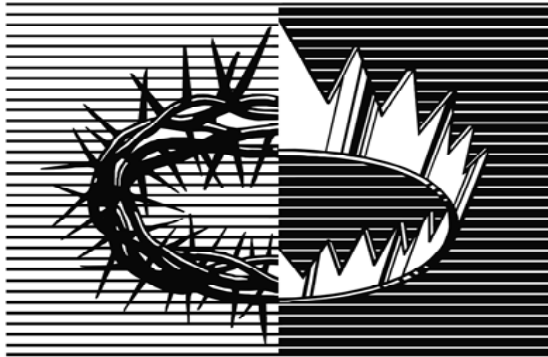


TITHE AND OFFERING READINGS



ATTENTION!

Dated material to be adapted,
translated and distributed to
Seventh-day Adventist Churches
before December 2011.

2012

Discipleship and Spiritual Revival

By Miguel Luna

Miguel Luna, Ph.D, a Peruvian and a former stewardship director at the Northern Asia-Pacific Division is now dean of the Faculty of Religious Studies at Asia-Pacific International University, Muak Lek, Thailand. He has been very active in teaching principles of stewardship and discipleship to church leaders and pastors.

This theme, “Discipleship and Spiritual Revival,” emphasizes the main concept of stewardship as a lifestyle of the believer who has been transformed by the Holy Spirit and as a result of that spiritual restoration the believer has made a full commitment in all dimensions of life with the Lord. An indication of such a commitment is the value of being so faithful in returning a tithe and offering as in an attitude of worship and committed discipleship.

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We welcome your comments and suggestions for future authors and themes for the **Tithe and Offering Readings**.

(For your convenience, pages i-v are repeated at the end of the readings.)

SABBATHS WITHOUT DESIGNATED OFFERINGS

There are **six Sabbaths** in 2012 that do not have designated offerings. Each Division Committee is to designate these offerings for use in their Division, Conference or Union. The Sabbaths are: January 14, February 11, June 9, August 11, October 13, and December 8.

The titles of the readings of these non-designated offerings are noted as “**Scheduled Offering: Division.**”

THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERINGS FOR 2012

Northern Asia-Pacific Division	March 31
Southern Asia-Pacific Division	June 30
Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division	September 29
South American Division.	December 29

Special Offerings

RECOMMENDED, To adopt the Calendar of Special Offerings—World 2012, as follows:

JANUARY

7Outreach/Church Budget
14Division
21 Church Budget
28 Conference/Union

FEBRUARY

4Outreach/Church Budget
11Division
18 Church Budget
25 Conference/Union

MARCH

3Outreach/Church Budget
10 Adventist World Radio*+
17 Church Budget
24 Conference/Union
31 Church Budget

APRIL

7Outreach/Church Budget
14 World Mission Budget*+
21 Church Budget
28 Conference/Union

MAY

5Outreach/Church Budget
12 Disaster and Famine Relief (Program provided for NAD only)*+
19 Church Budget
26 Conference/Union

JUNE

2Outreach/Church Budget
9Division
16 Church Budget
23 Conference/Union
30 Church Budget

JULY

7Outreach/Church Budget
14 World Mission Budget*+
21 Church Budget
28 Conference/Union

AUGUST

4Outreach/Church Budget
11Division
18 Church Budget
25 Conference/Union

SEPTEMBER

1Outreach/Church Budget
8 World Mission Budget* +
(Unusual Opportunities)
15 Church Budget
22 Conference/Union
29 Church Budget

OCTOBER

6Outreach/Church Budget
13Division
20 Church Budget
27 Conference/Union

NOVEMBER

3Outreach/Church Budget
10 Annual Sacrifice (Global Mission)*+
17 Church Budget
24 Conference/Union

DECEMBER

1Outreach/Church Budget
8Division
15 Church Budget
22 Conference/Union
29 Church Budget

*Reading provided by corresponding entity
+Worldwide Offering

SCHEDULED SPECIAL OFFERINGS

SABBATH	TITLE	DATE
10 th	Adventist World Radio	March 10
15 th	World Mission Budget	April 14
19 th	Disaster and Famine Relief	May 12
28 th	World Mission Budget	July 14
36 th	World Mission Budget (Unusual Opportunities)	September 8
45 th	Annual Sacrifice (Global Mission)	November 10

Sabbath 1

January 7, 2012

Offering: Outreach/Church Budget

New Year 2012 has arrived and new opportunities to praise the Lord for His blessings. We are worshiping God because of His creation, redemption and sustaining power. As Psalm 24:1, 2 proclaim: “the earth is the LORD’s and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it on the seas and established it on the water.” At creation God is the One who provided everything necessary in the environment for human existence and He created all the sources of blessings for our lives such as light, water, and plants. Everything that was created was a graphic lesson of how God cares for our lives. In Gen 2:8 the texts says that God planted a garden, so Adam and Eve could enjoy living in a wonderful environment. He gave them “all kinds of trees...trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food” (Gen 2:9). At that beginning, humanity was instructed to be a steward of His creation (Gen 1:26). Today as a consequence of the fall, humanity faces the consequences of sin. In revealing God’s character Jesus Christ came to show that God is still the source of blessings (John 5:17).

Appeal: As we come to worship today and give our tithes and offerings for outreach and church budget we want to recognize God as our Creator, Redeemer and the source of all blessings.

Prayer

Sabbath 2
January 14, 2012
Offering: Division

Psalm 23 has been a wonderful reminder of how God cares for His people. "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not be in want" (Psalm 23:1). King David knew that God is the One who cares and provides according to our needs. So he was confident that he would lack nothing. "Green pastures" and "quiet waters" show the abundant blessing we may also get from the Lord.

The Lord is not only interested in providing spiritual blessings; He is also looking for material blessings in our life and families. Verse one is a clear allusion of divine provision for all our needs. Trusting in his words and faithful to His covenant of grace the Lord assures blessings for our work, for our family, for our children, for good health and many more (Deut 7:12-16).

Appeal: As we come today to worship the Lord with our tithes and offerings let us remember the prayer of David "Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all" (1 Chr 29:11-12).

Prayer

Sabbath 3
January 21, 2012
Offering: Church Budget

God is willing to bring abundant blessings to our lives. As we read about God in the Scripture we will understand much of His character and love. It is Jesus who reminds us about the abundant blessing we may receive in placing Him first. "So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'" For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matt 6:31-33). God as the owner of everything provides for our needs. It doesn't mean that you will get material possession. It means that God has a way of giving you what you really need to live a decent life if God is first in your mind and heart.

