

# What Is United Prayer?

## 1 **Question**

2 What Is United Prayer?

3

## 4 **Introduction**

5 United prayer refers to (1) a group of people unitedly praying in a  
6 focused manner for an extended length of time, for a specific  
7 objective—perhaps for the conversion of a specific person or group of  
8 people in the church; and (2) a group of people offering short  
9 prayers on a specific theme as prompted by one of the group, then  
10 going on to pray short prayers on another them, then another, etc. I  
11 share quite a bit of information that follows. Anything from the Bible  
12 or Ellen White will have quotations marks and citations.—Dan

13

## 14 **United Prayer First Type:**

### 15 **Unitedly Praying for the Same Objective.**

16 Regarding the first form of "United Prayer," Ellen White speaks of  
17 praying in unity with others regarding a specific objective. She bases  
18 her thoughts on Matt. 18:19.

## 19 **Bible Answer**

20 Matthew 18:19 (NKJV) “Again I say to you that if two of you agree  
21 on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by  
22 My Father in heaven.”

## 23 **Inspired Answer**

24 “Our Saviour follows His lessons of instruction with a promise that if  
25 two or three should be united in asking anything of God it should be  
26 given them. Christ here shows that there must be union with others,  
27 even in our desires for a given object. Great importance is attached to  
28 the united prayer, the union of purpose. God hears the prayers of  
29 individuals, but on this occasion Jesus was giving especial and  
30 important lessons that were to have a special bearing upon His newly  
31 organized church on the earth. **There must be an agreement in the**  
32 **things which they desire and for which they pray. It was not**  
33 **merely the thoughts and exercises of one mind, liable to deception;**

34 **but the petition was to be the earnest desire of several minds**  
35 **centered on the same point.”**{ CCh 242.1}

36 "This is the ground of our difficulties; this is the reason for the  
37 pressure for means. The people must be called to reflection. There  
38 must be a spiritual awakening. They must have a personal interest, a  
39 burden of soul, to watch and pray for the success of the work. Let  
40 every one who gives of his means also send up his prayers daily that it  
41 may bring souls to the foot of the cross. In every church there should  
42 be stated seasons for united prayer for the advancement of this  
43 work. **Let all be united, having a specific object for their faith and**  
44 **entreaties.** Brethren, move high heaven with your prayers for God to  
45 work with the efforts of His servants." {1NL 30.2}

46 "The faith we have in the promises of God is feeble in comparison to  
47 what it should be. But the encouragement is given that if two or three  
48 shall agree, uniting together to ask the Lord in prayer for any one  
49 thing, He will give it us. These occasions of united prayer to the Lord,  
50 making our requests known unto Him, are not made as frequently as  
51 they should be. Seeking the Lord with the heart, represented as asking,  
52 seeking, knocking, is profitable. These are terms expressive of urgent  
53 need for immediate help from the source of all grace and power."  
54 {Lt45-1897.15}

55

## 56 **The Results of United Prayer**

### 57 **United Prayer Brought Answers**

58 "As a church, we have received great light. This light the Lord has  
59 entrusted to us for the benefit and blessing of the world. To us has  
60 been given the ministry of reconciliation. With power from on high we  
61 are to beseech men to be reconciled to God. We are encouraged to  
62 pray for success, with the divine assurance that our prayers will be  
63 heard and answered. "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching  
64 anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father  
65 who is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My  
66 name, there am I in the midst of them." "Ask of Me, and I will answer  
67 your requests." {Lt32-1903.15} **The promise is made on condition**  
68 **that the united prayers of the church are offered, and in answer to**  
69 **these prayers there may be expected a power greater than that**  
70 **which comes in answer to private prayer.** The power given will be  
71 proportionate to the unity of the members and their love for God and  
72 for one another." {Lt32-1903.16}

### 73 **United Prayer Brought the Holy Spirit at Pentecost**

74 "It took courage to bear this straight testimony. This **courage and**  
75 **boldness in speaking the truth had come in answer to the united**

76 **prayer of the disciples**, while they had been together in the upper  
77 chamber." {1SAT 392.5}

