



Anglican Network in Canada

First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer – October 2012

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 October 2012 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.

PLEASE PRAY FOR ANiC's UPCOMING ELECTORAL SYNOD

Our moderator, Bishop Don Harvey, is most eager that we pray fervently for our upcoming synod November 15-16 in Ottawa. He has urged us all to keep a copy of the prayer below handy to remind us to pray often for this pivotal moment in our history - when we elect our co-adjutor bishop who will succeed Bishop Don when he steps down in mid-2014.

Prayer for ANiC synod 2012

Almighty God, You have demonstrated Your favour and covenant faithfulness to Your people, both in the accounts of Scripture and in the experience of the Church through the centuries. We thank You for Your tender care for ANiC and our local congregations over our brief history.

Visit us, we pray, by Your Spirit with Wisdom and Power at our upcoming Electoral Synod. Preside as Lord and King over all that transpires. Grant discernment and unity to all delegates. Protect us from any snares of the evil one, and may all that is decided be in complete accordance with Your perfect will for ANiC. This we ask in the mighty Name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Amen

The Strategic Importance of Praying for our Leaders

By Bishop John Guernsey

The following article is edited text taken from a sermon delivered by the Right Reverend John Guernsey, bishop of the ACNA diocese of the Mid-Atlantic. Bishop John is one of the premier Bible teachers in our movement and is especially gifted in teaching on prayer. This sermon was given on August 26 and seems particularly pertinent to us in ANiC as we approach our important electoral synod. Garth V. Hunt+

My parents experienced the deprivations and shortages of life during World War II. As a consequence, as I was growing up, whenever they saw that my brother or I left a light on, they'd always call out, "Don't you know there's a war on?"

Well, the Apostle Paul writes to the church in Ephesus to tell them that there's a war on and to tell them what to do about it. "Put on the whole armour of God", Paul says. "We're in a spiritual battle. The enemy is the devil and his demonic forces, not flesh and blood, not human beings, no matter how much people annoy us or hinder us or hurt us. The real enemy is in the spiritual realm and so the enemy must be fought wearing spiritual armour and wielding spiritual weapons."

Paul exhorts us to put on the elements of our armour: truth and righteousness and the readiness of the gospel of peace and faith and salvation. He tells us to use the Word of God which is a mighty sword in the battle.

These parts of our armour merit a sermon to themselves, if not a sermon series, but I want to pass on to the element of our armour, our spiritual protection, that is most often overlooked.

The part of our armour that is most neglected is prayer, and particularly prayer for those in spiritual authority over us.

After naming the items of armour, Paul writes in verse 18, that we are to *“pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.”*

But then he goes on with the very clear direction to his flock to be praying for him personally.

Verse 19: *“Pray also for me.” And he’s very specific about what he needs them to pray for. He writes, “Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.”*

I believe what Paul is showing us here is that those in spiritual authority over you are part of your armour, your spiritual protection and covering. And just as it is the responsibility of spiritual leaders to pray for those entrusted to their care, so it is the responsibility of each of us in the Body of Christ to pray for those who exercise spiritual authority over us.

Your vestry or executive council, your clergy and your bishop are part of your spiritual armour and they depend on your prayers, your intercession before God on their behalf.

Long before it was made into a movie, I came across the book, *The Blind Side*, by Michael Lewis. It tells the fascinating and hilarious story of an inner city boy and the changing world of professional football. Michael Oher was the neglected son of a Memphis crack addict, who went on to play in college and, now, the Baltimore Ravens. Woven through Michael’s story—more in the book than in the movie—is the evolution of NFL football and the emergence of the importance of the left tackle.

As the passing game became the dominant force in professional football, the quarterbacks who could throw the ball with pinpoint accuracy became the key asset of every franchise. That was predictable. What surprised everyone in the game, though, was the new importance of a previously ignored position, that of left tackle. Since most quarterbacks are right handed, as they stand to throw the football, opposing players coming from the left are attacking them from their blind side—hence the title—and the blind side is where they are most vulnerable. So defensive coaches began to put their quickest, meanest, most aggressive, most athletic players on that side, to come at the quarterback from his blind side. And in response, offensive coaches realized they had to find players of enormous size, strength and agility and put them at left tackle to keep their multi-million dollar quarterbacks alive.

These left tackles are remarkable athletes, but unless you’re a real football fanatic, you probably never heard of any of them. They labor anonymously and without recognition; they are noticed only when they make the rare blunder and allow the quarterback to be sacked. But here’s the fascinating thing: left tackles are the most highly paid position in NFL after the quarterback; not the dominant running backs, not the flashy wide receivers. No, it’s the anonymous left tackle who is the most highly valued.

It is my view that in the church, the position of left tackle is filled by personal intercessors, those prayer warriors who provide spiritual protection for others. While the focus in the church is often on the clergy, it is the prayer warriors who are truly fighting the battle on behalf of those leaders. The priest in the pulpit is under attack as surely as the quarterback in the backfield. And how we need the prayers of the saints to cover our blind side!

