

Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

Inner Court Ministries

For the Week of November 28, 2004

A Call to Prayer

Prayer in its highest form and grandest success assumes the attitude of a wrestler with God. It is the contest, trial and victory of faith; a victory not secured from an enemy, but from Him who tries our faith that He may enlarge it: that tests our strength to make us stronger. Few things give such quickened and permanent vigour to the soul as a long exhaustive season of importunate prayer. It makes an experience, an epoch, a new calendar for the spirit, a new life to religion, a soldierly training. The Bible never wearies in its pressure and illustration of the fact that the highest spiritual good is secured as the return of the outgoing of the highest form of spiritual effort. There is neither encouragement nor room in Bible religion for feeble desires, listless efforts, lazy attitudes; all must be strenuous, urgent, ardent. Inflamed desires, impassioned, unwearied insistence delight heaven. God would have His children incorrigibly in earnest and persistently bold in their efforts. Heaven is too busy to listen to half-hearted prayers or to respond to pop-calls.

Our whole being must be in our praying; like John Knox, we must say and feel, "Give me Scotland, or I die." Our experience and revelations of God are born of our costly sacrifice, our costly conflicts, our costly praying. The wrestling, all night praying, of Jacob made an era never to be forgotten in Jacob's life, brought God to the rescue, changed Esau's attitude and conduct, changed Jacob's character, saved and affected his life and entered into the habits of a nation. E.M. Bounds *Purpose in Prayer*

This Week in Prayer

- Pray for Israel. Pray for the protection and peace of Jerusalem.

***Now it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham,
the son of Uzziah, king of Judah,
that Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah,
king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to make war against it,
but could not prevail against it.***

Isaiah 7:1 (NKJV)

- The persecution of Christians continues. Men and women are standing for their faith. In many places, this stand comes with persecution and the threat of death. Will you stand in faith with those who stand?

- Pray for support for the outreaches and ministries of your church and Inner Court Ministries. God works in conjunction with prayer.
- Pray for the **Brotherhood Beyond Boundaries** Conference in Poland, June 24-26, 2005. Pray for support for the conference and for continued support for the pastors supported by this outreach.
- Pray for the ministry of the ICM eV (our German Verein). The Verein conference will be in Germany, June 16-18, 2005.

Continue Earnestly in Prayer

God continues to open new doors of opportunity to this ministry and our friends. This section is a place to report specific request for prayer. Please continue earnestly in prayer for these friends and their ministry.

Marianne Burns – Marianne is a missionary to China with Campus Crusade for Christ. Remember Marianne and the work with students at a university in China. Marianne asks for prayer for the young Chinese women who she has been training and working with. Her most recent report has both challenges to meet and good news of what God is doing. Pray for boldness to share, continued fellowship, and strength in times of discouragement.

Jacek Gromadzki – Jack and Agnes are a young couple who pastor a church plant in a town about 30 or 40 minutes from Koszalin, Poland. Remember this church, pray for the 20 members, saved and baptized by the end of the year.

DK Limbu Daniel – Pray for his work across Nepal. There fields are white unto harvest, but there are many who oppose the work. Pray for safety for pastor Daniel as he travels.

Praying Always for You

Pray for one another; pray we would be faithful ministers of Christ.

***as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant,
who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf,***

Col. 1:7 (NKJV)

Imperative Importance of the Work of Prayer

God Answers Prayer – An Exam

David Williamson

Sometimes things are different from what we expect. We think we know something, we think we understand things, we think we have things figured out, only to find we have made a mistake. Things

are not the way we think they are. We need to review what we think. What standard, what base should we use for this review? Is there any other choice than the Bible?

This type of review is very important in prayer. Everyone prays, in the paper today there was an article where a poll indicated the 60% of the respondents pray once or more per day and another 21% pray at least once a week. Unquestioned in the poll, is the question, how many believe God answers prayer? How many pray in faith? How many pray according to what the Bible says about prayer? And, more importantly how do we believe, how is our faith, how accurate are we in responding to what the Bible says.

Let us look at one aspect of this; answers to prayer. Do a self-exam, do you actively, daily, fully, continually, faithfully, believe that God answers prayers? This is not to doubt you, but to encourage you to check and see if you are in the faith in this area. It is so easy to give lip service to our beliefs, but to slip into doubt. For this self-exam, ask God to reveal you heart, that you and He might rejoice in your faith or repentance of your lack of faith. In a true self-exam, the Holy Spirit will often reveal shortfalls, and then encouraged us to grow with Him in faith. If He reveals areas that need work, if He reveals doubt or fear, if He reveals sin, let the Word of God and the blood of the Lamb wash you clean. The Holy Spirit, our teacher, is here to pick us up and help us to grow strong in faith.

God answers prayer by His grace.

It is in no way by my strength, ability, or position. Israel got into trouble because they thought their position as God's people, gave them position. God answers, not by position, but by grace. He has chosen to answer prayer. Today people fall into this same trap. They expect answer because of their position, church, ministry, or good works. However, it is still true, even as it was in the time of Paul, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" Romans 3:23 (NKJV). If answers depend on our ability or goodness, then there will be no answer. God answers prayer by His grace.

