

# Voice of Thanksgiving

## Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

Inner Court Ministries

For the Week of May 14, 2006

### *A Call to Prayer*

Elijah had learned the lesson of prayer, and had graduated in that divine school ere we know him. Somewhere in the secret places, on mountain or in plain, he had been alone with God, an intercessor against the debasing idolatry of Ahab. Mightily had his prayers prevailed with God. How confidently and well assured were the answers to his praying.

He had been talking with God about vengeance. He was the embodiment of his times. Those times were times of vengeance. The intercessor was not to be clothed with an olive branch with its fillet of wood, the symbol of a suppliant for mercy, but with fire, the symbol of justice and the messenger of wrath. How abruptly does he come before us in the presence of Ahab! Well assured and with holy boldness does he declare before the astonished, cowering king his message of fearful import, a message gained by his earnest praying,—“in praying he prayed that it might not rain,” and God did not deny his prayer. “As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years but according to my word.”

The secret of his praying and the character of the man are found in the words, “Before whom I stand.” We are here reminded of Gabriel’s words to Zacharias in informing this priest of the coming of a son to him and his wife in their old age: “I am Gabriel that standeth in the presence of God.” The archangel Gabriel had scarcely more unflinching devotion, more courage, and more readiness of obedience, and more jealousy of God’s honor, than Elijah. What projecting power do we see in his prayer! “And it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.” What omnipotent forces which can command the powers of nature! “Not dew nor rain.” What man is this who dares utter such a claim or assert such a power? If his claim be false, he is a fanatic or a madman. If his claim be true, he has stayed the benevolent arm of Omnipotence, and put himself, by God’s leave, in God’s place. The accursed and burnt-up land and the fiery, rainless and dewless days and nights, attest the truth of his saying, and prove the sternness, strength, firmness and passion of the man who holds back the clouds and stays the blessed visitation of the rain. Elijah is his name, and this attests the truth of that name, “My God is Jehovah.”  
from *Prayer and Praying Men* by E. M. Bounds

### *Continue Earnestly in Prayer*

There is a great stirring in many of the areas of our prayers. God is hearing and responding to our prayers. Now is the time for great diligence in prayer for these nations, ministries, and people, as well as other projects you are a part. This time is one of great darkness coming over people and a time of the great light of the Gospel setting men and nations free. People and nations hang in the balance, will you pray?

The Holy Spirit is looking for partners who will join with these ministries in prayer and support reaching nations for Jesus Christ. Pray for open doors of opportunity for the Gospel.

***And give Him no rest till He establishes  
And till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.***

Isaiah 62:7 (NKJV)

**Mark Spencer** – Pray for Mark and the others going to Poland and the East May 21.

**The Brotherhood Beyond Boundaries Conference** – Pray for the BBB Conference the first weekend in June.

**The Inntal Prayer Initiative** – Pray for upcoming seminars on prayer. Pray for the Inntal region. Heike writes, *we also feel like "there is something in the air" in our area please pray for protection and manifestation of God's power. Please do also pray for the Christians to wake up and pray! It is obvious that we need the church to intercede.*

**DK Limbu Daniel** – Pray for Pastor Daniel and the pastors he works with in Nepal. Pray for the necessary paper work for his up coming trips. Pastor Daniel writes:

*Greetings in Jesus' Name!*

*We are fine and blessed in the Lord. Despite the difficult situation, God has protected us and people are coming to the Lord Jesus for the salvation. Please add Nepal in prayer matter for safety and growth of Church of God in Nepal. My country is on the verge of change. Since 10 days country is closed and under strike against monarchy. Everyday there is a demonstration, no vehicle may leave capital and enter. Everything's price is shooting up. In this 10 day movement over 4000 are arrested and 2000 are injured and 5 are killed, dozens are missing. Government is being pressured from everywhere and King is troubled. We had to graduate our school last week. But we are not worried about this, but only worried about souls. Pray for souls that they may come to the Lord more than ever before.*

*May God bless you all. In His service in Nepal,*

*Pastor Deu K Limbu*

**Marianne and David Dean** – *Pray that the Lord would help us find balance while we invest in friendships here in the States yet remain focused on our goal of returning to East Asia in August. Pray that the Lord will bless our times in his Word and prayer.*

**Jacek Gromadzki** – Pray for Jack and his church in Kolobrzeg, Poland, pray for outreach in Kolobrzeg and this northern part of Poland.

**Marek Kaminski** – Pray for Marek and his church in Poland, pray for his ministry and duties across the region. Pray for all of the arrangements being made for the 4<sup>th</sup> annual BBB Conference.

**Joyce Abrahamson** – Pray for the school children, their education is important and their introduction to the Lord is imperative.

**Your Home Church** – Pray for your church and its world view. Pray that they will in ever increasing measure see the nations of the world as white unto harvest. Pray for labors to be thrust forth for the nations.

**Pray for Israel** – Pray for Israel; the times are difficult for this nation and people.

### **Imperative Importance of the Work of Prayer**

#### **The Place of Prayer**

David Williamson

Struggle is a constant companion of man. There is a struggle in nearly every aspect of life, a struggle to survive, a struggle for success, a struggle to fit in, a struggle with the features of our bodies, a struggle with sin, struggle relating to others and many more. In addition, men and women struggle with God. This struggle ranges from forms of rejection of God to chaffing at the bit from His commands and requirements.