The Apostle Peter needed others to pray for him. Jesus said at the Last Supper in Luke 22:31, “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail.”

And in Ephesians 6, the Apostle Paul needed others to pray for him. Paul asked for prayer again and again. In Romans 15:30, he wrote, “I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.”

In Colossians 4:3, Paul said, “Pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message.”

And in 2 Thessalonians 3:1, Paul said, “Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men.”

I have a clergy friend of another tradition who likes to say, “I’m bulletproof until Jesus calls me home.” I know what he’s trying to say and I appreciate his faith, but the Apostle Paul never talked like that. He didn’t think he was bulletproof. He knew that he needed others to pray for him.

And your clergy and lay leaders in the Body of Christ need you to pray for them. But sadly, there is often reluctance on the part of leaders to seek the prayer we need. Many of us clergy were taught in seminary to keep our personal needs private from the flock.

For some it is arrogance: “I don’t need their prayers.”

For some it is fear: “How might some abuse information I share about my problems or about my family?”

For some it is a false humility: “I’m the centre of attention enough as it is. Why should people pray especially for me more than for everyone else?”

Parishioners fail to pray most often out of ignorance. They simply do not understand how vitally important it is to intercede for leaders in the body of Christ. Added to that are lack of information about what to pray for, and lack of training in prayer.

Clergy can be overwhelmed with feelings of ineffectiveness – there is tremendous pain in seeing individuals or even congregations stuck in the same problems, not changing, not growing in Christ, and feeling powerless to make a difference.

We are engaged in a spiritual battle and our adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Clergy experience attacks such as: attacks on finances; attacks on health; attacks on marriage and family, on leadership and ministry; attacks of fear and doubt.

Satan well knows the strategic importance of attacking leaders. When leaders are caught in sin or debilitated by brokenness or lost in heresy, the harm that is done to the Church is incalculable. And a vital key to the health and well-being and effectiveness of leaders, a key that is so often overlooked, is faithful, persevering prayer for them by their people.

Paul described his own struggles and need for prayer in 2 Corinthians 1. He wrote of his troubles and suffering, his distress and need for comfort. And then he said, *“On [God] we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us as you help us by your prayers.”*

Clergy need prayer. Yes, we clergy must be people of prayer ourselves. That is vital. But we also urgently need the prayers of others. In ministry, I’ve come to view prayer cover the way the infantry views air cover. We have to fight the battle on the ground, to be sure, but we’d be foolish to try it without that canopy of covering in the heavenlies.

For too many years, I failed to grasp how important intercessory prayer cover is for my ministry, for my family, for me. But I have repented and I’ve become very intentional about recruiting and encouraging those who faithfully and sacrificially pray and fast for me, for my family and for my ministry.

Now, one of the blessings of being a bishop is the great number of people who pray for me. I’m often asked, “With all that you do and all the travel, you seem to be thriving. How do you do it?” And the first answer I give is, “I get to go everywhere with my wife and she is the most amazing partner and friend and encourager.” And the second answer is, “We travel on the prayers of the saints. We couldn’t do what we do without the extraordinary prayer support that we receive.”

Such prayer support is not just for clergy. In the parish I served as rector, we would urge everyone who took on a ministry or leadership responsibility to seek out personal intercessors who would commit to pray for them and support them in their ministry as a member of the Vestry or as a Sunday School

teacher or as a short-term missionary or youth group leader—whatever their role. It really is okay to **ask** people to make an intentional commitment to intercede for you.

How thankful I am for those who pray for me. How precious are those personal intercessors! They are our left tackles, that most valuable position on the team. Their prayers uphold us and encourage us and protect us.

Brothers and sisters, seek the prayer support that you need. Pray fervently and faithfully for your clergy. And, in these days, may I urge you especially to pray for your bishop, who is in such great need of your prayers.

We all need brothers and sisters in Christ to whom we can say, along with St. Paul, “I urge you..., by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.”



Praise God ...

- 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.
- 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.

Confess if needed...

- The times that we have not appreciated our leaders as spiritual covering, part of the armour that God has given us.
- The numerous times that we have neglected to pray for their safety and spiritual well-being

Please pray...

- That we would demonstrate our faith in God's goodness and sovereignty by cultivating **thankfulness, vigilance in prayer** and by expressing **praise** in the midst of loss, adversity or injustice.
- 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 the upcoming electoral synod in Ottawa in November and for God's clear leading in the **election of a coadjutor bishop**. (The coadjutor will succeed ANiC's moderator Bishop Don Harvey when he retires in July 2014.)
- 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).
- For **ANiC clergy** and their families, especially those experiencing spiritual and physical attack.
- 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
- **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 throughout the Anglican Communion. Pray for the planning of the global gathering next May.



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