Appeal: God knows the needs of his children. As the apostle Peter reminds us "His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness" (2 Peter 1:3). As we bring our tithes and offerings just remember that he is giving us both spiritual and material blessings.

Prayer

Sabbath 4

January 28, 2012

Offering: Conference/Union

We worship God because He is our Creator. The apostle John acknowledging God's creation when he wrote: He said in a loud voice: "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water" (Rev 14:7). Through His divine power He created man and woman from the dust of the earth (Gen 2:7), according to His own image (Gen 1:27-28) and gave them abundant life to rule over His creation. He put them in a garden, He provided them with food and He even provided the tree of life by which they may enjoy life continually.

It is God who created and blessed the family in the first wedding, and He gave them the Sabbath for an intense communion with Him in a special day of rest. Unfortunately sin was introduced because of disobedience and the consequences of such separation produced all types of suffering and pain.

Appeal: As we come today to worship let us remember the words shared in the book of Acts: "And he [God] is not served by human hands, as if he needed any thing, because he himself gives to all men life and breath and everything else" (Acts 17:25).

Prayer

Sabbath 5

February 4, 2012

Offering: Outreach/Church Budget

How we may understand God's promises for blessings. It is the prophet Isaiah who mentioned God saying "for my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9). And because God loves humanity and cares for them He has revealed to us His message of salvation through Jesus Christ (Heb 1:1, 2) and in accepting His divine provision, promises of blessings are provided for His children.

One of those promises is the plan of salvation by which Jesus Christ has come to this world to redeem and save humanity. The One who knew no sin became sin for us (2 Cor 5:21). In taking our place, Jesus experienced separation from God and died on the cross. This is why the book of Acts proclaims "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Appeal: Our tithes and offerings we are returning today expresses our gratitude for His amazing grace and care for His children.

Prayer

Sabbath 6
February 11, 2012
Offering: Division

Humanity has been created according to the image of God (Gen 1:27). God as Creator is the owner of everything and because of His mercy and love, He gave humanity the opportunity for stewardship (Gen 1:28). The Scripture teaches that God is the owner of all goods. “The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters” (Psalm 24:1, 2).

The fact that God is owner of all things means that we must give an account to Him. So, one day we will give an account of all that God has entrusted to us, time, money, material possessions, gifts and talents and health and strength with which He has blessed us. The reality of such accountability ought to influence the way we live (Matt 25:14-30).

Appeal: We are so abundantly blessed with good things! Let us never take our Heavenly Father for granted but use wisely and gratefully all that He has given us. Today, as His faithful stewards we return our tithes and offerings to Him.

Prayer

Sabbath 7
February 18, 2012
Offering: Church Budget

God has provided humanity with capabilities to have an encounter with Him. From the beginning our Lord has blessed humanity—His masterpiece and the crowning act of His creation. David praised the Lord for His wonderful act of forming man. “You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas” (Psalm 8:5-8).

There are two important principles expressed by David. First we are a special creation, the crowning act of His creation, and as such, God has given men and women dimensions of life that are spiritual, rational, moral, social, and practical. Second, God has given us the opportunity to become His stewards.

Appeal: Although humanity is under the predicament of sin, God still gives His children opportunity to express their gratitude for the gift of life and the fruitfulness of blessings bestowed upon them.

Prayer

Sabbath 8

February 25, 2012

Offering: Conference/Union

God reveals His power in nature and also in history and human existence. So through the created things in this world and the universe it is possible to trace God's design and care for this world. "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands" (Psalm 19:1-2). After the demonstration of God's design in the first section of Psalm 19, David shows the power of His Word. "The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple" (Psalm 19:7). Both nature and the Scripture reveal God and his sustaining power.

It is the apostle Paul that gave this message "For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Col 1:16-17).

Appeal: Our tithes and offerings express our gratitude for His creative and sustaining power by which our Lord allows His creation to continue supplying for the need of His children. Let us give Him thanks because He "richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment" (1 Tim 6:17).

Prayer

Sabbath 9

March 3, 2012

Offering: Outreach/Church Budget

God provided a solution in the difficult experience of Abraham. In a dialogue with his father Abraham, Isaac mentioned that everything for the sacrifice was ready except the lamb (Gen 22:7). Abraham by faith answered him with these words "God himself will provide the lamb for the burn offering, my son" (Gen 22:8). Indeed after the faithful Abraham was willing to sacrifice his own son, the Angel of the Lord stop him and immediately he found a heifer in the bushes (Gen 22:12, 13). After the sacrifice Abraham called this place "The Lord will provide" (Gen 22:14).

God is willing to provide solutions when we are confronted with problems and difficulties in life. The story of how God tested Abraham is an analogy of how God Himself provides for the restoration and redemption of humanity through the sacrifice of His own son Jesus Christ.

Appeal: As we approach today with our tithes and offerings just remember that God has provided His church with salvation and restoration so that now we may have the opportunity to worship Him.

Prayer

Sabbath 10

March 10, 2012

Offering: Adventist World Radio

Every year, Adventist World Radio receives thousands and thousands of letters, e-mails, and phone calls from listeners. These listeners describe their heartaches in life, their family challenges, their search for hope, and their joy in hearing of the love God offers them.

A relief worker in Afghanistan told AWR that Afghanis have great interest in learning about Christ, but are afraid to purchase Bibles. Instead, they listen to Christian radio programs, and AWR is reaching most of the population with programs in 4 local languages: Dari, Pashto, Arabic, and Uyghur.

God is using AWR's broadcasts—on shortwave, AM/FM, and now online—to transform lives in the most varied locations imaginable. From villagers in Cambodia, to soldiers in Ethiopia and university students in China, the message of salvation is being heard around the world through AWR.

Appeal: With your help, AWR can keep its broadcasts on the air and add new languages, so that millions of listeners can hear the message of salvation in a language they can understand. We invite you today to partner with AWR in this vital ministry.

Prayer

Sabbath 11

March 17, 2012

Offering: Church Budget

Psalm 8 praises the name of the Lord for His amazing work of creation. When king David looks at the vast universe He declares “When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?” (Psalm 8:3, 4). The exclamation of that creative power caused Him to add “You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor” (vs. 5). God's sustaining power includes His care for humanity, the crown of His creation. Clearly understood God Himself gave men and women the opportunity to become stewards of His creation (vs. 6).

