



## Pray for the Nation ~ INOI MO TE MOTU

### Intercessors for New Zealand

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The LORD said, "If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from Heaven, and I will forgive their sin, and heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14)

**MAY 2020**

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Yet even now, says the LORD, **return to Me with all your heart**, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the LORD, your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.  
Joel 2:12-13

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## Praise and prayer

- Over the 10 days up to 1st May, the average number of confirmed or probable new cases of covid-19 was **3.6** (with only 2 new cases on 30th April); **84%** have recovered so far; there are only **7** in hospitals throughout the country (none in intensive care) and the Alert Level has been lowered from 4 to 3. Sadly, there have been 19 deaths, over two thirds of these were in rest home care.
- Pray that number of new cases each day will *not* increase, and that we will not have to return to Level 4 again. Pray against any further significant outbreaks (a second wave of transmission); and for all those people involved in finding new cases, clusters, contacts, transmissions and outbreaks – for success in dealing with these.
- Pray that people will obey the restrictions of Level 3, act responsibly, and that by 12 May we will be able to drop to Level 2.
- Pray for schools, businesses, financial institutions, and other places returning to some degree of normality.
- Pray for NZ's economic situation, with huge debt, high unemployment, and large numbers of people suffering from much lower income over the past 5 weeks. Pray for great wisdom for our government in dealing with all these troubled financial areas.
- Pray for a speedy change back to normal employment; especially in tourism and related businesses, air travel, and other areas hugely impacted by covid-19, including small businesses, self-employed, and so on.

## Parliamentary issues for prayer

1. The House started sitting again on 28 April, with caucus meetings, and \$3 billion of tax assistance for small businesses.

2. The annual Budget will be announced on 14 May.
3. The covid-19 outbreak has, and will continue to have, a huge impact on our economy. Parliament authorised the Government to spend up to **\$52 billion** to mitigate economic impacts of the virus; about half of this has already been allocated, including **\$10.3 billion** which has already been paid out as a wage subsidy to 1.6 million people. 30,000 more people are on a jobseeker benefit (unemployed).
4. The likelihood of worldwide recession and how our government should handle it.
5. The date of the elections – currently set for 19 September – should this be delayed until October or November?
6. The selection by all political parties of who should stand in each electorate, who should be on their Party list, and their major policies.

## What, on earth, is God doing?

"When I shut up the heavens so that there is **no rain**, or command the **locust** to devour the land, or send **pestilence** among My people, if My people who are called by My name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from Heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:13-14)

God says in these verses that if there was no rain (leading perhaps to drought, famine, high temperatures and fires), plagues of locusts, pestilences (widespread diseases) ... and other disasters, then we need to **Call on the name of the LORD** and be saved, both physically and spiritually.

The disciples called on Jesus in the storm and were saved. Peter, walking on the water, called on Jesus and was saved. People called on

Jesus and were healed, delivered, the dead were raised; God heard their cry and answered.

In Luke 13:1-5, Jesus says that the troubles that came upon certain people were not necessarily because they were worse sinners than others, but unless we repent, we will all perish. God wants repentance, hence His warnings. Repentance includes turning from ignoring God, to living by His ways.

#### **In times of disaster:**

God wants Christians to call on the Lord, repent, pray and intercede.

God wants non-Christians to call on the Lord, repent, and be saved.

- Where there is wrong in our lives, we need to repent and call on the Lord for His forgiveness.
- Where there is wrong in the church, there needs to be repentance and calling on the Lord for His forgiveness.
- Where there is wrong in our nation, there needs to be national repentance, a calling on the Lord for His forgiveness, and turning from our wicked ways, back to God and His ways.

Then we are all to give thanks to God, worship Him and follow in *His* ways, not our ways or the ways of the world (worldliness). God wants to forgive; God wants to send revival! Hence His warnings. *Do we live in fear of covid-19 and all its results, or in the fear of God?*

### **Returning from 'Egypt' to the 'Promised Land'**

When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, they saw plagues, pestilence and death strike Egypt. God told them of the Promised Land where they would not only be back to 'normal' again, but if they obeyed God, it would be even better than before. After the Passover, they were released from Egypt but because of their disobedience, only those under the age of 40 entered the land of God's promise.

