

ALTARS

NAME:

ALTARS

We hope this devotional journey will help you spend intentional time with Jesus this week. We are staying on the theme of 'Altars', but changing the emphasis in line with what we feel God is doing at this time.

Let the Spirit guide you as He reveals the areas of our lives that He wants to move into, and the parts of our land and the nations that need breakthrough.

Our intention this year, not just in this booklet or this week of prayer and fasting, is to set a course in our hearts to persistently cry out for God to move in fresh and new ways and for His Kingdom to come in us, in our city, in our nation and the nations.

We want to be intentional as we cry out to God to move in specific ways for the sake of His Kingdom, His power and His glory.

ALTARS

Altars hold a significant place in the biblical narrative mentioned nearly 400 times across the Old and New Testaments. They are places of sacrifice and worship, covenants and divine communication. Altars are where mankind extended their devotion towards God, sought forgiveness, and established pacts embodying divine-human relationships.

Since Genesis they have been places where people worshipped God and dedicated themselves fully and permanently to Him in response to His goodness and what He had done. As God's story unfolds and we find our time and place within it, we want our lives to count, to be a people who lay our lives down as living sacrifices for a God who is worthy.

Altars at their very essence are a recognition that He alone is God, He alone is worthy, He alone is Holy, Holy, Holy and we need him. Altars are places of divine encounter and acknowledge God's presence as the most important thing in our lives. This week we get to bring our hearts, our church, our land and the nations to our God as we cry out for Him to move in these days.

Our purpose is to ask at each altar that God take his rightful place, that competing altars and idols would be torn down and that we would be fully surrendered, possessing nothing but having gained everything.

MONDAY

ALTAR OF THE HEART

Our hearts are built for devotion and left unguarded that devotion can become misdirected toward all manner of things. It's easy to think that we have our priorities straight, and it may even appear so, but in the depths of our hearts our true loves and desires may not actually be aligned with our intentions as disciples of Jesus.

“What do I really love?” or “What is my deepest desire?” can be difficult questions to answer so perhaps starting with “How do I spend the majority of my time?” or “What do I think about most?” could be helpful as we allow the Holy Spirit to reveal who or what occupies the throne of our hearts. What have we allowed to elevate itself when we weren't paying attention?

PRAYER

Start here and if you'd like to go deeper the prayer points and Scripture on the following pages will help guide you.

Our conversation with God today is about our heart. So lets take the time to ask some deep searching questions and respond to the answers as we seek to consecrate the altar of our heart.

Lord show me the distractions in my heart?

Lord show me my disordered desires (longings that are badly prioritised) in my heart?

Lord show me the disobedience in my heart (rebellion that we are emotionally attached to and unwilling to release)?

**My prayer of consecration for the altar of my heart
May my heart be a place where**

PSALM 139

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.

You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely.

You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand— when I awake, I am still with you.

If only you, God, would slay the wicked! Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty! They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name. Do I not hate those who hate you, Lord, and abhor those who are in rebellion against you? I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies. Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

TUESDAY

ALTAR OF FAMILY

Families can take on many forms and the biblical understanding of family is broad but what they all have in common is that they are smaller groups of people who are committed to each other, love one another, spend time together, care for each other, support one another and grow together. Whomever you consider to be family, the Lord cares about those relationships. He is not just interested in the space within us being a place of devotion, but also the space between us. His kingdom can come there powerfully when that space is submitted to him and honours him.

PRAYER

Start here and if you'd like to go deeper the prayer points and Scripture on the following pages will help guide you.

Our conversation with God today is about the altar of family and specifically your connect group family if you are part of one. Holy Spirit guide us and open our eyes where we have become blind.

Lord show me the distractions in my family/connect relationships?

Lord show me the disordered desires (longings that are badly prioritised) in my family/connect relationships?

Lord show me the disobedience in my family/connect relationships (rebellion that we are emotionally attached to and unwilling to release)?

