

# PEOPLE OF PRAYER

WHAT THE CHURCH NEEDS TODAY IS NOT MORE MACHINERY OR BETTER, NOT NEW ORGANIZATIONS OR MORE AND NOVEL METHODS, BUT PEOPLE WHOM THE HOLY SPIRIT CAN USE – PEOPLE OF PRAYER, PEOPLE MIGHTY IN PRAYER. THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES NOT FLOW THROUGH METHODS, BUT THROUGH PEOPLE. HE DOES NOT COME ON MACHINERY, BUT ON PEOPLE. HE DOES NOT ANOINT PLANS, BUT PEOPLE – PEOPLE OF PRAYER.

~ADAPTED FROM E.M. BOUNDS,  
"POWER THROUGH PRAYER"

# Transforming Prayer

Long Beach Alliance Church • April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2007 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**SEE THAT NO ONE REPAYS ANOTHER WITH EVIL FOR EVIL, BUT ALWAYS SEEK AFTER THAT WHICH IS GOOD FOR ONE ANOTHER AND FOR ALL PEOPLE. REJOICE ALWAYS; PRAY WITHOUT CEASING; IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS; FOR THIS IS GOD'S WILL FOR YOU IN CHRIST JESUS.**  
~ 1<sup>ST</sup> THESSALONIANS 5: 15-18 (NASB)

## **1) The Perfect Match Of Providence And Prayer**

- A) The Bible teaches us that God knows everything (1<sup>st</sup> John 3:20). God knows the past, the present, and the future.
- B) God the Son, Jesus Christ, created all things and keeps all things held together (Colossians 1:16-17). Nothing escapes God's notice, He is holding it all together!
- C) In the midst of this, Jesus Christ calls on His followers to pray (Matthew 6:9ff). Prayer is not just for meals or special moments, prayer is supposed to be a consistent and continual habit (1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:17).

- D) Why should we pray? Does prayer make a difference? The overwhelming answer of Scripture is **ABSOLUTELY!** Prayer transforms people and events (Luke 11:5-13).
  
- E) How is this possible? How can people cause change through prayer (James 5:16) when God has exhaustively predestined the universe (Ephesians 1:3-6)?
  
- F) Clearly, the answer is a tremendous mystery for mankind (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2:7, cf. Ephesians 1:9). Somehow, God is able to “predestine change” in His universe.
  
- G) These two things seem as opposites for the mind of mankind, but clearly they are not opposites for God (cf. 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 20, 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 15:11 (note clarifying addition in 15:29), Genesis 6:5-6).

## 2) An Important Interpretive Application

- A) Just because we can read about and articulate God’s characteristics (His “omni’s”), does not mean that we understand how they work (Isaiah 55:8-9).
  
- B) We observe what God has revealed to us, our view is limited (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:12). God knows and observes everything, He is the limitless “omni-” creator (Isaiah 40:28).
  
- C) Followers of Jesus Christ should respond with deep security and confidence in the power and knowledge of God, because God is completely good and loving (Psalm 73:28, cf. Romans 12:1-2).

## 3) What Is Changed By Prayer?

- A) Clearly, prayer can change events. What kind of events? Here are just a few...
  - i) Weather (James 5:17, cf. 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 17:1).
  - ii) Childbearing (1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 1:11, 19-20, 27).
  - iii) Politics (2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 15:31, 17:14, 23).
  - iv) Rulers (1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 10:22, 12:19).
  - v) Military battles (1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 23:2).
  - vi) Long life (2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 20:5, Isaiah 38:5).
  - vii) Blessing (1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles 4:10).
  - viii) Healing (James 5:16).
  - ix) Life & Death (John 11:40-44).
  - ix) Salvation (Romans 10:1).
  
- B) From small things to big things, from things with eternal consequences to things with short term consequences, God calls on us to engage Him in prayer (Philippians 4:6).
  
- C) Jesus Christ taught that we should be bold and persistent in our prayers, not giving up but asking, seeking, knocking -- showing persistence (Luke 11:5-13).
  
- D) While prayer changes events (which is important), God is most interested in changing the hearts of people (Jeremiah 31:33, cf. Hebrews 8:10).