### 78 **United Prayer Brought Healing Power**

79 "I felt in my soul **it would be a great privilege for me to call**  
80 **together a few of the old tried servants of God and engage in**  
81 **united prayer for the help and strength I so much needed.** I  
82 followed out the earnest wish of my heart. All present, ministering  
83 brethren united in prayer. The Lord indited those prayers. We were so  
84 glad Brother Butler was present to engage with us in prayer. I realized  
85 it was a most precious season, and I felt that Christ was present. A  
86 sweet fragrance was sensibly realized by me, and I am sure those  
87 present must have felt the deep influence of the Holy Spirit. I felt that  
88 the canopy of God was over me. I could say fully, Whether I live or  
89 die it is well, it is well, with my soul. My life is hid with Christ in  
90 God." {Ms220-1902.3}

### 91 **United Prayer Brings the Holy Spirit In Our Day**

92 "**Could there be a convocation of all the churches on earth, the**  
93 **object of their united cry should be for the Holy Spirit.** When we  
94 have that, Christ our sufficiency is ever present. We shall have every  
95 want supplied. We shall have the mind of Christ. While you yearn  
96 over the whole human race, you will have One by your side who hath  
97 said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Have  
98 you not then a helper? One who died for the recovery of the world?  
99 Have you not a sufficiency? Is not He your counselor? and is He not  
100 devising fresh methods for the saving of the souls for whom He died?  
101 While we are His instruments to seek and save the lost, we must  
102 permit the work of saving to rest on our Saviour. While in your  
103 prayers you present the great want of souls before the world's  
104 Redeemer, commit both yourself and them to Him as His own  
105 purchased possession. Your only hope for yourself and for them is in  
106 Jesus. He bears your name upon His breast. Your prayers may rise  
107 with an importunity that will not accept denial; that is faith." {Ms8-  
108 1892}

### 109 **United Prayer Brings Unity**

110 "It is essential that the teachers harmonize in the inculcation of ideas.  
111 They should manifest the love of Christ. They should pray and  
112 converse together upon the lessons given in the Word. Those who will  
113 with the whole heart study the truth together, and unite in prayer  
114 together, will together receive the blessing. **Where there are two or**  
115 **three agreed as touching any one thing, the Lord has promised if**  
116 **they ask in faith it shall be granted them. And the more and better**  
117 **the understanding of the Scriptures, the more unity and love will**  
118 **exist.** The truth will bind heart to heart. A different atmosphere must

119 come into the hearts of teachers. There should be no dissension in our  
120 school; for where there is unity there is courage, and strength, and  
121 victory." {Ms54-1898.13}

122

### 123 **Further Instruction**

#### 124 **Unity Among Group Members is Needed**

125 "Our Saviour has said, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching  
126 any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them." Matthew  
127 18:19. Their prayers will be heard. **Nothing can grieve the Spirit of**  
128 **God more than variance among those who are engaged as laborers**  
129 **in His vineyard because the same spirit they entertain is diffused**  
130 **among the churches. Such seed, once sown, is difficult to**  
131 **eradicate.** It required time and labor and distress of soul to adjust  
132 things and bring in a state of harmony and peace. All heaven is  
133 laboring for the unity of the church, and the professed followers of  
134 Christ are working at cross purposes with God, because they will not  
135 heed His instruction but will bring in dissension." {Ms26-1889.12}

