



**First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer – October 2013**

*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 2013 first Friday Call to Prayer, our tenth anniversary edition. 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 <b>the first Friday, October 5<sup>th</sup></b>, 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;"><b>Prayer Quotes</b></p> <p><i>Prayer is the main secret of success in spiritual business. It moves Him who can move heaven and earth. It brings down the promised aid of the Holy Spirit, without whom the finest sermons, the clearest teaching, and the most diligent labors, are all alike in vain.</i> J. C. Ryle (1816-1900)</p>
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**Carrying Your Friends to Jesus**

In the Gospels of Mark and Luke, there is an account of an amazing event in the early ministry of Jesus. It involves the determination and commitment of some caring individuals for their friend. Let's look at Mark's version of the incident.

*When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them. And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic—"I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home." And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"*

Mark 2: 1-12 ESV

Now Jesus' dialogue with the Pharisees over whether he had authority to forgive sins or not is definitely compelling and the stuff that theologians have sunk their collegial teeth into over the centuries of church history. By declaring that he has forgiven the sins of the paralyzed man, Jesus is making an unmistakable point – a claim to be the divine son of Yahweh. The Pharisees are outraged, but the paralytic and his four friends are ecstatic, and it is they that I would like us to focus on and see what we as intercessors can learn from their example.

As we look at the paralytic's friends, what do we see? We see four men who are deeply concerned about their buddy. They have heard that Jesus, the rabbi, is back in town and have become convinced that their friend's only chance for healing lies in them somehow getting him to Jesus. Rumors abound concerning the healing ministry of the rabbi, and they have come to believe that their paralyzed comrade has an opportunity to walk, perhaps for the first time in his life. But how are they going to get

him to the house where Jesus is staying? There's nothing for it except to carry him on his bed. So each of the four men picks up a corner of the bed and they carry it like a litter.

But the obstacles to meeting their objective have not all been overcome yet. When they arrive at the house, it is a chaotic scene that presents itself. People are crowded around the doors and windows trying to get in, but apparently the house itself is jam-packed because there is no movement in the line. Thwarted? Stymied? Do they just give up? No! The men make the remarkable decision to lift the litter up onto the roof of the house, remove some of the roof tiles to make an opening, and then slowly lower their friend, still on his bed, directly in front of Jesus! And, ultimately, he is healed and carries his own bed home!

We all get asked to pray for people through a prayer chain, during Sunday morning coffee hour, or even on Facebook, and yet we may know very little of the situation that people are facing. Sometimes, I say, "I'll pray for you", but don't always follow through as well as I ought. In reading Mark's account of the healing described above, I was struck by the things that the four friends *did* and the things that they *didn't* do, and tried to apply them to my own intercessory prayer for others.

First and foremost, they took the paralytic man to Jesus. They knew full well that they personally had no answers for his condition. There is no record that they tried to counsel him on the benefits of diet change or stretching that might alleviate his pain. They didn't lecture him, like Job's friends, on the sins in his life that "no doubt" led to his condition. No, they carried him to Jesus.

After the strenuous effort of lowering him through the opening in the roof that they created, they didn't tell Jesus all about their friend's circumstances nor did they presume to tell Jesus exactly how he should deal with the situation. It was sufficient to have succeeded in getting an audience with the Rabbi. He would know what to do.

I began to see that often this was all that was required of us as well when we pray for the sick or hurting ones in our lives. We need to carry them to Jesus, perhaps by even picturing them lying on a stretcher like the paralytic. We really don't need to tell the Lord what they need or instruct him on how he should go about healing them. We don't need to ask him to be "with them" in the hospital. If we are carrying them to Jesus in confident faith, he will be with them, surrounding them with his covenant mercy and comfort. After all, he loves them more than we do – he died for them.

In our Sunday morning Prayers of the People, we frequently speak out loud the names of those who are ill, grieving, unemployed or have other serious needs, and I have often wondered whether that was sufficient. Shouldn't we be explaining to God their circumstances and making suggestions as to how he should fix their problems? Isn't it too easy to just mention their names to the Lord? Then I thought, "Garth, how arrogant! Does the Lord really need me to figure this all out? Is there really any more that I can or should do than to bring them to Jesus?"

Now, the four friends of the paralytic did have to work hard just to get him to Jesus. Sometimes, for example, if we are praying for a loved one's salvation, we may need to carry them to Jesus many times over a period of years or even decades. But it is a great relief to not have to know all the solutions to their desperate situations or how or whom the Lord should use to save them.

Sometimes, we may need to engage in some spiritual warfare on behalf of the person for whom we are praying because there is demonic opposition to their getting to Jesus. Evil forces have perhaps blinded them so that they cannot see beyond their own pain or unbelief. As we "carry them to Jesus", we can command those forces in the authority of Jesus' Name to relinquish their hold on our friend. It's akin to the situation the paralytic's friends must have encountered with crowds blocking their way through to the house where Jesus was ministering.

But our faith anchor must be secured, not in our fervor, passionate intensity or intimate awareness of the situation at hand, but in the Master's covenant love, mercy and knowledge of what is the absolute best for the person we are bringing to him. He has known them from before the beginning of time!

As I find myself consciously spending less time in prayer telling the Lord how he should fix the situation and more time in simply offering people to our Lord who knows perfectly what they need at this very moment, I am finding a new level of peace in prayer. The pressure is off. My need to figure it all out

before I pray is fading. I am trusting Jesus more completely with those for whom he calls me to pray. Let me encourage you as well – carry your friends to Jesus. Amen.

Garth V. Hunt+



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

- For the incredible privilege that we can bring in prayer those we love to Almighty God who knows their needs far better than we do.
- That we can depend fully and unreservedly on our loving Father for every aspect of our lives.
- 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...**

- The times that we have sought to instruct the Lord in prayer as to how he should answer our prayers and meet the needs of those for whom we are interceding.

### **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 empowerment.
- For **Bishops** Donald Harvey, Charlie Masters, Stephen Leung, Trevor Walters, Ronald Ferris and Malcolm Harding (retired) – and their families. Pray for spiritual and physical protection and renewal, for wisdom, and for a daily closer walk with God.
- Pray for the highly important **Global Anglican Future Conference 2 (GAFCon)** taking place in **Nairobi, Kenya on October 21-26**. There will be more than 20 delegates from ANiC, including bishops. Specifically pray for **unity among delegates and a clear strategy** for evangelism, church planting and global gospel partnership. Given the recent tragic events in Nairobi, pray for **peace of heart and protection** for all the delegates during their travel and for the duration of the conference. Pray for **provision of sufficient finances** (around \$5k) as delegates must pay their own way.
- 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 of our **ANiC clergy** and 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.
- **Southern Cone** – Pray for Presiding Bishop Tito Zavala in his primatial duties and for this province which includes much of South America.
- 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 **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.
- For the **Anglican Relief and Development Fund Canada** (ARDFC) as it raising funds for a training and education centre in the Diocese of Recife (Brazil).
- For **Christians in the Middle East** who are facing increasing pressure and persecution as many of their countries embrace a more aggressive and extreme form of Islam – especially Christians in Egypt, Syria and Nigeria.
- Also pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ in Pakistan, particularly those who were injured or who lost family members and friends in the September 22 terrorist attack on All Saints’ Anglican church in Peshawar where at least 85 were killed and more than 100 were injured.