Humanity is invited to come under the grace of God and the power of restoration in Jesus Christ. This is the good news that Jesus Christ has come to communicate to the world that “the time has come, he said: “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:15).

Appeal: As we praise our Lord with our tithes and offerings, let us share gratitude for His plan of salvation and restoration. He still cares.

Prayer

Sabbath 12

March 24, 2012

Offering: Conference/Union

God our Father is ready to provide for the needs of His children. It is David who in his old age praised the Lord in this way. "I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread" (Psalm 37:25). The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand is a demonstration of Jesus' abundant blessings in providing for the needs of his followers. A great multitude followed Jesus and when He saw them the gospel tells us that "He was moved with compassion for them, and healed the sick" (Matt 14:14). "Compassion," was Jesus' attitude to those who were in critical need. He is willing to provide for those in need today.

Jesus cared and provided for the needs of the multitude. By this miracle, the multitude was fed by Jesus with only five loaves of bread and the two fish (Matt 14:17-20). This miracle not only shows that Jesus provided for the needs of his followers but also anticipated the Last Supper indicating a symbolism of His own life as the One who came as the bread of heaven (John 6:51).

Appeal: God will continue providing for our needs. We need to trust and express gratitude for Jesus the bread of Heaven.

Prayer

Sabbath 13

March 31, 2012

Offering: Church Budget

The Lord gave specific instructions to Elijah to go to Zarephath of Sidon and visit a widow to supply him with food (1 Kings 17:8-9). The widow whose name is not mentioned was also in an extreme situation because of the drought. There was not even enough food for her or her son (1 Kings 17:12). The arrival of the prophet changes completely her view about God.

The widow was experiencing a critical situation to the point of starvation and final extinction. This is the crucial moment in which God intervenes providing a solution. At the request of Elijah she shared with him a piece of bread and water (1 Kings 17:12). God as loving provider supplied enough food not only for the prophet but for the widow and her child.

Appeal: You may have certain needs in your life and family. The Lord has promised abundant blessings by trusting in His promises. As you come today to give your best to the Lord, let us come with the trust that indeed He will supply our needs.

Prayer

Sabbath 14

April 7, 2012

Offering: Outreach/Church Budget

Although imprisoned in Rome, the apostle Paul wrote to the saints, the faithful in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:1) and expressed the blessing of how God in Jesus Christ has created a church in which both Jew and Gentile can come together to worship the Lord as members of the family of God.

He prayed that they may continue getting additional blessings until they “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” (Ephesians 3:16-19). After these spiritual blessings, the apostle also encouraged the church that indeed God provides for their needs. “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” (Ephesians 3:20).

Appeal: Our Lord Jesus Christ is giving us spiritual blessings by the assurance of His redemptive power and simultaneously He wants to give us abundant and rich blessings.

Prayer

Sabbath 15

April 14, 2012

Offering: World Mission Budget

A few years ago, an emphasis on “project giving” began which has resulted in mission work that may otherwise not have been possible. But once completed, successful projects generally become part of the ongoing work of the church and must be sustained if that success is to continue and that requires ongoing, regular, systematic “non-project” giving from our faithful members.

Today’s offering for the “World Mission Budget” is added to other “non-project giving” such as our Sabbath School Mission offerings. The members in many locations around the world cannot afford the continuing, day-to-day operating expenses of this mission work. Therefore “non-project giving” is essential to sustain the work of the long-term success of “project giving.”

“In His providence, the Lord has ordained that the work in His vineyard should be sustained by the means entrusted to the hands of His stewards” (37, p.117).

Appeal: May we be faithful stewards today, in sustaining the Lord’s work.

Prayer

Sabbath 16

April 21, 2012

Offering: Church Budget

One of the most known biblical texts refers to God as a shepherd. “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want” (Psalm 23:1). The shepherd provides food, and helps the sheep to find rest, pasture, and water to meet their physical needs (Psalm 23:2). He provides restoration and a serene environment. He provides protection and assurance in fear (Psalm 23:4). The climax of such a blessing comes with the assurance of eternal life. “Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever” (Psalm 23:6).

The same demonstration of God as provider is taught by Jesus Himself: “therefore I tell you, do not worry about life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?” (Matt 6:25). Jesus finally appeals: “but seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matt 6:33).

Appeal: God is willing to help in all circumstances of life, including moments of most extreme need. We just need to trust in His promises. As we come to worship Him with our tithes and offerings our hearts and minds express gratitude for His help in life.

Prayer

Sabbath 17

April 28, 2012

Offering: Conference/Union

The Gospels teach us the importance of discipleship and the Lordship of Jesus. It is the Lord who calls us to be his disciples. Andrew was the one who invited his brother Simon Peter to come to Jesus. Jesus Himself called Phillip, and Phillip invited his friend Nathanael to come to Jesus.

Discipleship includes a commitment and loyalty to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We must surrender completely to Him as Lord. Discipleship involves the complete placing on the altar of all that a man has in his life—plans, ambitions, friends, relatives, possessions, riches—anything and everything that might interfere with service for the kingdom of heaven.

Appeal: As disciples of Jesus, today we have the same invitation and commitment as the early disciples. This morning we want to dedicate our life again to Jesus Christ. Stewardship is the lifestyle of one who accepts Christ’s lordship. As we express our worship with our tithes and offerings we want to recognize that indeed we are His servants and He is our Master teacher, our Lord and Savior.

Prayer

Sabbath 18

May 5, 2012

Offering: Outreach/Church Budget

The Lordship of Jesus Christ is the foundation of stewardship. Following Jesus is to follow Him in His pattern of life, sacrifice and commitment to the mission by which He came and died as an atonement sacrifice. There is a cost in following Jesus and we, His servants, need to be aware of the price. Jesus addresses the crowds saying: “anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple” Luke 14:27).

“It was by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who gave His life for the life of the world, that this plan for systematic giving was devised. He who left the royal courts, who laid aside His honor as Commander of the heavenly hosts, who clothed His divinity with humanity in order to uplift the fallen race; He who for our sake became poor that we through His poverty might be rich, has spoken to men, and in His wisdom has told them His own plan for sustaining those who bear His message to the world”.—*R. & H., Feb. 4, 1902, (CS 61).*

Appeal: Jesus Christ paid the supreme price for our salvation and restoration. When we made the decision to follow Him completely the blessings that we receive are so overwhelmingly high. As we return tithes and offerings we reaffirm our commitment to Him.

