



Challenging Christians to Pray

Prayergram[®]

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A Clarion Call to 'Intercession'

"Intercessors are like eagles, they don't flock; you find them one at a time."

"**And** he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor..." (Isaiah 59:16). He wondered then and He wonders now. Can we read the probing words of the prophet and refuse to turn the searchlight on ourselves without being convicted of our paltry prayer life? God said, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not" (Jeremiah 33:3). **Matthew Henry was right when he said, "With God, saying and doing are not two things as they are with men. God will do as he has said."** In our time of need, may we cry out to God for mercy, **O Lord, our house is in ruin, our nation is rebellious, our Churches are lukewarm, please come and repair our shattered lives! Beloved, the 'era' of comfortable Christianity is over and there is no easy/painless road to Gethsemane, period.**

I've said it many times, but I'll say it again: The ministry of intercession is not one of the most sought after ministries within the evangelical circles. **Why?** It has no glamour or appeal that one would desire. The power of intercession holds such a unique place in revival history, and yet, for some reason, it remains foreign to many. Intercession is powerful, and yet it's too elusive. When I speak about prayer, I speak one language, one purpose without any double-talk. **Friend, calculate the horrendous cost of not praying for a lost and dying world before Jesus returns!** As believers, we are the **praying force** that can usher in such revival that we desperately need and desire.

Tired of a prayerless existence? Dissatisfied with prayer meetings without prayer? Are we being persuaded to pray symbolically for the nation once a year and then ignore the precious privilege of prayer rest of the time? We don't need to wait for a special invitation to light up the 'prayer furnace' in our homes and churches. God wants us to echo the call, and sound the trumpet like the prophets of old. **The resilient intercession has given birth to a mighty awakening. The sleepless nights have produced great joy and inflexible resolve in the human heart. Importunate prayer can overtake the forces of evil, defy satanic inquisition, transform defeat into victory and cause triumph over despair and hopelessness. Remember, God's intercessors are inextinguishable. If Christians intercede with desperate resolve, and faint not, as Jesus commanded, we shall truly experience a mighty revival. Why not get desperate for revival, why not intercede with real apostolic power and purity? Believe me, God's praying people are quintessential to the survival of the Church and they are not consumed by fear, or apathy; but rather they cling to God's ironclad promises.**

Surprisingly, there is an alarming number of Christians who are not interested in prayer at all. **That's regrettable.** In the past, God's people had an insatiable hunger for soul-travail. One of Scotland's

most devoted men was **John Welch**, son-in-law of the great Scottish reformer, **John Knox**. Welch was not as well known as his famous father-in-law, but he was a remarkable man of prayer. **Dr. R. A. Torrey**, in his book **The Power of Prayer**, states: “Many people have the idea it was John Knox who prayed, **Give me Scotland or I die**. It was not; it was **John Welch, his son-in-law**.” Toward the close of **John Welch’s** life he confessed, “**That he counted the day ill-spent if he did not spend seven or eight hours in secret prayer**.” What a life! What a legacy! Just imagine playing the second fiddle all your life and living in the shadow of well-known people, religious or otherwise! But remember, you can get harmonious music out of second fiddle.

Beloved, I plead with you to **intercede** for the world before it’s too late! Let’s cry out to God in the name of our ascended Lord that He would send His power to expose the ‘false gods’ of this world and reveal the real God of heaven. **Rise up, brothers and sisters, rise!** Not only our nation but the entire world is fast approaching toward judgment. It could, however, soon be ready for ‘**revival**’ if we’re willing to cast before the Lord like Elijah of old did on Mount Carmel. When national renewal is needed, God’s intercessors step up to the plate and accept their sacred responsibility under the Lordship of Christ without any fanfare. Beloved, the enemy is upon us and the storm cloud is about to break loose. Nothing but the prayers of God’s humble remnant in the power of the Holy Spirit can stem the tide. “**Seek ye the Lord while ye may be found, call ye upon Him while he is near**” (**Isaiah 55:6**). We have time for practically everything else, but no time to talk to the One who loves us passionately. **Our heavenly Father opened up the celestial communication line long before man ever came up with technology and all its devices. One doesn’t need a ‘Prayer App’ to communicate with the ONE who waits to hear from us. Beloved, it is not a matter of finding time but making time for God. Imagine a world without prayer and praying people!**