#### 136 **Unity Brings Wonderful Results**

137 **"Jesus promised a special blessing on united prayer.** After his  
138 death, the disciples often prayed together in the place where they  
139 assembled for worship; they also resorted to the temple at the hour of  
140 prayer. Paul exhorted the Ephesians to pray "always with all prayer."  
141 He who loves to pray alone, as did Daniel, may be assured that in  
142 public prayer his motive is not to be heard of men. {ST August 14,  
143 1884, par. 11} Oh that we could impress on the minds of all the great  
144 willingness of God to help and strengthen every one who looks to him  
145 in trusting prayer. The oil and wine of consolation will be given to  
146 those who seek for it; the importunate soul will know him as the One  
147 who hears and answers prayer, the One who "comforteth those that are  
148 cast down." He is a God over all the earth, exercising over the whole  
149 human family an unwearied and solicitous watchcare which nothing  
150 can escape. Every moment he grants audience to those who lay their  
151 wants and desires before him; and every moment he is ministering to  
152 the necessities of thousands who live upon his bounties, yet yield him  
153 no tribute of grateful praise, give no token that they realize their  
154 dependence upon him. {ST August 14, 1884, par. 12} After we have  
155 offered our petitions, we are to answer them ourselves as far as  
156 possible, and not wait for God to do for us what we can do for  
157 ourselves. The help of God is held in reserve for all who demand it.  
158 Divine help is to be combined with human effort, aspiration, and  
159 energy. But we cannot reach the battlements of Heaven without  
160 climbing for ourselves. We cannot be borne up by the prayers of  
161 others when we ourselves neglect to pray, for God has made no such

162 provision for us. Not even divine power can lift one soul to Heaven  
163 that is unwilling to put forth efforts in his own behalf. The unlovely  
164 traits in our characters are not removed, and replaced by traits that are  
165 pure and lovely, without some effort on our part. {ST August 14,  
166 1884, par. 13}

167

## 168 **United Prayer Second Type:**

### 169 **Unitedly Following A Particular Sequence When Praying**

#### 170 **Introduction**

171 United prayer also refers to what has become a very popular and  
172 meaningful way of praying together in groups. For discussion  
173 purposes, I will refer to this as "facilitated united prayer."

174

#### 175 **The Origin of Facilitated United Prayer**

176 To the best of my knowledge, this form of "United Prayer" began in  
177 Cambodia on a Mission Trip where participants sought to include  
178 believers of other faiths who had not prayed much with other people.  
179 In praying for wisdom to know how to include these individuals, the  
180 impression came to have participants offer short prayers on several  
181 general themes, one theme at a time, going around the circle, as  
182 prompted by a facilitator.

183 In this form of United Prayer, the group spends time praying on the  
184 first theme until the facilitator introduces the next theme. The next  
185 theme may be introduced with a transitioning prayer: "Lord, now we  
186 want to transition to a time of making specific requests...." The  
187 facilitator might also suggest a few Bible promises to encourage  
188 participants. The group would continue praying through however  
189 many themes were being followed. Participants are urged to keep their  
190 prayers short, limiting them to a sentence or two. The sequence chosen  
191 at that time of the Cambodia trip was based on the "ACTS" acronym:  
192 Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication.

193 What was the result with that first group in Cambodia? Individuals  
194 who were not accustomed to praying much, or praying with other  
195 people, easily participated and were greatly blessed. For them the  
196 method was a kind of prayer "training wheel"—similar to the training  
197 wheel on a bicycle.

198 The other participants were also wonderfully blessed in following this  
199 facilitated form of prayer. Not only did some of the group feel  
200 comfortable participating, but it also brought a wonderful bonding that  
201 had not been anticipated. Mission trip participants had come from  
202 various places in the US and had not known each other ahead of time.  
203 But praying together, they quickly connected. The United Prayer

204 sessions brought such blessings, that participants brought the practice  
205 back to their home churches and introduced it to other people.

206 United Prayer is now known throughout the world and is a much  
207 appreciated form of group prayer.

208

## 209 **More Information On Facilitated United Prayer**

### 210 **Size of the Group**

211 This form of United Prayer is very effective if a smaller group of  
212 people are praying. However, if a group of one hundred people try to  
213 use this method, it won't work very well. It is better to divide a large  
214 group into several smaller groups.

215

### 216 **The Sequence**

217 It helps to understand the various parts of the sequence.

### 218 **Adoration & Worship**

219 Psalms 29:2 (NKJV) "Give unto the Lord the glory due to His name;  
220 Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

221 In the initial time of adoration, participants spend time remembering  
222 and telling God how much they appreciate Him—it is a time of  
223 worship in prayer. Even in our individual prayers we should take time  
224 to acknowledge who God is. These prayers might include "Thank you  
225 for your love"; "Thank you for dying for me on the cross"; "Thank you  
226 for sacrificing so much in coming to earth"; etc.

### 227 **Confession**

228 James 5:16 (NKJV) 16 "Confess your trespasses to one another, and  
229 pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent  
230 prayer of a righteous man avails much."

231 Confessions is often the second theme followed. This theme helps  
232 participants come into right relationship with God by appropriately  
233 acknowledging short-comings—the key word here is "appropriately."  
234 You can read what Ellen White said about appropriate confession  
235 in an article entitled, ["Acceptable Confession."](#)

236 Appropriate prayers of confession might include, "Lord, you know I  
237 struggle with covetousness," or, "Lord, I am not always kind in my  
238 relationships." You can express much using general expressions,  
239 without becoming inappropriately detailed. Some subjects should  
240 never be brought up in public confession—for example moral failures,  
241 as discussed by Ellen White. However, appropriate confession is a  
242 significant and necessary way of clearing the King's highway so that  
243 blessings can come. Ellen White speaks to this, and many of the  
244 revivals in our church have included times of confessing. Some groups

245 may feel more comfortable with a time of silent confession. However,  
246 regardless of the method followed for confession, confession is a  
247 significant, not to be missed, part of United Prayer.

248 *"By prayer and confession of sin we must clear the King's highway. As  
249 we do this, the power of the Spirit will come to us. We need the  
250 Pentecostal energy. This will come, for the Lord has promised to send  
251 His Spirit as the all-conquering power."*

252 *Testimonies, Vol. 8, p. 297.6*

253 *"There are those who, when they make mistakes, stand out in  
254 stubbornness, saying that they have not sinned, and refusing to  
255 confess. Those who say, "I never confess," will never see the kingdom  
256 of heaven unless they do confess. Read the prayer of confession that  
257 Daniel offered. He was called a man greatly beloved by God, and yet  
258 he confessed that he as well as the people had sinned.*

259

260 *Those who make no acknowledgment of sin, those who refuse to  
261 confess because they think it would hurt their position and influence,  
262 will never be cleansed from unrighteousness unless they make a  
263 decided change in their attitude. We need the spirit of confession right  
264 here in this meeting. It would be surprising if none of those present  
265 had anything to confess. Brethren and sisters, will you not take the  
266 stumbling-blocks out of the way, and clear the King's highway, that he  
267 may enter in among us? Then we shall see of the salvation of God, and  
268 the glory of the Lord will be revealed."*

269 *Review and Herald, July 13, 1905 Par. 10 & 11*

## 270 **Thanksgiving**

271 Philippians 4:6 (NKJV) 6 "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything  
272 by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be  
273 made known to God;"

274 Thanksgiving is also a vital part of United Prayer. Sometimes it comes  
275 next, sometimes it comes at the end. Sometimes it comes next and  
276 then again at the end when blessings are anticipated, and thanks is  
277 given in advance to God. I mention "thanksgiving" next because it is  
278 good to acknowledge all the things God has done for us, and because  
279 such gratitude allows God to bless in a greater way, as noted in a [Bible  
280 Echo article, entitled "Praise Ye the Lord."](#)

281 *"Shall all our devotional exercises consist in asking and receiving?  
282 Shall we be always thinking of our wants, and never of the benefits we  
283 receive? Shall we be recipients of his mercies, and never express our  
284 gratitude to God, never praise him for what he has done for us? We do  
285 not pray any too much, but we are too sparing of giving thanks. If the  
286 loving-kindness of God called forth from our hearts more thanksgiving*

287 *and praise, we should have far more power in prayer. We should*  
288 *abound more and more in the love of God, and have more bestowed to*  
289 *praise him for. You who complain that God does not hear your*  
290 *prayers, change the present order, and mingle praise with your*  
291 *petitions. When you consider his goodness and mercies, you will find*  
292 *that he will consider your wants.*

293 *Bible Echoe, January 1, 1888, par. 9*

294 These prayers of thanksgiving should also be short and to the point.

### 295 **Supplication (Requests)**

296 Matthew 7:7-8 (NKJV) 7 "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and  
297 you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who  
298 asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will  
299 be opened."

