Litany to our Tower of Strength

Pastor: This litany is built around the prayer that was written and originally prayed by Atlantic District President David Benke at the nationally broadcast memorial gathering in Yankee Stadium on September 23, 2001. The litany brings to remembrance the events and the lives that were lost on September 11, 2001, and to once again ask God to be with us. The words of President Benke’s prayer are spoken by the assembled gathering, the responses by the Pastor.

People: We're stronger now than we were an hour ago; but sisters and brothers, we are not as strong now as we are going to be. The strength we have is the power of love, and love comes from God, for God is love. Our task is to take that love from this place into our communities, one by one.

Pastor: We are stronger now, 10 years later. And we are different in many ways as well. Our prayer is for peace, for an end to terrorism, hatred, divisive ideologies, and wars — whether they rage in nations or households. Give us wisdom, Lord. Because it is so easy to hate, grant us the courage to love.

People: Join me now in prayer on this field of dreams, which has now become a House of Prayer....

Lord, we are leaning on you today, for you are our Tower of Strength. We are leaning on you for you are our Mighty Fortress, the Rock of our salvation, and our Strong Deliverer.

Pastor: As we call on God as our Tower of Strength we are reminded that even though the seemingly impregnable Twin Towers, built on the strength of human ingenuity and capitalism fell, God is the Tower, the Fortress, the Strong Deliverer who is always with us, who never fails or falls. Be with us this day, O Rock of our Salvation.

People: Those of us who bear the name of Christ understand that your towering love found its ultimate strength when you stooped to send your Son to die and live again in order to bring the world back together.

Pastor: The tie that binds the hearts of human beings together is Jesus Christ, who entered our world of brokenness and violence, who defeated death. Bind us together, Precious Savior. Help us to see you amidst the grief and brokenness that always surrounds us and sometimes consumes us.

People: We implore you in your tender mercy to comfort with signs of your presence those who mourn the lost and missing and cannot find you now in the ashes; unbind, unfear, unscorch, unsear our souls; renew us with your free Spirit.

Pastor: The heart of God breaks in the face of people’s inhumanity to people. From His own soul, scorched and seared by the death of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ, God seeks those who have lost touch with their own hearts and souls. Many who died on September 11th were never found. To us they are memories. To their families and to their Heavenly Father, they still have hearts and faces and spirits. We commend them and the broken spirits of their loved ones to you once again this morning, O Lord. And for those of us
who still walk through a world marred by unpredictability and tragedy, bind our fears and renew a right spirit within us.

People: O Tower of Strength, extend Jacob’s Ladder for those who ascended the stairways to save us, even as others escaped the fire and flames.

Pastor: Many ordinary people acted heroically on September 11th 2001 and subsequently. Some walked into the jaws of death to show others the way out. Lord, by their example, teach us all to climb the ladders and cross the bridges that lead us to your heart, and then send us back into this world renewed and refreshed to be servant heroes in the lives of others.

People: O Tower of Strength, open innocent and victimized hearts to the sacrifice of the Innocent One; pour out your consolation upon the traumatized, especially our children.

Pastor: The loss of innocence, the feeling that we are vulnerable is at once frightening and healthy. At first it traumatizes, eventually it stretches our hearts to attain growth we never thought possible. In the interim, we need to be soothed by the consolation of our troubled spirits and the rebuilding of our dismantled lives. For those who still grapple with the void left by loved ones who died, for those whose psyches are still raw, we pray for eyes that learn to see the Tower of Strength, and hearts enfolded in the gracious love of God’s Innocent and Resurrected Son.

People: O Tower of Strength, unite us now across all boundaries in acts of grace and truth in this great city; guide and empower with wisdom, especially our religious and civic leaders.

Pastor: The forces and deeds that destroy life and separate humanity are the result of boundaries, often of our own making. Unity is elusive, but remains one of our ideals. Lord, we pray that you would give us the incentive and persistence to climb the walls that divide human beings. Bless our leaders with a vision of the world as you intended. Lead us across the bridge of the cross, so that by the shed blood of your Son, we are reunited with you in spirit and truth.

People: O Tower of Strength, we are leaning on you today; keep us in the shadow of your shelter, and send us forth to walk in peace.

Pastor: We pray for those who need a healing, guiding hand, especially --------------. God is always God, a true Tower of Strength. People are always people and need someone to lean on. Thank you, God, for being there for us. Teach us peace.

People: In Jesus Precious Name.

Pastor: Lest we forget, when we gather, when we pray, when we lay our needy hearts open, there He is in the midst of us.

People: Amen.