

February 17, 2016

**Memorial Prayer Commemorating the 5th Anniversary of the
March 11, 2011 Eastern Japan Earthquake, Tsunami and Nuclear
Disaster**

Eastern Japan Earthquake, Tsunami and Nuclear Disaster
Relief Committee

Ken'ichi Hayashi (Sameh Baptist Church)

Dear Lord,

Five years have passed since the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake, Tsunami and Nuclear Disaster struck at 2:46 pm on March 11, 2011. We are thankful that in that time you have supported and blessed us and protected us. At present, there are listed as dead 15,893 people, as missing 2,565 and a further 3,407 who have died in other disaster-related ways. There are also 186,602 people forced to live in temporary living arrangements.

Dear Lord, these numbers are made up of “individuals” who have suffered these five years since March 11 and whose lives have been changed by the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster. Even now, many people are wounded, saddened and struggling. Please enable us to pray for them a prayer that can encompass them all. We pray that all people can bring their hearts together, remember the many who have died, and gain soothing and hope, and new strength and wisdom.

Dear Lord, it has been five years since the disaster. The stricken area changes with each visit. Much of the rubble has been cleared, roads and seawalls and new houses have been built. It is often heard: “The stricken area has recovered.” But, in reality, full recovery is still far away off. It is often remarked how strong Japan is in its preparations for the 2020 Olympics while the refrain “This is no time for the Olympics in Japan” is often heard. In the areas stricken by the tsunami, we often hear the words “Disaster Prevention” and “Strengthening” as

large-scale public works projects proceed as if the disaster were something from the distant past. We cannot forget the sad looks on the faces of the people living in temporary housing which seem to say “Don’t forget us!” and “Will you visit us even if we leave temporary housing?” Dear Lord, please console us, stay with us. We pray that those suffering from loneliness and sadness can share in your healing.

Dear Lord, many people are now leaving temporary housing and beginning new lives in new places. However, after leaving temporary housing, many elderly people have little hope and are at unease. Many of them are at a loss as to how to create relationships with their new neighbors. And many have been left behind despite the recovery efforts. Many have no idea when construction of better housing will ever begin. Life in temporary housing is soon beginning its sixth year. Many children are growing up in temporary housing. Many of them will have to live in temporary housing until they become adults. Some children have never exercised in three years in the junior high playground which is now a site for temporary housing. In these five years, many people simply haven’t been able to live a normal life. Dear Lord, please strengthen us with hope that these people will not be cast away and forgotten.

Dear Lord, many people have had their homes, their communities, their hometowns taken away from them by the Fukushima nuclear disaster. Please Lord, let us listen to the voices of those who have lost homes, their jobs, their communities and their family lives taken away. The high amounts of radioactivity from the disaster has contaminated all of Japan and many countries around the world, has exposed people, particularly children, to dangerous health problems. Their home towns have been radically altered since March 11, even though they look almost the same. “Home towns never be recovered as they were,” “How regrettable!” “How sad it is!”: may we never avert our eyes from the reality that these pleas evoke.

And, there have arisen many problems over the disposal of radiation-contaminated materials. And many people are risking their lives in dangerous cleanup work. Nonetheless, there is no end in sight for restoring the situation to normal. Dear Lord, if even by one day, please bring these cleanup efforts to their completion as soon as possible so that the suffering will not increase even more.

Dear Lord, we humbly offer ourselves to you as the Creator of all things. Please grant us the strength to lift our eyes to the reality of the situation and grant us strength and wisdom. Please lead us to consider the truth and change the way we live. Please guide us so that we will never again repeat the mistakes we've made in our dependence on nuclear power which have led to such damage by radiation. Please show us your mercy.

Dear Lord, these five years we have received from you much love and blessings. We are thankful. You have helped and supported us when we stumbled in our efforts to help the stricken. And you have comforted us in our own pain caused by the disaster. And you have gathered the prayers of the churches and missions throughout Japan and delivered them to us. Through the prayers, service and contributions of many people, we have been able to spread your precious love. We have been able to build precious bonds between the helped and the helpers.

Dear Lord, please show us the ways we must follow in the coming days. Full recovery is still far away, but we pray that your comfort in the cross and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ will spread. May the Lord's truth be known. We pray that the lives of each and every one of us will be blessed and each and every community will find recovery as you see fit.

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ we pray.
Amen.