



THE UNITING
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
IN SOUTHERN
AFRICA

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“REVIVE US AGAIN, O LORD”

Easter Time 2024

Brothers and sisters, the time has come to celebrate and live out our belief in the resurrection. It is time for us to ask God for a revival this Easter season. The Psalmist prayed on behalf of the people saying:

Psalm 85:6

“Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?”

“Revive us again” is our request to God as we focus on the message of salvation that is a cause for us to celebrate in this Easter season, yet we are often burdened and heavy laden. The state of our lives, our churches, relationships, our diverse societies all make it necessary for us to ask for a revival – a renewed move of the Spirit, a spiritual awakening. We are in need of a spiritual refreshing from God. “Revive us again, O Lord.”

We are not simply praying for a once-off revival event or service – we are talking of the lasting state of renewal and spiritual awakening that comes when revived and re-spurred by the Spirit of God – a permanent gift of the empowering of the Spirit to re-ignite us to action for God and to holiness. “Revive us again, O Lord.”

This Easter, as we reflect on the fact that the dead body of Jesus was brought back to *life*, we too, as the body of Christ, want God to bring us back to life, bring us back to our first love for God, bring us back to an attitude of repentance and to bring us back to obedience to the Word of God.

And why should we ask for a revival?

Because when God revives God’s church, then the new life overflows from the church to the conversion of outsiders, and the cleansing of believers, and the renovation of society. So, while revival begins with the church, its effects do not stop there, and the world needs the effects of a revival. There is a genuine revival when the church rises, and shakes herself from the dust, and puts on her garments of spiritual splendour as Isaiah declared (Isaiah 52:1-2). “Revive us again, O Lord.”

During this Easter season,

- ✓ Let us be deliberate in our activities to ask God to “revive us again.”
- ✓ Let us preach the word with power; let us worship God with gratitude; let us evangelize with intentionality.
- ✓ Let us humbly admit our shortcomings before the Lord, for repentance is an ingredient for a revival.

- ✓ Some sorrow and distress may happen inside us when God sends a revival – let it be. Some renewal of joy too may happen – let it be. We may experience reignited compassion and concern for the souls of their neighbours – may it be so.
- ✓ Ours is to pray for a revival – and let it be, because only God can bestow the blessing of a revival on God's people in God's own ways and in God's own sovereign timing.

So how should we position ourselves for a revival? Through prayer.

- ✓ For every *congregation*, a prayer or intercession team, the engine of the congregation.
- ✓ Where the congregation already has a prayer team, add revival to your prayer requests - revival of each congregation member, and revival of the denomination.
- ✓ Where the congregation does not have an active prayer group, start a prayer and intercessory team to pray for a revival.
- ✓ For every congregational *fellowship*, a prayer group to pray for revival and renewal of that fellowship and for the revival of our denomination.
- ✓ For every congregational *ministry*, a prayer group to pray for revival of that ministry, and revival of our denomination.
- ✓ For every *presbytery*, an intercession team, not just to pray for the revival of the presbytery, but also for the revival of the denomination as a whole.

Pray 'regularly' for the revival following whichever regular routine works for your context. We need to pray regularly to gain consistency. In reality, when we pray for revival we are praying for the breaking of strongholds in our families, strongholds in our churches, strongholds in our presbyteries, and strongholds in our personal lives. We are urgently praying for a move of the Spirit so that we do not continue as we are.

And finally, brothers and sisters, revival is a corporate event.

When we petition God for revival we acknowledge our need for each other with our diversity of gifts. We acknowledge that all our efforts to organize and contextualize are in vain unless God goes before us. Revival is neither a well-organized evangelistic campaign nor a finely crafted apologetic dissertation. Revival will come when we as the people of God see our need for spiritual renewal, and beseech God to "revive us again" and keep us "stronger together".

Your servant in the Lord,



Rt Rev LC Neshangwe
Moderator of the General Assembly