

## PRAISE the Lord for:

- ★ The steady flow of commitment slips from the paper coming into the office
  - ★ For all our partner organisations around the world who assist us to get out the good news
  - ★ Various countries who have approached us to print the Challenge newspaper, although finances are always an issue
  - ★ Our wonderful volunteers who come each month to help with the Challenge wrap ... we couldn't do without them
- ## PRAYER needed for:
- ★ The continued increase in the distribution, effectiveness and impact of the paper in Australia
  - ★ Don and Lillian Kennedy as they continue to promote and develop the newspaper particularly in Queensland. Pray for open doors and for the Lord's care, protection and provision for them while on the road

## Intercessory prayer in the life of the Christian and the church

It is important to recognise that prayer – in particular intercessory prayer – is our honest, open, transparent acknowledgement of our **complete dependence** upon God. Intercessory prayer is an abandonment of our fleshly spirit of independence from God.

This principle of dependence upon God is illustrated in **Exodus 17:8-13**. Israel is being attacked by Amalek, and Moses issues orders for Joshua to go out with the army and ward off the enemy. Meanwhile Moses, Aaron and Hur go up on a hilltop to pray.

Note with me four key thoughts from these verses.

**1. Prayer is conflict v8-9** We need to see that prayer is essential to overcome our enemies, which are the world, the flesh and the devil. This theme is presented in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 *"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."*

Intercessory prayer is a vital weapon the Christian church has at its disposal. The problem seems to be that many of us don't see the strategic nature of prayer. Today's emphasis is on methods and techniques rather than prayer and brokenness before a holy God. Lost people, unsaved people, have strongholds in their lives that only the Holy Spirit can tear down, in response to the intercessory prayer of the saints. We can only overcome the attacks of the enemy as we pray.

**2. Prayer is obedience v10** Joshua immediately responded to the God-ordained leadership of Moses. He didn't argue, criticise or complain. He just simply obeyed.

Remember in Joshua chapter 7 when Achan sinned and Joshua was deep in prayer mystified by the spectacular defeat of Israel at Ai. Then the Lord says Israel had sinned, so deal with it. No amount of prayer will change disobedience. It is significant that following this incident chapter 8 of Joshua records the victory of Israel over Ai. Obedience opens the way for victory over the world, the flesh and the devil.

*Continued over*

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Email: info@challengenews.org

## PRAYER CONTINUED

- ★ The appointment of new Board members. If you think you would like to be involved please contact carl@challengenews.org This is a vital part of the ministry as the Board oversees Challenge into the future
- ★ Our writers and for the Lord's inspiration as they faithfully provide articles for the paper each month
- ★ Cobus Britz (our South African Director) and his wife Christa. Pray for protection on the roads, for open doors as they visit churches and for the continued growth of the paper
- ★ Ananda and Grace Pula who head up the work of Challenge in Malawi. Isaac Chigawa oversees the administration plus gathers stories for each edition. Please pray for the Lord's care, protection and provision for both families.

**3. Prayer means action** As with most principles in the Bible, we need to have a correct balance. Prayer should never be viewed as a replacement for action. Rather we need to see that prayer is essential for God-ordained action. This is vital as a church meets for intercessory prayer for the life of the church. Many churches have lots of action in the normal flow of a week, however, we need to ask this important question: *"How much of our church's action is God-ordained action?"*

There are churches that are sincere, genuine, enthusiastic and zealous for the Lord. Unfortunately such churches can descend into discouragement because so much of their hard work yields little or no fruit because it is not God ordained action.

**4. Prayer is answered v11-13** As Moses stands praying on the hilltop with his hands raised, Joshua and his troops gained the upper hand. However, when he lowered his hands, the enemy prevailed.

This tells us that quality intercessory prayer needs to be consistent and persistent. Churches are wondering why it is that non-Christians are not responsive to the gospel. Just maybe, the problem is that we have dropped the hand of intercessory prayer.

I have mentioned before in my prayer letter editorials that the book of the Acts of the Apostles speaks of prayer on at least thirty occasions. That is more than once per chapter. Many of these occasions speak of corporate church prayer meetings. Such intercessory prayer was, and should still be, a key element of the growth and spread of the gospel. Numbers grew so rapidly in the book of the Acts, that Dr Luke stopped recording statistics, simply because it became so difficult to do so.

Apart from this, intercessory prayer became an important means of bringing the needs of the church before the Lord, such as Peter's miraculous deliverance from prison. It was, and should be, a tremendous way of proving God day by day in our own lives and the life of the church, and that is why we need to pray without ceasing.

CARL CARMODY, EDITOR OF CHALLENGE



## MY RESPONSE

Post to: Challenge Literature Fellowship, PO Box 978, Cloverdale WA 6985 or Fax to **(08) 9453 3006**

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