

REVIVAL NEWS

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WHEN THE CHURCH PRAYS

The nations in uproar

As I travelled and ministered in Liberia in West Africa and ministered in various centres in Kenya in May/June 2008, I became aware that despite recent serious national crises in these nations, the church was not committed to, or active in, congregational prayer led by their ministers. Liberia was still recovering from 14 years [1989–2003] of horrendous civil war that has left the nation traumatized because of the innumerable, senseless killings and maiming and rape of innocent people.

Kenya went through two and half months of serious shaking in early 2008 over a disputed election result. I witnessed some of the results of the destruction of properties in towns and cities, and in rural regions in western Kenya. On Thursday the 29th May 2008, I ministered to a congregation of people who have come back after fleeing murder, violence, theft and destruction of their homes [church buildings and schools].

It was in this context that Paul's instructions to the churches everywhere, to be committed to prayer ***“for all men, for kings and all who are in authority”***, became so important and urgent in my understanding. If we will pray in obedience to the word of God and in agreement with the word of God, we will experience the Biblically promised results: ***“a quiet and peaceable life in all Godliness and reverence” (1Tim.2:1-2)***.

Today in 2021 we are witnessing major upheavals in many nations because of the pandemic of Covid-19, and again we are challenged to prayer. Here in Australia, we are praying much for our nation and especially for the State Premiers as we have experienced unexpected and serious expressions of totalitarian government. Millions of people have been locked down, unable to go to work or school or even to go outside their houses. This is causing much distresses and discouragement among the population. Let us consider afresh Paul's instructions to the church to pray.

Pray according to the word

In **1Timothy 2:1-4** Paul exhorts the church that first of all, ***“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 Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”***

I have been aware for many years that when the church is congregated and corporate prayer is entered into according to these verses, the church begins to stand in the gap with Christ Jesus the mediator: ***“For there is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus” (v5)***. When the church **prays in agreement with the word of God** then the church will

experience the end result of the prayer: peace and quietness. Such prayer is a powerful act of spiritual warfare, as the church has been authorized by God to make such prayer in the name of Jesus the Messiah

In giving us the Lord's Prayer, Jesus has instructed us concerning the important elements of prayer. There is an invocation of God's kingdom; there is to be discernment of God's will. When the church stands in confession of prayer in agreement according to the will of God, then the prayer of the church will be established [answered] and God's will, will be done in the earth.

Prayer for all men – 1Tim.2:1

Paul exhorts us in **1 Timothy 2:1** that it is '*of first importance*' [or '*first of all*'] "*that supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men*". He mentions three kinds, or three ways, of praying for all men and as well there should be the giving of thanks.

- **Supplications**

What are supplications? The dictionary says they are entreaties, or humbly begging, making petition. It suggests a serious pleading and crying out to God for particular people [all men]. Consider the example of Jesus in **Hebrews 5:7**.

- **Prayers**

What are prayers? Prayers include supplications but more generally prayer is our communication with God. This means prayer is a dialogue and we should listen for His answers.

Philippians 4:6 tells us that it is by prayers and supplications that we "*make our requests known to God.*" We know God has answered by the witness of "*the peace of God*" (v7) coming into our spirit.

Prayers and supplications are to be made "*in the Spirit*" (**Eph.6:18**). This means that in our prayer life we are to move from the soul realm to the spirit realm, where God is able to guide us.

- **Intercessions**

What are intercessions? To intercede is to go on behalf of or to go between. It is to plead in favour of someone else; it can mean to mediate; it means to represent another at the throne of grace. Consider the testimony of Queen Esther who went before the King on behalf of her people.

- **Giving of thanks**

1 Thess.5:17-18 tells us to "*pray without ceasing*" and "*in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*"

Ephesians 5:20 tells us to be "*giving thanks always for all things.*" The giving of thanks is the attitude of a Spirit-filled believer and thankfulness to God is the attitude to undergird all prayer. The giving of thanks builds faith in our hearts.

- Prayer is to be made for **ALL MEN [including women]**.

Praying for all in authority

Paul then goes on to say, *“I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; in like manner also, the women...”* 1Tim.2:8-9a.

