



DAILY DEVOTIONS FOR

21 DAYS OF PRAYER FOR REVIVAL



WEEK TWO:

COMMUNITY REVIVAL



DAY EIGHT:

BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

INTRODUCTION

When God blesses us, he always intends it to be passed on to others. God's reviving work in our hearts is meant for our community. Today we will look at a foundational example of this as we study God's promise to both bless Abram and bless the world through Abram. As God revives our hearts personally, he wants to use us to bring revival to our community. We are blessed by God to be a blessing to our world.

SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 12:1-5

The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.

"I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you;

I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

*I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.

DEVOTION

As we saw last week, God has chosen to use people to achieve his purposes. I am not sure why. It seems to me that God could do a better job by himself, but this is not his way. He loves to include us and give us a place in his powerful work of blessing.

Adam and Eve were God's original choice to represent him to the world, but when they failed by wanting to displace him, God looked for another family through whom he could share his blessings with the world. He eventually settled on Abram and his descendants. They were not outstanding in any way. But that is the way God likes it. He takes ordinary people who trust him and rely on him and uses them to bless.

This Scripture focuses on the way God is going to bless Abram. He would be the father of a great nation. Which is interesting because at the time he had had no children at all and would not actually have a child through his wife



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until he was 99. He would possess a new land. Which is interesting because at the time he was a nomad. And he would build a huge reputation. Which is interesting because at the time he was a nobody. Of course, from our vantage point, we can see how all these promises were fulfilled by God through Abram's family, Israel, and Abram's descendant, Jesus. Abram/Abraham is still a household name throughout the world over 4000 years later.

But the point of God's promise in this Scripture is not just the impossible and undeserved blessing that would eventually come to God's representative Abram and his family, but the fact that it was God's intention that the whole world would be blessed through Abram. "All peoples on earth" God says. This is the way God works. He blesses his people because he loves us, but the blessing is not just for us but for everyone – our friends, our family, our neighbours, our community. We are blessed so that we will be a blessing to our world.

As our spiritual lives are revived and God's incredible love for us flows into our hearts, God's intention is that we will bless others. This involves serving others of course, but it also includes praying for spiritual revival for those around us. For those who are close to God and those who are a long way off. That they might be filled "to the measure of all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:19).

PRAYER RESPONSE

Lord I thank you for what you are doing in my life. Drawing me closer to your heart. Lavishing me with your love. Reviving my trust in you and passion for you. But this is not just for me. May your grace work in my life influence those around me. May your presence in me be obvious to them. May you work in power in those I love and in those I struggle with. Please Lord revive the spiritually lukewarm and dead in my community.

PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

Lord, please bring a new hunger for you to our church and community. We are a broken and rebellious people, but you love us deeply. Forgive our apathy and draw our hearts to you. Bring your revival.



DAY NINE:

GOD'S GLORY REVEALED AGAIN

INTRODUCTION

The 66 chapters of Isaiah's prophetic book forecast two major changes for Israel. The first 39 chapters of Isaiah mainly focus on God's future punishment of his people for their disobedience. God is going to allow other nations to dominate and decimate them. They will be dragged away from their land. In the first part of his prophetic book, Isaiah warns that Israel is in big trouble and very difficult times are on the horizon. Then in chapter 40, Isaiah changes tack and speaks of a new season following this incredibly tough time – a season of hope and comfort, a season of God's working in power, a season of God living close to his people, a season of God's glory being seen by all. In other words, a season of revival.

SCRIPTURE: ISAIAH 40:1-5

*Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her
that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for,
that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.*

*A voice of one calling: In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.
And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together.
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."*

DEVOTION

When did this new season of great blessing prophesied by Isaiah come about? Well, it is not straightforward. In some ways it came about 200 years after Isaiah's prophecy when God's people returned from their exile in Babylon. As Isaiah had prophesied, the Babylonians ransacked Jerusalem and replanted most of the Jews throughout their Empire. But from 538 BC a significant group of Jews started coming back home. They rebuilt Jerusalem and re-established the Jewish nation in their own land. It was a new season of God's blessing.

