

# Exploring Hope Today

Devotional thoughts from the director, Dr Peggy Banks



## What Is Unity?

*“When the people in a church dwell together in the unity of the gospel and together pursue the building up of one another in love, they are providing fertile soil for the roots of deep joy.”*

Matt Chandler, *To Love Is Christ, To Die Is Gain*

I love the picture that Matt Chandler paints as he describes what it would look like for those in the church who are pursuing the unity of the gospel as they dwell together, “providing fertile soil for the roots of deep joy.”

Reconciliation is a hot topic today in many cultures globally, whether we are talking about reconciliation between races, between family members, between friends or between us and God. What is needed to find reconciliation with God?

The message of the gospel is the message of reconciliation. It is the message of God, who loved the world so much that he sent his son, Jesus, into this world to live, die and be buried for our sins against the very God who now wants to save us. However, Jesus didn't stay buried but rose from the dead on the third day and lives today in the hearts of those who have placed their faith in Jesus.

It is through the blood that Jesus shed on the cross that we find the covering for our sins as a sacrifice to God. Jesus became this sacrifice for us so that those who put their faith in him might know him and find eternity with God forever (John 3:16-17). Have you made that profession of faith in Jesus (Rom. 10:9)? Do you know that if you were to die tonight that you would be with Jesus in heaven for all eternity?

When we are reconciled to God by grace through faith in Jesus, we become a new creation. We have a new life, a new hope and a new heart (Ezek. 36:26). Do you know this to be true about your heart today?

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them.” 2 Cor. 17-19

I gave my heart to Jesus many years ago and today have a peace in my heart that I have been forgiven not only of my past sins but also for the sins of today and tomorrow. It has not always been easy, but I know more about God's love and mercy today than I knew yesterday. He has been faithful even when I have not, he has been kind when I haven't listened, and he has given me hope when I was hopeless and lost. Today, as I worship him, I find it is creating a strong bond of unity and relationship with Jesus.

We have the wonderful privilege every day of bringing hope in Jesus to women around the world and across generations. I pray you know that hope for yourself too.

In Him our hearts rejoice!

July 2021

## Prayer for Marriage, Family, Single Parents

1. Dear Lord, required online schooling is taking its toll on children and parents worldwide. Give each family the grace, patience and support that is needed to successfully educate while maintaining strong relationships. (2 Cor. 12:9)
2. Father, we pray for Romanian mothers abandoned by their husbands. Grant them wisdom, hope in you, patience in raising their children, financial resources and support from a Christian community. (Ps. 57:1)
3. Lord, protect young Cambodian women from evil people who would take them abroad to China or Malaysia to marry men against their will. (2 Thess. 3:3)
4. Many victims of domestic violence in Croatia are threatened and in danger from their abusers during lockdowns. Lord, protect them, lead them to safety and bring them to a place of restoration. (Isa. 41:10-12)
5. May Tanzanian families be spiritually strengthened by sharing the Word of God and praying together. Let there be mutual respect, love and appreciation between parents and children. (Rom. 10:17)
6. God, we pray that you would help Vietnamese multigenerational families to understand one another and choose to live in harmony. (Ps. 112:2)
7. Father, we ask that you open the wombs of the many women living in the North Caucasus who cannot get pregnant. Infertility is creating conflict between many husbands and wives in this area. (1 Pet. 3:7)
8. As divorces among Muslim couples in Indonesia increase during the pandemic, many single parents with children are struggling to find jobs. Pray that these families will be provided for, so they will not force their young daughters to marry for financial reasons. (Matt. 18:10)
9. We praise you, God, that the *Women of Hope* programmes are bringing hope and strength to Portuguese families in crisis during this time of pandemic. Use these programmes to bring reconciliation and peace in their lives. (Mark 10: 6-9)
10. Father, we thank you that our team in Ethiopia is teaching women and men that they are created in the image of God. This identity, which has been damaged by sin, is restored through salvation in Jesus Christ. (Gen. 1:27)
11. Lord, we pray for godly repentance, life change, forgiveness and reconciliation for those couples in South Africa who are separated because a spouse has been unfaithful. (Eph. 5:33)
12. Father, we pray for South Korean women who marry and become mothers at an early age and who have no parents near to advise them. May the *Women of Hope* broadcasts be a source of godly wisdom and knowledge. (Ps. 32:8)
13. Lord, help single mothers on Bonaire to make the care of their bodies, minds and spirits a priority. Then they will be able to care for others and be the emotional support their children need. (Isa. 40:31)
14. Father, we pray for entire families in Paraguay who have received the salvation of Jesus. Strengthen their faith through your Word, and may they understand your love and forgiveness (Ps. 119:105)
15. God, may couples in Liberia seek you to breathe renewing life into their marriages. Show them how to cherish one another and be unified in you. (1 Pet. 4:8)
16. Father, help Finnish couples to value marriage and understand this relationship is like that of Christ and the church – it must be based on love, forgiveness and mercy. Knowing you is the best foundation that a marriage and family can have. (Eph. 5:21-23)
17. As single parenting rises in Japan, Lord, we pray for support and provision for the many mothers who live in poverty and whose children often lack the means to go to school. (2 Cor. 9:8)
18. God, may families and couples in Spain find healing for their broken relationships through you. Bring reconciliation, unity and peace, teaching them to forgive one another. (1 John 4:16)
19. Lord, we pray for the successful launching of the Polish programme, *You Are Precious*, which addresses common problems of marriage, family and single parenting. (Prov. 16:3)
20. Father, give strength to husbands and wives in India to be faithful to you and one another. Give them grace to be humble, gentle and patient with each other, finding unity through your love. (Ps. 133:1)
21. Father, help wives in the Philippines who are having difficulty relating to their in-laws. We pray for peace, harmony and understanding in these relationships. (1 Pet. 5:6)
22. God, we pray for single mothers struggling to provide for their families. In this pandemic many have lost jobs and are anxious, depressed, hungry and even homeless. (Matt. 6:26)
23. Lord, please help mothers in Central Europe to set the right priorities in their family life, make good choices and seek you in how to balance career and caring for their children. (Isa. 30:21)
24. Lord, we pray for marriages in Denmark that are made up of individuals from different cultures. They face special challenges, including lack of acceptance by their families and conflicts on what roles their cultural backgrounds should play. (Phil. 2:2)
25. Father, protect and guide those who are sailing to remote villages in Greenland to hold Bible classes. Transform entire families with the gospel message, bringing hope, joy and new life in Christ. (2 Cor. 5:17)
26. Father, strengthen the spiritual lives of women and their families in China. May they seek your Word and the Spirit in their decisions and place you as the central focus of their lives. (2 Pet. 1:3)
27. We pray for families in Canada who are in conflict due to increased time together during COVID-19 lockdowns. Father, bring reconciliation in these marriages and families. (Eph. 4:31-32)
28. We pray for families with children who have special needs. Sometimes the needs are greater than the caregiver can handle. Lord, send them support and assure them daily that you are with them. (Ex. 33:14)
29. Father, may our homes be safe places filled with love. Help believers who are dealing with stress or unemployment to bring you their burdens and turn to you as their provider rather than creating conflict or hurt among family members. (Matt. 5:9)
30. God, we uplift families who are grieving. Help them through their season of loss. Comfort them with your unfailing love and faithfulness and give them the strength to seek you. (2 Cor. 1:3-4)
31. Lord, you are a Father to the fatherless. May your love and presence fill the hearts and minds of children from single-parent families and provide all that is needed (Ps. 68:5).