Prayer

Sabbath 19

May 12, 2012

Offering: Disaster and Famine Relief

(Program provided for NAD only)

As we look around us, it is difficult to fathom the pain and suffering consuming our world. People are starving for food and love and light. We have an opportunity to be the hands and feet of Jesus, to feed the hungry and lift the destitute. This Sabbath we have a special opportunity to partner with The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) to provide for these hungry souls. ADRA is working in more than 120 countries feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, educating the illiterate, providing healthcare to the sick, protecting the innocent, creating livelihoods for the destitute, and giving hope to the hopeless. The offering collected this morning will provide nourishment and relief in places ravaged by war, oppressed by poverty, and devastated by disaster—both natural and manmade, and wracked with famine.

Appeal: Your generous gift allows ADRA to provide desperately needed care to impoverished communities. Your gift will touch the lives of children, women, and men all over the world. With your offering, you help bring hope and life to millions of suffering people. “For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace” John 1:16 (ESV).

Prayer

Sabbath 20
May 19, 2012
Offering: Church Budget

In the last Passover meal and before his trial and crucifixion Jesus addressed His disciples as friends. “I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you” (John 15:15). Jesus statement implies a new dimension of relationship among His disciples. Jesus is referring to a different level of relationship. That change of tone on this relationship shows a new model for lordship by which now we become partners with Him. He is telling them “now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy” (John 15:22). Jesus is referring to his atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. As Jesus prays for Himself he says “I have bought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do” (John 17:4). The disciples finally understood that Jesus had a mission to fulfill. “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).

Appeal: God almighty is calling us to come to him for a new life in Jesus Christ; this is a call for salvation and restoration and new saving relationship. Our Creator and Redeemer call us friends and partner again.

Prayer

Sabbath 21
May 26, 2012
Offering: Conference/Union

The Gospels teach that Jesus called the twelve to be with Him (Mark 3:13-14). Luke describes that Jesus “went out to a mountain to pray, and spent the night praying to God” (Luke 6:12). The calling of the twelve evidently was a result of Jesus praying to the Father.

Mark tells us that Jesus “appointed twelve—designating them apostles” (Mark 3:14). The title implies first “that they might be with him” (Mark 3:14), a relationship not only of master/disciple but also of friends. They became partners with Jesus in the redemptive mission that Jesus came to fulfill. Second, he called them apostles so “he might send them out to preach” (Mark 3:14b). In both instances they needed to be close to Jesus. The twelve personifies the church which is looking for a relationship with Him as friend and partner for church mission.

Appeal: Jesus knows each one of us by name; He has called us to be His disciples. He wants us to continue the proclamation of His kingdom with all who we are and all that we have for His glory.

Prayer

Sabbath 22

June 2, 2012

Offering: Outreach/Church Budget

Stewardship principles begin with God who is our Creator. John in the book of Revelation praises the Lord with these words “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being” (4:11). It is king David who also praised God for being the owner of the earth and everything including ourselves (Psalm 24:1-2). The creative power of God is also manifested by Jesus. Paul teaches that “He is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col 1:17). It was Jesus who testifies of His sustaining power when he mentioned “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working” (John 5:17). The beautiful news is that God continues providing every good gift and blessing to His children (2 Cor 9:8). Looking to these principles we conclude that stewardship is a lifestyle and accept the lordship of Jesus working in partnership with God working as an agent to manage His affairs on earth.

Appeal: As we express our adoration to God and Jesus Christ with our tithes and offerings, let us express our sincere recognition of God as our Creator, Owner, Sustainer and Provider with all who we are and with all that we have.

Prayer

Sabbath 23

June 9, 2012

Offering: Division

At Pentecost, Peter mentioned about the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. In his concluding remarks the apostle reaffirms the resurrection of Jesus and declared “therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). As a result of the message “three thousands were added to their number that day” (Acts 2:41). When we as a Church proclaim Jesus as Lord we are saying that He is sovereign in our lives. The title Lord was also use by Thomas when he exclaimed “my Lord and my God” (John 20:28) after Jesus’ resurrection. Thomas was recognizing Jesus as the true God and object of worship and in whom we can trust. Paul experienced Jesus’ absolute sovereignty when he was called. He asked, “Who are you Lord?”(Acts 9:5), a question that indeed indicates recognition of someone standing above the human level. And Paul listened “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting” (Acts 9:5). Addressing Jesus as Lord signified that we as His disciples are willing to give Him full commitment of our lives (Acts 15:26).

Appeal: As disciples of Jesus we have accepted His lordship because of creation, redemption and love. As servants of the Lord Jesus Christ we come to worship Him with our tithes and offerings.

Prayer

Sabbath 24

June 16, 2012

Offering: Church Budget

One important teaching of Jesus is the great commission to go and make disciples (Matt 28:18-20). That was an important commission for the community of Christian believers initiated by Jesus Himself (Matt 16:18). As the Father send Jesus, now Jesus sends the disciples (John 20:21). As a result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the community of believers grew so they spread the gospel preaching the repentance and forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus to all nations (Luke 24:47).

The early disciples “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of the bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42). As a result of such a commitment, the disciples faithfully surrendered their life and their possessions for the advancement of church mission (Acts 2:45). They got so many blessings that they continued sharing their possessions; bringing them at the apostles’ feet (Acts 4:35). That was the natural result of discipleship committed to the Lordship of Jesus. Without discipleship the concept of stewardship becomes more a manipulative performance.

Appeal: As disciples of Jesus we also may have the same results by being faithful to the Lordship of Jesus. Stewardship is a spiritual concept that involves all dimensions of life.

Sabbath 25

June 23, 2012

Offering: Conference/Union

The apostle Paul teaches to count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires” (Rom 6:11). And he added: “for sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace” (Rom 6:14). Clearly understood the apostle is telling us that it is by the grace of Jesus Christ that now we belong to Him, He is now our Lord. We used to be slaves of sin but now we are free from sin and slaves of Jesus our Lord (Rom 6:22). It is by the power of Christ and the Holy Spirit that justification and transformation happens. “But those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires” (Rom 8:5). Most importantly, the apostle describes the new relationship as being adopted by God the Father (Rom 8:17); that partnership with the Father and Jesus, places us in an intimacy by which now we belong to the family of God.

