

Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

For the Week of October 26, 2008

“How glibly we talk of praying without ceasing! Yet we are quite apt to quit, if our prayer remained unanswered but one week or month! We assume that by a stroke of His arm or an action of His will, God will give us what we ask. It never seems to dawn on us, that He is the Master of nature, as of grace, and that, sometimes He chooses one way, and sometimes another in which to do His work. It takes years, sometimes, to answer a prayer and when it is answered, and we look backward we can see that it did. But God knows all the time, and it is His will that we pray, and pray, and still pray, and so come to know, indeed and of a truth, what it is to pray without ceasing.”—Anon.

The Life of Prayer

Long Term Prayer

David Williamson

***As iron sharpens iron,
So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.***

Proverbs 27:17 (NKJV)

I have been blessed with good friends. They have been friends with me in good times and hard times. They have been friends over long distances and through long gaps when we did not see one another. These friends are true friends and they challenge me in my daily walk and in my spiritual walk. They are good enough and close enough friends that they will not put up with things they see in me. I cannot roll around in the muck and mire of doubt and fear, they will not allow me. I told you they are good friends.

They do more than correct me when I am in the wrong. They walk before the Lord in ways that challenge me. We are close enough friends that I get to see how they walk, even in tough or hard times. These friends are not perfect, I have seen times that they needed sharpening, and I have tried to return the favor. However, there are many areas where they challenge me and the way I walk through life. I hope they will challenge you today.

Several of these friends are gardeners. And more than just having a garden, they have long range plans for their garden and yard. My wife and I grew plants in a garden for many years. We would prepare the ground and plant some seeds. We would have a yield, but it was not well planned and our execution was haphazard at best. My friends have plans, long term plans, for their garden and yard. Their plans are far more detailed and challenging than anything I have done. In some cases I have watched their plans develop and grow for more than twenty years. There are cases where I have seen them plant little trees and watch as they have become great trees, fulfilling the part in the overall

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plan they were planted for. Over the years I have watched as their yards have changed to match the plan for the yard. Their plans have yielded produce, comfort, enjoyment, relaxation, and protection.

One of the keys to the development of their yard is the long term mentality and plans. I would take about ten minutes to plan where I would plant tomatoes and then execute my plan. They have spent time and effort to plan their yards. Some of these plans have grown over years, there have been some modifications, but much of the original plan is still visible and guiding their efforts. The difference between my yard and theirs is the long term plan and work.

In prayer we see this same contrast. Most people are like me and my yard. We are willing and able to pray a prayer for now. We may pray in faith and see results. Quick prayers and quick answers are ok (I enjoyed a lot of tomatoes from my yard over the years). However, there is more and there is a need for men and women who will be more like my friends and their long term mentality. Long term prayer is needed today and it does not come to the haphazard, short term thinking Christian. It requires a commitment to the long term.

For many years one of the features of fairs and carnivals, at least here in the United States, was a tower with a bell at the top. Connected to this tower was a mechanism that you could hit with a heavy hammer. The harder you hit it the further up the tower a metal bar would go. If you hit it hard enough the metal bar would hit the bell and with its ringing you won the strength challenge. This is a good picture of the prayer life of most people. We are willing to take the challenge and try to get an answer, we may even try several times, but if we cannot get the answer, then we move on to what ever is next. We have some good successes in prayer, we pray in faith and God answers. However, much of the need for prayer that is around us today is not met by this type of prayer. We need a long term mentality like my friends. We need long term prayer.

The Bible has many examples of long term prayer. Watchmen on the walls, is not a short term or quick thing. God speaks of day and night and never giving Him rest until the answer comes. God has sought for someone to stand in the gap on behalf of the land. Making a walk and standing duty at that wall is long term. What kind of person would this be if they stood in the gap just when they felt like it or it was convenient? The bondservant of Christ always labors fervently in prayer. In great zeal Epaphras prayed for the Colossians, Laodiceans, and those at Hierapolis. These all take time and great continuance of prayer. Long term prayer is what is needed and what God is calling for.