**My prayer of consecration for the altar of my family/connect
May my family/connect be a place where**

PRAYER POINTS

CONNECT GROUPS

- There are more than 55 connect groups across our sites. Pray for these groups and the hosts who lead them.
- Pray that we would be a people set apart, formed into Christ by the relationships we build together and not deformed by a culture that is individualistic and separate.
- Pray that as we do this we would see small groups of people across our nation being changed into the very likeness of Jesus and overflowing His love into our world.

WEDNESDAY

ALTAR OF THIS CHURCH

Today we are praying for CFC with a particular focus on kids, youth and worship.

Kids and Youth

This church often feels like a busy family home, sometimes noisy, often stretched, but always full of life. These multigenerational spaces are where faith deepens and friendships grow. Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me” (Matt 19). In our church family, children belong right at the centre, close to Him. From newborn cries to teens in worship, every sound is a joyful offering to God. The younger generations bring creativity and passion, they are not just the future; they are the church now, stepping into faith and leadership with courage and vision.

Worship

The Church is a home for communion with the Father and with each other. We gather to declare: Jesus is Lord. Whether in joy or pain, our worship is not performance, it’s our honest, shared offering. A space to celebrate, weep, dance, listen, and adore the Father.

“Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit.” — Eph 5:19

PRAYER

Start here and if you'd like to go deeper the prayer points and Scripture on the following pages will help guide you.

Our conversation with God today is about the altar of this particular church that you belong to with a focus on Kids, Youth and Worship. Holy Spirit guide us and open our eyes where we have become blind.

Lord show me the distractions in this church?

Lord show me the disordered desires (longings that are badly prioritised) in this church?

Lord show me the disobedience in this church (rebellion that we are emotionally attached to and unwilling to release)?

**My prayer of consecration for this church
May this church be a place where**

PRAYER POINTS

WORSHIP

- Pray for our worship and creative communities across all sites.
- Ask God to unite the right people to glorify Him and to raise a prophetic voice through our songs, words, and creativity.
- May a river of life flow from our worship into the world, bringing many to know Jesus.

ANTRIM KIDS & YOUTH

- Pray for new kids' team members to settle in and lead with wisdom and creativity in limited space.
- That children know God's love, build strong faith, and form good friendships.
- Thank God for growth in youth ministry; pray for deeper relationships and lasting impact from Summer Madness.

EAST BELFAST KIDS & YOUTH

- Pray that children grow in genuine relationship with Jesus.
- Pray for wisdom for leaders as they guide kids in faith.
- Pray for Jack Gavin (new youth worker) to settle in.
- Pray for salvations and openness among youth from non-faith backgrounds.
- Pray that youth leaders are filled with energy, wisdom, and excitement.

HOLYWOOD KIDS & YOUTH

- Pray for kids' leaders managing busy rooms with limited space.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit moves powerfully in kids' lives, bringing breakthrough moments.
- Pray for new youth leaders to step forward and renewed strength for existing ones.
- Pray that young people feel connected, grow in God's love, and become more involved in church life.

INNER EAST BELFAST KIDS & YOUTH

- Pray for kids in the local community, especially those without parents in church.
- Pray for a dedicated team to rise up with compassion and commitment.
- Pray for a growing youth community full of faith, identity in Christ, boldness, and purpose.

SOUTH BELFAST KIDS & YOUTH

- Pray for our Sunday and Friday kids' teams as they meet spiritual and practical needs.
- Pray for opportunities to bless and encourage the next generation.
- Pray that youth grow deeper in their faith.
- Pray for new interns to settle in and flourish in their roles.

SIGN LANGUAGE KIDS

- Pray that the team make deep relationships with the families coming to SLC.
- Pray for opportunities to share more about the love of Jesus with them.
- Pray for safety and protection of all our SLC kids.