But then Isaiah's prophecy was also fulfilled almost 700 years after he spoke it, when Jesus arrived on earth. All the Gospel writers link 40:3 ("a voice of one calling in the wilderness") with the ministry of John the Baptist who



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preceded Jesus. As Isaiah prophesied, Jesus came and died. Then he was resurrected. The Holy Spirit came. The church was born. It was a new season of God's blessing for his people as Isaiah predicted.

But in some ways this prophecy is still yet to be fulfilled. 40:5 speaks of all people seeing the glory of God together. This will occur when Jesus returns to this earth as king (Rev. 1:7). It will be the ultimate new season of God's blessing for his people. So this prophecy by Isaiah is not just predicting one historical event that happened thousands of years ago, but a series of new seasons in which God would work in revival blessing.

This is what we are preparing the way for. A fresh season in which God shows himself in greater glory. It may be the return of Jesus which we expect at any time. That would be the ultimate answer to our prayers. But it may also be a season of revival. During revival people sense the presence of God powerfully. Conviction, contrition, repentance and prayer grow. People thirst for God and his word. Lukewarm Christians come alive. Many non-believers are saved. "The rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed" (40:4-5). This is worth praying and preparing for.

PRAYER RESPONSE

Lord, Israel had to wait almost 200 years for their revival. May we not have to wait that long. Please come in your power. Do the impossible. Bring conviction of sin. Draw our hearts to you. Show your power. May many people see your glory and turn to you.

PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

Lord I ask that you work in the lives of our community leaders – our politicians, our business leaders, our media and social media influencers, our school principals, our bosses. May those with significant influence become aware of you. May they see your greatness and follow you.



DAY TEN:

DRY BONES CAN LIVE

INTRODUCTION

One of the challenges we have in praying and preparing for community revival is that most of us have not personally experienced it. We live in a secular and materialistic society (at least in the West) and we are surrounded and influenced by our culture. How can this ever change? How could our community come alive spiritually? Well the Jews that had been exiled wondered the same thing. They were defeated, downtrodden and banished. How on earth could God restore Israel? Both ancient Israel and modern Christians are faced with the same dilemma – spiritually dry bones everywhere. But Ezekiel the prophet told Israel what God would do. And his message is the same for us.

SCRIPTURE: EZEKIEL 37:1-14

The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"

I said, "Sovereign Lord, you alone know."

Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.'"

So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.'" So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.

Then he said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.' Therefore prophecy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: My people, I am



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going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.”

DEVOTION

Ezekiel saw a picture of devastation and desolation. Lots of dry, dead bones piled all over the floor of a valley. They may have been a powerful army at one stage, but those days were long gone. These people had been slaughtered and their bodies left to the animals and elements. In this valley, there was no strength. No life. No hope. Just misery and despair.

Ezekiel was speaking primarily about Israel in this prophecy, but what a poignant picture of our community. Dry bones. Spiritually barren. Devoid of life and hope. Morally corrupt. Trapped by the idols of pleasure and self-indulgence and selfishness. Dry bones everywhere. Maybe I am being alarmist. I know God is at work and many people in our community try hard. But as I look around, it just feels spiritually like a pile of dry bones. People don't care about God. They are apathetic and disinterested. Their hope is gone. I find myself confronted with the same question Ezekiel was asked, "Can these bones live?"

If this is your question about your community, keep reading the Scripture passage until God's answer sinks in. These dry bones can become a vast army of God. God does the work, but our role (with Ezekiel) is to believe, pray and prophesy new life into our community. God will breathe on these bones and restore spiritual life.

PRAYER RESPONSE

Lord my faith is small. It is so hard to see how things are going to change radically among the people I mix with. But faith is believing what I cannot yet see. So please help me to hold on to your promises and trust your power. Help me to believe that dry bones can become a vast army of people following you.

PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

Lord you built Israel into a powerful nation again as Isaiah prophesied. You bring spiritual life to those who are dead. I am asking you to do the same for my community. Please work in your power. Do the impossible. Bring spiritual revival. May these dry bones live.