300 Though we do not fully understand why God requires that we ask Him  
301 for blessings in prayer, "asking" is required. Note the following:

302 *"It is a part of God's plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith,*  
303 *that which He would not bestow did we not thus ask."*

304 *The Great Controversy, p. 525.2*

305 During this sequence, participants verbalize their needs in short  
306 prayers that are limited to one item usually—or one theme. For  
307 example, "Lord, I am taking a test and I need your blessing on my  
308 preparations." Another person might pray, "Lord I am concerned for  
309 my family. They don't know the Lord. Please send the Holy Spirit to  
310 touch each one of their hearts." Please remember to keep requests  
311 appropriate.

312 Sometimes it helps for the leader to suggest a focused theme as was  
313 discussed earlier on this page. For example, it might be suggested that  
314 the group wants to take extra time to pray for the youth of the church.  
315 In response the participants would begin praying for the youth in little  
316 short prayers. It might be good to invite a leader of the youth, or some  
317 of the youth, to come and share about the needs being faced by the  
318 youth. This will help the United Prayers be more effective and  
319 relevant to what is going on. This special focused praying, by the way,  
320 allows additional people to be invited to attend, who may end up  
321 attending long-term: they have experienced the blessings, have  
322 decided they like United Prayer, and invite their friends to come and  
323 pray with them. Sometimes the youth end up in their own United  
324 Prayer group, but that is fine since they are praying.

325 During the request time, it is important to be sensitive to the people  
326 who are more shy about jumping in and praying, or who feel  
327 uncomfortable mentioning their personal needs in front of others. To  
328 address these concerns, care should be taken to make sure that time is



329 given for everyone to list specific personal requests who have been  
330 slower to speak up—the leader stating, "Lord, perhaps there are  
331 people who haven't mentioned requests; we want to take time for them  
332 to pray. It can also help to have a time for silent supplication, the  
333 leader stating, "We want to take some time to silently tell God the  
334 things that we need."

### 335 **Variety**

336 Variety is the spice of life; it is also the spice of prayer and United  
337 Prayer. To always follow the United Prayer method may cause it to  
338 become routine. Constant use of the method can also cause some  
339 people to stop attending because they do not feel comfortable with the  
340 United Prayer approach for any variety of reasons. As a result it is  
341 good to vary the format of the praying from week to week, and in the  
342 course of individual meetings. For example, United Prayer could be  
343 followed one week, then followed by a more traditional format the  
344 next week. Or, in the course of a prayer meeting, the early part of the  
345 prayer meeting might include a time of United Prayer, but later the  
346 same people might follow a more traditional approach. Some churches  
347 have even found it helpful to have two groups praying  
348 simultaneously—one group following the United Prayer format, the  
349 other group praying in a more traditional way.

### 350 **Long Prayers**

351 Long prayers are prayer meeting killers.

352 *"There are some, I fear, who do not take their troubles to God in*  
353 *private prayer, but reserve them for the prayer meeting, and there do*  
354 *up their praying for several days. Such may be named conference and*  
355 *prayer meeting killers. They emit no light; they edify no one. Their*  
356 *cold, frozen prayers and long, backslidden testimonies cast a shadow.*  
357 *All are glad when they get through, and it is almost impossible to*  
358 *throw off the chill and darkness which their prayers and exhortations*  
359 *bring into the meeting. From the light which I have received, our*  
360 *meetings should be spiritual and social, and not too long. Reserve,*  
361 *pride, vanity, and fear of man should be left at home. Little differences*  
362 *and prejudices should not be taken with us to these meetings. As in a*  
363 *united family, simplicity, meekness, confidence, and love should exist*  
364 *in the hearts of brethren and sisters who meet to be refreshed and*  
365 *invigorated by bringing their lights together."*

366 *Testimonies, Vol. 2, 578.3*

367 It is my experience that constant education must be given in this  
368 regard. Of course such education should be given tactfully, but it must  
369 be done. If someone new joins the group, interrupt briefly to welcome  
370 the person, let them know what theme is being followed, and  
371 encourage them to make short, specific, one item, prayers. Education

372 can also be provided by putting up an information sign near the  
373 entrance, or have little instruction sheets for new people.

