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Saints, We Must Pray!

by Ricky Earle

...and pray for one another...the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (James 5:16)

The Word of God time after time stresses the necessity for us as believers in Christ to pray. When Jesus walked this earth He exemplified the priority prayer should have in our lives.

Prior to His public ministry Jesus fasted and prayed for 40 days and 40 nights (Matthew 4:2, Luke 4:2), He arose early in the mornings and went to solitary places to pray (Mark 1:35).

Christ had many sleepless nights filled with prayer, when He departed from people and went up a mountain to pray (Matthew 14:23, Mark 6:46, Luke 6:12, John 6:15).

All four of the Gospels record Jesus specifically departing from others for all night prayer meetings with God the Father!

As well, our Lord often times led prayer meetings with His disciples in solitary places, away from the multitudes (John 6:3, Luke 9:28, Mark 9:2, Matthew 17:1).

It was Jesus who said that demons could be cast out and that nothing shall be impossible - though only through prayer and fasting (Matthew 17:20-21, Mark 9:29).

Why do we not see the hand of God working today as in the book of Acts? There is virtually no prayer power from the Lord, because the Church will not humble itself, turn from its wicked ways and pray!

Prayer and communion with God is what led Jesus to weep over Jerusalem, He felt such a burden for lost souls. Hebrews 5:7-8 tells us how He prayed and offered up supplications with strong crying and tears! May the LORD so lead us to shed tears for this lost and dying world!

A couple of Christian workers from the Salvation Army back in the 1800's wrote to William Booth and told him they had tried everything to get a movement of revival. Booth wrote back to them to "try tears". They did just that and revival broke out in their part of England. Bible colleges, seminars, and Christian conferences cannot teach us how to have this broken soul, but God can.

It was Leonard Ravenhill who said, "No man is greater than his prayer life" and "For this sin-hungry age we need a prayer-hungry Church" - and he said this in 1959 how much more so do we need this in 2006!!

Jesus said that His house is the house of prayer (Luke 19:46). Yet look to the churches of our day. Maybe they have a weekly prayer meeting, which is attended by such a small few of the church family. Then consider how much prayer unto the Lord is actually offered to Him. We need burdened, compassionate prayers which will move God and are not constrained to time. Revival will not be birthed from once a week prayer meetings! Oh for a church in every city that would stand on the Word of God and pray daily for revival to hit and for lost souls to be saved by Jesus Christ.

We need ministers of the Gospel who will actually obey Acts 6:4 and give themselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word. Then, and only then will we see people crying out to God in repentance and becoming saved by the Blood of the Lamb who was slain, and gloriously resurrected.

Can YOU not set aside time daily to seek God in prayer? Can YOU not urge your Church to get serious about prayer? A lost and dying world is not due to the exceeding sinfulness of 21st century sin, it is because we as Christians will not repent, and seek wholeheartedly after our risen LORD Jesus.

Ravenhill said (Don't you just love quoting him!) that the great revivalists like Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield were "GREAT REAPERS in public because they were GREAT WEEPERS in private." Now, that's a totally awesome quote! That's in "Revival God's Way", a book he wrote in 1983. If you don't have it - get it. It's filled with great stuff about how prayer is linked to revival. Check this out from page 74:

"...Cotton Mather devoted 490 days and nights in intercession for revival in New England. He died in 1727, just prior to the First Great Awakening. Where prayer is, revival cannot be far behind. Preacher, is YOUR heart crushed over the sin of your people and the staggering sin worldwide? Oh, for a generation of preachers who will daringly and deperately pray with Jeremiah:

'Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!' (Jer. 9:1)."