DAY ELEVEN:

BOTH GRIEF AND JOY

INTRODUCTION

What would community revival look like? Of course, every powerful work of God is different so it is difficult to predict, but let's have a look at a spiritual revival that occurred in the Old Testament to see if we can find some clues. First some background. As God had promised in yesterday's Scripture, many Jews returned from exile and set about rebuilding Jerusalem. It was not easy reconstructing a nation from scratch and eventually their energy waned, and they returned to bad habits both physically and spiritually. It was very disappointing. But God was not ready to give up, so he called an important godly official in the Persian empire (a Jew named Nehemiah) to lead a new delegation back to Jerusalem to get the revival going again. Nehemiah helped the Jews to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, but they still were not in a good place spiritually. So Ezra, the main Bible teacher of this revamped nation, stepped up.

SCRIPTURE: NEHEMIAH 8:1, 5-11

All the people came together as one in the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the teacher of the Law to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded for Israel...

v5 Ezra opened the book. All the people could see him because he was standing above them; and as he opened it, the people all stood up. 6 Ezra praised the Lord, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, "Amen! Amen!" Then they bowed down and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

The Levites instructed the people in the Law while the people were standing there. They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people understood what was being read.

Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher of the Law, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, "This day is holy to the Lord your God. Do not mourn or weep." For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.

Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

The Levites calmed all the people, saying, "Be still, for this is a holy day. Do not grieve."

DEVOTION

The Book of the Law of Moses that Ezra read from was most likely the whole Pentateuch – the first five books of the Old Testament. These books contain foundational narratives of God's relationship with his people, but they particularly focus on how God's family can live in covenant relationship with him. They lay out what Israel



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needed to do to live close to God. Now you would probably find someone reading laws to you rather boring. A bit like someone reading a Constitution aloud. Not a promising start for revival. But most of these people were illiterate. They were used to listening to the leaders read and as Nehemiah makes clear, there were some helpful explanations happening as the covenant law was read. They also stood the whole time out of respect for God's word, and this probably aided concentration.

Whatever the arrangements, God was at work in a powerful way this day. Everyone started to cry as they listened. They realised that they had not been living the way God wanted. That they had abandoned God and his covenant again. They were mortified at their callousness to what God asked of them. It struck them how far they had slipped away from their God as a nation. And the tears flowed. They were deeply sorry. God was convicting them about their apathy and disobedience. Revival was beginning. Revival is always accompanied by deep repentance from sin. This seems to be the only way to enter revival. God convicts and we repent. Often accompanied by tears. We repent alone and we repent together.

But while repentance is vital and Israel would need to do more of it (see Nehemiah 9), revival does not stop there. The spiritual leaders of the nation recognised this. The dominant emotion of revival is not grief but joy. The joy of coming close to God. The joy of living God's way. The joy of following God together. The joy of delighting in God. The joy of seeing God work in power. The joy of the Lord becomes our strength. In revival there will be more joy than you could ever dream of. A foretaste of heaven.

PRAYER RESPONSE

Lord I long for the tears that will bring release. Release from my shame and guilt. Release from my cold-heartedness to you. Release from the chains of sin that bind me. But even better will be fresh joy. I desperately need your joy to sustain my spiritual strength. I want to profoundly enjoy you and your work.

PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

Lord in your grace, please bring your conviction on us – our church, our community, our nation. Show us how we have abandoned you. How we have wounded you. How we have ignored you. How we have disappointed you. Do not leave us alone to slowly perish in our self-righteousness. Please convict us so that we can know real joy.



DAY TWELVE:

SIGNS AND WONDERS

INTRODUCTION

Like the other Hebrew prophets we have studied in the last few days, Joel prophesied blessing ahead for Israel if the nation would repent and turn to God. He promised that after their punishment, God would repay them for the years “the locusts had eaten” (Joel 2:25). Israel would flourish again under God’s protection. We saw a little of how this worked out yesterday in the study. But Joel goes on to describe an even more powerful time of revival that would lie still further ahead. This revival would impact the whole world. He calls it “the Day of the Lord.”

SCRIPTURE: JOEL 2:28-32

And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.

Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke.

The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood

before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.

And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved;

for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the Lord has said,

even among the survivors whom the Lord calls.