An aspect of struggle with God is dealing with the feeling that God is far away. The ancient Greek concept held god to be so far away and unapproachable they developed “near gods” to fill the gap. The gods of mythology were “near gods” as close as Mount Olympus. With human attributes and failings, these gods were more approachable. Mythological stories explained the unexplainable of nature and vagrancies of human nature and these gods provided a relationship with a god. This separation filled by “near gods” is found in the shadowy past of many cultures.

The Jewish history is a change in mans separation from God. Beginning with Abraham, the Jews experience encounters with God, close encounters. This was not an easy transition; most non-Jews took offense that any people would make such a radical claim and Jews struggled with being near God. Remember the people’s reaction when Moses and God scheduled a meeting with God and the people. It did not go well.

*Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes,  
the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking;  
and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off.  
Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear;  
but let not God speak with us, lest we die."  
And Moses said to the people,  
"Do not fear; for God has come to test you,  
and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin."  
So the people stood afar off,  
but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was.*

Exodus 20:18-21 (NKJV)

The people stood afar off and Moses had to represent the people before God. The people were afraid to draw near to God. Jewish history is filled with individuals who have had near encounters with God. It is also the record of people who, at most times were by choice, far from God. The period of the “Kings” is a battle between near and far relationship with God. When the people draw

near to God, they are blessed and win battles. When God is far off, they sin and lose battles. The prophets had many messages for the Jewish people (and for us); one theme running throughout; a call to draw near to God.

With the advent of Jesus the struggle between near and far relations is radically changed. Jesus begins to teach about God with both message and lifestyle of nearness to God. His message was, God as our Father. A father is not a concept of someone far away. One reason for the Jewish people got so mad at Jesus was His familiarity with God describing Him as our Father. Just as they had rebelled against nearness to God in the time of Moses, so the people especially the leaders rejected the nearness to God claimed by Jesus.

Jesus walked on the earth as a man. He took a human body, but He walked with closeness to God. He walked with a closeness that was unconceivable to the people of that time. God was always near to Him; the two of them walked together and talk one with another. Even in the hubbub that morning at the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus was so near to God that He could say, Father I thank you....

***Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying.***

***And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said,***

***"Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.***

***And I know that You always hear Me,***

***but because of the people who are standing by I said this,  
that they may believe that You sent Me."***

***Now when He had said these things,***

***He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!"***

John 11:41-43 (NKJV)

Nearness to God is a key to success in Christian life and in prayer. For example, nearness to God overcomes sin. The little boy who starts fires would never even think of doing this when he is near his mother or father, but when far away from their watchful eye, in the far corner of the backyard he might start a fire. A great deterrent to sin is closeness to God. When Jesus walks with me or I with Him, I do not sin. It is when He seems to be far off that I sin. Just like the little boy of the fire story, it is all a matter of near or far.

Our flesh is like the Jews of Moses time; it does not want to be near to God. It rebels against the restrictions of being near Him. (It does not understand that there is greater freedom in the "restrictions" of being near God, than there is in the "freedom" of being far away from Him.) Also our enemy, the Devil, works day and night to help us stay far from God. Many letters in the delightful book, "*The Screentape Letters*" by C. S. Lewis, are filled with advice to a demon assigned to the man of the story. The advice, keep the man away from nearness with God.

Separation from God is preparation for sin. Doubt, fear, anger, unforgiveness, bitterness, and unbelief are but a few of the tools for keeping us far from God. Jesus came to bridge the gap of separation, dieing on the cross, loaded with all our sins, He paid the price providing for nearness to God. There is no excuse for separation; our Father is like the father of the prodigal son, every day looking for us with open arms to receiving us back near to Him. The question of the day, every day, is will we come to our senses and return to His waiting arms, to be near to Him, or will we languish in the muck and mire of the pig slop of life, far from God.

*And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate,  
and no one gave him anything.  
But when he came to himself, he said,  
'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare,  
and I perish with hunger!  
I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him,  
"Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you,  
Luke 15:16-18 (NKJV)*

In prayer the question of near and far is very important. It is easy to allow prayer to become prayer from afar. We speak the words, but they fall to the ground unheard, unanswered, because they are said from afar. In the realm of sin, separation from God is preparation for sin; in the realm of prayer, separation from God is preparation for empty ritual, not prayer. Prayer from afar is merely whispering into the wind. Effective prayer is whispered from near by in the ear of our Father.

As mentioned before, doubt, fear, anger, unforgiveness, bitterness, and unbelief are but a few of the tools keeping people far from God. They are also the tools keeping people far from prayer. Some people may say words, but effective prayer demands a nearness to our Father, a nearness that is not possible when separated from Him. The first battle in prayer is to be near our Father.

*let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith,  
having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience  
and our bodies washed with pure water.  
Hebrews 10:22 (NKJV)*

*Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.  
Cleanse your hands, you sinners;  
and purify your hearts, you double-minded.  
James 4:8 (NKJV)*

God is calling; with open arms He is calling you. He asks if you will draw near or continue to stand far off. If you want to pray, you must draw near. You must not allow anything to separate you from Him. Today let us choose to come to our senses, let us wash clean by the blood of Jesus Christ, and draw near to our Father. This is the place of prayer.

### **Home for This Company**

The home of *Voice of Thanksgiving* is at [www.voiceofthanksgiving.com](http://www.voiceofthanksgiving.com). This website has current and past issues of VoT and an archive of articles from the section *Imperative Importance of the Work of Prayer*. The monthly issues of *Stimme der Dankbarkeit*, the German monthly version of VoT are also available here. Send correspondence to [dave@voiceofthanksgiving.com](mailto:dave@voiceofthanksgiving.com)

**Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer**