

First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer – August 2014

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people . . . This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 1 Timothy 2: 1-4 ESV

Welcome to our August 2014 First 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 within ANiC and the Anglican Communion worldwide.

<p>We encourage you to set aside the first Friday, August 1st, 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.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Prayer Quote</p> <p><i>Pray for revival? Yes, go on, but do not try to create it, do not attempt to produce it; it is only given by Christ himself. The last church to be visited by a revival is the church trying to make it.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Martyn Lloyd-Jones 1899 - 1981</p>
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Yet will I praise Him

It's August, and I hope that you, dear Friends, are able to secure some time this month for rest, family time, and re-creation. Recognizing that this pilgrimage of prayer ministry is a long-distance marathon, not a 100-yard dash, is absolutely vital to our not burning out. All of us require times of refreshing that will reinvigorate us for the increased responsibilities that the fall inevitably brings.

Over the past several months we have been talking about our culture's desperate need for a fresh outpouring of God, and the Church's desperate need of renewal. The importance of fervently praying to such end is paramount on the agenda of our new diocesan and moderator, Bishop Charlie Masters. As we begin a new era under new leadership, both in our province (ACNA) and our diocese (ANiC), there is reason for continuing high expectation as to what the Lord has in the future for us.

As you are no doubt aware, those who are praying for revival in the Canadian church and beyond encounter many obstacles: - weariness, discouragement, the feeling that our prayers are not getting past the ceiling, and, sometimes, the hopeless sense that we are attempting to assault hell itself with nothing more than a water pistol. All too frequently it really is tough slugging. You may have already experienced some of these obstacles, and the thought of gearing up yet again for a season of fervent prayer may seem daunting or even overwhelming.

And yet the Lord has given us a wonderful gift – a gift that, when implemented, restores a heavenly perspective in our hearts and invigorates us to carry on. It is the gift of Worship! God gave us this gift, not because He has an ego that needs to be stroked, but because it is the doorway by which we enter His presence.

Worship, whether it is personal or corporate, has the power to lift our eyes off ourselves and our current difficulties and up to the glory and majesty of our Saviour King. When we offer "the sacrifice of praise – the fruit of our lips" in worship (Hebrews 13:15), the Holy Spirit is at liberty to bring healing, solace and restoration to our often-battered spirits. Our hearts are refocused on the things that really matter – the things that are eternal.

Let's look together at two passages of scripture that illustrate this point. The first is taken from the Old Testament prophet, Habakkuk. One commentator puts it this way, "When the prophet in the Spirit saw the formidable power of the Chaldeans approaching and menacing his land, and saw the great evils

they would cause in Judea, he bore his complaints and doubts before Jehovah, the just and the pure.” After a season of intercession, Habakkuk began to praise the Lord in what has been described as “unequaled in majesty and splendour of language and imagery.” Listen to the finale:-

Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places.

Habakkuk 3:17-19 ESV

Amazing words aren't they! It's also well worth noting how the prophet's worship also contains a testimony of the renewed strength that the Lord has given him, now that his eyes are off the Chaldeans and well focused on the Lord. Re-read the passage. It brings “goose bumps” to my soul!

The other passage will be more familiar as we looked at it in some detail back in our March meditation. It is the Acts 16 story of Paul and Silas in the Philippian jail. Allow me to remind you of the situation. Paul, Silas and their companions, including Luke the author of Acts, have come to the city of Philippi where, as was their custom, they have been sharing the gospel message in public areas. After Paul casts a demonic spirit out of a clairvoyant girl who had been harassing them, her handlers create a riot that ends with the apostles being arrested, stripped of their clothes, and severely flogged.

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.” And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

Acts 16:25-30 ESV

This passage is rich with sermon material but suffice for us to say here that Paul and Silas understood the great value of worship in the midst of severe hardship. No doubt they had been praying for the people of Philippi, perhaps for the healing of their wounds and even for their own deliverance. Ultimately, one may have turned to the other and said, “We're slipping very close to feeling dreadfully sorry for ourselves here. Let's worship the Lord!”

Was it their worship that caused the earthquake and the opening of the prison doors? Would it have happened if they hadn't begun to praise God loudly enough that all the other prisoners could hear? We don't know. What we do know is that, despite the severest of beatings and being thrown in prison, they chose to focus, not on their circumstances, nor their pain, but on their Saviour and Lord as they worshipped Him in song. Nor were they timid or embarrassed in their worship. There was no whispering or singing under their breath, for Luke makes it clear that the prisoners were listening, and perhaps, finding some comfort and relief from their own burdens and hardship.

Worship refreshes, worship refocuses, worship lifts our eyes from the issues of the moment to the glories of the Eternal. It also changes our paradigm, allowing us to more clearly see from God's perspective. The demands of the urgent cry, “You've got to do it, and do it now, God!” fade into a more submissive attitude that trusts in the Lord's goodness and sovereign purpose. Our God is an awesome God, and he does indeed know what he is doing!

Take the time to stop whatever you're doing and spend it in expressing love and adoration to our God. No matter the circumstance, no matter how it appears the battle is going, **“Yet will I praise Him”**. Amen.

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Thoughts on Revival Prayer

In this new feature, we will share thoughts, both current and historic, on how we might be praying for revival in our church and in our nation. Do feel free to send me via email any insights you may have on how we might learn to grow in this type of prayer.

There are two kinds of means requisite to promote a revival: the one to influence men, the other to influence God. The truth is employed to influence men, and prayer to move God. When I speak of moving God, I do not mean that God's mind is changed by prayer, or that His disposition or character is changed. But prayer produces such a change in us it renders it consistent for God to do as it would not be consistent for Him to do otherwise. When a sinner repents, that state of feeling makes it proper for God to forgive him. God has always been ready to forgive him on that condition, so that when the sinner changes his feelings and repents, it requires no change of feeling in God to pardon him. It is the sinner's repentance that renders His forgiveness proper, and is the occasion of God's acting as He does.

So, also, when the children of God pray fervently they are in the right inner condition to enable God to hear them. He was always prepared to bless those who have a right heart attitude and who pray in the right way.

Prayer is in a chain of causes which lead to a revival, and is a cause which is as important as the proclamation of the truth. Many zealously preached the gospel to cause people to turn around but have laid too little weight on prayer. They preached eagerly, talked to individuals, and handed out leaflets but, to their surprise, with little success. The reason why they could not achieve more was because they neglected the other form of support, which is fervent prayer. They forgot that the truth itself has no effect without the Spirit of God.

Sometimes it happens that those who are mostly involved with the spreading of the truth do not dedicate themselves to prayer in the same proportion. This is terrible unless someone else upholds them in prayer; otherwise, the preaching of the Truth only strengthens the heathen in their unrepentant attitude.

Charles Finney 1792-1875

Praise God ...

- For the incredible gift that God has given us in prayer – immediate access to our Father at any time of day or night. Thank Him for the incredible privilege of participating with him through prayer in his grand redemption plan.
- Praise God for our new primate, **Archbishop Foley Beach**, and our new diocesan and moderator, **Bishop Charlie Masters**. Pray for great wisdom and for a smooth transition in leadership. May God be pleased to glorify Himself through ACNA and ANiC.
- 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...

- Times where we have grown weary and allowed doubt and complacency to erode our fervor in prayer for renewal in the Church and revival to sweep across our land. Let's repent of discouragement and any sense of futility that the enemy has sown into our hearts.

Please pray...

- For a new visitation of the **Holy Spirit** upon our bishops and clergy, our parishes and our diocese. Pray that the fresh wind of the Spirit will bring renewal, healing and revival across our land.
- For **Bishop Charlie Masters** (& Judy) – Pray for our new diocesan bishop as he leads ANiC. May God grant him vision, spiritual protection, and spiritual and physical renewal.

- For **Bishop Don Harvey** (& Trudy) – Pray for rest and joy as they adjust to a slower pace.
- For **ANiC's suffragan bishops**: Stephen Leung (& Nona) and Trevor Walters (& Dede). Pray for discernment, energy and grace as they care for their clergy and congregations.
- For our **Archdeacons**: the Venerables Ron Corcoran (Vancouver Island), Dan Gifford (BC), Paul Charbonneau (Ontario), Tim Parent (Ottawa Valley), Paul Crossland (Prairies), Michael McKinnon (New England, USA), and Darrell Critch (Atlantic Region & Quebec) – and our Dean of Multicultural Ministries, the Very Rev Dr Archie Pell.
- For all **ANiC clergy** and families, especially those experiencing spiritual and physical attack.
- For the **ANiC congregations** that have lost their places of worship and are meeting in temporary facilities. May God comfort and pour out His blessing on them. May they be filled with the joy of the Lord as they seek His guidance for more permanent worship facilities.
- That God would continue His work in & through the **Anglican Church in North America (ACNA)**.
- **GAFCon Primates and Fellowship of Confessing Anglican (FCA) leaders** – Pray for the Lord's courage and wisdom as they seek to guide the orthodox reformation and realignment that is taking place in the Anglican Communion.
- For the Archbishop of Canterbury **Justin Welby**. Pray that the Lord will grace him with wisdom, courage and the faithfulness to follow the teachings of Scripture in his decision-making.
- For the **Anglican Relief and Development Fund Canada (ARDFC)** as it raises funds for a pediatric ward for a busy clinic in South Sudan. Pray also for peace in that troubled country.
- For **Christians in the Middle East, Asia & Africa** who face growing pressure and persecution as countries embrace extreme forms of Islam and Islamic terrorists groups advance their agendas. Pray especially for Christians in Syria, Iraq, northern Nigeria, South Sudan, Egypt & North Korea.
- For **those who serve us and are in authority over us** – our police forces, our armed forces, our emergency responders, our municipal elected officials, our provincial MLAs and premiers, and our federal MPs and Prime Minister.
- For **God's wisdom for the world's leaders** with regard to the escalating situation in Israel and Gaza, the Ukraine, and in Iraq. Pray that the evil one's agenda for violence, hatred and bloodshed would be averted. Pray for protection of innocent civilians, adults and children, who so often are the victims in today's urban warfare.