In many churches the only prayer prayed is to ask God to bless the service and later to ask God to bless the offering and those who have given. The congregated church is meant to be praying *“for all men, for kings and all who are in authority”*. Despite civil war in Liberia and the unexpected upheaval in Kenya, the church can still be caught in the trap of thinking ‘we go to church to get blessed’; and yet **the church is meant to be the fountain of blessing for the nation.**

When Jesus cleansed the temple, He proclaimed *“My house shall be called a house of prayer but you have made it a den of thieves”* Matt. 21:13. He was quoting from Isaiah 56:7 where God had said that prayer in His house should be for ‘all nations’. In the context the nations are ‘all men’ that Paul tells us to pray for.

Lifting up Holy Hands

We can only pray genuinely and effectively by *“lifting up holy hands”* 1Tim 2:8. If we lift up our hands to God with ‘wrath and doubting’ in our hearts we are being hypocritical and our hands are not holy.

- **Without wrath**

At the end of the Lord’s Prayer in **Matthew 6:9-13**, Jesus emphasizes a second time the need to forgive others as a prerequisite to answered prayer.

Wrath is anger seeking revenge. The Bible says *“be angry and sin not”* (Eph. 4:26). The Bible says *“Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath, for it is written ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord”* Rom. 12:19.

God says He will exercise wrath because only God can judge rightly.

Even though we have good cause to be angry with our enemy we are to ask God for the grace to forgive. Forgiveness is more powerful than revenge. Revenge harms others and binds the avenger. Forgiveness sets you free and places your enemy in the hands of God. *“If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head”* Rom. 12:20.

- **Without doubting**

Paul says to pray without doubting. When terrible things happen we can wonder ‘where is God?’ And doubt comes into our hearts.

James warns that unless we ask in faith we *“will receive nothing from the Lord”* (James 1:6-7).

“Without faith it is impossible to please God” Heb 11:6. Before we can pray effectively we need to *“Take captive every thought to the obedience of Christ”* 2 Cor.10:5b.

The church is called to stand in the gap in prayer for the nation. To do this effectively we must help every member of the church to embrace the grace to show

mercy and forgiveness toward others; and to have a good confession of faith in the sovereignty of God and His ability to answer our prayers and save our nation.

Therefore pray

Therefore I exhort the church everywhere to be obedient to Paul's instructions in **1Timothy 2**. The church can make the difference in the nation. The church is to know how to conduct itself "*in the house of God*" (**1 Tim 3:15**). Every time the church meets it is good and acceptable to God to pray for your nation, to pray for rulers and those in authority.

The result of such prayer will be peace in the nation and the opportunity for the church to continue the work of the ministry, bringing all to the knowledge of the truth.

Prayer for kings and all in authority – 1Tim.2:2

We are to pray for all men and then we are to pray specifically for kings – presidents, prime ministers – and all in authority, that is, in positions of prominence in our society and nation.

The result of such prayer will be "*quietness and peace*". How many nations and how many cities do not have the blessing of "*leading a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence*"? Does the church stop to ask ourselves the question: Why is there not peace in our nation? In our city? The answer is: because the church is not giving first priority to prayer for the nation, for all men, for rulers and authorities.

God's will is good – 1Tim.2:3-4

It is "*good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour*" for us to pray diligently and committedly for all men and for the government of our nation. It is God's will for us to be able to live "*a quiet and peaceable life*".

The goal of our prayer for all men, including the rulers, is their salvation. God "*desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*" God is "*not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance*" (**2Pet.3:9**). Men will be saved when they come to the knowledge of the truth. How shall they hear the truth?

There is a Mediator – 1Tim.2:5

Job knew his need for a redeemer; he needed someone to go before God on his behalf. His friends could not help him (**Job 19:25**). Once Christ has come, Paul declares, "*There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.*" The core message of the New Testament is that "*Jesus is the Christ*" (**Acts 5:42**). The result of Christ dying is that we can "*come boldly to the throne of grace*" (**Heb.4:16**) and we can boldly "*enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus*" (**Heb.10:19**).

He gave Himself a ransom for all – 1Tim.2:6

A ransom is the cost of redemption. This concept comes from the market place and referred to the buying of a slave's freedom. The ransom for all men to be saved was the blood of Jesus: His life. He gave His life so that we could be set free from the bondage and corruption of sin and death.

