

# Prayer and Renewal

A. Scott Moreau

*In an age in which the stakes are growing ever higher in the daily spiritual battles of all people, prayer is indisputably one of the greatest--and most under-utilized--weapons we have at our disposal.*

--George Barna, User Friendly Churches, 122

1. Factors in developing prayer in churches that pray (from Barna, User Friendly Churches, 116-9):
  - a. The congregation was exposed to biblical teaching about the role of prayer in the Christian life.
  - b. Church leaders (staff and laity) modeled prayer as normal and significant behavior in all aspects of the Christian life.
  - c. These churches has learned to celebrate the fruits of prayer.
  - d. The congregation was held accountable for prayer.

2. What is renewal (or revival)? Coleman says:

The basic idea of revival is always the return of something to its true nature and purpose. In terms of redemptive history, revival can be seen as that 'strange and sovereign work of God in which He visits His own people, restoring, reanimating and releasing them into the fullness of His blessing." By its power, "vast energies, hitherto slumbering, are awakened, and new forces--for long preparing under the surface--burst into being." In the wake of revival comes life--life in its fullness, live overflowing with the love and power of God. (Coleman, The Spark, p. 20).

3. What are the conditions of revival?

- a. Primarily **God's sovereignty!!** At the same time, however, we should not lose sight that men and women are God's method (not programs or campaigns).
- b. Granted that, we must also note that God is willing to send renewal to those who show that they want it. Coleman points out the following "conditions" for revival, all of which essentially mirror the same thing: that Christ be exalted on earth as He is in heaven (The Spark, pp. 36-46):
  - i. Submission to the authority of God's Word
  - ii. Confession of sin, turning from our evil ways, and throwing ourselves on God's mercy. This also includes any restoration necessary.
  - iii. Prevailing prayer
  - iv. Serving God as He calls, which at heart will involve reaching the lost for Christ

4. Taking inventory of the prayer life of our church(es).

- a. Are people praying consistently, intensively, and expectantly?
- b. Do they see answers to prayer, and are they communicating this with others?
- c. Do they incorporate meaningful prayer into the fabric of their lives, or is it on the periphery

(e.g., only before meals or bedtime)?

5. Prayer and renewal: Questions for personal reflection
  - a. How can I be the one through whom the spark that ignites comes?
  - b. How can I be motivated to pray?
  - c. How can I make my motivation an infection that spreads through the church?
  - d. How can I be used of God to help prevent prayer meetings from becoming dull and powerless?
  - e. How can I be used of God to maintain a momentum of prayer in my church?

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### Prayer in the New Testament

#### 1. The prayer life of Jesus

Matthew 14:23: After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone,

Matthew 26:36: Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray."

Matthew 26:39: Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

Matthew 26:41: "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." 42 He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

Matthew 26:44: So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

Mark 1:35: Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Mark 6:46: After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

Mark 14:32: They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray."

Mark 14:35: Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him.

Mark 14:38: Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." 39 Once more he went away and prayed the same thing.

Luke 3:21: When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened

Luke 5:16: But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

Luke 6:12: One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.

Luke 9:18: Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say I am?"

Luke 9:28: About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. 29 As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.

Luke 11:1: One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." 2 He said to them, "When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.

Luke 22:32: But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

Luke 22:40: On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." 41 He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed,

Luke 22:44: And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. 45 When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. 46 "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation."

John 17:9: I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours.

John 17:15: My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.

John 17:20: "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,

Hebrews 5:7: During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.

#### 2. Examples of prayer and selected passages for observations about prayer from the early church

Mark 9:29: He replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer. "

Luke 18:1: Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.

John 16:26: In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf.

Acts 2:42: They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Acts 4:31: After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

Acts 6:4: and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."

Acts 6:6: They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

Acts 13:3: So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

Acts 14:23: Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

2 Corinthians 1:11: as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

2 Corinthians 9:14: And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you.

Philippians 1:9: And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight,

Philippians 1:19: for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.

Colossians 1:9: For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Colossians 4:12: Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.

1 Thessalonians 3:10: Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.

2 Thessalonians 1:11: With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith.

2 Timothy 1:3: I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers.

Philemon 1:4: I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers,

Philemon 1:22: And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers.

Revelation 5:8: And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

Revelation 8:3: Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. 4 The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand.

### 3. Promises of prayer

Matthew 21:22: If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

John 16:23: In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

Romans 8:26: In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

1 Peter 3:12: For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

### 4. Commands to pray

Matthew 5:44: But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

Matthew 6:5: "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling

like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.

Matthew 6:9: "This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

Matthew 9:38: Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Matthew 26:41: "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." 42 He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

Mark 11:24: Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. 25 And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins. "

Mark 14:38: Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." 39 Once more he went away and prayed the same thing.

Luke 6:28: bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

Luke 10:2: He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.

Luke 11:1: One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." 2 He said to them, "When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.

Luke 21:36: Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."

Luke 22:40: On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." 41 He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed,

Romans 12:12: Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Romans 15:30: I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.

1 Corinthians 7:5: Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

Ephesians 6:18: And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Philippians 4:6: Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Colossians 4:2: Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. 3 And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.

1 Thessalonians 5:17: pray continually;

1 Thessalonians 5:25: Brothers, pray for us.

2 Thessalonians 3:1: Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you.

1 Timothy 2:1: I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone--

1 Timothy 2:8: I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing.

James 5:13: Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. 14

Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up.

If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. 16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. 17 Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

1 Peter 3:7: Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

1 Peter 4:7: The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.

1 John 5:16: If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that.

Jude 1:20: But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.