I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; They shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the Lord, do not keep silent, And give Him no rest till He establishes And till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth. Isaiah 62:6-7 (NKJV)

The people of the land have used oppressions, committed robbery, and mistreated the poor and needy; and they wrongfully oppress the stranger. So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. Ezekiel 22:29-30 (NKJV)

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Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis. Col. 4:12-13 (NKJV)

For much of the needs we face today, long term prayer is the answer. The problem is that God is looking for a man or woman, but He has not found anyone. There is a need for men and women to pray. God's call is to both quickly answered prayers and long term prayers. The problem today is few will take the time and effort that is required to pray long term prayers. Far more than just saying the same prayer over and over day-after-day, long term prayer is walking with God, by the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit, coming to the place of abiding with God so we can command His hand. In some areas this will take a lifetime.

Right up to the moment Jesus returns, will there not be soil of hearts that needs to be prepared for receiving the Gospel? Until that last day, will the governments of this world not need supplications, prayers, and intercessions? Even until the last trumpet calls, will there not be a need for those who can pray and bring the comfort of the comforter to people? God is looking for men and women who will ask Him for answers, those who will command the work of His hands. Will you answer? Will you avail yourself to Him for long term prayers?

He saw that there was no man, And wondered that there was no intercessor; Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him; And His own righteousness, it sustained Him.

Isaiah 59:16 (NKJV)

Then I returned and considered all the oppression that is done under the sun: And look! The tears of the oppressed, But they have no comforter--On the side of their oppressors there is power, But they have no comforter. Eccles. 4:1 (NKJV)

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

1 Tim. 2:1-4 (NKJV)

Thus says the Lord, The Holy One of Israel, and his Maker: "Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons; And concerning the work of My hands, you command Me".

Isaiah 45:11 (NKJV)

Let us Pray!

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A Call for Prayer

Pray for provision for ministries and outreaches. Pray that God meets their every need. There is much to do and we must trust God to provide. Be bold in prayer and pray for the ministries list here in Voice of Thanksgiving and for those sponsored by your church and you. The last verse in today's article is a great place to start.

Thus says the Lord, The Holy One of Israel, and his Maker: "Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons; And concerning the work of My hands, you command Me".

Isaiah 45:11 (NKJV)

Pray for David and Marianne Dean who are ministering in East Asia. Pray for the training of new interns. Pray for safety and security of the campus fellowship and ministry. Pray for wisdom and protection for David, Marianne, their team, and native converts to the faith. Pray for health and a continued smooth pregnancy for Marianne. Pray also for guidance for balance of ministry need and concerns with preparing for raising this child.

For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; Col. 1:9 (NKJV)

Basic Prayer Focus

Pray for Israel and the Peace of Jerusalem

Pray for the reaching of Souls from Every Nation

Pray for the government of your country (so we can live peaceably and the Gospel can be preached)

Pray for your home Church

Continuing Faithful in Prayer

Pray for these ministers and ministries. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide and direct your prayers.

Joyce Abrahamson – Head of school in Brazil

John Coon – Ministry in Europe and the USA

Churches in Belarus – Growing number of churches in Belarus

Churches in Lithuania – Growing number of churches in Lithuania

DK Limbu Daniel – Pastor of a church in Nepal and church planting among Nepalese people

Marianne and David Dean – Missionaries on college campuses in East Asia

Jacek Gromadzki – Pastor of a church in Kolobrzeg, Poland

Marek Kaminski – Pastor of church in Kaszalin, Poland, leader in Polish churches, and co-founder and leader of BBB Conference

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Bernd and Heike Pastor – Ministry in Germany

Mark Spencer – Pastor of church in Longmont, Colorado, worldwide ministry, and co-founder and leader of BBB Conference

Patty Spencer – Pastor in Longmont, Colorado, worship leader, and artist with a great new CD

William Williamson – Pastor of church in Holly, Colorado

Charles and Janice Wilson – Pastors in Wyola, Montana

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Voice of Thanksgiving is published in a weekly version in English. *Voice of Thanksgiving* is also published monthly in German and Polish and is available in book form, *Prayer: A Force that Causes Change – A Call to Prayer*.

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