Appeal: As members of those who are waiting on Jesus’ glorious appearance; we must follow the pattern of His life and His teachings.

Prayer

Sabbath 26

June 30, 2012

Offering: Church Budget

Spiritual revival begins with recognition that we are sinners and we need a savior. As the apostle Paul wrote to the Church of Rome, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23) and immediately he suggested the solution: “and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Jesus Christ” (Rom 3:24). This is the plan of redemption by which Jesus Christ died for us sinners. “But God demonstrated his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8). As a result of the acceptance of His sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins, now we have the opportunity to delight living and being in Christ. The apostle concludes “in the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom 6:11). Let us make the prayer of Paul also the prayer for our church that God’s glorious riches may strengthen the church with power through his Spirit in their inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith (Eph 3:14-18).

Appeal: As we move to a sanctified life in Christ we need to continue being connected with the source of spiritual power. A relationship with Christ is an essential qualification for a fruitful spiritual life. Our liberality in our offerings testifies of the intensity of such a relationship.

Prayer

Sabbath 27

July 7, 2012

Offering: Outreach/Church Budget

Stewardship is deeply connected with the reality of a spiritual revival. This reality is based on the regeneration that occurs in the inner being. The apostle Paul made a summary statement of what happens as we come to Jesus: “therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come” (2 Cor 5:17). This regeneration occurs by the power of God (2 Cor 5:18) and by the influence of the Holy Spirit in the mind of the believers. This is a re-creation, a radical change brought by God’s power when a person becomes a spiritual being. He has passed from death to life in Christ as the apostle Paul mentioned “for we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin—because anyone who has died has been freed from sin” (Rom 6:6-7). This constitutes a spiritual revival, a regeneration that indicates now we are alive in something that was dead (Eph 2:4-5).

Appeal: God is the One who provides spiritual birth and transformation from beginning to end. As disciples and stewards of Jesus, let us express our gratitude for His redemptive power.

Prayer

Sabbath 28

July 14, 2012

Offering: World Mission Budget

Historically, in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, missions have been promoted almost exclusively in the Sabbath School where the weekly Sabbath School, Thirteenth Sabbath, Investment, and Birthday/Thank Offerings are received. But today is one of the few times that mission offerings are promoted during the church service.

Just as the Sabbath School offerings from Sabbath School members support our worldwide mission, the World Mission Budget offering which is now received twice a year, is a significant additional source of funds provided from our church members. It is used for all aspects of our mission work, everywhere.

Appeal:

The Bible says the everlasting Gospel is to be preached “to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (Rev 14:6). Let us accept this challenge by our contributions today.

Prayer

Sabbath 29

July 21, 2012

Offering: Church Budget

Spirituality is a process that begins with accepting Christ as our Savior. “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). That was the message of the apostles and disciples in the early Church. This was the answer Paul and Silas gave to the jailer at Philippi “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household” (Acts 16:31). That spiritual experience includes recognizing Him as Savior and at the same time as Lord (Acts 2:36, 41). The disciples were entrusted to share the good news of Jesus Christ to all nations. Those who accepted Him as Savior and Lord went and spread the gospel to others even in circumstance of persecution “so those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went” (Acts 8:4). After they experience the regeneration by the power of God, now they were given the “ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor 5:18). The message was so precious that the apostle teaches that “we are therefore Christ’s ambassadors” (2 Cor 5:20).

Appeal: The same appeal of Jesus to His disciples is the same he is telling us today “As the father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21).

Prayer

Sabbath 30**July 28, 2012****Offering: Conference/Union**

One aspect of the biblical foundation of stewardship and discipleship is unity of the believer with Christ. A clear teaching was expressed by Jesus when He taught “on that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you” (John 14:20). In the same discourse, Jesus again gave a deeper example for a personal relationship. He emphasizes to His disciples, “if you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you” (John 15:7). As result of such a union, Jesus affirms that they would bear much fruit, showing themselves to be His disciples (John 15:8). In similar fashion the apostle John, who was witness of Jesus’ discourse, applied the union of Christ’s experience to an individual and corporate dimension. For individual intimacy the apostle wrote “But if anyone obeys his word, God’s love is truly made complete in him. Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did” (1 John 2:5, 6). From a corporate dimension He also mentioned “we know that we live in him and he in us of his spirit” (1 John 4:13).

Appeal: Jesus is inviting us for an individual and corporate abiding and by using the vine illustration He says to us. “I am the vine; you are the branches” (John 15:5).

Prayer**Sabbath 31****August 4, 2012****Offering: Outreach/Church Budget**

There is a basic need as disciples of Jesus to continue being spiritually alive. We need a permanent communion with Jesus and living under the direction of the Holy Spirit. The apostle John records Jesus saying “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in Him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). The word “remain” is mentioned ten times in the chapter to describe the reciprocal union between Christ and His disciples. As branches live and bear fruit being united with the vine, in like manner, the disciples derive their spiritual life in intimate communion with Jesus Christ. Another important illustration for the union of Christ and His disciples is in the image of the human body that constitutes the whole. The Church is presented as a divine organism, the body of Christ. “So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others” (Rom 12:5). Notice the expression “in Christ” which indicates the abiding in Jesus who is the head of the body, the church (Eph 1:22-23).

Appeal: This illustration teaches the need for a deep relationship with Jesus that we may also share in his glory (Rom 8:17). As we return our tithes and offerings keep in mind the glorious future reward.

Prayer

Sabbath 32
August 11, 2012
Offering: Division

Lordship is intimacy with Christ integrated in everyday life. This is the result of accepting Jesus Christ as Savior, Redeemer, Owner and Lord for our lives through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. So as disciples of Jesus we follow His teachings and example of life to continue the process of disciple multiplication by inviting others to follow Him (Matt 28:18-20). This intimacy is a continued process where His disciples used spiritual disciplines to help the church focus on spiritual growth under the influence of the Holy Spirit. This intimacy is characterized by loving Christ and our fellow disciples. In a final appeal at the last supper He gave instructions of how to treat each other. "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have love you, so you must love one another" (John 13:34).

Appeal: Jesus is inviting each one of us to have an intense relationship with Him through a daily personal communion by integrating him in all dimensions of our life. As we participate in worship with our tithes and offerings, we also want to follow Jesus' command to love each other in the local church as well as to love our world church family.

