

**Prayer: Walking With God**  
**The Word that Moves God**  
**Romans 12:9-13; Colossians 4:2-4**

**Romans 12:9-13**~ <sup>9</sup> Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. <sup>10</sup> Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. <sup>11</sup> Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. <sup>13</sup> Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

**Colossians 4:2-4**~ <sup>2</sup> Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. <sup>3</sup> At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— <sup>4</sup> that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

## I. Introduction

As the New Year rolls around, I enjoy reading some of these so-called prophets predicting what God will do in the year 2019. This happens every single New Year. People have visions and dreams from God (so they claim), telling them what God would do in that year.

For example, Chisma Magazine reports that this year in 2019, there will be a purging of the Church.<sup>1</sup> Dead branches are being cut off to make way for new branches that will produce more abundant fruit. Also, the leaders of the Church will be judged. Leadership that embraces the Jezebels and the Ahabs in their leadership will be met with severe punishment (whatever that means). I do not know what they mean by the Jezebel and Ahabs.

In fact, another self-proclaimed prophet who calls himself "Prophet Solomon" prophesized that there will be many pastors who will die in 2019 as a judgment from God.<sup>2</sup> Well, I just hope I am not one of them. These are morbid and gloomy prophecies.

But not all the predictions for 2019 end in death and judgment. There are some who claim that God told them that the year 2019 will be a year of revival and renewal. These prophets prophesize a pouring out of God's Spirit on all flesh, where there will be a greater prophetic movement ... quoting from Peter's message to the men of Israel in Acts 2. But those of us who are students of the Bible know that this particular prophecy was fulfilled in the first century, according to Peter.

Before I left on vacation, one of my friends who goes to a "Spirit-filled" church asked for my thoughts on whether there will be a revival in 2019 ... because his pastor predicted and prophesized that there will be a great move of God in America that will usher in another Great

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<sup>1</sup> Jennifer Leclair, "5 Sober Prophetic Predictions for 2019." Chisma Magazine. January 14, 2019.  
<https://www.charismamag.com/blogs/prophetic-insight/40045-5-sober-prophetic-predictions-for-2019>

<sup>2</sup> Theodore Mawuli Kwaku Viwotor, "Prophet Predicts Doom for Pastors in 2019." GhanaWeb. December 31, 2018.  
<https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Prophet-predicts-doom-for-pastors-in-2019-712125>

Awakening. This pastor believes that a Great Revival where multitude of people will be convicted of their sins and flock to the Church will happen very soon. And I pray that will be true. But honesty and intellectual integrity compel me to answer my friend, "NO" ... there will not be a revival in 2019.

I answered "no" not because I am a prophet. Anyone who knows me knows that I am not a prophet nor do I claim to be one. I am a Bible teacher and one who enjoys studying history. And as I examine the Bible and look at history, I notice a common thread about a move of God. Before any great revivals ever break out ... the First and Second Great Awakening in the 18th century, the Jesus' Movement in 20th century ... there is one common thread that weaves through all these revivals. Something always happens before a revival can occur. And that is prayer ... PRAYER.

## II. Three Things on My Mind

Not a pocket of prayers here and there ... a small group of gathering in a tiny locale thinly spread across the region. On the contrary, there is always a PASSIONATE ... PUBLIC ... PAIN-STAKING ... PROFUNDITY of prayers collectively in all the churches.

My friend's question about the movement of God stirs up three thoughts on my mind.

1. First, there is always a movement of PRAYER before there is a movement of GOD.

I told my friend, "Look around, do you see God's people praying? Do you really see God's PEOPLE (collectively) praying?" Again, I am not talking about a fringe few for I know that there are people praying. And of course, here at Forgiven Life, we are a people of prayer. But for revival to occur, there has to be a collective corporate prayer from the Church. There has to be both public and private prayers that are spread through ALL the churches.

I am reminded of Ephesians 6:18 that says:

**Ephesians 6:18**~<sup>18</sup> praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints

Note the "alls". In my Bible, I circled all the "alls".

- a. All times
- b. All prayers and supplication
- c. All perseverance
- d. All the saints

R.A. Torrey writes that this verse sets in stone the overwhelming and tremendous importance of prayer for all believers. He notes:

... the intelligent child of God is driven to say, "I must pray, pray, pray. I must put all my energy and all my heart into prayer. Whatever else I do, I must pray."<sup>3</sup>

There has to be a movement of prayer before there is a movement of God. I love the immortal words of E.M. Bounds, "Prayer moves the hand that moves the world."

2. Second, it starts with a SMALL gathering of people to make it a LARGE movement.

And you know what is the most encouraging thing is when you study the Bible and history? It always starts with a small gathering of praying people to make it a large movement.

