

## What We Believe - The Power of Prayer

Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth brought forth its fruit. (James 5:16-18)

This verse tells us two things

1. Ordinary people like you and me can gain extraordinary results if we simply use the power of prayer
2. The degree of the result is based on the effectiveness and fervency.

William Carey

God does nothing but in answer to prayer

Martin Luther

I have so much work to do that I cannot get along without giving three hours daily of my best time to prayer

E. M. Bounds

Prayer has in it the possibility to affect everything which affects us

Leonard Ravenhill

One might estimate the weight of the world, tell the size of the celestial city, count the stars of heaven, measure the speed of lightening, tell the time of the rising and setting of the sun – but you cannot estimate the power of prayer. Prayer is as vast as God is, because God is behind it. Prayer is as mighty as God is because He has committed himself to answer it.

We can attempt to explain away the slowness of the revival taking deep root in the Australian hearts by all kinds of explanations like

The people aren't interested,

There's no Christian heritage,

The ground of a person life is too hard. None of these suffice.

It doesn't matter where when or what government is in power, what demons are over the country, what sins of the nation are, prayer is the answer for breaking through and arousing a hunger of God in the people and awakening people to their spiritual needs.

There are two elements of prayer.

1. the prayer of faith

2 Tim 1:7

Mark 11:23

Isaiah 43:2

Phil 4:19

Matthew 19:26

Luke 1:37  
2 Corinthians 2:14  
John 14:14  
Matthew 7:7  
Philippians 4:6

Psalms 55:22  
Psalm 37: 3-5

## 2. United prayer

Jehoshaphat led a nation into victory after he united them all with their families in prayer  
120 disciples gathered together in unity in the Upper Room praying for ten days and the church was birthed

The whole church came together and prayed when Peter was imprisoned. Angels came and set him free.

Paul and Silas prayed and sang and they got free.

There are essential four types of prayer

### 1. Ineffective non fervent

Best summarized by the prayers, Oh I wish God would do this, or that. These sorts of prayers are ineffective because they lack the heart of the person. They are simply cries from the head.

### 2. Ineffective but fervent

Ineffective prayers are a regular happening in the body. Mostly they are due to lack of fervency but occasionally they are due to us giving in. We may be fervent about something but really we are not regular.

### 3. Effective but not fervent

Fervency is not about the volume. Its about the heart. Sometimes we seem to Pray without any urgency, without any conviction, without any real belief and low and behold something happens. I believe God does this out of His mercy and grace towards us. He moves sovereignty. No matter what we could do He still moves. This is not a regular event in the church. Some people believe that God has stopped working in the world today. They even say that God is not answering prayers. In most of these occasions these people are waiting for God to do something when all along He is waiting for us to do something.

### 4. Effective and fervent.

Elements of Fervent prayer

Fervent prayer is enthusiasm. It's prayer that has the fire of God in it. Its praying with passion. Its feeling what you're praying with your heart. It's giving a burden words. It's praying with energy.

### 1. Its regular

When something is fervent we know that a person believes in the cause they are pursuing. It's the same with prayer. When you believe in something we pursue it and regularly. Prayer is no different. In Matthew 7:7 the implications of the original Greek are to 'Ask and keep on asking'.

My children know how to ask and keep on asking. I sometimes call this nagging. But they are truly fervent in their approach. God wants us to boldly come and keep on coming before Him.

### 2. Its from the heart

Some people believe that prayer is idle chatter to God. No it's our heart crying out to God. It's not simply coming to God with a list of your needs or desires it's you expressing your heart to God. That's true fervent prayer. It's meaningful. It shakes heaven because it arouses God and He always responds to prayers/words from the heart.

Words that don't come from the heart are simply religion. They have no meaning and lack any ability to shape a world.

In The House we have three regular prayer meetings most weeks. On Sunday Am from 9.20 – 9.50 , on Saturday from 7.30 – 8.30 and on Wednesday I have a men's prayer meeting in my office from 8.00-9.00am.

In the 18th Century, the French revolution was as terroristic as anything we've seen in our days. America had declared its rights of man in 1776. Voltaire was preaching that the church was only a system of oppression for the human spirit, and along with Tom Paine declared, 'Christianity will be forgotten in 30 years'. Karl Marx agreed. The so-called 'new morality' had arisen. Christianity was held in almost universal contempt. A poll taken at Harvard revealed there was not one believing student. Princeton the Evangelical College found two.

In the wake of the American revolution which lead to independence, out of 5 million people, 300,000 were confirmed alcoholics. 15,000 of them died each year. Bank robberies were a daily occurrence. Society was seemingly falling apart.

In the churches, The Methodists were losing more members than they were gaining. The Baptists said it was the worst times they had seen. The Protestant Episcopal Bishop of New York quit work because he had not seen anyone join the church for such a long time he decided his services were no longer needed in the city.

But in 1740s, a man named John Erskine of Edinburgh published a pamphlet encouraging people to pray for Scotland and elsewhere. His writings reached a little known man called Jonathan Edwards in the USA. He picked up the challenge and wrote a treatise called, 'A humble attempt to promote Explicit Agreement and Visible union of God's people in extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of religion and the advancement of Christ's Kingdom'.

For 40 years John Erskine continued this 'Concert of Prayer', around the world, then in 1781 at St. Just Church in Cornwall at 3.00 am, intercessors met to sing and pray. The heavens opened. They prayed through until 9.00 am and re-gathered on Christmas evening. They continued praying through January and February. By March they were praying until midnight.

Two years later John Wesley visited the area and records, 'This country is all on fire and the flame is spreading from village to village'. Right across England people were coming to Christ, not just through the preaching meetings, but in the prayer meetings. Many came to scoff but were thrown to ground by the power of the Spirit. Sometimes it was noisy, and other times it was quiet, but there was a ceaseless outpouring of the Spirit. Whole denominations doubled, tripled and quadrupled in the next few years. This move of the Spirit swept from England to Wales, Scotland, USA, Canada and then on to third world countries.

This revival had an amazing effect on the social order of the day as well. William Wilberforce, William Pitt, Edmond Bourke, Charles Fox all worked towards the abolition of the slave trade in 1807. Florence Nightingale founded modern nursing. John Howard and Elizabeth Fry transformed the Prison system. Ashley Cooper came to the rescue of the poor working class ending their 16 hour, 7 day a week grind.

Prayer is vital to our journey as a Christian. It's the place of connection for us with God. It's our chance to display unity. Its our opportunity to connect with others.

We believe in the power of prayer. The effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.