Prayer

Sabbath 33
August 18, 2012
Offering: Church Budget

The apostle Paul teaches the dynamics of salvation when he says "for it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph 2:8-10). It is by grace, the redemptive sacrifice of Jesus Christ that we are saved from sin (Rom 3:23). That process from being a sinner to become a righteous person is the amazing work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Notice that the apostle is mentioning the creative power of God in Christ by which we become a new person in Christ. According to Paul, God restores us to the original purpose by which humanity was created. Writing to the church of God in Corinth, the apostle teaches what we need after being redeemed by Christ. Now by the power of the Holy Spirit we are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit (2 Cor 3:18). "Through this faith the heart is renewed in the image of God" (SC: 63).

Appeal: Let us come to worship Him with faith and "be made new in the attitude of our minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph 4:24).

Prayer

Sabbath 34

August 25, 2012

Offering: Conference/Union

Christ not only redeems us from sin, He redeems us to become children of God. "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children" (Rom 8:15-16). Therefore we no longer belong to Satan or to ourselves; we belong to God because of Christ. So the goal of our redemption is to make us more and more like God or more and more like Christ who is the perfect image of God (Rom 8:29). This renewal is the work of God who sanctifies through the Holy Spirit. The apostle indicates in his letter to the Ephesians "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children" (Eph 5:1). To be imitators of God implies to continue growing to the image of God. In principle we need to follow what the apostle is also expressing in the context of this declaration. "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Eph 4:32). And "live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Eph 5:2).

Appeal: As we come today to offer our tithes and offerings just remember we give because we love Him.

Prayer

Sabbath 35

September 1, 2012

Offering: Outreach/Church Budget

Moral obedience is a consequence of the redeeming grace of Jesus Christ and calls for loyalty and gratitude to the Redeemer. Obedience is a demonstration of the dynamic process of salvation from grace to do good works (Eph 2:10). Salvation precedes moral obligation to the redeemed person. Such obedience and loyalty to our Lord Jesus Christ is a visible consequence of the grace of God. As his children we continue expressing love for God for his redemptive power. The apostle John summarizes in these words, "this is love for God: to obey his commands, and his commands are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3). Christ himself taught "if you love me, you will obey what I command" (John 14:15). Jesus repeated the word "obey" three times to emphasize the importance of obedience of His words and commandments. When He invited his disciples to "follow" him He was inviting them to follow his commandments too. So Christ is asking His followers today for a total commitment to Him and His commandments.

Appeal: As we worship today we want to reaffirm our loyalty to Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. We want to express our full commitment to Him and to His commandments.

Prayer

Sabbath 36

September 8, 2012

**Offering: World Mission Budget
(Unusual Opportunities)**

Look around you. Do you know where the fire escapes are? Don't worry, there's no fire and we aren't having a fire drill. But safety experts say we should always be prepared just in case.

Every now and then a door opens; a mission opportunity comes along and we, as a church, should be prepared just in case. Sometimes the opportunity doesn't last long. God opens doors, hearts, and minds. And suddenly exciting opportunities exist for mission, opportunities that may not last long. Not long ago, funds from this offering helped send Bibles into a country that was facing political changes that could make being a Christian and getting Bibles difficult.

Today's World Mission Offering for Unusual Opportunities will give our Church the ability to respond quickly when unusual opportunities suddenly present themselves. Please help us to be ready to respond quickly to unusual opportunities. Help carry a message of hope to people who have never heard about Jesus and His soon return.

Appeal: Your offering can help us take one step forward in telling the world about Jesus. Thank you for your generous support.

Prayer

Sabbath 37

September 15, 2012

Offering: Church Budget

Jesus calling to His disciples implies a full commitment to Him as Lord of our lives. The Gospels mentioned the occasion of Matthew and Philip who were called directly by Jesus. After the invitation "Follow me" the Gospels testified that they obeyed the call. The call to follow Christ implies to follow His example, His teaching, obey His words and identify with His mission. Now to follow Jesus as Lord we need to renounce all lesser loyalties. Jesus taught the crowd what is the cost of being a disciple. "Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33). This implies an inner surrender. There must be a renunciation of sin that produces repentance. "It is the virtue that goes forth from Christ that leads to genuine repentance" (SC: 26). It is "an influence of which they are unconscious works upon the soul, and the conscience is quickened, and the outward life is amended" (SC: 27).

Appeal: Repentance is a definite turn from every thought, word, deed and habit which is known to be wrong. It is a matter of an inward change produced by the influence of the Holy Spirit. Today we are coming to express our gratitude to Jesus for His amazing grace in changing our hearts and minds.

Prayer:

Sabbath 38**September 22, 2012****Offering: Conference/Union**

Members of the church have been called by Jesus to be His disciples. He said to His disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt 16:24). First of all it should be a renunciation of self. As it cost Jesus to follow his Father's will, so it would cost his disciples to do the same. Jesus is addressing each one of the disciples and also others in the crowd, as testified by the gospel of Mark (Mark 8:34), to "renounce himself," to submit his will to Christ; therefore, to live for Christ rather than for himself. Clearly Jesus is about to submit Himself and His own desires to the desire of the Father's will, which signifies that he will pass through suffering and death. In following Christ we need to renounce to the very principles of self-will which lies at the root of every act of sin. To follow Christ is to abdicate the throne of ourselves and do homage to Jesus as Lord and King. Self-denial therefore involves repudiating ourselves and acknowledging the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all dimensions of life.

Appeal: Jesus Himself establishes the condition for discipleship; as we come today to offer our tithes and offerings just remember that we are recognizing Him as Lord and King.

Prayer**Sabbath 39****September 29, 2012****Offering: Church Budget**

The call to discipleship involves a full commitment to Jesus as well as a renunciation of self. Another important condition Jesus instructs His disciples were to "take up his cross." The cross was not a Jewish cross, but a Roman cross, an instrument for executing criminals. In the context in which Christ here mentions cross bearing, it seems that he refers, not so much to the minor difficulties and obstacles to be encountered by his disciples, but rather to the need to be ready to face death itself. Therefore the attitude of self is to adopt the idea of crucifixion. Interestingly enough the gospel of Luke added the word "daily" (Luke 9:23). Every day the disciples of Jesus die to self and selfish ideas. Every day we renounce to the sovereignty of our own will. So everyday we renew our unconditional surrender to Jesus Christ our Lord. The supreme object of our lives is not our personal happiness or fulfilling our every desire. Our goal is God's kingdom and His righteousness.