THURSDAY

ALTAR OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Perhaps some of you already have a deep love and concern for the Church across this island, but if not, today let the Lord expand your heart and show you his bride as he sees her. There are many things in the Church on this island to be grateful for and joyful about but there are also areas where we desperately need God's help.

PRAYER

Start here and if you'd like to go deeper the prayer points and Scripture on the following pages will help guide you.

Our conversation with God today is about the Church on this island. Holy Spirit guide us and open our eyes where we have become blind.

Lord show me the distractions in the Church on this island?

Lord show me the disordered desires (longings that are badly prioritised) in the Church on this island?

Lord show me the disobedience in the Church on this island (rebellion that we are emotionally attached to and unwilling to release)?

**My prayer of consecration for the Church on this island
May the Church on this island be a place where**

PRAYER POINTS

The following prayer points have been submitted by some local church leaders

CITY CHURCH, BELFAST

City Church will be starting an Alpha in September and ask us to pray that they will have the joy to see more people being saved.

HARBOUR CHURCH, BALLINA

Would love prayer for 3 specific areas of breaking ground:

- For someone who can lead and raise up a culture of worship in the community, for someone (or more) with a passion for pioneering kids and youth ministry.
- For a physical space for Harbour Community to inhabit. We are in initial talks with a group about what it would look like for us to take part of a space in an old disused convent/ former school. This would involve some renovation work, but the prospect of us being invited into a shared community space is quite exciting in the long-term.
- Pray that the Lord will guide our every step and that our little community here would grow deep roots in Him.

NEWTOWNBRED A BAPTIST

- Pray for the leadership of Newtownbred A Baptist that they would continue to be led by the Spirit and be able to discern God's direction for the church.
- Pray for the Lord's financial provision in areas of facilities and missions.
- Pray the Lord would sustain those involved in the pastoral care of the church.
- Pray for spiritual protection against division and that we would continue to enjoy unity together.
- Pray for the Lord to use us to be a missional presence in our community. Especially pray for Alpha courses running twice a year and our regular outreach ministries.
- Pray for our new children's ministry coordinator, Susie, who starts in September and for our staff generally.
- Pray that Newtownbred A Baptist would be a community that continues to preach the gospel, signpost people to Christ, represent Him authentically, and be a place that brings hope to those who are broken, hurting, and marginalised.

TABLE, TANDRAGEE

- Pray for their plans in opening the 'Lost Coin' coffee shop, right in the same courtyard that Table and Links Tandragee meet. Hearing the vision behind this and how the folks at Table want to serve the town by giving them a space to be able to connect is really beautiful.
- Pray for them as they get it set up and for a new young adult ministry ("Altared") beginning in the Autumn.
- In general they would love us to be praying for protection and blessing as they move forward with the view to creating spaces of encounter for young people and an interface "where the river meets the sea"!

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

- PCI have just agreed (in June via our general assembly) a new church planting vision of establishing 10 new congregations and launch 10 additional new church planting projects in the next 10 years. We are praying that there would be a number of these further south and west in particular.
- Pray also for current Presbyterian church planting projects in Wexford, Balbriggan, West Belfast, Carlisle Circus, Titanic Quarter, Banbridge and Portadown.
- Pray for the Forge church planting course.
- Pray for Jonny and Naomi Campbell who will be leading the plant in Titanic quarter.

FRIDAY

ALTAR OF THE CHURCH IN ACTION

Justice and Poverty

All humans are made in the image of God and deserve to be treated with dignity and fairness and yet across the world often the most vulnerable in society are treated the most unfairly. Throughout Scripture we see God as the champion of the poor, the needy, the oppressed, the widow, the orphan and the outcast. God advocates for the vulnerable and calls us to do the same.

Proverbs 31:8-9 ‘Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.’

Jeremiah 22:3 ‘This is what the Lord says: Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place.’