Whenever we speak about intercession or intercessors, we always speak in terms of the past; we use examples such as **Muller, Brainerd, Bounds, Taylor, Martyn, Howell, Hyde**, and many others who were mightily used of God in the past. Believe me, I have great ‘**love and admiration**’ for the past, but we cannot always live in the past; we need to step up to the plate NOW by paving a path for the next generation of **intercessors, who will gladly enter into God’s holy presence**. In a day of religious hype and adulation, intercession occupies no special place among many in Church leadership. Regardless of how we perceive intercession, it’s the highest form of service we can render to God and man. Naturally, men would enjoy the company of others but intercession calls for stillness and solitude. **As in the words of George Whitefield, “Be much in secret prayer, converse less with man, and more with God.”** Intercession is considered to be an **Intercontinental Missile** which is fired from the burdened heart of a believer with precision that can strike from any angle like torpedoes, bursting out with such explosive power, changing lives and nations beyond our grasp! Imagine what would happen if a handful of **Christians come together in covenant with God to intercede for a hurting world, a great deal would be changed**. I’ve seen men making emotional/tearful commitment to prayer during Prayer Conferences and Seminars, but after a while they lose their burden and zest for prayer. **Beloved, I beseech you in the name of Jesus, stay at it! Stay at it!**

Why is there such an aversion to intercession? Why the churches are in a **stupor when it comes to prayer**? In my office, I have a picture of David Brainerd, perhaps one of the greatest intercessors of early America who died at the age of 29. He was a godly young man with a burning passion for the souls of **Native American Indians**. While he was living among the Native Indians he fell ill and had no one to care for, so **Jonathan Edwards, that Puritan saint who brought Brainerd to his home to look after during the last days of his earthly life**. This is what Edwards wrote about Brainerd, “**The Lord brought him (Brainerd) to my home to die so I could hear his prayers**.” What a legacy! What a heart-warming example of prayer passion! **Brainerd died in obscurity as an intercessor, but lives in glory**.

Praying or Fainting: Our Lord teaches us that “men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” (Luke 18:1) One of the greatest snares in intercession is to faint, and lose heart, and abandon the habit of prayer altogether. Satan hates prayer and chokes it every chance he gets. **May I plead with you friend, never, ever give up praying.**

Beloved, intercession is not a hit and run spiritual exercise; it is always satisfying and uplifting, and its power and influence are immeasurable and inestimable. What’s the secret of intercession: it is perseverance and passion! So, the bottom line is this: if we are looking for a closer walk with God, and want it to be simple and relevant, we need to go into our prayer closet to weep over a world that’s on the brink of disaster. Let’s pray like Elijah did on Mt. Carmel (James 5:17). We are told he (Elijah) bowed himself to the ground with his face between his knees; that is, strictly concentrating on God by discounting all outside interferences. **HAVE WE EVER DONE THAT?**

Remember, the living God of Elijah is still with us, and may we cry out to Him for a glorious exploit of His power and might to confront the evilness of the present-day! So let’s intercede fervently with passion and desperation like Elijah did! **Intercessors are truly God’s ‘Green Beret’ soldiers and their mission is to go where nominal Christians are afraid or reluctant to go!**

--- Matthew Skaria

God’s hand and our mouth

I had a sign in my office with the words of Jim Elliot, the martyred Christian, **“God gives His best to those who leave the choice with Him.”** How precious it’s to make our needs known unto God and then wait patiently for His divine provisions! Personally, I am thrilled to watch how God provides for His work here from an unseen treasury day-by-day for all these many years! The grace of God never obligates anyone. Our response to God must come from a willing and ready heart. When God’s people are close to Him, they can hear the loving voice of the Father in the matter of true discipleship.

The ministry of helping the Lord’s work should be looked upon as a privilege, not an obligation. If that’s beyond our grasp, then let’s read 2 Corinthians 8:2, **“How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.”** The Macedonian Christians were not being forced to give—they eagerly desired the opportunity of ministering to their fellow Christians at Jerusalem. Oh, that this spirit were revived and restored in our midst today!