#### 374 **Promotion**

375 Beyond announcements in the bulletin, posters and word-of-mouth  
376 advertising, sharing testimonies in church is one of the BEST ways to  
377 encourage others to attend.

#### 378 **Objections**

379 Some people will object to the United Prayer format. They may feel  
380 uncomfortable with, praying out loud in front of other people,  
381 confessing in front of other people, or the extended amount of time  
382 praying. Listen and try to be sensitive to their concerns. Realize  
383 however, that one size does not fit all, and therefore they may not  
384 come to every prayer meeting. Seek to be inclusive, however,  
385 making sure there are weeks when they will comfortable coming.  
386 Don't insist that United Prayer is the only way to pray. Don't insist  
387 everyone participate. Do make allowances by providing time for silent  
388 prayer.

389 Be aware that some people are less trusting than others, and find great  
390 difficulty opening up before others. I find this is often true of older  
391 people. It is also true of those who have been relationally-hurt in the  
392 past. Encourage them to attend and participate as they feel able. Make  
393 sure there are moments for silent prayer.

394 Some people object to the format, stating they don't find anything  
395 about that kind of praying in the Bible. I think the ten days prior to  
396 Pentecost indicate otherwise, though we don't how they were praying  
397 exactly. However, there is much regarding praying short prayers in  
398 Mrs. White's writings, as well as praying together in groups.

399 *"How many come before the congregation and offer up long, tedious*  
400 *prayers that weary the people, and do not bring the blessing of God*  
401 *upon them. Keep your long prayers for the closet; and when you come*  
402 *to the meeting, present your request before God in a simple, direct*  
403 *way. Let your words be the expression of the need of the hour; for God*  
404 *has said: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find;*  
405 *knock, and it shall be opened unto you."*

406 *Review and Herald, July 19, 1892, par. 6*

407 *"Short, heartfelt prayers right to the point, offered with an earnestness*  
408 *corresponding to the soul-hunger for the Holy Spirit, are not*  
409 *wearisome to God or to the people; for they reveal a longing desire*  
410 *for needed strength—strength which can be obtained only from the*  
411 *Source of all strength."*

#### 412 **Contemplative Or Spiritualistic Prayers**

413 Finally, this has nothing to do with contemplative or other  
414 spiritualistic forms of prayer that are unsanctioned. When United  
415 Prayer began, it was seen as a way of helping new believers of other  
416 faiths participate in prayer. The shared experience, however, was such  
417 a blessing, that it was introduced elsewhere. Today, United Prayer is a  
418 wonderful way to teach people how to pray. It also enables a  
419 wonderful bonding experience in prayer.

#### 420 **Meetings For Confession Were Promoted By Ellen White In Her** 421 **Day!**

422 "Our early morning meetings were well attended and were precious  
423 seasons of confession of sins, of defects. Confessions were made of  
424 unimproved opportunities; and there were many testimonies filled  
425 with expressions of gratitude and thankfulness for the precious tokens  
426 of God's love and favor they had experienced during the meeting."  
427 {Ms15-1884.8}

428 "I have presented to my brethren that less time needs to be occupied in  
429 sermonizing. Let companies be broken up and several meetings be  
430 held for testimony and prayer and confession of sins. Let more time be  
431 given to earnest labor for the reformation of souls of youth and for the  
432 church generally." {Ms24-1889.26}

433

#### 434 **Additional Resources**

435 [Praying For Rain](#). This helpful booklet is published by the General  
436 Conference. You can find it in other formats and languages [at the](#)  
437 [Reformation and Revival website?](#)

438 [egwwritings.org](#) has an ocean of additional information. Look further  
439 down on specific strings to use in doing the research.

440 [United Prayer Promises](#) This is the booklet that I developed years ago  
441 that briefly discusses United Prayer and provides Bible promises and  
442 quotes for the sequences, as well as Bible promises to claim for the  
443 needs that may be mentioned.

444

445

446 *This document was compiled by Dan Augsburger of Path2Prayer*  
447 *Ministries.*

448 *Find more resources like this at [discipleheart.com](#).*

449 *Contact Dan via [discipleheart@protonmail.com](mailto:discipleheart@protonmail.com).*