

Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

For the Week of January 25, 2009

I urge upon you communion with Christ a growing communion. There are curtains to be drawn aside in Christ that we never saw, and new foldings of love in him. I despair that I shall ever win to the far end of that love, there are so many plies in it. Therefore dig deep, and sweat and labor and take pains for him, and set by as much time in the day for him as you can. We will be won in the labor. Samuel Rutherford

The Life of Prayer

Delay

David Williamson

The people who live across the street from us just had a son. This is their first child and mother and son are doing well. It has been fun to watch as they have gotten excited as the birth date drew near. There were all the preparations to make, changing a room into a nursery/bedroom for this boy, buying clothing and supplies for a newborn, and preparing to be parents. There was the picking of a name for the boy and telling parents and friends the impending good news. This couple even went through the process of a dry run for the birth, when they thought he was ready to make his grand appearance, only to find he had decided to wait a few more days. Finally the long awaited day arrived and everyone was pleased to see this child. The birth of a child is one of the great joys of life and a special time for any family. From the earliest times to the present, the birth of a child has been very special. All births are special, but the Bible records one that was extra special.

For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. Genesis 21:2 (NKJV)

The people across the street from us have been and are very excited with the birth of their son, but can you imagine the excitement the birth of Isaac was to parents, relatives, and friends. Few births have caused such a stir to all who heard about it. When it finally came the birth was wonderful, but the year-after-year struggle dealing with the perceived delay of God, must have been very difficult for Abraham and Sarah.

One of the difficult issues we face in prayer is delay of answers. Some people do not know anything of what I am writing here. They never experience delay in answers to prayer because their nebulous prayers receive no answers and none are expected. If you do not expect answers, you never experience delay, but you also never experience the thrill of answers to prayer.

If you have been praying for sometime and been expecting to have answers to prayer, you have experienced dealing with delay. There are times in our praying when God will do like He did for Abraham and announce a set time for the answer. However, often God does not tell us of His time

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schedule or His plans. There is an expectation in faith that we will trust God's power and might, but also His faithfulness. He expects us, to by faith, know that He can and will answer. He also expects us to trust Him with the timing. Please note a key phrase in the announcement of Isaac's birth, "**at the set time**". It would be valuable for us to remember that God works at His set time and there will be time this causes issues around perceived delay.

The first point, and most important, is to remember that God is never late. This is an easy thing for us to say, but in the heat of battle, when we have prayed long and hard, it is an opportune time for the enemy to whisper in our ear. The Devil may tell us things like, God is busy, God is mad at us, we are not good enough to get an answer, or any of a myriad of explanations as to why answers are delayed. We must have a firm footing of absolute confidence that God is never late.

After we agree that God is never late, we still must deal with perceived delays. As we grow and mature in prayer, God will give us assignments in prayer. We may have to deal with the problem of perceived delay in the coming of the answer to our prayers. One cause of the problem is not listening to God and hearing His plan and timing. Think how hard it would have been for Abraham and Sarah if they had not heard from God the, "**set time of which God had spoken to him**". Too often we are so excited about this and that and we do not listen and we do not hear God's timing. We are often guilty of assuming that things mean this or that, not having heard from God. And for most people anytime seems as good as another, so they think God should answer on their schedule, but God has His perfect timing and He does not waiver from His set times.

Then Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil. You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come."

John 7:6-8 (NKJV)

There are times, and this happens more often than not, when God does not share with us His planned timing. A key to faith is being able to believe God at His word and not have to see things before they happen. This includes having to have a time chart that spells out the timing of coming answers and events. Faith often demands walking with God and trusting in His faithfulness, no matter what we see or hear. It demands that we stand firm in faith believing what He has said He will do, He will do, even when it seems the answer is delayed.

We must settle firmly in our heart that we trust God. We must establish with out wavering that we will wait for God's timing. We must prove that we will continue in faith and prayer until God says stop or the answer comes. This must be our faith statement and the action of our life and most of the time this matter must be settled in our heart before the answer will come.

Another key to dealing with delay is dealing growing and maturing. Our Father is interested in more than just answers to prayer. He could bring the answer faster and easier if He left us out of the process, but He wants us to grow and mature in prayer and in every aspect of Christian life.

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One time when I was a boy, I went to visit my Grandparents and my Grandpa decided this would be a good time to build birdhouses. He was not interested in just building these houses or in having me watch him build them, he wanted me to learn how to use carpentry tools. It was much easier for him to build the houses and they would have been better, if he had built them. However, he believed that there came a time when a boy needed to learn to build things and the birdhouses were a great project for these lessons. Slowly he took me through the process. We selected the wood, he taught me how to make a straight cut with a hand saw, and how to drive a nail straight and true. He taught me how to use a hand drill and to determine the correct bit to use for the right sized opening for the birds we wanted to attract. He taught me to paint and complete the project so the birdhouses would be useful and attractive. We built three houses and there were birds that made these houses their home every year as long as my Grandparents lived at that house.

God is looking for opportunities for us. It is important to Him that we learn lessons of life and He uses every opportunity to teach us. One of the great values of prayer is that it can be a tool in God's hand for teaching His children. Please note that I wrote, it can be a great tool. Unfortunately some people refuse to allow Him to work with them and the opportunities for lessons are lost. This personalized teaching, like the one-on-one method used by my Grandpa, is what God longs to give to you and me. As we learn our lessons, God takes us to the next opportunity.

Often what seems like a delay to us is just our lesson time. We may be learning to trust God more fully, how to deal with sin and hindrances, or any of the many other things God wants to teach us and perfect in our life. Please note Our Father longs for us to learn His lessons, but He does not force us to learn. I could have told my Grandpa, no, I do not want to learn how to make a birdhouses, it takes to long. Or I could have given up when I found I could not cut a board straight with a hand saw (until Grandpa taught me the secret). If I had stopped the opportunity I would have missed the lessons and the learning. If we will not continue, even in seeming delays, we will miss lesson and learning God has prepared for us.

Delays in receiving answers to prayers can be very frustrating, but it is an opportunity for faith and trust. It can be an opportunity for lessons on the many issues of Christian life. The question is not what to do about delays, but if we will allow the seeming delay to be a time for instruction and testing. If we will faithfully walk with God and continue in His working in our life, He will take us through our lessons to the next place of maturity (at that place there awaits a new lesson). When we face delay we should seek Our Father and His lessons for our life, as we do, we will see that He answers, "***at the set time***".

Let us Pray!

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A Call for Prayer

Pray for the opening of doors. In all our ministries, personal and corporate, we have areas that are closed to the Gospel. For some it is a person that we need to speak with, but they have rebuffed our efforts. In another case it is a town, city, or region that is closed to the Gospel. This can be by many factors, government, tradition, errant thinking, and other reason, but we need to see a change so we can share. Pray for the doors to be opened to the Gospel message and its delivery and acceptance.

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

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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- ✓ If you have questions you may email me at: dave@voiceofthanksgiving.com