

Praying Men Can Make a Difference



By Dave Butts

Most church prayer ministry teams are predominately female. There's a reason for this. In most situations, women pray more than men. C. Peter Wagner notes that of those who have been identified as being primarily intercessors, about 80% are female. Consider why this is so, remembering that we are dealing in generalities here. Women are typically more compassionate than men, which naturally leads them into praying for others.

Again, generally speaking, women are more spiritually sensitive than men. This awareness that something is happening spiritually brings about prayer. Certainly in many, if not most churches, they have had the model of praying women set before them. Women go to the prayer meeting while the men go work on the building. Stereotype? Yes...but all too often very close to the truth.

What God has perhaps allowed in the past is no longer permitted today. God is calling men to step up to the plate

and do their part in prayer. The Lord today is calling ALL of the Church to prayer...both men and women, young and old. Look just at the spiritual warfare aspect of prayer. John Piper writes, "Until we know that life is war, we won't know what prayer is for." Prayer involves battle against spiritual forces in the heavenlies. Men –how do you feel about sending your mother or wife out to do battle while you sit at home? Isn't that what we've been doing when we have looked at prayer as women's work? It's time to take the place of the warrior, alongside the women, as we do battle together in the Lord's strength and victory as a people of prayer.

Consider also the issue of spiritual leadership in the home. It's very apparent in Scripture that the Lord expects Christian men to be the spiritual leaders of their homes. Here is a truth though, that is not always understood: spiritual leaders pray! If a man is not praying, he is not a spiritual leader. Prayerless men have abdicated their place of spiritual authority and left their families open to attack. You see, this is not an abstract discussion, but a matter of very practical issues for you and your family.

I believe the place for married men to begin is to develop the habit of praying with their wives. Most Christian men do not do this. Several years ago, *Leadership Journal* shared how most pastors don't pray with their wives either. There are always excuses why we don't, but they remain mere excuses. Couples that pray together are forging strong bonds that will not easily break. A survey was taken that noted just 1 in over a thousand couples who prayed together saw their marriage fall apart. Match that up against the close to 50% figure for all other couples, including Christians.

When my wife, Kim, and I were first married, we made a commitment to pray together. We found that there never seemed to be just the right time of day to do this. We finally decided the only way it was going to work for us was to get up a half an hour earlier in the morning. Our prayer time is

precious to us. I hear from Kim about the things that are important to her by just listening to her prayers. She hears me praying over her day and asking God to bless her, as I also hear her pray for me. It is a wonderful time of sharing together before the Lord, and strengthening one another.

There are some days we don't pray together. The schedule is out of the ordinary, or we're on a trip, or one of us is especially tired. That's ok. It's not a legalistic requirement that we never miss a day of prayer together. Don't put yourself under condemnation. Praying together is a great gift to give one another. Whether it is in the morning or evening, for 5 minutes, or for an hour, it is vital for Christian couples to learn to pray together.

I believe that God is calling men to lead out in prayer as part of His strategy for retaking planet earth. As men begin to respond in prayer, God begins to move in amazing ways. Dr J. Edwin Orr said it this way, "When God gets ready to do something new with his people, He always sets them praying."

God is doing a new thing today. If you want to be "in" on what God is doing, you must begin praying with greater passion and intensity. If you want purpose and meaning to life, and if you want your life to really count for God and to make a difference in this world...PRAY! Prayer is what God is calling His people to do today as a part of His plan for this world.

God is moving all things toward completion. I don't pretend to know when. But I do know the key. It is evangelism. And the key to evangelism is prayer. Let me show this to you scripturally.

Jesus said, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14). The gospel is going to be preached to all nations...Jesus said so. Do you want to be a part of the fulfillment of these words?

Jesus ties together prayer and evangelism in Matthew 9:37-38: "The harvest is truly plentiful but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the Harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." Then, in 1 Timothy chapter 2, Paul urges prayers to be lifted up because God wants everyone saved. Again prayer and evangelism are brought together.

There are two passages of Scripture in Revelation that you may not have noticed before that are exciting in their presentation of prayer and evangelism: "Each one has a harp and they are holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints" (Revelation 5:8). "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. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand" (Revelation 8:3-4).

After each of these incidents, in which the collected prayers of God's people are poured out before God, angels are loosed upon the earth to cause events intended to bring people to repentance and salvation. God uses the prayers of His people to bring about the establishment of Christ's Kingdom.

The second passage in Revelation comes in the midst of a half an hour of silence. Author Walter Wink explains the connection well: "Heaven itself falls silent. The heavenly hosts and celestial spheres suspend their ceaseless singing so that the prayers of the saints on earth can be heard. The seven angels of destiny cannot blow the signal of the next times to be until an eighth angel gathers these prayers...and mingles them with incense upon the altar. Silently they rise to the nostrils of God.

"Human beings have intervened in the heavenly liturgy. The uninterrupted flow of consequences is damned for a moment. New alternatives become feasible. The unexpected becomes suddenly possible, because God's people on earth have invoked heaven,

the home of the possibles, and have been heard. What happens next, happens because people prayed. The message is clear: history belongs to the intercessors.”

Dick Eastman, of Every Home for Christ, said it this way: “God’s ultimate purpose for mankind, the completion of Christ’s bride and the establishing of His eternal Kingdom on earth will result only from the release of the prayers of God’s saints.”

Graham Kendrick and Chris Robinson wrote the hymn, *All Heaven Waits*. See if their words call to your heart and stir within you a passion to be a man of prayer:

“All heaven waits with bated breath for saints on earth to pray,
Majestic angels ready stand with swords of fiery blade.
Astounding power awaits a word from God’s resplendent throne.
But God awaits our prayer of faith that cries, “Your will be done!”

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