



## **The Way to Wisdom**

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“Select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, *full of the Spirit and of wisdom.*” (Acts 6:3, emphasis added) Faced with growing dissension within their ranks, that was the Apostles solution for the growing food distribution problem in the Jerusalem church. And their proposal *pleased the whole community* (Acts 6:5). So, they chose seven persons like Stephen. Later, even those who violently opposed him, “could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke.” (Acts 6:10)

From its inception, the church has needed leaders, “full of the Spirit and of wisdom.” And how desperately we need them today, especially as we prepare to embark on a perilous voyage into uncharted waters, in the formation and establishment of the Global Methodist Church. So, we need to earnestly pray for

wise leaders that the new church will walk in the way of wisdom. And that's the focus of our prayer guide this month.

But what exactly characterizes a wise leader? In *New Testament Words*, William Barclay discusses the background and meaning of the three great Greek words (*sophia*, *phronesis*, *sunesis*) associated with wisdom found in the New Testament.

Each captures an essential element of wisdom.

- **Sophia** pertains to awareness of eternal things. It has to do primarily with knowledge of ultimate things, human and divine.
- **Phronesis**, often translated *prudence*, is the ability to apply knowledge to the practical problems of daily life and living. Much of the Old Testament wisdom literature such as Proverbs falls into this category.
- **Sunesis** is the ability to test, evaluate and form appropriate judgments. The wise can intelligently assess difficult situations and then choose the right course of action in response to them.

The way to wisdom combines all three elements. According to Barclay, it involves being “wise in the things of eternity and efficient in the things of time.” In Jesus, we find the perfect embodiment of wisdom. Paul stresses that He himself is wisdom, the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24, 30). In Him are all the treasures of wisdom (Col. 2:3).

### A Suggested Pattern of Prayer

As you pray through the following prayer points, invite the presence of the Lord into your time of prayer. Each day's prompt has a Scripture reference for you to pray through. As you pray also allow time to listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to you. When you have prayed through the Scripture and prayer point, you may be led to add your own prayers. Pray and consider what action steps you might take in response to the Lord's leading. Repeat this prayer pattern weekly for the month.

**Sunday:** James urges us to ask, and God will give us wisdom “generously and ungrudgingly”.

Pray, boldly asking God to grant us wisdom for the living of these days. (James 1:5)

**Monday:** Pray for wisdom as *sophia* in the GM Church, the ability to distinguish between the eternal and the temporal so that we can hold fast to the things that never age. (Matthew 7:24-27)

**Tuesday:** Since Christ himself is our wisdom, pray for a deepening of our union with Christ, so that as our love and devotion for him increases, our wisdom will increase. (Colossians 2:3)

**Wednesday:** Pray for prudential, practical wisdom (*phronesis*), particularly in relation to complex decisions GM Church leaders must make. (Proverbs 8:11-12)

**Thursday:** Pray that we would not be seduced by the power and wisdom of this world but hold fast to the foolishness of God's wisdom revealed in Christ's cross. (1 Corinthians 1:22-25)

**Friday:** Pray for an increase of wisdom as *sunesis*, so that we might discern the long-term implications and consequences of current decisions. (1 Kings 3:9)

**Saturday:** Pray that God will raise up women and men "full of the Spirit and of wisdom" to lead us in the coming days. (Acts 6:3)

*In Him are all the treasures of wisdom. (Col. 2:3)*