



## I Belong to Jesus

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For our witnessing trip with the Book of Mormon Internship, we planned to visit the Church of Christ Temple Lot saints in New York and be a part of their reunion. In order to prepare, we decided to attend a prayer service at the Temple Lot congregation in Independence. Jon informed us that they knelt during prayers, but we didn't expect it would be for a full 45 minutes of prayer. Most of us agreed that, though it

was different and a little uncomfortable, we did enjoy it and felt God's Spirit there with them.

When we arrived at the New York reunion, we were more prepared for the prayer and testimony service on Sunday. This was a four-hour service with about an hour of kneeling. But the Spirit was so strong, it didn't feel that lengthy. Our prayers and testimonies were led by the Spirit and there wasn't more than 15 seconds of silence waiting for the next person to share. It was truly beautiful. One of the things all of us interns really appreciated about these saints was how humbly and intentionally they prayed before the Lord. We were amazed that they didn't kneel for every prayer, which could have made the kneeling more of a routine. Instead, they were led how to pray for each individual prayer. Most of us decided this was something we would try to implement within our own prayer lives as well.

After that service, Shayla told me she thought it was pretty cool how they knelt. She said that in the few months before the Internship, she had been feeling impressed that she should kneel for prayer time—both at prayer service and before bed. Little did she know that I had also been having those thoughts prior to the Internship. I truly think God was preparing us for the things He had in store for us.

Two days later we were preparing to leave for New York City to witness. I think most of us were pretty nervous about it. Originally, we had planned to go out to breakfast together, but Jon asked if we wanted to have a few prayers before we left instead. All of us agreed this was a good idea. Jon also suggested that, since we had enjoyed the Temple Lot service, we should kneel for our prayer time. He also challenged us to open our hands instead of holding them together. This was very difficult for me because I'm not used to it and it's not considered normal for our church. I even know some people who make fun of it. But I did end up opening my hands a little.

Jon started us with prayer and asked for one or two more prayers. I knew I wanted to pray, but I was going to give others the opportunity to pray first. But after Jon's prayer, no one prayed for about 30 seconds—which is a long time of silence—so I knew it was my time to pray. As soon as I opened my prayer, I felt God's Spirit wash over me so incredibly strong. There's only been one other time I've felt the Spirit that strong, but this time I felt the Spirit enter me through my hands. It was the same feeling I normally feel with God's Spirit, but instead of It washing over me from head to toe, I felt It enter into my hands and come reside in me. It felt like, with my open hands, I was reaching out to accept His Spirit and asking It to be with me. The other thing I felt was that my hands were heavy. I didn't really notice this at first so I kept praying. And as I was praying, I felt led to give my heart to Jesus. I've been a Christian my whole life; and I've heard testimonies about converts giving their hearts to God. But I don't think I've ever prayed to give my heart to Him. I was scared at first because I knew I would be giving up control, so I

said, “Jesus, please help me give my heart to You.” I prayed for a few other things like allowing the Spirit to be with us as we went out to witness, and letting others see the light in us; and through that I prepared myself. The next words out of my mouth were, “Jesus take my heart, it’s Yours.” As soon as I said those words, I felt the heaviness in my hands lifted. I knew the weight I had been holding was my heart and all the control I had taken upon myself to have. I felt incredible joy after speaking those words. I felt light. I didn’t even feel like I was on the ground anymore because of not only how light I felt, but because I knew there was light in me. I was so overcome with the Spirit that I just had to close my prayer. Then, I wanted to sing the campfire song, Spirit of the Living God, but people kept praying. I could tell they were led by the Spirit in their prayers, so I didn’t want to disrupt them. However, after a few more people prayed, Tammy lifted her head and started singing the words for that song. I felt another rush of the Spirit and so much joy! I knew we were blessed immensely with the Spirit, and that whatever happened that day was going to be led by God.

In my prayer life now, I try to be humble and reverent before God by kneeling to Him. I don’t always open my hands because I’m still working on that, but I try to be led in whatever way I pray so that it doesn’t become routine. I’m looking for a strong Spirit to be with me. It’s so amazing how God can take us out of our comfort zone to show us the vastness of His love and the different ways we can worship Him to honor His name. Mostly though, I’m so thankful He gave me a conversion testimony where I can proudly say that I belong to Jesus.