Let’s pray that the global Church would be agents of justice and mercy, seeking to be a voice to the most vulnerable. There are many justice issues to consider: homelessness, exploitation, fostering and adoption, the poor, asylum seekers and refugees, the hungry, the broken and the hopeless. Seeking justice is a radical and selfless way to live, yet this is how we are called to live (Micah 6:8). It is not convenient or easy. Take a moment to ask God to give you his heart for justice and righteousness.

PRAYER

Start here and if you'd like to go deeper the prayer points and Scripture on the following pages will help guide you.

Our conversation with God today is about the Church in action, bringing his kingdom to earth. Holy Spirit guide us and open our eyes where we have become blind.

Lord show me the distractions as the Church acts?

Lord show me the disordered desires (longings that are badly prioritised) in the actions of the Church?

Lord show me the disobedience in the actions of the Church (rebellion that we are emotionally attached to and unwilling to release)?

**My prayer of consecration for the altar of the Church in action
May the Church in action be a place where**

PRAYER POINTS

There are many incredible organisations across the world seeking radical and systemic change such as IJM, Acts 21, Compassion, the Trussell Trust etc.

Here are the organisations and ministries we partner with in CFC who are seeking justice for the most vulnerable in our city, land and nation. Take a moment to pray for one or two of these organisations.

OVERSEAS

Each of these groups are involved in education, training and enabling:

- UCCI (United Christian Church of India)
- Ethnos Asia
- Earth Mission Asia

LOCAL

- CAP
- The Larder Social Supermarket
- Homeplus - caring for homeless in Belfast
- Starling Collective - 181 house for destitute asylum seekers
- Life House - supporting single mums
- Breakfast Club for Dundela Infants
- South Belfast Food Bank
- Turnaround Project - supporting ex-offenders to get back into work
- City Church - refugee lunch
- Hollywood Family Trust
- Antrim Food Bank
- Antrim Womens' Aid
- Sure Start
- And many individuals through the compassion fund.

GENERAL PRAYER FOR JUSTICE

- God break the chains of injustice
- Bring freedom to people stuck in cycles of oppression and addictions
- Bring about systemic changes in governments

Amos 5:24 “Let justice flow like water, and righteousness, like an unfailing stream,”

SATURDAY

ALTAR OF THE CHURCH TOGETHER

In John's gospel Jesus prays for those who would believe in him that "all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you". The amazing truth to this is that we get to be the answer to Jesus' prayer. We often think of God answering our prayers, but here and now, in our everyday, you and I get to be the answer to the prayer of Jesus. This day we get to focus on the unity within the body of Christ, His Church, His bride.

PRAYER

Start here and if you'd like to go deeper the prayer points and Scripture on the following pages will help guide you.

Our conversation with God today is around Jesus' prayer that "all of them may be one", that all who believe may be united. Holy Spirit guide us and open our eyes where we have become blind.

Lord show me the distractions in Church unity?

Lord show me the disordered desires (longings that are badly prioritised) Church unity?

Lord show me the disobedience in Church unity (rebellion that we are emotionally attached to and unwilling to release)?

**My prayer of consecration for the altar Church unity
May the united Church be a place where**

PRAYER POINTS

We are hosting a service on Monday 6th October, which will be recorded for broadcasting on Radio 4. It will focus on the Nicene Creed, this is the 1700 anniversary of the Nicene Creed and is still held to by all mainline Christian denominations. Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox churches all hold to this amazing collection of beliefs put together 1700 years ago by church leaders from across continents and languages.

Why not pray the Creed thanking God for the unity which it still represents in these days, and also pray for the service at CFC that will be broadcast across the UK and Ireland. Pray for the anointing of the words, songs and prayers that they will impact those who listen and cause greater unity in the body. Pray also for people to come to faith who are listening and don't yet know Jesus.

NICENE CREED AD325

We believe in one God,
the Father, the almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father.

Through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven;

by the power of the Holy Spirit

he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;

he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again

in accordance with the scriptures;

he ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the father.

