Prayer Focus: October 2013

‘Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls’ (Matthew 11:28-29).

Reflection
We become children of God when we accept Jesus as our personal Saviour and invite him to live in our hearts. God wants his children to do his work. That’s why we are also called followers of Jesus – we are doers of his word. We are part of God’s family and we are called Christians (Christlike). God does so many great things for us: he blesses us, he guides us, and he’s always with us. As Christians we often think that because we are God’s children life will be easy. We think that because we are in his family, our problems and pain will go and we will be happy. Yes we are in his family, yet we are still subject to the demands of life itself.

Matthew 10:22 says: ‘All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved’ (NIV1984). When we are saved by God’s grace we are his followers; we should try to do what is right and teach his word, but because we are doing the opposite of what the world thinks, the world will try to deceive us. So we will experience ups and downs in this broken world. The risks and dangers of living in it are inescapable.

As Christians we must never tire of doing what is right. It is a challenge living as a Christian in today’s world and we need to demonstrate patience, courage and strength to maintain our faith and continue to do God’s work. Jesus assures us that we can have peace through him because he has overcome the world (John 16:33). We can ask him to refresh our faith in him: ‘Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls’ (Matthew 11:28-29), and ‘refresh my heart in Christ’ (Philemon 1:20).
The Prayer Song
Refresh my heart Lord, Renew my love
Pour your Spirit into my soul, Refresh my heart
You set me apart Lord, To make me new
By your Spirit lift me up Lord, Refresh my heart.

And I will worship you Lord, With all of my heart
And I will follow you Lord, Refresh my heart
And I will worship you Lord, With all of my heart
And I will follow you Lord, Refresh my heart.

Poem – The Fountain of God
We can truly be at peace
In the shadow of his wings,
There we find release for our souls
From life’s many stressful things
He gives to us new strength
When we are feeling weak
And leads us beside the fountain that flows
From heaven to the valleys so deep
Where we can wade in his blessings,
Immersed in His Spirit divine,
Finding true refreshment from God
For our bodies, our souls and minds
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Prayer for forgiveness
Dear Heavenly Father, I humbly come before you, bowing down knowing that I am a sinner. I have done things that are not right in your eyes. Gracious Father, I ask for your forgiveness for all my transgressions, through the blood of your Son, Jesus Christ. Lord, help me to learn to forgive and forget the wrongs I have done and others have done and to know that your abundant grace and mercy is sufficient for me. Take me into your loving hands O Lord, to be a member of your family. Amen.

Prayer of thanksgiving
God of all blessings, source of all life and giver of all grace, we thank you for the gift of life. For the breath that sustains life, for the food of this earth that nurtures it and for the love of family and friends, without whom there would be no life. We thank you for the mystery of Creation: the beauty that the eye can see, the joy that the ear may hear, for the unknown things we cannot see but which fill the universe with wonder, for the expanse of space that draws us
beyond ourselves. We thank you for setting us in communities: for families who nurture us, for friends who love us by choice, for companions at work who share our burdens and daily tasks, for strangers who welcome us into their midst, for people from other lands who call us to grow in understanding, for children who lighten our moments with delight, for the unborn who offer us hope for the future. We thank you for this day: for life and another day to love, for opportunities to witness, one more day to work for justice and peace, for neighbours, for people to love and be loved by, for your grace and the experience of your presence, for your promise to be with us, to be our God, and to offer salvation. For these, and all blessings, we give you thanks eternal, loving God. Through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

**Prayer for refreshment and restoration**

Dear Lord Jesus, I lift my heart and hands heavenward, knowing that no one refreshes a dry and weary heart like you. I am tired and weak but come to you, for your mercies are new every morning and your steadfast love never ends. I find refuge and strength in you Jesus. I join my brothers and sisters in coming to you now with open hearts. I humble myself before you to be restored by your power and filled with the Holy Spirit. My need is one that you alone can meet and I am not ashamed to bring it to you Lord Jesus. You love to give, and I love to receive from you. Great is your faithfulness Lord. In you we are refreshed. Amen.

**Prayer for the ministry of the Word**

Gracious and merciful Father, thank you for the wonderful day you have made. Thank you for the countless blessings we receive every day of our lives. We pray for everyone ministering your Word and seeking to extend your Kingdom on earth. May you strengthen their hearts and minds to continue in the counsel of your Word. We pray also that through your Spirit the Word will touch the lives of those who hear it so that they may come to know you as their personal Saviour. Lord, in Matthew chapter 28 you commanded us, ‘Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I [you] have commanded’. Father, may your message extend to the ends of the world. Continue to strengthen our hearts and minds and defend us from the evil one. We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.