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**SACRED ASSEMBLY OVERVIEW (SEPT. 1-30) – COREY STARK**

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**I. CORPORATE PRAYER KEYS**

A. There are **three key components** that we need to recognize to effectively establish *unified corporate engagement* in prayer, which is the purpose behind our HPC “corporate prayer protocol.” These aren’t the *only* components for effective prayer, but these three are at the top of the list during the September Sacred Assembly.

KEY 1 - Agreement with God’s will: The first key to answered prayer is being in agreement with God’s will (Mt. 6:10; 1 Jn. 5:14-15). Since the LORD has inspired all Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16), praying *biblical prayers* ensures our agreement with His perfect will every time (Jn. 15:7)! Simply speaking God’s Word back to Him in prayer is like cosigning a two-signature check on the earth that the Lord has already endorsed in heaven. A “biblical prayer” is not simply turning a good bible verse into a prayer, but finding the actual prayer text recorded in Scripture for our benefit. There are over 30+ prayers recorded in the New Testament that were prayed by Apostles. We call these *Apostolic Prayers* (see section VII).

***1 Jn. 5:14 If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him***

***Jn. 15:7 If... My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.***

Key 2 - Unity with one another: The second key to answered prayer is being in harmonious agreement with one another. Division hinders our prayers, whereas agreement with God and unity with one another empowers them (Mt. 18:19; 1 Pet. 3:7). In addition, there is a synergy when two or more people agree with God’s will, causing us to go farther together (Lev. 26:8; Deut. 32:30).

***Mt. 18:19 Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.***

***Lev. 26:8 Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred shall put ten thousand to flight.***

Key 3 - Engaging our words in faith: Lastly, God’s word spoken in faith has unlimited potential! Even faith as small as a mustard seed can release great power through our words. Speaking our prayers out loud to God is much different than simply thinking about things or talking about them to others. Jesus’ teaching on prayer requires using *faith-filled words of agreement*, as the means to release God’s governmental power and establish His will on earth.

***Mt. 17:20 For assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.***

B. As we release *faith-filled words of agreement* to God, He responds by releasing His power in the earth. The *simplicity of agreement* with God is the primary way that He establishes His will and advances His Kingdom in the earth. Our volume, hype, talent, eloquence of speech or multitude of words does not motivate or manipulate God to do more. In other words, our agreement with God’s will is the key to releasing His power. This is why a child’s prayer can be as powerful as an adult’s.

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C. We *cannot* do God's part and He *will not* do our part. If we do not agree with Him by using our words in prayer, then some of the sovereignly ordained blessing of His heart that He would joyfully give to us is withheld (Isa. 30:18-19; Jas. 4:2).

***Jas. 4:2 You do not have because you do not ask.***

***Isa. 30:18 Therefore the Lord will wait, that He may be gracious to you... For the Lord is a God of justice... 19 He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears it, He will answer you.***

## II. CORPORATE PRAYER PROTOCOL

A. Our **primary goal** in corporate prayer times is to cultivate unified corporate engagement of faith-filled prayers of agreement. Therefore, we have established the following guidelines to help those praying on the microphone do it in such a way that is conducive to aiding this goal in the room.

1. Pray Biblical Prayers – Biblical prayers are the actual prayer texts recorded in Scripture for our benefit. Since all Scripture is inspired by God (2 Tim. 3:16), praying *biblical prayers* makes it easier for people to know and agree with God's perfect will. When people pray biblical prayers on the microphone it also facilitates agreement with one another, empowering those in the room to engage their own words in faith by *repeating intercessory phrases* (i.e. prayers) back to God.

a. This is conducive to effective corporate prayer, because it utilizes three key components of effective prayer (see section V).

b. By default, most people only *listen, watch, and agree in their minds* with the prayer (which is better than nothing), but helping them pray by giving them the language of Scripture to speak to God themselves in unity with the prayer leader is better!