That is the second thing that is on my mind. All it takes is a small group of passionate people who persistently prayer both individually and corporately for there to be a large movement to prayer. Prayer begets prayer. Forgiven Life can be the spark that ignites and sets the fire of the Spirit ablaze.

3. Third, there will be no spiritual revival until saints stop PLAYING and start PRAYING.

Before I left for vacation, I jotted this note to myself in my journal: "There will be no spiritual revival until saints stop playing and start praying." That is my third thought.

I am tired of my mundane Christian life. I am tired of being caught in this "rat race", constantly caught up in this competitive struggle for prestige, or power, or even to be popular, doing things and compromising my conviction so people will like me. I want my Christian journey with God to be vibrant and virtuous ... to be colorful and cheerful.

And this third thought came to me ... there can be no spiritual revival:

- in my life,
- and in the life of this church,
- and in this nation ...

... until saints stop playing and start praying.

You know what I mean, right? We got to stop playing Church, bothers and sisters, and start praying for the Church. Can I get an "Amen" for that? We have to stop pretending. We come to Church on Sunday pretending to have the fruit of the Spirit -

- love ("oh, I love you so much"),
- joy ("oh, I am so happy to be here"),
- peace (hey, all is well between you and me, brother"),
- patience,
- kindness,

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<sup>3</sup> Torrey, R. A. (n.d.). *Power and Peace in Prayer* (p. 6). Westchester, IL: Good News Publishers.

- goodness,
- faithfulness,
- gentleness, and
- self-control (Galatians 5:22-23)

But all along in our heart ... IN OUR HEART ... we have the working of the flesh -

- envy and enmity in our heart,
- strife and sorcery against our brothers and sisters,
- rage and rivalries towards believers,
- dissensions and divisions,
- jealousy and conceitedness (Galatians 5:19-21)

You see, when we have the work of the flesh in our heart, it is time we stop playing and stop pretending and start praying.

So I when I left for my vacation, I packed several books on prayer for my wife and I to read (yes, I gave my wife and myself some homework assignments during our vacation). We read three books on prayers during our trip Down Under because I feel that in 2019, Forgiven Life has reached the next stage in our journey where we need to work on our prayer life, both private prayers and public prayers. Forgiven Life must be a praying Church ... a genuine, sincere, and selfless praying Church.

So when I got back, I talked with Pastor Paul and shared with him what I feel in my spirit. His response was, "Praise God," because he feels it too. So in the weeks to come, I would like for us to look at the Bible and unpackaged prayer so that our prayer will be vibrant and virtuous.

### III. Why Should We Pray

I know that praying is hard. It is something that all believers know they must do and wish that they could do it more. Prayer is both taxing and tedious. Taxing is because it is a spiritual warfare. It is a battle that we must fight but it leaves us weary and drained. It is tedious because sometimes we feel like God does not answer our prayers. We feel that prayer does not really matter. I know because I feel the same way sometimes ... well, if the truth be known ... many times.

But you know why I still pray? There are many reasons, but let me give you my three top reasons.

1. First, we pray because we are Commanded to pray.

We read this during our Scripture reading today. But I just really like the way the NASB translated better.

**Romans 12:10~<sup>10</sup>** *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love ... (NASB)*

"Be devoted" ... the idea is to be constantly and steadfastly ... to give continual care. Give continual care to what? Give continual care to loving one another. This is the mark of a Christian ... loving one another.

For those of us who are in Oz's house church, we have been looking at this for several weeks in 1 John. THE TEST of whether we really love God is if we love one another. That is the test. One who is born of God must love his brothers and sisters. Those who do not love their brothers and sisters are not born of God.

How do we show our devotion to loving one another? We do not need to guess. Paul gives us a list on how we can be devoted to one another in brotherly love, starting with:

- give preference to one another in honor (12:10)

The jump down to verse 12:

- rejoicing in hope (12:12)
- persevering in tribulation (12:12)
- devoted to prayer (12:12)
- contributing to the needs of the saints (12:13)
- practicing hospitality (12:13)

Right in the list of how to love one another is to be "devoted to prayer", that is to be devoted to praying for each other. Brothers and sisters, praying for one another is one of the ways we show our love for each other. When you pray for me, it is your love showing for me. And when I pray for you, it is my love showing to you.

In fact, do you know that if we do not pray for each other, it is a sin? Yes, it is true. In 1 Samuel 12, when the sons of Israel sinned against Yahweh by asking for a king like the rest of the nations, Yahweh was mad. So ...

**1 Samuel 12:18-19~<sup>18</sup>** ... the LORD sent thunder and rain that day, and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel. <sup>19</sup> And all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for ourselves a king."

