

Ascension Day 2020

REACH-SA Prayer Guide

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. When he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes and a cloud hid him from their sight." Acts 1:8,9



Ascension Day Prayer

Almighty God, grant that as we believe your only begotten Son to have ascended into heaven, so may we also in heart and mind there ascend, and with Him continually dwell; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen

Let us pray in the light of these great Ascension truths:

1. Access to the Throne of Grace (Hebrews 4:14-16)

The Ascension of King Jesus assures us that Christ has fulfilled His High Priestly role of offering an acceptable and complete sacrifice for our sin. We can now speak to God because of Jesus, who stands as our permanent priest (mediator) before the Father (Heb.7:25).

- a. Spend some time giving thanks and praise to God for King Jesus.

Rejoice, the Lord is King,
Your Lord and King adore:
Mortals give thanks and sing
And triumph evermore:
Life up your heart, lift up your voice
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice. – Charles Wesley

- b. Come before the Lord confessing sin. Perhaps sinful habits have re-emerged during this lockdown time. Call on God for forgiveness and strength to repent. Ask God for discipline to persevere in spiritual disciplines during this time of isolation.

2. The Extension of Christ's Kingdom (Acts 1:8)

The ascension of Christ to heaven's throne is the transition between Christ's ministry *to* his disciples on earth and Christ's ministry *through* his disciples by His Holy Spirit. We are now empowered to be Christ's witnesses to all the nations as we take the gospel to the lost.

This lockdown time has presented many challenges to gospel mission. Much prayer and wisdom is needed in how we make progress in proclaiming Christ over this time.

- a. Pray for the Government. That God would give them wisdom and unity in enacting and enforcing proper regulations that help to preserve life and economy over this pandemic period.

- b. Pray for mission. Lift up missionaries you support to the Lord. Pray also for your local church pastor and ministry team as they plan outreach in new ways. They all face many new challenges over this time. Pray that the Lord's people will continue to partner with them in the work of the gospel.
- c. Pray for the witness of God's people in your local church. Lockdown stress and financial uncertainty can lead to frayed nerves and emotional swings. Let's confess those realities to the Lord and pray that He will strengthen us through the trial and enable us to bear witness to Christ in the crisis.
- d. Pray for the lost. Lift up those you know, families, neighbours, colleagues who are trying to cope without hope in Christ. Ask the Lord to open their eyes to Jesus.

3. The Ministry of the Church (Eph.4:8-13)

Ascension Day leads to Pentecost where Christ pours out His Holy Spirit on His church. Christ's ministry on earth continues through us as we seek to make disciples among all the nations. In that, Christ gifts His church with the tools for ministry. The Holy Spirit endows different spiritual gifts upon the church for the purpose of maturing God's people in Christ.

"But to each of us, grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: When He ascended on high, He led captives in His train and gave gifts to people [Ps.68:18]...

It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be evangelists and some to be pastors and teachers, to equip God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Eph.4:8,9,11,12)

- a. Pray for God's people to think creatively about putting their various gifts into practice as they serve one another in this lockdown environment.
- b. Pray for partnerships between local churches to be strengthened so that we are able to unite in caring for the poor and struggling in our communities.
- c. Pray that God will work in the hearts of His people to address the challenges in our widespread communities. To engage with Government, to address injustices, to care for the poor, to help the sick, to comfort the grieving.
- d. Pray for the many ministries to the hungry and homeless (many are run through our local churches). Pray for generosity by donors and wise management by the ministry leaders.

"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than we could 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" (Eph.3:20,21)