



Anglican Network in Canada

First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer – March 2010

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. Philippians 4: 6 ESV

Welcome to our March 2010 1st Friday Call to Prayer. Our aim is to provide you with teaching that we trust will enhance your prayer experience and will be an encouragement to you. We will also provide you with praise items and prayer requests coming from ANiC and the Anglican Communion worldwide.

We encourage you to set aside **the first Friday, March 2nd**, as a day of prayer and fasting for the Church in these critical days, ideally gathering with other believers in your parish or region for corporate prayer at some point in the day.

Prayer Quotes

The true spirit of prayer is no other than God's own Spirit dwelling in the hearts of the saints.

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)

Prayer and Vigilance

From time to time over the past decade, we have provided teaching on prayer from one of the great prayer warriors of the past. No one has had more of a profound influence on the North American church in the area of prayer than E. M Bounds (1835-1913). His writing on prayer is both prolific and profound. I personally have found his teaching both instructive and challenging.

In the following article, Bounds uses the image of the Christian soldier; not a particularly popular image in today's culture, even in the church. Many denominations have removed "Onward, Christian Soldiers" from their hymnals because the imagery is repugnant to a society that avoids conflict, suffering and sacrifice at all cost. It doesn't sit well with the "life-is-all-about-me" lifestyle that so many pursue.

But as Bounds points out, for us as Christians, there is an aspect to our lives that is warfare, and wishing it were not so does not change the reality of it. Prayer is the most potent weapon that God has provided for us. Accordingly, we must stay alert and be ready to fight until "the strife is o'er and the battle is won"!

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The description of the Christian soldier given by Paul in the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians is compact and comprehensive. He is depicted as being ever in the conflict, which has many fluctuating seasons -- seasons of prosperity and adversity, light and darkness, victory and defeat. He is to pray at all seasons, and with all prayer, this to be added to the armour in which he is to fare forth to battle. At all times, he is to have the full panoply of prayer. The Christian soldier, if he fights to win, must pray much. By this means, only, is he enabled to defeat his inveterate enemy, the devil, together with the evil one's manifold emissaries. "*Praying always, with all prayer,*" is the Divine direction given him. This covers all seasons, and embraces all manner of praying.

Christian soldiers, fighting the good fight of faith, have access to a place of retreat, to which they continually repair for prayer. "*Praying always, with all prayer,*" is a clear statement of the imperative need of much praying, and of many kinds of praying, by him who, fighting the good fight of faith, would win out, in the end, over all his foes.

The Revised Version puts it this way:

"With all prayer and supplication, praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplications, for all saints, and on my behalf, that utterance may be given unto me, in opening my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am in bonds"
Ephesians 6: 18-20

It cannot be stated too frequently that the life of a Christian is a warfare, an intense conflict, a lifelong contest. It is a battle, moreover, waged against invisible foes, who are ever alert, and ever seeking to entrap, deceive, and ruin the souls of men. The life to which Holy Scripture calls men is no picnic, or holiday junketing. It is no pastime, no pleasure jaunt. It entails effort, wrestling, struggling; it demands the putting forth of the full energy of the spirit in order to frustrate the foe and to come off, at the last, more than conqueror. It is no primrose path, no rose-scented dalliance. From start to finish, it is war. From the hour in which he first draws sword, to that in which he doffs his harness, the Christian warrior is compelled to "endure hardness like a good soldier."

What a misconception many people have of the Christian life! How little the average church member appears to know of the character of the conflict, and of its demands upon him! How ignorant he seems to be of the enemies he must encounter, if he engages to serve God faithfully and so succeed in getting to heaven and receive the crown of life! He seems scarcely to realize that the world, the flesh and the devil will oppose his onward march, and will defeat him utterly, unless he gives himself to constant vigilance and unceasing prayer.

The Christian soldier wrestles not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickedness in high places. Or, as the Scriptural margin reads, "wicked spirits in high places." What a fearful array of forces are set against him who would make his way through the wilderness of this world to the portals of the Celestial City! It is no surprise, therefore, to find Paul, who understood the character of the Christian life so well, and who was so thoroughly informed as to the malignity and number of the foes, which the disciple of the Lord must encounter, carefully and plainly urging him to "put on the whole armour of God," and "to pray with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." Wise, with a great wisdom, would the present generation be if all professors of our faith could be induced to realize this all-important and vital truth, which is so absolutely indispensable to a successful Christian life.

It is just at this point in much present-day Christian profession, that one may find its greatest defect. There is little, or nothing, of the soldier element in it. The discipline, self-denial, spirit of hardship, determination, so prominent in and belonging to the military life, are, one and all, largely wanting. Yet the Christian life is warfare, all the way.

How comprehensive, pointed and striking are all Paul's directions to the Christian soldier, who is bent on thwarting the devil and saving his soul alive! First of all, he must possess a clear idea of the character of the life on which he has entered. Then, he must know something of his foes -- the adversaries of his immortal soul -- their strength, their skill, their malignity. Knowing, therefore, something of the character of the enemy, and realizing the need of preparation to overcome them, he is prepared to hear the Apostle's decisive conclusion:

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Wherefore, take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

Ephesians 6: 10-13

All these directions end in a climax; and that climax is prayer. How can the brave warrior for Christ be made braver still? How can the strong soldier be made stronger still? How can the victorious battler be made still more victorious? Here are Paul's explicit directions to that end:

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

Ephesians 6: 18

Prayer, and more prayer, adds to the fighting qualities and the more certain victories of God's good fighting-men. The power of prayer is most forceful on the battle-field amid the din and strife of the conflict. Paul was preeminently a soldier of the Cross. For him, life was no flowery bed of ease. He was no dress-parade, holiday soldier, whose only business was to don a uniform on set occasions. His was a life of intense conflict, the facing of many adversaries, the exercise of unsleeping vigilance and

constant effort. And, at its close -- in sight of the end -- we hear him chanting his final song of victory, a "I have fought a good fight," and reading between the lines, we see that he is more than conqueror!

In his Epistle to the Romans, Paul indicates the nature of his soldier-life, giving us some views of the kind of praying needed for such a career. He writes:

"Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered from them in Judaea that do not believe."
Romans 15: 30-31

Paul had foes in Judaea -- foes who beset and opposed him in the form of "unbelieving men" and this, added to other weighty reasons, led him to urge the Roman Christians to "strive with him in prayer." That word "strive" indicated wrestling, the putting forth of great effort. This is the kind of effort, and this the sort of spirit, which must possess the Christian soldier.

from *The Necessity of Prayer* by Pastor E.M. Bounds

E.M. Bounds was a law student, preacher, pastor, and a prisoner of war during the American Civil War, Bounds was a powerful writer and spent the last seventeen years of his life in Georgia, reading, writing and praying. He rose at 4 AM daily for many years, and took the command to pray without ceasing very seriously. Here is a man who truly "walked the walk" and that gives his writing both credibility and authenticity.

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### **Praise God ...**

- For the incredible privilege we have been given in prayer such that we can come boldly into the Presence of Almighty God with our heartfelt needs and concerns
- For the honour of serving our beloved Lord, even if it means persecution, suffering and sacrifice.
- That we can depend fully and unreservedly on our loving Father for every aspect of our lives.
- For the work God is doing in the life of our diocese and province: cleansing, restoring, transforming, healing and equipping.
- For the reformation God is working out in global Anglicanism – and the entire Christian Church. In the midst of chaos, He is building His Kingdom and refining His bride, the Church.
- For the many ANiC "projects" and church plants – the small, but growing congregations of faithful Anglicans that He is adding to our number.
- For faithful Anglican Primates, bishops, clergy and laity – throughout the Communion – who are standing for truth even when their stand for Christ and His Word makes them targets of attack.

### **Confess if needed...**

- For allowing weariness, lethargy and personal comfort to distract us from being vigilant in prayer
- For looking to find ways to avoid any suffering or sacrifice on behalf of the Gospel.

### **Please pray...**

- That each of us would recognize our desperate **need to be dependent on God** for all things.
- That even in times of prosperity and relative peace, we would not forget to be **vigilant in prayer**
- That we would demonstrate our faith in God's goodness and sovereignty by cultivating **thankfulness** and expressing **praise** in the midst of loss, adversity or injustice.
- That we would have a **passion for souls** – for those around us who need our Lord.
- For the **ministries** of our churches; that we would become intentional in reaching our communities.
- For **Bishops** Donald Harvey, Stephen Leung, Charlie Masters, Trevor Walters, Malcolm Harding and Ronald Ferris – and their families. Pray for spiritual and physical protection and renewal, for wisdom, and for a daily closer walk with God.
- For our **Archdeacons**: the Venerables Ron Corcoran (Vancouver Island), Dan Gifford (BC), Paul Charbonneau (Ontario), Paul Crossland (Prairies), Michael McKinnon (New England, USA), and Darrell Critch (Atlantic Region & Quebec).

- For **ANiC clergy** and their families, especially those experiencing spiritual and physical attack. May the joy of the Lord be their strength. Please pray also for **ANiC's clergy retreat in Sumas WA, March 20-22**.
- For **those suffering** under the attack of the enemy in our congregations and families. Pray for victory in Christ and healing where needed.
- For **new and forming ANiC congregations** as they attend to the many details of organizing and launching a parish – and for other congregations considering joining ANiC.
- For the **ANiC congregations** that have lost and are losing their places of worship. May God comfort and pour our His blessing on them. May they be filled with the joy of the Lord.
- For **the Anglican Sojourner Fellowship** as it seeks to connect through various technological means isolated Christians who live where there are no biblically faithful Anglican churches – so that they are no longer “orphans” but “sojourners”, living in the world, but belonging and connected to each other through Jesus Christ.
- For the leaders of the **Anglican Communion Alliance** (formerly Anglican Essentials Federation), as they seek to provide support for orthodox Anglicans still within the Anglican Church of Canada.
- For those in the **Zacchaeus Fellowship** who are giving testimony to the liberation God offers those held captive in sexual sin; for the Anglican Church of Canada to listen to their testimony.
- For strength and wisdom for the Presiding Bishop of the Southern Cone, **the Most Reverend Tito Zavala** and for God's blessing on the **Province of the Southern Cone**.
- That God would continue His work in and through the **Anglican Church in North America**
  - For **Archbishop Bob Duncan** (and wife, Nara), especially for wisdom as he seeks to give Godly leadership through any growing pains our province may encounter
  - For the other ACNA dioceses.
- For **Anglican1000** - Pray for ANiC's church planters and for more passionate, trained workers. Pray especially for the **Anglican1000 Summit in Plano, TX, March 6-8**.
- For orthodox Primates and bishops – especially those in the **Global South** – who are courageously standing for Truth. Pray for spiritual and physical protection and for discernment, grace and strength as they lead in a torn Communion.
- For the orthodox **Primates** in the Anglican Communion – especially the GAFCon primates – as they prepare for upcoming FCA/GAFCon gatherings of orthodox global Anglicans in 2012 & 2013.
- For growing support of the **Anglican Relief and Development Fund Canada (ARDFC)**. For the ARDFC's new projects in Myanmar and Peru, focused on providing rural women trapped in poverty with the resources to establish micro-businesses that will generate income to support their families.
- For the **Archbishop of Canterbury**. May he pursue God wholeheartedly and seek the wisdom and discernment he needs to fulfill his responsibilities to the glory of God.
- For **suffering Christians** around the world in conditions of persecution, war and poverty – especially those in Muslim and communist countries who face injustice and violence.
- For God's protection of **Israel** as it is surrounded by those who seek its destruction.
- For peace in **Sudan** and in **South Sudan**.
- For **those in authority** over us and who serve our country. Pray for wise decisions that honour the Lord and promote the welfare of **our nation**. Pray specifically:
  - For those in **government** – both for our elected leaders creating laws and for civil servants in positions of responsibility – that they would uphold righteousness.
  - For **judges in our court system** who are charged with interpreting and applying laws;
  - For **officers of the law & emergency response personnel** who risk their lives for us.
  - For those who selflessly serve our country in the **military** as well as for their families at home.



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