The Macedonian Christians recognized that money without heart and spirit was meaningless. Thus, they committed themselves afresh to the Lord and to His servant Paul before they offered any of their money for the Lord’s work. When Jesus said that His disciples could lay up treasures in heaven, He was not implying or suggesting that if we give \$10 to the Lord’s work, we will have \$100 waiting for us in heaven. God’s economy is not in recession. The faith walk is a choice we make and it’s neither pleasing nor appealing to the world. Biblical faith is not a do-it-yourself system or a concept that we can put it on a video-cassette and market it. Such manipulative schemes have affected the real faith of many, not realizing that true faith is not swayed by whims and emotions. Please tell me, who supported all those faithful servants of God who have gone before us?

I appreciate the story of the mother who took her son shopping. In the store, the grocer invited the boy to take a handful of cherries, but he seemed hesitant, **“Don’t you like cherries?” asked the grocer. “Yes,” replied the boy with a smile.** The grocer put his hand in the basket and pulled out a generous portion and dumped them in the little fellow’s cap which he had promptly held out. Later, his mother asked him why he had not taken the cherries himself, instead of waiting till the grocer gave them to him. **“Because his hand is bigger than mine,” was the reply. What an incredible**

description from a boy!

George Muller, the founder of the Ashley down Orphanage in Bristol, England, was relating to a friend some of the difficulties he had to encounter in caring for the orphans with food day-by-day, and when he finished, his friend said to him, **“You seem to live from hand to mouth!”** **“Yes,” replied Mr. Muller, “it’s my mouth, but God’s hand.”** Out of faith comes abundance and out of obedience comes blessings untold. Beloved, God will stand by us as He promised in His Word. There are plenty of unknowns out there; but our faith in God shouldn’t be one of them.

God supplies our needs not grudgingly but in full measure. Isn’t it better to plead with God than with man? The blessings of God manifest in obedient people; thank God for the people who are obedient to His voice. It is truly an honor and joy to depend upon Jehovah God, the Provider and Sustainer of this ministry who is always on time with manna from on high. Let us not give any credence to those who advocate or promote a hypothetical faith! We can know our Lord by personal experience and not by hearsay or theological expediency. Suffice it to say, there is a loving God who cares for His children. Never mind the unbelief and sarcasm of the world. God will do great things if we depend on Him. **“For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cori.5:7).** I like what James Moffat said on this passage, **“I’ve to lead my life in faith, without seeing Him.”**

--- Matthew Skariak

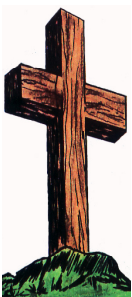
On Loving Others

As Christians, our job is to love others. Before we meet them or know anything about them, we are to love them. Beyond the handful of people we know in our own circle, others seem to be strangers. We are told to go into a world full of them. This is the love of the “cross” functioning through us as sons and daughters of God.

We win people to Christ by example and compassion. We do not impress people by criticizing their faith or beliefs but sharing the truth in love. It’s God who enlightens people with His truth, mercy and grace. Let God be God! Let Him judge the world! Let us submit ourselves to His divine wisdom, and His way is always superior to ours! I am reminded of the words of **Thomas Carlyle, the 18th century Scottish Poet and essayist, “Holy living is the best argument that tells for God in an age of fact.”** Examples are better than precepts.

Let’s allow God’s love flow in and through us; it can be done only through the unending love of the cross. Without God’s love and mercy, man is lost and in desperate search for a Shepherd who can draw him back into the fold. Religion offers nothing but darkness, but Christ dispels such darkness with His glorious light because **“He is the Light of the world.”**

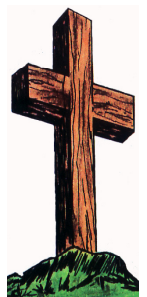
--- Matthew Skariak



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Website: www.worldprayerband.com

E-mail: mwpbs@yahoo.com



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Phone: (575) 626-5097 • World Prayer Band P.O. Box 92953 • Southlake, Texas 76092