

Abide in Me

BY PAVEL GOIA



After graduation I was called to a district that had three small churches. It was winter. One of the churches had a mostly elderly membership. On a very good Sabbath, like for the Christmas program, we had maybe 40 people. On a bad Sabbath, about 10.

One Sabbath it was very cold, around -32°F, and nine people showed up: my family of four and another five. I wondered, Should I even preach? The head elder, a lady who was about 90 years old, said, “We pay tithe, so you need to preach.” So I did.

I preached from John 15:4–8. In four verses Jesus repeats “Abide in Me” three times. In Hebrew culture, something repeated three times is very important, even essential. I emphasized that it is not so much what we do in the Christian life. While we are called to serve, we will never have results

by ourselves. However, Jesus gave His word that if we remain in Him, whatever we ask, it will be done. There is no ambiguity; it’s 100 percent assurance for success.

“So,” I told the listeners, “it is not what we can do, but what God can do that makes the real difference.”

Author Ellen G. White states, “It is not the capabilities you now possess, or ever will have, that will give you success. It is that which the Lord can do for you. We need to have far less confidence in what man can do, and far more confidence in what God can do for every believing soul” (Christian Service, p. 262).

I told my little congregation that prayer “is the secret of spiritual power” (Prayer, p. 12). It connects us with the “Source of strength” (Prayer, p. 272). Prayer gives us access to God’s “boundless resources” (Steps to Christ, p. 95). It is the most efficient weapon against Satan’s attacks (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1 pp. 295, 296, 345, 346).

I told them about the promise Jesus gave in Matthew 18:19, 20. “Truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them” (NIV). It doesn’t say “If 200 or 300 ask” but “If 2 or 3 ask” for something in agreement, in unity. And it is not “I might do it” but a very clear “I will do it.”

I told my few listeners, “It’s not an option to do nothing. We must pray and work, and God will give the results as He promised.” It was a strong sermon on the power of prayer.

As my wife and I drove home, I told her, “We need to move. There is no hope of growth or in fact of anything in this church.” She repeated back to me my sermon, with Jesus’ promise, and she asked me, “Why don’t you call them to prayer?” I hesitantly did so. Those few ladies came every morning at 6:30 a.m. to pray together for the Holy Spirit, church growth, families, the city, God’s plan for our church, and clarity on what we needed to do. Three months later the church had an attendance of about 120.

God is calling you to continually remain in Him,

pray without ceasing, never disconnect, and walk with Him. He invites you to abide in Him, and you must daily invite Him to abide in you. That’s your only source of true power. That’s your safety. As long as you are connected to God, Satan has no power over you. Christ in you and you in Him is the single way to growth and success.

Pavel Goia is the editor of Ministry Magazine and the associate secretary of the Ministerial Department of the General Conference. This story was featured in this year's 10 Days of Prayer at www.tendaysofprayer.org.

World Church Prayer Requests

FEBRUARY 7 — 13, 2025

- **United States:** Pray for Northside SDA Church as they prepare to host an evangelistic series titled “Lift Up Jesus.” Pray that all those involved, as well as those attending, will be touched with the Spirit and understanding of Jesus and will commit their lives to Him.
- **Mozambique:** Pray for Maputo International English, a new branch church opening February 7 and 8. Pray that those who attend this special weekend will be blessed and empowered to serve and lead in their communities.
- **Canada:** Pray for the Nepean SDA Church as they prepare to host an Adventist Christian Fellowship retreat for youth and young adults studying on public campuses. Pray that the young people will be inspired to dedicate their lives to Jesus and serve Him daily.
- **Kenya:** Pray for the Valley Central SDA Chebaiwo Church that it will grow in its influence within the community. Pray that the Holy Spirit will be poured out in an abundant measure and that the members will be filled with love and unity as they seek to minister to others.
- **Papua New Guinea:** Please pray for the Adventist churches in the East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea as they reach out to villages that are caught in the darkness of witchcraft. Pray that God’s Spirit will go ahead of each person, protecting and preparing them to be lights for His glory.
- **Southern Asia Pacific Division:** Pray for the 202 million people in the 41 least reached cities. Pray that they will know and love Jesus.