2. With a Specific Focus (vs. too broad) – We want to be specific in our prayers without being overly detailed. The "prayer of faith" (i.e. confidence) requires a *specific focus* that is reasonable for people to grasp or to clearly picture in their mind. It is impossible to picture a million missionaries across the earth when praying for missions. We find it more helpful to avoid praying too broad (i.e. "*all the lost people*" or "*all the churches in the world*"). Because we can't picture them, it is difficult to have faith/confidence in the Lord answering. Rather, we find it more *helpful* (vs. wrong or incorrect) to pray according to what I can picture and have faith for.

3. At a Moderate Speaking Speed (vs. too fast) – This aids the listeners ability to hear and repeat intercessory phrases to God (i.e. prayers). It's common when people are new at something to be nervous. Unfortunately, this usually translates to speaking too quickly on the microphone. It's not helpful to pray so fast that no one can understand and therefore agree with your prayers.

4. At a Moderate Volume Level (vs. predominant shouting) – We aim at a *moderate* level (energetically talking our prayers). Occasionally we have the option to go to a higher volume in *projecting* our prayers (at preaching volume) and then even less often *shouting* at full volume.

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- a. Shouting can sometimes enhance a prayer meeting when done in proper proportion. *Less* is definitely *more* with shouting. However, to stay at intense preaching or shouting volume for 90% of the time is to be less effective in engaging the room over time.
- b. Shouting our prayers may inadvertently establish a culture that makes it appear as the “norm” giving the perception that shouting is more spiritual and those who simply speak their prayers in faith are less anointed and not welcome to pray on the microphone. Volume doesn’t equal authority. We want everyone to have confidence to pray corporately on the microphone, regardless of whether they have a quieter personality.
- c. When possible, intercessors should pray on a microphone, even if the prayer meeting is small. Principle - In a corporate setting, as a general rule we want to pray *loud enough for everyone* to hear (i.e. microphone) or *soft enough for no one* to hear, but not in between. We don’t want people around them to be ‘held hostage,’ so to speak by intercessors. This is just basic consideration of others.

B. Therefore, we aim to pray *biblical prayers* (vs. unbiblical) maximizing agreement with God’s will, with a *specific focus* (vs. too broad) maximizing corporate faith, at a *moderate speed* (vs. too fast) maximizing agreement with others by aiding listeners ability to hear and repeat intercessory phrases, at *moderate volume* (vs. predominant shouting) maximizing room engagement through volume contrasts and by empowering everyone to have confidence to pray on the microphone.

C. Unhelpful Dynamics: Avoid dynamics that are unhelpful in cultivating *unified corporate engagement of faith-filled prayers of agreement* and that tend to scatter corporate focus.

1. Praying for things that involve too many details.
2. Informing God of circumstances, situations or issues with people that others are not aware of; and therefore, may find it difficult to agree with you in prayer.
3. Informing people concerning details of things that need to be changed, and prescriptions of what you believe are needed (i.e. preaching prayers).
4. Devotional prayers that focus on your personal spiritual needs, longings and personal concerns or issues that are not shared burdens of the group.
5. Praying in such a manner that gives the feeling that you are exhorting others with doctrinal insights or teaching content (i.e. teaching prayers).
6. Praying too loudly off the microphone. When possible, intercessors should pray on a microphone, even if the prayer meeting is small. In a corporate setting, as a general rule we want to pray *loud enough for everyone* to hear (i.e. use the microphone) or *soft enough for no one* to hear, but not in between. We don’t want people around them to be ‘held hostage,’ so to speak by intercessors. This is just basic consideration of others.

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7. Praying in tongues on the microphone, as it is *most* beneficial to individuals as your personal prayer language in your devotional time or in a corporate setting *if* it is accompanied by an interpretation. Therefore, since we are praying corporately to God with the potential of both pre-believers and believers with varying denominational backgrounds in the room during the Sacred Assembly it is not *most helpful* to pray in tongues on the microphone (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23).

***1 Cor. 10:23 All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify.***

### III. SACRED ASSEMBLY PRAYER TARGETS

A. The *primary message* of the Book of Joel that applies to our Sacred Assembly and helps shape our prayer targets is three-fold:

1. There is unprecedented crisis with no human solution escalating in our nation, but there's unprecedented glory available.
2. Wholeheartedness is required from God's people to increase the glory and minimize the crisis.
3. History can be dramatically changed, if we respond God's way, as He can minimize, delay, reverse or even eliminate the crisis altogether, turning a disaster into revival! So why not?