DEVOTION

It is easy for us to identify the day that Joel was speaking about. Not because we are particularly brilliant biblical scholars, but because the apostle Peter, preaching on the Day of Pentecost, quoted this exact Scripture (Acts 2:17-21) to describe what was happening. Joel here was predicting the pouring out of God’s Spirit on believers and the impact it would have.

A strong emphasis of Joel’s prophecy is that everyone will be included in this revival. God’s Spirit would be for all peoples. God’s Spirit was often at work in the Old Testament, but not in or through ordinary people. It was the spiritual leaders who were empowered by the Spirit. In this revival it would be different. The Spirit would be poured out on everyone. It’s “all people.” It’s “men and women.” It’s “old and young”. It’s even the slaves (“servants”). Everyone can hear God’s voice through his Spirit within. Everyone can speak God’s words.



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And there will be signs and wonders. Joel pictures them in figurative terms – fire, smoke, black sun, red moon. At Pentecost, Peter applied these pictures to the miracle of his bushie friends full of the Spirit speaking the gospel in tongues (in perfect Ethiopian and Egyptian, etc.). Joel's signs of this Day are meant to show that things will occur that will defy nature. God, in his power, will override his natural laws and do powerful miracles that will be seen by everyone.

In this Scripture we see some of the marks of community revival. God's Spirit fills the lives of believers and they are empowered. Ordinary people become miracle workers. Regular Christians hear God and speak boldly on his behalf. Revival is not something for the spiritual elite. It is not for the particularly holy. It is for us all. Everyone.

And many are saved as they call on God. The power and love of God are seen through the lives of common people and the wonders God does through them. And many are drawn to the freedom and deliverance of Jesus.

PRAYER RESPONSE

This is getting exciting Lord. Thanks that you have given me your Spirit to live in me and empower me. Fill me with your Spirit. May I hear your voice. May I speak your truth with boldness. Fill me with dreams of what you can do. Please work in your power through me.

PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

Lord you worked to bring revival to the early church and you have revived your church many times since. Please do it again. Fill us with your Spirit. Take ordinary Christians and turn them into powerful witnesses. Work through signs and wonders to help unbelievers see that you are sovereign God and that you care for them. May many call on you and be saved.



DAY THIRTEEN:

CUT TO THE HEART

INTRODUCTION

Today we move out of the Old Testament and into the New Testament in our biblical study of community revival. We are looking at the Day of Pentecost when as Joel had prophesied, God's Spirit was poured out for the first time on all his people. It was an incredible day. A group of Jesus' closest disciples had been privately celebrating the Feast of Pentecost when the Spirit came on them, accompanied by signs like fire and the sound of a violent wind. They all began speaking loudly in languages they had never learned. This commotion attracted a large crowd that had come to Jerusalem for the Feast from all over the world. Unexpectedly those in the crowd heard these relatively uneducated and untravelled followers of Jesus speak perfectly in their native languages. They were amazed and perplexed. So when Peter got up to speak, they listened intently. Quoting from the Old Testament, he told them about Jesus. Now read on.

SCRIPTURE: ACTS 2:37-41

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

DEVOTION

Three thousand converts after one sermon – that's revival. I know that Jesus had large crowds following him at one stage, but there were only perhaps 500 disciples left by the time of his ascension. So with 3000 new baptised converts, in one day the fledgling church grew by about 600%. That is clearly more than church growth, that's revival.

Of course, the coming of God's Spirit was a unique and special event. It is doubtful that we will see anything quite like that response in one day in our church. But the powerful, supernatural conviction of God's Spirit seen in this Scripture is typical of revival. I love the phrase "cut to the heart" (2:37). This was not an emotional response to a powerful sermon by Peter. This was a work of God, opening the eyes of many in the crowd to their



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separation from God and their desperate need to be saved by Jesus.

I have seen God do this convicting work many times. I remember a proud and unemotional Scotsman sobbing loudly in my office after church as God's Spirit cut his heart for the first time. I remember a 65-year-old vehement and angry atheist shedding tears of repentance as he realised that Jesus loved him – the Jesus he had ridiculed most of his life. I know God works like this, but in revival it ramps up. Many are drawn to Jesus. Many hear the convicting voice of God's Spirit. Many prodigals come home.

