

# Day of Prayer and Repentance

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## Overview

The Day of Prayer and Repentance is usually one of the prescriptions that the consultation team gives to a church to be completed as one of the first steps in the process.

This day is usually conducted by Sherry Habben, the Director of Connectional Ministries for the Missouri Conference, or someone else recommended by her or the office of Congregational Excellence.

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## Purpose

1. The first purpose for this day is to ask for forgiveness in failing to join in God's mission for the Church, which is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
2. The second purpose is to pray that God will give the leaders and the congregation a vision for the community in which the church exists.

Prayers need to be offered asking God to break open anew the hearts of the people for those in the community who live without any spiritual hope for the future with the Creator God who loved them enough to send Jesus Christ.

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## Format

The prayer times and calls to worship as well as music are designed around the prayer and repentance language/theme. The pastor will typically take care of these parts of the service.

Recommended songs: "Spirit Song" UMH #347 and "Spirit of the Living God" UMH #393—other songs are chosen based on what the congregation is most familiar with.

Scripture: Luke 8:40-50 and the title is "Reaching Out"

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## Day of Prayer and Repentance, Continued

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### Message

- Obstacles and barriers that were/are between the woman and Jesus and us and Jesus and her courage in breaking through those barriers to reach out to Jesus for healing
  - Lift up that she needed to be willing to accept a new way of being in order to live a different life
  - Encourage everyone to consider their own obstacles and corporately, the congregation's barriers, in moving ahead so they can more effectively make disciples for Jesus Christ
  - Talk about the need to ask for forgiveness for the ways in which they have not been reaching out to make disciples for Jesus
  - Use some of the language from the prescriptions to lift up areas in need of change—prayer and repentance
  - Understand that there is often a need to acknowledge hurt and pain in the congregation that needs to be forgiven and let go of in order to prepare the way for a new beginning/vision
  - Ask for insights from the pastor and/or those who conducted the consultation
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### After the Message

- People are handed a piece of paper and encouraged to write down what barriers or obstacles they/the congregation needs to let go of; what they need to ask forgiveness for, or where they need to grant forgiveness
- They are then invited to bring those up front and tear them up and put them in a basket.
- They then take a strip of muslin cloth as a symbol of touching the hem of Jesus' robe—for healing and a new beginning—It is suggested that they keep this in a place that will remind them of the healing and new life Jesus offers
- They then can come to be anointed (if they desire) and spend some time in prayer at the altar rail.

During this time some quiet music is being played. The message, writing barriers and coming forward typically takes about 30 minutes, depending on the number of people.

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## Day of Prayer and Repentance, Continued

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### Logistics

The church will need to have at least two baskets up front, plus strips of cream colored muslin cloth cut to the size of a bookmark. Pieces of paper will need to be inserted into the bulletin or available for the ushers to hand out along with writing instruments. (Check with the person conducting the service concerning the anointing oil.)

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