For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem; You shall weep no more.

He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry;

When He hears it, He will answer you.

Isaiah 30:19 (NKJV)

God answers prayer and sometimes He answers immediately.

God is amazing, He at times, answers so quickly it astounds us. We pray and in walks the answer! Wow, we love this. The prayer life is great! But, immediate prayer is fraught with danger. It is very easy to fall in to the snare of the enemy even here. It is easy to view immediate prayer as a measuring rod. This takes many forms. For example, if I get quick answers, I must be spiritual. This is deception and very dangerous. Ministers face this deception often. If many people come to church, they must be good. Many of the ministries, which have fallen into sin, have fallen this way. "My ministry is saving many, so God approves of what I am doing." Soon this can become "God winks at my sin." Then, "God Okays my sin." Oh, what a stumbling block success can be. He asks us to pray and He delights to answer. His answers to prayer are not a vindication of our life. His answers are answers to prayer.

"It shall come to pass

That before they call, I will answer;

And while they are still speaking, I will hear.

Isaiah 65:24 (NKJV)

***Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel,
for from the first day that you set your heart to understand,
and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard;
and I have come because of your words.***

Daniel 10:12 (NKJV)

God answers prayer and sometimes He answers after delay.

Prayer and delay is a difficult issue. Many have lost their faith in prayer due to delay, although you could make the case that many of those who lost their faith, due to delay, never had faith. God answers prayer, but when the answer tarries, it is hard to stay away from doubt, fear, and concerns. The enemy is very willing to whisper in your ear. He would destroy your confidence in God.

***Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering,
for He who promised is faithful.***

Hebrews 10:23 (NKJV)

It is easy to question answers delay. We seem to be experts in the need at hand since we are so close to the need, which is not true even in the natural. We improperly do and say many things because we are too close to the need to have any perspective. As in the old expression, we cannot see the forest for the trees. With our nose pressed against the window, we cannot see what is happening around us. But, God knows the correct timing for answers. He is never late. How often have we yield to the pressure of time, the whisper of the enemy, or heaviness of the need and given up just before the answer comes. Paul knew about this, having done all, to stand, stand.

***Therefore take up the whole armor of God,
that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth,
having put on the breastplate of righteousness,***

Ephes. 6:13-14 (NKJV)

Does God answer prayer, even if the answer delays?

***And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him,
though He bears long with them?***

Luke 18:7 (NKJV)

God answers prayer and sometimes differently from our desire.

I know what I want, but I do not always know what is best. As parents, we know this. I like ice cream, and since man does not live by bread alone, he must live by ice cream. So, anytime, anywhere, ice cream for me, is my prayer. We know this is not a good prayer for God to answer (I would weight 400 pounds). But, often when we pray we are like a soiled child. We throw a temper tantrum, kick and scream, if we do not get what we want. But, Father knows best.

Some would claim, see God knows best and so sometimes He does not answer prayer. Once again as parents, we know the answer to this concern. If my children knew what was good for them, they would ask correctly. Our Father knows what is best for us and He has sent the Holy Spirit to instruct us on prayer and guide us on what to pray. By the guidance of the Holy Spirit, my prayer is not for ice cream, but for my daily bread, (what I need for good nutrition and some fun). When we

pray by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we pray the prayers of the Father. We pray with understanding and wisdom. Jesus prayed what He heard the Father say. We should pray what Father, Son, and Holy Spirit say to pray.

***Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.
And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you,
for My strength is made perfect in weakness."
Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities,
that the power of Christ may rest upon me.***

2 Cor. 12:8-9 (NKJV)

God answers prayer and sometimes beyond expectation.

Do your prayers limit God? A few weeks ago, my wife had health concerns and the doctors determined she had to have surgery. Many people prayed for her, people from many churches and groups, in many countries. The surgery was very successful and she is doing fine. Before the surgery, a well-meaning person said, thank God for surgeons, which I do. Then added, often surgery is God's best. I mumbled something and went on, but this was like a slap in the face. Jesus did not send the woman with the issue of blood to another doctor. He did not send the man with the withered hand to the doctor. His healing was God's best. How often do I limit God, how often do I restrict His best?

***Call to Me, and I will answer you,
and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.***

Jeremiah 33:3 (NKJV)

***Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly
above all that we ask or think,
according to the power that works in us,***

Ephes. 3:20 (NKJV)

How did you do? Are there areas where you need to work? Prayer by prayer, we must believe and act in faith, until we fully know, truly know, God answers prayer.

Joining This Company

All Christians who will pray are welcome. **Voice of Thanksgiving** is sent by e-mail or letter to all who will commit to prayer as members of this company. It is a guide to challenge us and direct our prayers. The fee for joining is your commitment to pray. Please join us in praying for the nations.

To join send an e-mail with the word JOIN for the subject. Tell your friends and prayer partners about **Voice of Thanksgiving**. The call is to gather a company of believers who will pray. Together we will reach nations for Jesus Christ.

To receive **Voice of Thanksgiving** by e-mail:

Send an e-mail to david@innercourt.com
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