It is not that Peter had no contribution to the work of God's Spirit in revival. He warned and pleaded with the crowd (2:40) to believe in Jesus. He put the pressure on as best he could. He was bold and convincing. But this was the Spirit's work not Peter's work. God's Spirit was opening eyes and cutting open hearts in powerful new ways. The small group of Jesus followers watched in awe and excitement as the revival began.

PRAYER RESPONSE

Lord I read about the way your Spirit worked 2000 years ago and I long for it to happen again. There are many people I care about who are completely ignorant of you. Some have turned their backs on you and walked away. Others have no idea of who you are. I would love for you to cut them to the heart with the gracious truth of the gospel. Not to leave them broken, but so that you can forgive them and adopt them and fill them and bless them. Please open their eyes Holy Spirit of God.

PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

Out of all the blessings that revival will bring, the one I long for most is to see many people streaming into your kingdom. The lost coming home. The broken being healed. The rejected being accepted and loved. The proud being humbled. The self-reliant seeking a Saviour. Bring revival please Lord.



DAY FOURTEEN:

REVIVAL LIFESTYLE

INTRODUCTION

We have looked at some of the signs that accompanied biblical revivals. But how will community revival impact the lifestyle of Christians? That is a difficult question to answer because lifestyles are significantly impacted by cultures, and there are many different cultures both throughout history and in our world today. Obviously, we will live more intimately with Jesus and be more dependent on him, but how will this change our priorities? Let's look at how the revival commencing at Pentecost impacted the lifestyle of the early Christians, and then try to extrapolate some principles. Today's reading follows on from yesterday's Scripture. As you read, look for lifestyle changes that could impact you in revival.

SCRIPTURE: ACTS 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

DEVOTION

It is a mistake to see the lifestyle described in this passage as normative for the whole of the early church. It may appear that the early Christians lived in idyllic Christian communities without any problems as they shared meals and possessions and support and worship. However, this is not true. We find in the New Testament letters that many of the early churches faced the same tensions and problems that we face today. The Christian lifestyle described here flowed from a revival. God was on the move in extraordinary ways. For example, people were being added to the church every day.

But this description of lifestyle in the early Jerusalem church does give us some clues as to how our lifestyle might change as God moves in revival. First, there will be a greater passion to spend time with God and grow in relationship with him. These revival Christians were at the temple every day as well as learning from the apostles and spending much time in prayer. It will be interesting to see how this desire for time with God meshes with our hectic Western lifestyles. I suspect some things will have to go.



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Second, we will want to be together more to encourage and disciple and serve and share with and pray with each other. While the Jewish culture 2000 years ago was more communal than our contemporary, individualistic culture in the West, these Christians took community to the next stage. There is a huge emphasis in this passage on being together: in the Temple, in homes, around meals. Even generously sharing money and possessions. It is not that these early Christians had oodles of spare time and cash. They worked all day with no weekends. Most were quite poor. They just loved each other and wanted to share together in every way. In revival, unity and fellowship will be strong.

Third, we will have a much stronger awareness of the presence and power of God. These early Christians experienced numerous miracles. They saw God adding new people to their church community every day. No wonder their hearts were glad and they were filled with awe. Even their neighbours were impressed. As God works in greater power, it will be exciting for us. Our expectations of God's presence and power will grow.

Where will all this fit into our present daily routines? I am not sure really. Maybe our access to social media and technology will help us connect together more often. All I know is that things will change. There will be significant sacrifices along with wonderful new experiences of God.

PRAYER RESPONSE

Lord I recognise that revival will bring change and some of that change will be costly for me. Maybe I will have less time or money for myself. Maybe I will be called to give up things I really enjoy. But bring it on Jesus. I want to be filled with awe. I want to love others more deeply. I want to see new Christians daily.

PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

These early believers had been mourning the death of their Messiah. They felt their hope was gone. Then within 7 weeks they not only had a risen Saviour but were in the middle of your powerful new revival work. Many of us have waited a long time for community revival Lord. Please bring it on.