He will come again in glory

to judge the living and the dead,

and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,

the Lord, the giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.

He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,

and the life of the world to come. Amen

PRAYER POINTS

- Many Alpha courses are running in September in increasing numbers across the Catholic church. Pray for Father Conor McGrath and the team at St Colmcille's, Ballyhackamore as they continue to reach many within their community with the power of the gospel through this course. Within the Catholic church there is a new direction being taken to employ youth workers to help pass on faith to the next generation. Pray for the right people to apply and for favour in getting 'buy in' as this is a new venture and fresh way of doing things.
- In Ballymena there is a fresh move of unity between the churches as they meet to prayer walk the town at 6 am! Pray for Nick and Alison in the House of Prayer gathering they are leading, that they can get a permanent 24/7 prayer space in the town.
- Emmanuel Portadown would love us to be praying for them as they try and create a safe space for those from different ethnic minorities/asylum seekers in the town who are potentially feeling unsafe after recent protesting/ demonstrations against immigration.

SUNDAY

ALTAR OF THE GLOBAL CHURCH

Missions and Partnerships

The Church is the love of God's life. He is deeply committed to her regardless of her many flaws. Our relationship to his Church is important to him. In an individualised culture, we must fight the "me and Jesus" narrative at all costs and remind ourselves daily that when His Church flourishes we flourish because we are part of that bride.

PRAYER

Start here and if you'd like to go deeper the prayer points and Scripture on the following pages will help guide you.

Our conversation with God today is about the global Church, the people, leaders and circumstances. Holy Spirit guide us and open our eyes where we have become blind.

Lord show me the distractions in the global Church relationships?

Lord show me the disordered desires (longings that are badly prioritised) in the global Church?

Lord show me the disobedience in the global Church (rebellion that we are emotionally attached to and unwilling to release)?

**My prayer of consecration for the altar of the global Church
May the global Church be a place where**

PRAYER POINTS

In fulfilling our aim to impact the nations, our overseas mission goal is to serve our partnerships, resourcing them with knowledge, skills and finances that will equip, educate and empower pastors, workers, children and young people increasing their knowledge, skills and understanding spiritually, mentally, emotionally and physically. We work with three key partnerships and support Julia McConnell from our Antrim congregation who lives and works in Thailand:

UCCI - UNITED CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF INDIA

What they do?

In a country where education opens doors, UCCI run six schools educating and training children and young adults from Kindergarten through to degree.

How to pray?

- Finance – always a need.
- Staff – we all remember great teachers – pray for those who work with these children and young people.
- Spiritual input – pray for the churches and pastors associated with UCCI training.
- CFC Teams and support – pray that we can serve their vision well.

JULIA MCCONNELL

What they do?

Working in with the most vulnerable people – women, children and the homeless, Julia also works with a deaf church in Bangkok.

How to pray?

- Finance – always a need
- Protection for her and those she works with
- Wisdom as she navigates through very difficult situations

EARTH MISSION ASIA

What they do?

Working in war torn Myanmar providing essential healthcare and training in the ongoing conflict situation.

How to pray?

- Finance – always a need
- Peace in Myanmar – that the military would step down
- Protection for EMA from Burmese military and their attacks
- Training for medics and tech students

ETHNOS ASIA

What they do?

Working with churches and leaders across Access Restricted nations to see the church rise up and lead well.

How to pray?

- Finance – always a need
- Persecution – many of these countries still restrict believers – pray for Godly government and leaders
- Ministry Bible School – CFC helps run this – pray for wisdom and insight as we teach and empower leaders

Why not consider the list – look them up online or at thisiscfc.com/missions and see what else they do and ask the Holy Spirit to lead you to pray specifically for the work they undertake, their staff and volunteers and the people they serve. There are others of our congregation engaged in work overseas with other groups – why not make it a point to find someone and ask how you can pray for their work.

NOTES

