the reality is that truth is not found within us and we are easily prone to deception. The prophet Jeremiah said “the heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick, who can understand it” (Jeremiah 17:9) and King Solomon wrote “there is a way that seems right to a man which in the end leads to death” (Proverbs 16:25). As we approach general conference, pray that as a movement we seek the truth of God’s word as the means by which we tackle all the presenting issues we are facing now and in the future. May we be prepared to be hated by the world if that what it takes to live out Jesus’ mandates as His followers.
1. **No Discrimination Among Us**

*“My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism.**Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in.**If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, “Here’s a good seat for you,” but say to the poor man, ‘You stand there’ or ‘Sit on the floor by my feet,’****have you not discriminated among yourselves*** *and become judges with evil thoughts? (Jas. 2:1-7)*

* **Note:** A key cultural tension in James mind is between rich and poor. Tensions in current Canadian culture between Indigenous/ Black/ Asian/Another group and whites… Try substituting another race/ for “poor” and “white” for “rich”. This can bring James’ point closer to home for us today. Anytime there is a power imbalance or abuse we are subject to tension. James seems to be concerned about why we prefer the rich, successful and prominent among us as people with whom we are impressed. Are there other characteristics/ qualities that may be more worthy of our admiration?
	+ - **Quote:** *“If we are not careful, our colleges will produce a group of close-minded, unscientific, illogical propagandists, consumed with immoral acts. Be careful, 'brethren!' Be careful, teachers!”  (Martin Luther King Jr.)*
* **Prayer Guide:** Pray that our local churches will be examples of the kind of unity pictured in Heaven where every tribe, tongue and race are glorifying God together. Also, please pray that we will stand up to discrimination that takes on many disguises, some old and some new.
1. **A Life in God Results in a Life of Love**

*“And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love.* ***Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in Him.****” (1Jn.4:16)*

* **Note:** Two people can’t be close friends if they have totally different values. However, whoever you spend lots of time with will influence you. If you spend a lot of time in a barn you end up smelling like one. If you spend a lot of time with God you start acting like Him. In fact, if you don’t start acting like Him, loving like He does, you can’t have a close relationship with Him.
* **Quote:** *“For of all things, contemplating and loving the Creator made my soul seem less in its own sight and filled it full with reverent fear and true meekness and with much love for my fellow Christians.” (Julian of Norwich)*
* **Prayer Guide:** Please ask the Lord that we will not just seek His hand of blessing but also His face of love so that we can truly know Him and love each other like Him, and love our neighbors as ourselves. Pray that we will be known as a people that love each other deeply.
1. **Generous Love**

*“If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children,****let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth****.” (1Jn.3:17,18)*

* **Note:** When I first became part of the Free Methodist family of churches, it was known as one of the most generous denominations in North America. As I recall the per capita giving of its members was about 7%. I’m not sure what it is today, but if it is like the rest of the churches, our per capita giving is going down, while we enjoy a standard of living that the average person 50 years ago could only dream of. Paul commended the church in Macedonia for being so generous, even though they were extremely poor (1Cor.8:2). Canadian stats on giving year after year reveal that the poorest provinces are the most generous. This points to the fact that, the more we have the harder it is to give it away, and we have lots.
* **Quote: “***When a man becomes a Christian, he becomes industrious, trustworthy and prosperous. Now, if that man when he gets all he can and saves all he can does not give all he can, I have more hope for Judas Iscariot than for that man!” (John Wesley)*
* **Prayer Guide:** Let us ask God to enable us to excel in the grace of giving (1Cor.8:7) to our local churches, to various charities including the FMCIC, to the great needs beyond our borders and to those around us. Ask Him to help us to not only tithe but give offerings beyond that.
1. **There can be no mercy if there is no justice**

*“****Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne****; love and faithfulness go before you.” ((Ps.89:14)*

* **Note:** The nature of God is that He is holy and He wants His creation to be holy too. We understand this somewhat when we desire an unpolluted world where there is clean air, clean water and nature in balance. God not only created the world that way in the first place, but He wants it restored to that. But He wants much more than that, He wants clean souls. In fact, clean souls are the key to clean water and clean air. It was the sin of Adam and Eve that brought disorder to creation and it is our sins that perpetuate that disorder. All man’s efforts to bring about a healthy world are in vain apart from God. We must acknowledge that He is Lord of the universe and His throne is founded on righteousness and justice, and then we can receive His love and faithfulness. He sent His Son Jesus to offer us mercy if we acknowledge our sin and that He paid the penalty of death for our iniquities on the cross.
* **Quote:** *“How fair is mercy when she stands by the side of justice! Bright beams the star of grace amid the night of wrath!” – Charles Spurgeon*
* **Prayer Guide:** Ask the Lord to show us mercy by opening our eyes to see where our deeds are not complete, where we are only 98% committed to Him, where we are not living holy lives.
1. **Truth-based Love**

*“Instead,* ***speaking the truth in love****, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.” (Eph.4:15)*

* **Note:** Today, bookstores are full of how-to books on a wide range of subjects but especially on relationships. The reason for that is that we all recognize that there are good ways to relate and bad ways. There are ways that are based on the good order of life and ways that run contrary to that order and lead to conflict, confusion, lack of fulfillment, harm and even death. We all recognize and have experienced strong emotions in our relationships, but we also should recognize that emotions are the fruit of, and not the root of, healthy relationships. The root of true love is based in truth, and fruit, whether good or bad, grows out of that. The Bible tells us that the fruit of the Spirit of truth is love, while the fruit of the passions of our flesh is death (Gal.5:19-25).
* **Quote:** *“It is always easier to fight for one’s principles than to live up to them.” Alfred Adler*
* **Prayer Guide:** Let us ask the Lord to open our eyes to His revealed will found in the Bible about what true love looks like, so that we can speak the truth in love to one another, especially in regards to the ethical concerns related to the 3 task forces reporting to General Conference regarding racial discrimination, women in ministry and what it means to be welcoming and hospitable to people who identify as LGBTQ+.