B. In the book of Joel, the LORD gives us a divine pattern, empowering His people to confidently respond to Him during a *national crisis with no human remedy*, so He can intervene with great power, mercy and deliverance. We gather together in a "sacred assembly," *turning to Him* with all of our heart (2:12-17), asking Him to *intervene in crisis* (2:13, 17), and praying for a *great outpouring* of the Holy Spirit (2:28-31).

***Joel 2:12 "Therefore," says the Lord, "Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." 13 So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm. 14 Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing... 15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; 16 gather the people... the congregation... the elders, gather the children and nursing babes...***

1. Wholehearted Repentance: A wholehearted "turning" and "rending" of the heart expressed through individual repentance for ourselves and the sins of our nation (Joel 2:12-13).
2. Intervene in Crisis: Standing in the gap before God on behalf of our city and nation, appealing to Him for mercy in minimizing, delaying, reversing and even averting the current crisis altogether (Joel 2:13-14, 17).
3. Holy Spirit Outpouring: Contending in fervent intercession for a *great outpouring* of the Holy Spirit upon His Church and spiritual awakening in our nation (Joel 2:28-32).

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C. The God-ordained result of a “Sacred Assembly” (2:12-17) is that “after” the assembly, but “before” the coming of the LORD (i.e. Jesus’ return), His covenant people shall experience a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit (2:28-32), as seen in the book of Acts (Acts 2:1-4).

**Joel 2:28 “It shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions... 31 Before the coming of the... day of the Lord. 32 And... whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”**

1. It is noteworthy that Peter appealed to Joel 2 when accused of being “drunk” (Acts 2:15-21)!

**Acts 2:15 *These are not drunk, as you suppose... 16 But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh...’***

2. We understand through Joel that the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon 120 Jewish believers in Jerusalem was merely a down payment of a greater outpouring to come upon “all flesh” in the last days (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:17-21). Notice the qualifying word, “your,” indicating that God’s response to each geographic region is based on their wholehearted response to Him.

D. Seven Prayer Targets: The following prayer targets are meant to harness the power of unified corporate prayer. Even as a laser beam of light cuts through steel when focused, so these 7 prayer targets are meant to amplify our impact for God’s Kingdom by intensifying our prayers through a unified corporate focus. They are not meant to be restrictive or exhaustive, nor are they meant to be legally adopted, but a helpful tool to enhance unified corporate engagement in the prayer of faith.

#1 Outpouring of the Holy Spirit and Revival in the Church (Acts 2:15-21; Eph. 4:13; 5:27)  
Fullness of the Holy Spirit (wisdom, fruit, gifts) with unprecedented unity, purity and power.

#2 Spiritual Awakening and a Great Harvest Among the Lost (Mt. 28:18-20; Lk. 10:2; Jn. 8:32)  
Boldly speaking the revelation of Jesus with signs and wonders, reaching every tribe and tongue.

#3 Racial Reconciliation and Restoration of the Family (Mal. 4:5-6; Mk. 12:31; Eph. 5:22-33)  
Abounding love and repentance, reconciling ethnic division, restoring marriages and families.

#4 Mercy and Forgiveness for Personal/National Sin (Dan. 9:3-19; Jl. 2:12-17; 1 Jn. 1:9)  
Wholehearted turning to God in faith, repentance from sin, asking for mercy and forgiveness.

#5 Divine Intervention in the Current National Crisis (2 Chr. 7:13-14; Jer. 18:7-8; Jl. 2:12-17)  
God’s truth and light, exposing and stopping all darkness and corruption, bringing swift justice.

#6 Righteousness and Justice in the 7 Mountains of Influence (Am. 5:24; Mt. 6:10; 1 Tim. 2:1-4)  
God’s will in Arts & Entertainment, Business, Education, Family, Government, Media, Religion.

#7 Salvation of Israel and the Jewish People (Gen 12:3; Isa. 62:1, 6-7; Ps. 122:6; Rom. 10:1)  
Peace in Jerusalem and surrounding area, Israel’s revelation of Jesus and national salvation.