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Building Fathers House
A Dwelling Place for God by the Spirit

Elijah Prayer Discipleship School
Becoming an instrument of prayer

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(Discipleship=doing the will of God walking in submission to the authority of God so that you can become an instrument of authority)

Workshop no. 14 : “Prayer evangelism” - PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES OF PRAYER IN EVANGELISM - part one

Joh 17:20 And I do not pray for these alone, but for those also who shall believe on Me through their word,

Purpose of this workshop: To look at the principle of prayer evangelism as guidelines to assist us in our prayer goal.

Intended Goal: To understand the believer’s responsibility as exercised through the power of prayer. We need to get a clear **understanding of the value of prayer and keep it before us day and night to be spurred on to pray.**

Scripture readings :

1 Timothy 2:3-4 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Matthew 17:20-21 And Jesus said to them, Because of your unbelief. For truly I say to you, If you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, Move from here to there. And it shall move. And nothing shall be impossible to you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.

2 Corinthians 4:4 in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving ones, so that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ (who is the image of God) should not dawn on them.

Act 4:29-31 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your Word, by stretching forth of Your hand for healing, and miracles, and wonders may be done by the name of Your holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness.

Joh 6:44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who has sent Me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day.

Joh 6:65 And He said, Because of this I said to you that no one can come to Me unless it was given to him from My Father.

Matthew 5:13 You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt loses its savor, with what shall it be salted? It is no longer good for anything, but to be thrown out and to be trodden underfoot by men.

Mark 9:50 Salt is good; but if the salt becomes saltless, with what will you season? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.

Food for thought :

In 1 Timothy 2 we can see that God desires for all to be saved, and we are urged to pray for all. Paul makes a statement that people come to salvation and the knowledge of the truth in **response to the prayers of believers**. Jesus prayed for the unsaved when He prayed, '*John17:20 And I do not pray for these alone, but for those also who shall believe on Me through their word,*'

Evangelism without prayer

The church have been involved in evangelism for a very long time, since the early church of the Apostles. However, at some stage during the reformation of the church, prayer as a evangelism forerunner was overseen, and the rapid growth of the church that was experienced during the early church stopped. If God doesn't take the initiative in the life of the unbeliever, as He promises to do in response to our prayers, we are limited to our human resources and human understanding. It takes the supernatural power of God to release those who are in Satan's grip (Matthew 17:21AV) and to open the eyes of those blinded to the light of the gospel (2 Corinthians 4:4). God will act in response to our specific prayers.

Without prayer, the church's evangelistic efforts will:

- **be burdensome, discouraging, and done out of duty**
- **lack in the discernment that comes from the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:6-10)**
- **miss the joy of seeing people come to faith**
- **fail to produce lasting fruit (John 15:7-8, 16).**

Does this mean that evangelism with little or no prayer support will always fail? The answer is 'no'! God in His sovereign good pleasure may bring people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ despite our prayerlessness. The church may in fact reap where it has not sown (John 4:37-38). However, God prefers to work through and with us!

Prayer without evangelism

Again, looking at the early church, the Apostles urged the believers to prayer for the Gospel to spread. The church have forgotten the words of Jesus when He said: 'My Father's House is a house of prayer! The church however have become self centered in their approach and denominational instead of representing the church of Christ, the fellowship of believers. This results in different kinds of imbalance. If a church's prayers and activities are always inwardly directed toward their needs and concerns and never outwardly directed toward the world that God loves (John 3:16) – then the church will:

- **be missing the very heart of God**
- **be lacking in Christ-like vision and compassion**
- **be ineffective in building God's kingdom**
- **miss the joy of seeing God's power released in people's lives.**

Prayer in evangelism is to pray for the Kingdom of God to manifest in the hearts of the unsaved, asking the Lord to draw them to Himself, to open their ears in order to understand the truth (Matthew 13:19); and to open their eyes to see the light of the gospel (2 Corinthians 4:4). It also involves praying for ourselves that we may have compassion for the spiritual well-being of unbelievers, and be open to sharing the good news as He opens the door of opportunity. Simply put, prayer evangelism is when we talk to God about the people and then to talk to the people about God. When we as believers pray faithfully and fervently (James 5:16) for those outside the kingdom, we are blessed in that the Lord generates in our heart a Christ-like love motivating us to reach the lost. Ready to respond as we are directed by God's Spirit to sow His Word in well prepared soil. Being the salt of the earth as we stand firm in faith that God is able to do what know man can do, and we do not allow our selfs to be tempted to deviated from our faith.

True story :

Evangelism without God's intervention is powerless to change.

The miracle of the loaves and the fish is not always associated with evangelism, but when Jesus asked His disciples to feed the people, it was humanly impossible. Only because of God's intervention it was made possible and to the extend that it was **more than enough** to feed the people. **Likewise, evangelism without God's intervention is powerless to change.**

The Welsh revival is said to have been the initiative of two sisters praying unto God for the community. One was an invalid which resulted in them being confined to their home. God's intervention came and people were convicted of their sins without the intervention of man, then the Lord used His servant to address an already convicted heart. The result was a community transformed.

Church as light and salt to society:

When believers begin to pray seriously for their neighbors, things begin to happen.

When members of a church planted several prayer evangelism cells in an apartment complex to pray for those who lived there, the manager became a Christian, drug dealers moved out, crime rates went down, many tenants started going to church, several Bible studies started, and ten people made commitments to Christ. The difference was so evident that the police, discovering the reason for the changes, asked the church to consider planting similar prayer evangelism cells in other complexes.

God's authority :

John 17:24 Father, I desire that those whom You have given Me, that they may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me, for You have loved Me before the foundation of the world.

Psalm 133:1-3 A Song of degrees; of David. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment on the head that ran down on the beard, Aaron's beard, that went down to the seam of his garments; like the dew of Hermon that came down on the mountains of Zion; for there Jehovah commanded the blessing, life forevermore.

John 15:9-10 As the Father has loved Me, so I have loved you; continue in My love. If you keep My commandments, you shall abide in My love, even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

John 17:22 And I have given them the glory which You have given Me, that they may be one, even as We are one,

1 Peter 3:7 Likewise, husbands, live together according to knowledge, giving honor to the wife as to the weaker vessel, the female, as truly being co-heirs together of the grace of life, not cutting off your prayers.

James 1:5-6 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and with no reproach, and it shall be given to him. But let him ask in faith, doubting nothing. For he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed.

Hebrew 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Luke 11:7-11 And he answering from inside may say, Do not trouble me. The door is now shut and my children are in bed with me. I cannot rise and give to you. I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will arise and give him as many as he needs. And I say to you, Ask and it shall be given you. Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives. And he who seeks finds. And to him who knocks it shall be opened. For what father of you, if the son asks for bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a snake for a fish?

Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

Psalm 34:18 Jehovah is near to the broken-hearted; and saves those who are of a contrite spirit.

Psalm 138:6 Though Jehovah is high, yet He has respect to the lowly; but the proud He knows afar off.

Matthew 9:37-38 Then He said to His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray to the Lord of the harvest that He will send out laborers into His harvest.

John 4:23-24 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

*1 Timothy 2:7-8 To this I am ordained a preacher and an apostle (I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie), a teacher of the nations, in faith and truth. **Therefore, I desire that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.***

Conclusion :

As evangelism is focused on the lost people, so prayer evangelism is focused on the lost. Therefore the prayer that is perfunctory, self-orientated or compassionless will not accomplish much in evangelism. Likewise we cannot expect God to answer the prayers of those who have hearts that are hard, doubting, unforgiving or disobedient, for the Word said that *James 1:6 But let him ask in faith, doubting nothing. For he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed.*

To be effective in prayer evangelism we must first of all keep our eyes on the Kingdom of God trusting Him to give to our needs as we focus on advancing His Kingdom, desiring His glory in all things.

To pray on target we need to understand the mission of our Lord and His heart for lost. *Mark 1:38 And He said to them, Let us go into the next towns so that I may proclaim there also. For that reason I came forth.* Like Jesus, who always chose to do the will of His Father, so should we. But to know the will of the Father we need to spend time in His presence, listening to God in prayer.

But as we have seen before, what we hear will depend upon our readiness to listen and our heart's attitude before God, therefore the Bible challenges us to pray:

- **in faith** knowing that God will answer those who do not doubt (James 1:6);
- **with childlike trust** expect that God will reward (Hebrews 11:6);
- **with a consciousness of God's sure promises** (Luke 11:7-11);
- **with a humble spirit** and a contrite heart (Psalm 51:17; 34:18; 138:6);
- **with compassion** for the lost and hurting people of this world (Matthew 9:37-38);
- **with perseverance** (Luke 11:5-8; 18:1-8) and, if necessary, a willingness to fast and pray.

Apart from the above mentioned, when we pray :

- **be ready, with an obedient heart**, to serve a needy and hurting world in the name of Jesus Christ.
- **be available to be used by the Lord** whenever and wherever the opportunity arises;
- **be ready with the persistent prayer of faith** to overcome the obstacles/opposition to evangelism.
- **be in expectancy to see what God said will be done, think of Elijah.**

In reference to evangelism John Wesley once said, '**God does nothing except in answer to prayer.**' It has been said, '**Prayer is not a key to evangelism, it is the key!**'

When we pray for others expect to see:

- hearts are softened and changed;
- people are convicted of sin and turn to God in repentance;
- people are delivered from bondage and Satanic deceit; and
- strongholds are broken such that individuals and communities are transformed.

When we pray for the church, as the body of Christ, expect to see:

- people come to Christ, churches grow, new churches are planted, and the Kingdom is advanced;
- more laborers are released and sent into the harvest;
- the Body of Christ is built up as all believers learn to pray and work together;
- there is increased awareness of the power of prayer and of God's vision and guidance.

When we pray, expect to experience:

- the joy of partnering with an awesome God;
- the love of God to be birthed in your hearts by the Holy Spirit;
- to be used as a weapon of spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:10-18; 2 Corinthians 10:4-5);
- an increase in faith as we see the Word of God accomplish that for which it was sent;
- a spiritual growth in dependency on God.

We must remember that Jesus said my Father's House is a house of prayer - it was not directed at the building but at the activity. A church that does not pray is not a representation of the Father's House.

Questions to be answered :

1. Prayer evangelism is focused on what?
2. What is the result of evangelism without prayer?
3. What is the result of prayer without evangelism?
4. What is needed to pray on target?
5. What must we expect when we pray?