Listen to the words of this old prophet in response to the sons of Israel's request for prayer in verse 23 ...

**1 Samuel 12:23~<sup>23</sup>** [Samuel said] ... far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you ...

We pray because we are commanded to pray. We pray because it is a loving thing to do. We pray because if we do not, it is a sin against God.

2. Second, we pray because we are CHANGED through pray.

Prayer changes us. There are many things that God will do whether we pray or not. That is because of who He is. He is gracious and loving God who will bring about blessing whether we pray or not. Jesus talks about this in his Sermon on the Mount.

**Matthew 5:45~<sup>45</sup>** For he [God] makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

And this could be one of the reasons why people do not pray. God is going to do good things anyway, whether I pray or not. So there are many things that God will do whether we pray or not. However, there are some things that God will not do if we do not pray.

James pens in the fourth chapter that bears his name, and verse 2:

**James 4:2~<sup>2</sup>** ... You do not have, because you do not ask.

While the Church is looking for better methods (how to do things well), God is looking for better men (and women). Throughout time and within the pages of Scriptures, all men and women of God shares at least one thing in common ... they are people of prayer. Only prayer can change us and change each other.

E.M. Bounds, studying the lives of many saints of old, has this to say about prayers:

God's true [people] can be distinguished by one great feature; they are [people] of prayer. Often differing in many things, they have always had a common center. They may have started from different points, and traveled by different roads, but they converge to one point: they are one in prayer. To them, God is the center of attraction, and prayer is the path which led to God. These [people] do not pray occasionally - not a little or at odd times. But, they so pray that their prayers enter into and shape their very characters. They pray so as to affect their own lives, the lives of others, and to make the history of the Church influence the current of the times. They spend much time in prayer, not because they watch the shadow on the dial or the hands on the clock, but because it is to them so momentous and engaging a business that they can scarcely quit.<sup>4</sup>

We pray because God chooses prayer as a means to change us and others around us.

3. Third, we pray because it is the CALL-SIGN of the Church.

I do not have time to get into the theology of this. But I will quickly note that in Matthew 21 when Jesus entered into the Jewish temple and saw the money-changers and peddlers polluting the temple, Jesus said:

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<sup>4</sup> E.M. Bounds, "Power Through Prayer" (Springdale; Whitaker House, 1982), 42.

**Matthew 21:13~** <sup>13</sup> He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers.”

God's house is known as "the House of Prayer". It is a place by which people come to pray (and worship by offering sacrifice). But the Jews defiled God's house by not praying but making it into a market place. So God judge the Jews and temple. No longer did Jesus consider the Jewish temple to be God's house. Two chapters later in Matthew 23, the temple was no longer God's house or prayer but the Jewish's house.

Predicting the destruction of the temple, Jesus said:

**Matthew 23:38~** <sup>38</sup> See, your house is left to you desolate ...

It is no longer God's house. If the Jews do not want to pray in the temple, then God can move out and seek another residence. And so God did. The New Testament now calls the Church the temple, the House of God, the House of Prayer.

It is funny how little prayer is done in the House of Prayer. We are hoping and praying to change that this year. That in this Church of Believers, in Forgiving Life, we will be what God wants us to be ... a House of Prayer.

#### IV. The Blessing

**Presider:** May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. May the love of our Lord Jesus Christ be unto you.

**Congregation:** And also to you.

#### V. Forgiven Life

One thing about prayer is that we do a lot of planning to pray but never really pray. To learn how to pray, we just have to start praying. But praying is a discipline, and like any discipline, it takes time to cultivate. Here is a suggestion to get started with prayer.

##### 1. First, ask for the hunger to pray

Prayer is simply asking. And prayer does not have to be long. To start praying, you must have a hunger for prayer. So start by asking God to have a desire and a discipline for a regular time alone with Him.

Write your short, simple prayer here: \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Second, find a place where you can be alone.

This place can be anywhere. It can be in your home or at your work. It is any place where you can be quiet without disruption. Here is a challenge. Turn off your phone, your computer, your television, your iPad, or anything that can be a distraction. If you are willing to be alone with God, you must remove the noise of this world.

Where is your quite place? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Third, pick a time that is good for you.

Now that you have your secret place, pick a time that is good for you. For some, it is in the morning. For others, it is at night. And there are those who pick during the kiddos' nap time. Whatever time, you pick, try to be consistent with that time.

What time is good to be alone with God? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Fourth, get a good devotional book on prayer.

When starting out to pray, some people may need help in getting ideas to pray. One good way to do this is having a pray devotional to guide you along.

My suggestion is downloading a Bible app "You Version". It is a Bible app. In this app, you can select from a variety of prayer devotion plans to get you started.