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United in Prayer
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The world appears a smaller place and every face a friend, when we unite in prayers for one another. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). The "I" is the manifestation of God, or the Christ. The saving Christ shines in the midst of prayer to dispel mental darkness, as a divine light that appears even before a rescue is complete. Christ is the spiritual message, reassuring hope and strengthening faith until we experience the power and ability of God to heal and save.

God's safety does not end with the initial inspiration. Salvation continues until every tiny bit of anxiety, sin, and sickness are permanently removed. Even then the saving Christ does not leave us. Christ, Truth, remains to protect us from worldly aggression or self-doubt, and to protect our purity.

Gathering together in Christ's name is part of Church. This spiritual gathering has a higher motive than camaraderie and a pleasant social experience. It is a spiritual closeness whose purpose is to heal and save. The Greek root word translated "gather" illustrates this deep meaning. It implies union, including completeness (Strong's NT 4863, 4862). We unite in praise for God and "his wonderful works to the children of men" (Ps. 107:8). We unite in seeking to understand more of the divine nature and its activity. We unite mentally with all spiritually minded individuals who know and do the will of God. Christ is present in this spiritual concept of Church alive.

A complete gathering is the oneness expressed by our uniting with God and God's entire creation. All of God's ideas are gathered in divine Mind, permanently reflecting intelligence and immortal life. No one is isolated or left struggling alone to find God.

Understanding this is practical and brings healing. For example, once when I was a freshman in college, I became sick late at night. My roommate was asleep. I thought it was too late to call my mother or anyone else to pray with me. So I grabbed my *Bible and Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, by Mary Baker Eddy, and began to read the Bible Lesson for that week (which is available to be studied prior to the Sunday church service). Wrapped in layers of loneliness, self-pity, and pain, I struggled to pray for myself and affirm God's power and presence. I wished there was someone else there to support my prayer and to unite with me. It seemed it would be easier to feel God's presence if two or three others were gathered by my side.

At that moment, it occurred to me that someone else somewhere in the world was reading the same Bible Lesson and praying with the exact ideas I was. I realized we were united in prayer, even though separated by miles and not knowing one another personally. Then I realized that perhaps dozens, maybe hundreds and even thousands of sincere, spiritual thinkers were praying right then for the world, and that included me! In that instant, I realized I was not alone. I was united with countless others, and the Christ was in the midst of us—inspiring us, healing us, saving us. I was united with God and all of God's ideas. Something from *Science and Health* took on new meaning: "Man is not... an isolated, solitary idea, for he represents infinite Mind, the sum of all substance" (p. 259). In that moment, I was completely healed. The illness departed and I felt well.

The highest sense of solidarity is union with God and God's ideas. Whether our church is 33 men at the bottom of a mine, or thousands in a sanctuary, or one individual at home with God, we are gathered together in Christ's name. The healing, saving power of Christ is with you now and forever.