

Sunday Celebration (May 24, 2009)
"Prayer and Perseverance"

"The Prayer Catalyst" (Pt. 3)

James 5:16-18 ... 1Kings 18:41-45 ... Elijah's Importunity – 7 times on the Mountain

WHY Does it Take Elijah 7 times to get the result?

... This question begins a CHAIN of numerous, similar occurrences in the category of prayer and perseverance

ABRAHAM ... Gen 12, 17

MOSES ... Ex 24:12, 15-16, 18

HANNAH ... 1Sam 1 ... "year after year"

DANIEL ... Dan 10:2-6, 10-13

NEHEMIAH ... Neh 1:1-6, 2:1-8

SYROPHONECIAN WOMAN... Matt 15:21-28

JESUS... Matt 4:1...

PAUL ... 2Cor 12:1-10 ...

We must not remain comfortable with a view that portrays our prayer lives as being exempt from these dynamics.

... These Examples don't necessarily tell us WHY there is Delay, but it is vital that we know that DELAY & PERSEVERING are Normal and to be Anticipated.

"Once again we see the wisdom and goodness of God, answering sustained faithful prayer at the strategic moment and in the way that gives that answer maximum significance in the larger divine plan." J.I. Packer and Carolyn Nystrom, "Praying", p. 222

"Prevailing may involve God's most perfect time. ...To obtain the highest kingdom results God may need to delay your answer. Included in this timing may be special blessing for you. God may see that it is best for your spiritual growth and eternal reward for you to prevail at some length before the answer reaches you." Wesley Duewel, "Mighty Prevailing Prayer", p. 60

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT PRAYER AND PERSEVERANCE?

- (1) We've observed there's the concept of "EFFECTUAL FERVENT PRAYER" ("In your prayer, pray" ... "Praying until you pray").

"He who prays without fervency does not pray at all." Charles Spurgeon

- (2) Today, we observe the Seasonal Persevering Component of Prayer

Many of us never go far in prayer because we've never connected prayer to perseverance the way the Bible does...

Lk 11:1-13 ... No sooner has Jesus taught on prayer, that He IMMEDIATELY teaches on Perseverance in Prayer

Jesus Lesson on Prayer Focused on 2 Areas:

1. Content
2. Continuation... Perseverance

NOTE... also Lk 18:1ff

"Did Jesus tell these stories to give us an image of God our heavenly Father as a reluctant donor of things we badly need? No! Jesus showed in many other settings that God the Father is loving and generous and righteous and faithful and wants to give good gifts to His children. But Jesus told these stories to encourage us "always to pray and not to lose heart," ... Persistent, insistent petitioning, according to our Lord Jesus, is most certainly appropriate when the pressure is on. But why is this if God is truly our loving heavenly Father and truly wants to give us good gifts?"

...the one point of the stories just referred to is that we should pray insistently and persistently about crucial needs, not because God will not meet them unless we do but as if He would not." J.I. Packer and Carolyn Nystrom, "Praying", p. 211

*... Don't be caught OFF-GUARD—Know this from the start,
"Prayer that is effectual, fervent, and persevering will not be
easy and will be in constant need of repair and refreshing"*

Adequate Prayer Support

... Prayer—Optional or Essential?

"I cannot insist too strongly on my own helplessness among these people apart from the grace of God. Although I have now been ten years in China and Lisu, I find myself able to do little or nothing apart from God's going before me and working among them. Without this I feel like a man who has his boat grounded in shallow water. Pull or push as he may, he will not be able to make his boat move more than a few inches. But let the tide come in and lift his boat off the bottom—then he will be able to move it as far as he pleases, quite easily and without friction. It is indeed necessary for me to go around among our Lisu, preaching, teaching, exhorting, rebuking, but the amount of progress made thereby depends almost entirely on the state of the spiritual tide in the village—a condition which you can control upon your knees as well as I. Sometimes I feel that a village is grounded like that boat at low water! In such a case you can no more get the people to hold together and strengthen each other than you could roll dry sand into a ball. They will be cold and unresponsive, and weeks or even months of teaching will not do much for them. Their "prayers" are not answered as the power of the Holy Spirit is with them. I repeat, I feel powerless to help in such cases, except to do all that is possible then commit them to God." J.O. Fraser, "Beyond the Ranges", p. 236

- *How many ministries are sitting at "low tide"?* Effort is being spent but little movement is being accomplished.

Everybody is called to pray... Some are called to a ministry or season of intercession

THE PRAYER FORCE TEAM

- 6 Month Enlistment
- Boot Camp Training – Upcoming SOW class; Additional training resources throughout term
- 65 member team that will be divided up into squads who pray on different days
- 30 minute intercessory missions 2-3 times per week;
- Maintaining your daily prayer life in fighting shape;
- Attendance at Corporate prayer gatherings: Sunday morning (8-8:40, special scheduled prayer events)
- Prayer ministry is your priority not an optional consideration

WHAT CAN I DO TO REVITALIZE MY PRAYER LIFE?

1. **TAKE the Time to Pray**
 - a. The 5-7 minute prayer life... Stop calling that prayer! It may be better than nothing, but it is doing harm to you ever developing a prayer life that looks biblical. You can have a 5-7 minute prayer life only when you are practicing "effectual fervent praying" ("praying until you pray" times of prayer)
 - b. Set aside time for prayer... the same way you do to exercise, eat, or watch a favorite TV show.
 - c. Plan on having times of prayer that are not "convenient" or boxed in by other things or mired in "spontaneous disorganization" (plan on having a personal prayer retreat; plan regular times that you have prepared for in study and direction)
2. **Get Out of the Rut** – Introduce some new approaches to your prayer time (see resources page)
3. **Pursue "Praying until you pray"**—and not just praying until your clock or check list releases you
 - a. Do you ever experience the burden of God when you pray? Is there any "heat" or intensity in your prayers?
 - b. Do you ever experience a sense of owning the answer by faith?
 - c. Do you ever make room to just "wait" on God
4. **Don't just pray, study the practice of prayer... Don't just study on prayer, but pray**