Appeal: A true disciple gladly gives up all that he has in exchange for an unending life of joy and happiness with God. God gives without measure. The cross of Christ leads to victory and freedom from sin and death. Let us worship our Lord with our tithe and offering with a spirit of sacrifice and commitment to Him as our Lord.

Prayer:

Sabbath 40

October 6, 2012

Offering: Outreach/Church Budget

The call to discipleship involves a call to confess Jesus Christ as our Savior, Redeemer, and Lord. Jesus said to Simon Peter “Don’t be afraid; from now on you will catch men” (Luke 5:10). Christ’s call always implies sending. It is Mark who describes the calling of the twelve with these words “He appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach” (3:14). After the appointment of the twelve, “He sent out with instructions” (Matt 10:5).

We follow Christ in the personal level, and confess Him publically. It is not only that we deny ourselves, take our daily crosses by which we renounce to ourselves and follow Him, but also in everyday circumstance we confess Him as Savior and Lord (Matt 10:32). Discipleship is deeply rooted in the continuation of Jesus’ mission, which includes the proclamation of the kingdom of God and his soon coming.

Appeal: The great commission of Jesus in the Gospels invites us to “go and make disciples” (Matt 28:19), to “preach the good news” (Mark 16:15), of “repentance and forgiveness of sins” (Luke 24:47) to all nations. As the father sent Him, He also is sending us (John 20:21).

Prayer

Sabbath 41

October 13, 2012

Offering: Division

It is through Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit that we are given spiritual gifts for the ministry of the church. There are different gifts and different ministries for the edification of the church. The apostles wrote to the church in Ephesus “It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Eph 4:11-13). Those gifts are bestowed for the unity of the body of Christ, His church and they are going to continue their unifying role until the church reach the “whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” That level of maturity requires the corporate and individual spiritual growth. As a church we need to exercise the integrating principles to reach such maturity: prayer, a relational Bible study, meditation in God’s word and memorization.

Appeal: Our Lord has given us spiritual gift for His ministry. Let us express our gratitude to God by inviting us to be a partner in His mission and church edification.

Prayer

Sabbath 42

October 20, 2012

Offering: Church Budget

As dedicate disciples of Jesus each one of us is invited to be a fruitful servant of the Lord. "This is my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples" (John 15:8). The practice of spiritual disciplines will help each us to growth spiritually. The important condition for such fruitfulness is to remain in Jesus (John 15:5). We are nourished by knowing Jesus and knowing about his teachings. Jesus Himself reminds his disciples, "if you hold to my teachings, you are really my disciples" (John 8:31). Being a disciple means to follow His precepts and instructions. Continuance in the doctrine of Jesus is evidence of the sincerity of the original profession of faith in Jesus. He Himself is the truth that set us free (John 8:36). He is the source of truth, the perfect standard of what is right. This is the reason why in the context of the great commission He mentions to "go and make disciples" and "teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matt 28:20).

Appeal: As we come today to worship, we want to reaffirm our commitment to follow Jesus' teachings and apply them to our own life experiences.

Prayer

Sabbath 43

October 27, 2012

Offering: Conference/Union

Spiritual growth involves the application of stewardship principles. Among those disciplines, we can mention financial discipleship, Sabbath keeping, time management, witnessing and simplicity. As a reminder of God's ownership, the Scripture teaches us to return tithes and offerings as result of God abundant blessings. So the tithe is returned by the disciple in relationship to God as an act of worship. Jesus rebuked the teachers of the law and Pharisees for their hypocrisy (Matt 23:23). Jesus is echoing Amos' message: religious zeal and commitment to justice, mercy, and love must be kept together (Micah 6:8). Then he added: "You should have practiced the latter without neglecting the former [tithing]." The passage makes the attitude of Jesus toward tithing absolutely clear, and nowhere else in the New Testament are we informed about a change on his views on this subject. The words of Jesus are used by the biblical writer to instruct the church from the perspective in relation of what is still more important, justice, mercy and faithfulness.

Appeal: Christ endorsed the Old Testament principle of tithing among his followers. As we bring our tithes and offerings today let us come with humility and attitude of worship.

Prayer

Sabbath 44

November 3, 2012

Offering: Outreach/Church Budget

As disciples of Jesus we pledge loyalty to our Lord Jesus Christ. So we His servants are committed to Him as Lord. We need to know how we are supposed to serve Him. This is why our attitudes are so important. The first attitude that Jesus himself taught us was love. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matt 22:37-40). This is how we are supposed to approach God and our neighbors. Second, we need to dedicate all dimensions of our life to God everyday. That includes everything that we are in our minds and hearts. That includes the time and also our treasures. The apostle Paul suggests the attitude of the follower of Jesus. He declares "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20). That is the deep demonstration of a relationship within Christ and a disciple.

Appeal: Today we want to dedicate our whole life to Him with all who we are and with all that we have, including time and possessions. And as we return our tithes and offerings we are saying to God, Lord we love you and you are first in my life.

Prayer

Sabbath 45

November 10, 2012

Offering: Annual Sacrifice (Global Mission)

You have probably heard or received an email that starts by saying, "if the world were a village of 100 people...." There are different versions out there, some talk about how many would be men or women, how rich or poor, how educated or uneducated. Today that 100 people in a village scenario can help us visualize the mission challenge that remains today.

If the world were a village with 100 people: 33 would be Christians (optional: one of these would be a Seventh-day Adventist); 67 would be non-Christians; of these: 21 would be Muslim; 16 would be non-religious; 14 would be Hindu; 12 would follow traditional animist or folk religions; 6 would be Buddhist

Today is the Annual Sacrifice Offering, a special call to give up something in your life so that others may learn about Jesus. We have a special message of hope in Jesus. Please help Global Mission share that message of hope with the unreached people of the world.

Appeal: Your offering today will bring hope to someone in need. It will share the best news ever with those living in a bad-news world. Thank you for your generous support of Global Mission.

