

## But when you pray . . .

WWW.TENDAYSOFPRAAYER.ORG

### DAY 4—UNANSWERED PRAYERS (AND FAITH)

“But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength” (Isa. 40:31a, NKJV).

#### Waiting . . .

Waiting is not fun. Who likes waiting? Waiting at the doctor’s office, waiting in line, waiting for a delayed plane at the airport, waiting for someone who is late for a meeting.

Abraham had to wait 25 years to get an answer to his prayer. Moses waited 40 years for God to finally intervene. Joseph was a slave for several years and then sat in prison a few years—not a fun place to wait for God’s intervention! There are many examples of waiting for help in the Bible.

Though waiting challenges our patience, the Bible says that one characteristic of God’s people is patience. The same in prayer. Often, we may have to wait for an answer.

“To every sincere prayer an answer will come. It may not come just as you desire, or at the time you look for it; but it will come in the way and at the time that will best meet your need. The prayers you offer in loneliness, in weariness, in trial, God answers, not always according to your expectations, but always for your good” (*Messages to Young People*, p. 250).

When we humble ourselves and present our need, in a clear, specific way, acknowledging our total dependence on God, He answers. However, often we must wait. We often need to use up all our resources and options before God intervenes, so we can know with certainty that it was Him. If He answered instantly, we might take credit for ourselves.

When we see no possible way to solve a crisis, God says a word, and something that we never could have imagined happens. “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know” (Jer. 33:3, NKJV).

However, if God doesn’t answer at the time and in the way we ask, we may think He didn’t answer at all. God answers honest, humble prayers, and His answer is the best possible answer.

You are called to know the love of God (Eph. 3:19). That’s all you need. The more you know Him, the more you trust Him, the more peace you have, and the more you are willing to wait for His leading and intervention. Fix your eyes on Him, His love, His promises, and the way He has led in past challenges.

“You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You” (Isa. 26:3, NKJV).

God knows the future. He cares for you, but He also cares for others. He may not answer now because He has a better answer, or it’s not the best time, or you are not ready for His plan. He may have a different answer that addresses other needs, things you may not think about. He may also allow something in your life as the single way to reach someone that otherwise would not be reached. Many things happen that we will understand only in heaven.

Keep in mind, Jesus didn’t come and die to give us a comfortable life on earth. In fact, He said that in this world we will have trials (John 16:33). He often uses trials to teach us lessons necessary for character growth and salvation. “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17, NKJV).

So instead of asking God to remove challenges, ask Him to help you grow and learn through them. Our greatest need is not the needs that we pray for, though most of the time they are real needs. Our greatest need is to know our God. The more you know Him, the more you trust Him, and the more you allow Him to work.

God is calling you to pray and seek Him, His presence, His plan, His leading. Seek to know Him before seeking answers and help, then cast upon Him all your worries and wait upon Him.

Let's pray together.

### **Prayer Time (30–45 Minutes)**

*All prayer groups have different ways of praying together. We encourage you to spend the next 30-45 minutes in united prayer, in whatever way the Holy Spirit leads. We encourage short conversational prayers (1-3 sentences). This allows for more people to pray multiple times. Below are some examples of praying through Scripture based on the theme. You may pray through other passages also and include other subjects in your prayer time. See the Leader's Guide and World Church Prayer Requests for prayer ideas.*

#### **Praying God's Word — Isa. 40:31a**

"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength."

#### **"Those who wait on the Lord"**

*Father, we don't like to wait. Waiting makes us anxious and fearful, so we rush ahead and look for our own solutions. Teach us to rest in You as a child rests in his father's arms. Give us faith to know that You hold tomorrow in Your powerful hands. May we live by faith, not by sight.*

#### **"Shall renew their strength"**

*Lord, sometimes we grow weary of life in this broken world. We're worn out by illness, disagreements, poverty, injustice, and loneliness. Please lift our eyes to heaven and renew our strength. Teach us to lean on You and find strength in Your endless promises. When we are weak, connect us to Your power.*

### **More Prayer Suggestions**

**Thanks and Praise:** Give thanks for specific blessings and praise God for His goodness.

**Confession:** Take a few minutes for private confession and thank God for His forgiveness.

**Guidance:** Ask God to grant wisdom for current challenges and decisions.

**Our Church:** Pray for regional and world church needs (see separate sheet with requests).

**Local Requests:** Pray for current needs of church members, family, and neighbors.

**Listen and Respond:** Take time to listen for God's voice and respond in praise or song.

### **Song Suggestions**

*SDA Hymnal:* Leaning on the Everlasting Arms (#469); It Is Well with My Soul (#530); Be Still, My Soul (#461)

*Other Songs:* My Peace I Give unto You; I Cast All My Cares upon You; In God's Green Pastures