

Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

For the Week of January 18, 2009

How instant, strenuous, persistent, and pathetic was Paul's urgency of prayer upon those to whom he wrote and spoke! "I exhort," says he, writing to Timothy, "first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men." This he meant was to be the prime deposit and truth for the Church. First of all, before all things, to the front of all things, the Church of Christ was to be a praying Church, was to pray for men, was to pray for all men. He charged the Philippians to this effect: "Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." The Church must be anxious about nothing. In everything prayer must be made. Nothing was too small about which to pray. Nothing was too great for God to overcome. E. M. bounds from *Prayer and Praying Men*

The Life of Prayer

First

David Williamson

Do you remember the first time you saw a notable landmark of a country? When I was stationed in Germany my parents came to visit. For two weeks we traveled around Europe and we saw great castles, rivers, and cities. One of many special places we saw was the day we traveled to Zermatt, Switzerland. We went by train and I described to my folks the beauty of the Matterhorn as it looks over the valley below. I also cautioned that many times people have come to see the mountain, only to find it shrouded by clouds. However, my caution was not needed, when we arrived the grand mountain was at its best. The sky was cloudless and the Matterhorn seemed to lean out over the valley to greet us. We will never forget the first time my parents saw the Matterhorn.

You have many first in your life as well. The first time you saw, did, or said things. These can be great memories and often times you would not like to forget. There are firsts in prayer. While most of us may not remember it, there was a first time we prayed. There is the first time we prayed and saw God distinctly answer our prayer. In addition to first like this, just as E. M. Bounds wrote, Paul tells us to make prayer first.

Paul, the great man of prayer, in his letter to Timothy, exhorted that the first thing is to pray. He exhorted, now I do not know about you, but I do not use the word exhort very often. So just to be careful I thought I should review the definition. Exhort means to incite by argument or advice, to urge strongly, to give warnings or advice, to make an urgent appeal. That seems to say that Paul feels strongly about this subject. He is giving his young follower an important piece of advice. He is warning Timothy about something significant and of great consequence. He thinks it is or should be an essential part of Timothy's life. If this was that important for Timothy, then how important is it

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for us? This must be something that is crucial for us to read carefully, think deeply about, and take wise action upon.

Paul exhorts Timothy, first of all, pray! This is a very powerful and important advice. Unfortunately most people are in such a rush, when they read these verses, to get on to the kings and authorities, to the quiet and peaceable life, and to all godliness and reverence. They often miss the key point of the exhortation. First Pray! It is important that we pray for kings and authorities and we will get to that, but we must not miss the primary point. First pray! What does this mean, first pray! I like to keep it simple and take the mean of the words as just what they say and we know that in our interpretations of verses of scripture, we must stay within the guidance of the overall writing of the Bible, so the meaning of these words seems very simple, the first thing we should do is pray.

Whenever we do anything, we should pray first. When we go to the grocery store we should pray first. We should pray that there will be the items we need for our family. We should pray that we will get great price and value for the things we buy. We should pray that we will be wise in our buying, getting the things we really need. We should pray that we will have opportunities to share the Gospel with people we meet. We should pray for safety coming and going to the store. And still there are more things we should pray about on this trip to the store, but Paul's exhortation is that we should pray first. Too often we get home and think about what we should have bought, done, or said. Praying first is a key to seizing the moment.

What about when we go to work, we should pray first. Pray first for safe travel, for having a job, for success in our work and for the company. For good relations with the people we work with and work for. If more people prayed first for their employers before they went to work there would be more successful businesses. In a time of economic down turn it is the prayers of people that make a difference for companies surviving. God is the source of blessing for that company and it comes through prayer, and Paul, via Timothy, exhorts you to pray first. Pray first for every aspect of your job and the business. Far too often we work hard, but we are not as successful as we should be. The answer is; do we pray first?

When we go to church, what is the first thing you do? Do you take time and pray? Too many people just go to church. They do not pray first for the service, the ministers, for the other people, for the lost to come to the service, for opportunities for the Gospel to be preached, taught, and shared. We need to be praying first for our church, church family, church ministry, church outreaches, church health and welfare, for our church finances, and so much more. Pray first!

I hope you are seeing Paul's point here, in everything we do and say we should pray first. Some people might say they do not have time for this. I counter with asking you to think of all the time you spend fixing problems and mistakes. Save time, pray first! This does not have to take much time, it is not by the length of your prayer or by the fancy words you use, that your prayers are heard, it is by faith. Some of the most powerful prayers of Jesus were very short and to the point. ***Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!"***

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John 11:43 (NKJV) This powerful prayer, but it is also a very short prayer. Please do not tell me that you do not have time for a quick prayer like this. Even a few prayers filled with faith prayed first will save you a great deal of time and trouble. Pray first! And please note this was a prayer. Read the verses just before this verse.

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." John 11:41-42 (NKJV)

Pray first!

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 Timothy 2:1-4 (NKJV)

Today I would like to ask you to pray first. And today my specific request is that we pray first for the new American President. This week Barack Obama will be sworn in as America's next president. This is an important time for America and the world and we need to pray first. We need to pray for President Obama safety, wisdom, fear of the Lord, wise counselors, and so much more. Of primary importance is that President Obama would pray; perhaps he would pray even as Solomon prayed.

Now, O Lord my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted. Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"
1 Kings 3:7-9 (NKJV)

For better or worse the things done in America, lead by the President, affect people and events around the world and we need to pray. We need to pray for his leading to be in line with God's will. The problems he faces and the pressures and demands he must deal with are more than any man can handle so please pray first.

Also today pray for your country or for another country. Today is a great time for us to pray for the kings and authorities of countries beyond America. Pray for the leadership of the nation that they would be faithful in service to the people and nation. Pray that they would hear from God and yield His leadings and commands. Pray that they would not stand in the way of the preaching, sharing, and receiving of the Gospel message. For each of these countries there is much to be done and one

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of our jobs, as men and women of prayer, is to pray for opportunities of the free and uninhibited preaching of the Gospel.

We are called to pray. This is a great privileged and opportunity given by God to his children. The God of the universe has made provision so you and I may come to Him in prayer. We can come boldly before His throne and pray. How can we resist such an opportunity? One of the keys to success in prayer is to pray first.

Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. Matthew 18:19 (NKJV)

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. 1 John 5:14-15 (NKJV)

Let us Pray!

A Call for Prayer

Pray for Israel. This is too important a time for Israel, for us to stop praying. Please continue to be faithful in prayer for this people, nation, and region.

Lena Yellowtail from Wyola, Montana sent this email asking for prayer. Gwen just called and asked me to let you all know that Virginia is in the hospital again. They will be doing another MRI to see if the cancer has spread to her vertebrae, but we know that God is bigger than any of this so let us pray for complete healing and restoration!

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

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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

Lori Farquhar – Children’s Ministry Director

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

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 Cedaredge, Colorado

Charles and Janice Wilson – Pastors in Wyola, Montana

David Williamson – Editor of *Voice of Thanksgiving*

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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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