Prayer

Sabbath 46

November 17, 2012

Offering: Church Budget

Discipleship is also related to how we use our time. Jesus uses time entirely consecrated to God and to His work. Jesus spent time in prayer, teaching, healing and preaching. Basically His time is for those who were in need. He prayed as His time was already fulfilled. "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you" (John 17:1). In Christianity time is of fundamental importance. God intervened in our time sending Jesus in the prophetic time. "But when time had fully come, God sent his Son born from a woman, born under law (Gal 4:4). So, "the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14). By this calendar the Scripture puts Christ at the center of history. So how do we use the gift of time? In order to maintain a balance every disciple needs to have time for prayer, study the Word of God, meditation and examining our own conscience. Time is a precious gift of God. Moses prayed to God, "teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90:12).

Appeal: God teaches us to use our time to worship Him and to continue each day in communion with His grace and love. We express our gratitude for the blessings He bestows upon us this morning.

Prayer

Sabbath 47

November 24, 2012

Offering: Conference/Union

The disciples of Jesus keep the Sabbath as a memorial of God's creation and redemption. God is the omnipotent Creator, whom humanity needs to recognize and worship (Col 1:16). God is Redeemer and Savior which calls for a relationship with Jesus Christ. So, the placement of the fourth commandment among the ten demonstrates the strategic character of time management in the life of a child of God. The prophet Isaiah invites us to observe the Sabbath as a delight and "Lord's holy day honorable" (Isaiah 58:13). The fact that we are worshiping on this Sabbath shows that indeed we are His people, a people of His covenant (Ezek 20:12). The Sabbath reminds us that God has bestowed on humanity the need for fellowship and the capacity to love, care and be compassionated. Jesus Himself taught "therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath" (Matt 12:11). We are invited to observe the Sabbaths with joy and delight.

Appeal: The Sabbath reminds us there is a special time for physical and spiritual blessings. Let us come to worship Him with joy in this Sabbath so we may be refreshed.

Prayer

Sabbath 48

December 1, 2012

Offering: Outreach/Church Budget

The disciples of Jesus are expected to have daily communion with God. The disciples asked Jesus, "Lord, teaches us to pray, just as John taught his disciples" (Luke 11:1). Prayer to God was so essential for the spiritual growth that Jesus taught them a model of prayer (Luke 11:2-5). Jesus taught by His own example how to pray and especially to pray always (Luke 18:1) and asking "heaven to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him" (Luke 11:13). In another occasion, Jesus addressed His disciples at the last supper as friends (John 15:14) and immediately He explained the reason for this new approach "for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15) and He appealed to His disciples with these words, "then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name" (John 15:16). Let us open our heart to Jesus as a friend because "prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God our needs, but it enables us to knowledge Him as Provider and Sustainer. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him" (SC, 93).

Appeal: As we worship our Lord today let us make a commitment to experience His presence every day bringing to Him our needs and expressing thanksgiving for His blessings upon us.

Prayer

Sabbath 49

December 8, 2012

Offering: Division

As disciples of Jesus we need to allow Him to be our Savior and Lord until He comes again. There is an important invitation of Jesus found in the book of Revelation that helps us to see the relevance of such a commitment. That invitation is in the words of Christ Himself when He says: "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 him, and he with me" (Rev 3:20). This is a personal and corporate invitation of Jesus to the members of the church in Laodicea. Laodicea was a prosperous city so the material prosperity had brought in its wake a spirit of complacency which has even contaminated the Christian church (Rev 3:17). This is why Jesus is counseling the church to buy gold, white clothes and eye salve (Rev 3:18). Without Him we are morally and spiritually naked, having nothing with which to buy God's favor. But Jesus Christ can clothe us with His righteousness, touch our eyes so we can have insight and enrich us with spiritual wealth. Apart from Him we can do nothing (John 15:5).

Appeal: Jesus is inviting us to open the door, He is standing at the door of our lives, and He is speaking to us. Are you willing to accept His invitation as we worship today with our tithes and offerings?

Prayer

Sabbath 50

December 15, 2012

Offering: Church Budget

Disciples of Jesus who pledge total commitment to God have made an important decision to leave everything that interferes with the Lordship of Jesus. The apostle Paul expressed his dedication when he asserted “but whatever was my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish that I may gain Christ” (Phil 3:7-8). Paradoxically that “loss” became an ultimate “gain” for Paul. Paul is following the teaching and example of Jesus when He says “For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it” (Matt 16:25). That is the cost of discipleship and the commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ. Today our Church needs to dedicate time, spiritual gifts, and resources, prayerfully and systematically, to our Lord for the proclamation of the gospel and always motivated by the sense of the soon return of the Lord and His command to preach His gospel both at home and afar.

Appeal: Our Lord is inviting us for a total commitment to Him so we may recognize Him as Lord and Savior of our lives. Let us show our spirit of gratitude for His blessings as we return our tithes and offerings.

Prayer

Sabbath 51

December 22, 2012

Offering: Conference/Union

As disciples of Jesus we are in a journey to heaven. The apostle Paul pressed toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called him heavenward in Christ Jesus (Phil 3:14). As he continues with his message he declared “but our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phil 3:20). Although we respect our citizenship and being vested by the rights, privileges and duties of a citizen, the apostle is reminding us that as disciples of Jesus our primary alliance is to God and His kingdom. “Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone” (Eph 2:19-20). As citizens of God’s kingdom and of those who are waiting for blessed hope (Titus 2:13), our minds are shaped by the coming of our Lord. Jesus himself teaches us where to put our priorities in life (Matt 6:19-20).

Appeal: As a demonstration of our heavenly citizenship we come today to worship Him and to return our tithes and offerings for the advancement of His kingdom.

Prayer

Sabbath 52

December 29, 2012

Offering: Church Budget

The total commitment to God has it climax in the coming of our Lord “with power and great glory” (Matt 24:30). We accepted Him as the Lord in our lives and in his coming He again remind us “Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done” (Rev 22:12). We have been blessed by His love and redemption that have empowered us to be transformed according to His image. Now the time has come to reward His faithful disciples. In the book of Revelation the apostle John wrote to the church and to His contemporary disciples, that Jesus is reaffirming the promise of His soon coming, affirming His divine eternity, His messianic authority and His eternal life and Lordship (Rev 22:13). In a more explicit instruction Jesus introduces those who will get the most wonderful blessings. “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city” (Rev 22:14). Salvation in Christ and His righteousness motivates obedience and good works which is finally rewarded in eternity with Jesus.

Appeal: As faithful disciples of Jesus let us hold to a permanent saving relationship with our Lord and let us be prepared for the final eternal reward on His coming.

Prayer