

# SEVEN SAVES WORSHIP GUIDE



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At Food For The Poor, worship is an integral part of our culture. We gather for a few minutes each workday to join in song, reading scripture, and prayer. This Spirit-filled time serves as a foundation as we engage in the Lord's work together.

As your church launches Seven Saves, we encourage you to lead a themed worship service to help generate excitement for the initiative and to inspire your congregation with the Gospel's guidance on caring for those in need.

While we hope this guide is helpful in planning a special time of worship, we want you to incorporate your own unique worship style into this celebration! Know that you will be joined in prayer and praise with church families across the country as we address poverty together.

*(As the Latin American and Caribbean children whom we will feed and serve together are on our hearts, perhaps you might consider having a child/children in your congregation read this passage).*

**MATTHEW 25: 31-46 (NIV)**

## **The Sheep and the Goats**

<sup>31</sup> “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

<sup>34</sup> “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. <sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, <sup>36</sup> I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

<sup>37</sup> “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? <sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

<sup>40</sup> “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

**MATTHEW 25: 31-46 (NIV)**

## **The Sheep and the Goats**

<sup>41</sup> “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. <sup>42</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’

<sup>44</sup> “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’

<sup>45</sup> “He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’

<sup>46</sup> “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

***(Pastors, please adjust or elaborate on any of the following thoughts as you feel called.)***

I heard the story of a woman in an impoverished community in the country of Haiti. The woman, a mother of several children, shared that most days she was unable to feed her little ones. On the days that she had no food, she would put a pot filled with rocks upon a small fire in front of her home, stirring the rocks occasionally. The malnourished children, thinking that something might be cooking, would spend the day in hopeful anticipation of an evening meal. Eventually, they would fall asleep with empty bellies while waiting for their dinner and would awaken in the morning filled with new hope for the coming day.

While many of us here in the United States cannot fully understand this level of poverty, we can certainly understand the power of hope.

Today our church is launching the Seven Saves Initiative. This is an opportunity to bring hope – Christ’s hope – to those in great need. Through Seven Saves, our church can share hope. *You* can share hope.

We learn in Matthew 25 that Jesus is calling us, inviting us, and empowering us to serve the least of those among us. On the last day, Christ will measure our lives by asking: “Were the hungry fed? The thirsty given a drink? Strangers welcomed? Naked clothed? Sick and imprisoned visited?”

How will we - as individual followers of Christ and as a church family - respond? How will we see and serve Christ in the least of those among us? How will we reach out to those in our community and beyond?

## Suggested Sermon/Message

The Seven Saves Initiative [which we introduced earlier in the service or which we will talk about later in this service] enables us to answer those Biblical calls. It's a tangible way for us to make a difference individually and as a church to some of the poorest of the poor.

While the Gospel calls us to give, The Gospel's Good News of Christ's goodness and grace is always our *motive* to give:

- The hungry are to be fed because Jesus has fed us with the Bread of Life – His own life given on the cross! (*John 6:35*)
- The naked are to be clothed because Christ has covered us with his own righteousness. He has taken away our sin and put upon us his perfect righteousness! (*1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21*)
- The sick and imprisoned are visited because when sin held us sick and in prison, Jesus visited us and by his birth, life, death, and glorious resurrection has set us free! (*John 8:30-36*)

In some of our world's darkest corners, we can bring Christ's light and hope, trusting that the promises that come to us through the resurrection are true for the mother in Haiti. True for me. True for you.

### *Suggested Prayer*

Heavenly Father: Help us to remember that each time we feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, and care for the prisoner, we are serving Jesus. As our congregation responds to the calls of Matthew 25 and begins the Seven Saves program, open our hearts so we might share our blessings joyfully and generously.

Be with the impoverished people of Latin America and the Caribbean. Work through us as an answer to their desperate prayers. Transform their lives through the work of organizations like Food For The Poor and through church bodies like ours, committed to feeding hungry souls physically and spiritually. Help the poor to know your Son's love through us. May we bring Christ's light to our world's dark corners, brightening tomorrows with your grace, peace, and hope. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

***Please let us know if we can assist with the planning of your Seven Saves Launch Service. Blessings on your worship!***

### *Suggested Optional Announcement Copy for End of Service*

Through the Seven Saves Initiative, and in partnership with Food For The Poor, we can tangibly meet the physical and spiritual needs of the poorest of the poor living in the Caribbean and Latin America.

- For just \$7 a month, you can feed a starving child. In communities where food is sparse and malnutrition is rampant, your gift ensures that little ones are given two nourishing meals a day.
  - Together, let's commit to prayerfully consider what a "sacrificial gift" might mean to each of us (*Luke 21; The Widow's Offering*).
- And collectively, for every person who signs up for the Seven Saves program, our church family will be working toward supporting communities in additional ways: perhaps through a housing, water, or educational effort.
  - While our individual contributions are important, incredible things happen when we unite as the Body of Christ, caring for and uplifting each other (*1 Corinthians 12: 12-27*).
- We can provide Bibles to families! The people in these communities will feel our love and see Christ's love – ultimately bringing them closer to our Lord and Savior.
  - Jesus calls and commissions us to make disciples of all nations (*Matthew 28: 16-20*) – including Latin America and the Caribbean!
  - *Seven Saves feeds hungry souls – people in desperate need of consistent nutrition and souls in urgent need of the Good News.*

### *Suggested Hymns for the Service*

***Below are some hymns that focus on living in Christ and emphasize our witness and testimony to the world.***

Fill Thou My Life  
For All the Saints  
Hear the Call of the Kingdom  
A Charge to Keep I have  
Am I a Soldier of the Cross?