It can become a snare for the Christian to be glad to be saved but to forget that Jesus gave His life for **all** men. The practising church so often is only concerned for themselves and

for the institutional entity that they are. The message that must be testified is that Jesus ***“gave Himself a ransom for all.”*** That message is to ***“be testified in due time.”***

This is the issue: the truth of who Jesus is, that He is the Christ [Messiah **Acts 2:36**], that He is the Son of God [God manifest in the flesh **1Tim.3:16**], that He is **the only way** to the Father (**Jn.14:6**), and that through His death men can be saved. Therefore the truth of who Jesus is and the Scriptural reality of what His death on the cross has done, is to be ***“testified in due time”***.

Appointed a preacher, an apostle, a teacher – 1Tim.2:7

The expected result of the church fulfilling its responsibility to pray for ***“all men, for kings and all who are in authority”*** is:

- that God will appoint preachers, apostles and teachers ***“of the Gentiles in faith and truth.”***
- these appointed ministries carry the primary responsibility to ***“testify”*** concerning Jesus the Christ and the ransom He paid for men to be saved.
- these appointed ministries carry the primary responsibility to preach and teach ***“the knowledge of the truth”*** so that ***“all men”*** can be saved.
- for God’s will to be done, there is to be the appointment of preachers [this could include both prophets and evangelists as both these ministries are preaching ministries], apostles and teachers again today.

The commission is the same as Paul received

These appointed ministries are to convey the message of the gospel to the Gentiles. Gentiles are those who are not saved. The majority of the human race is not saved. There is a huge need for concerted committed prayer for all men so that God will respond and appoint again preachers, apostles and teachers of the calibre of Paul.

Paul’s calling was ***“to bear My name [Jesus] before Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel”***, Paul was to ***“suffer many things for My name’s [Jesus] sake”*** (**Acts 9:15-16**). In these days God is sending us to the nations as preachers, apostles and teachers and He has authorised us to testify to the Gentiles, and also to the lost sheep of Israel which is the church. We are to preach that Jesus is the Christ [Messiah – the King who came]; that Jesus is God manifest in the flesh.

To Kings

The apostolic message that is going forth and being received in many nations already often reaches to the highest levels of civil government and political office in those nations. I have personally had a minister of a government request a home meeting with me and the team and he had us lay hands on him and pray for him. One of our sons, preaching in Central Africa, had a president’s wife and a minister of State attend his meetings. As a result, the President of that country asked for a young apostle in that country to come and teach in his home church.

In faith and truth

These appointed ministries are ***“in faith and truth”***. ***“Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God”*** **Rom.10:17**. The faith here refers to the doctrines, the apostles’ doctrine (**Acts 2:42**) and ***“the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints”*** (**Jude 3**).

“Thy word is truth” Jn.17:17. The preaching and teaching of the truth is the preaching and teaching of the word of God which engenders faith in the hearers. This is God’s means by which ***“all men can be saved”***.

Because of the ineffectiveness of the church in making disciples of all nations, some have doubted the God-given means of fulfilling the Great Commission. The God-given means are the way to reach the nations. The problem has been the disobedience of the church. We have spread denominationalism [denominated doctrines] rather than the gospel ***“in faith and truth”***.

A new generation of preachers, apostles and teachers

It is time for a new generation of Biblical preachers, apostles and teachers to be raised. These ones will not repeat and promulgate denominational tenets of faith; they will preach and teach the word of God, the word of truth, the word of the Gospel, as it is written. It is not time for the church fellowships of a city to gather together to say the Apostles’ Creed, which was written by bishops in church history and is not the apostles’ doctrine.

The church of the city needs to receive the five-fold ministers

It is time for the church fellowships of the city to gather together to hear the apostles’ doctrine in faith and truth. This requires real apostles who have been called and appointed by Jesus and who understand the mysteries of the kingdom and the glory of God. This requires teachers who have received and understood the apostles’ doctrine. This requires preachers who are able to preach the Gospel of the kingdom of God, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and not some watered down, man-arranged version.

Prayer and ministry of the word

When the church prays according to the will of God in obedience to the Scriptures as written, the results will be awesome. God has delegated to His church the responsibility of the Great Commission. Prayer and the ministry of the word are the two vital components of the ministry of apostles and therefore of all the ministries (**Acts 6:4**). Let us commit ourselves to prayer and see that God will raise apostles, preachers and teachers who will speak the word of God. AMEN!

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