We are going through a plague of covid-19. We need to wake up! See what is happening in our world! Seek the Lord, turn from our wrong ways, call on Him for mercy and forgiveness. If we don't learn; if we continue to disobey and turn from the Lord, then judgement will come again, just as it did to the Israelites and all those who died before entering the Promised Land.

***"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is shameful to any people."*** (Proverbs 14:34)

Pray for righteousness in our land!

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### ***(continued from page 4)***

- Deacons, elders and apostles were chosen and ordained after prayer and fasting (Acts 6:6; 13:2-3; 14:23)
- The Holy Spirit was outpoured on the Gentiles as a result of the constant prayers of Cornelius and Peter (Acts 10:2, 9, 30)
- Peter was released from prison as a result of prayer (Acts 12:5); so were Paul and Silas, and a Philippian jailer and his household were saved as a result (Acts 16:25)
- Miracles, healings and the raising of the dead were associated with, and accomplished through, the prayers of the believers (e.g., Acts 9:37-40; 19:11-12; 20:9-12; 27:9, 21-25, 33-35)

Would we like to see the same results? Then we need to pray too!

### **QUESTIONS**

1. At what stage of "revival" do you believe we are in now?
2. What can we do in order to hasten the coming of revival?
3. "Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power" (Psalm 110:3). What does this mean?
4. What is a "spirit of travailing prayer" and what can we do so that God gives such a spirit of prayer to His people?
5. Discuss the inter-relationship between prayer and revival; that is, prayer bringing about revival and revival bringing about a new release in prayer.
6. "The key to God's blessing in revival is a passionate desire to know the Lord more closely and more deeply". Discuss this statement.

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***The Bible Study starts on the next page ...***



## REVIVE US AGAIN!

### 4

#### The Place of Prayer in Revival

In the last two studies we have been looking at some of the Biblical principles of revival in broad outline, as seen especially in the Old Testament.

In the following studies we will look at some of those individual principles in more detail, including the greatest of all revivals – the coming of the Son of God and the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ – as recorded in the Gospels and Acts.

All true revivals are born as a result of prayer, are carried on through prayer, and result in much fervent prayer. The travail of intercession by God's faithful people has always been foundational to the coming of revival and the sustaining of it. When prayer wanes, revival ceases.

Some people may ask "Which comes first, revival or prayer?" It is a bit like the age-old question, "Which comes first, the chicken or the egg?" Does God wait until there is "enough" prayer before He will move in revival; or is prayer a result of God moving? Do I pray "every time I feel the Spirit moving in my heart"; or do I feel the Spirit moving in my heart when I pray?

No doubt both of these are true. Revival comes in answer to the prayers of God's people (see 2 Chronicles 7:14), and God's people are also especially stirred into the ministry of prayer and intercession during times of revival.

Nevertheless, lest we wait passively for God's moving before we do anything, let us not forget that God is looking for watchmen who will both stand in the gap, interceding on behalf of their people, and who will warn the people of impending judgement if they fail to repent and get right with God (Ezekiel 3:17-19; 22:30; Isaiah 59:16).

Then, in God's time and wisdom, as He begins to pour out His Spirit in revival power, intercessors are raised up who carry the revival through. It is borne by the spirit of intercession

which is given to those who are called to this ministry. This ministry of intercession involves travail in prayer – prevailing prayer that lays hold of God and sees mighty things accomplished as a result. Such a ministry is a God-given ministry in the Spirit; no-one can work it up or carry it on in the flesh!

God always longs for a pure, vital, Spirit-filled, witnessing Church, and Christlike children. So if we are willing, and fulfill His requirements, God will move, and revival will come. He is always willing to forgive those who are repentant, and to save those who will come to Him (2 Peter 3:9).

When we intercede, and obey God's commands and fulfill His requirements, we will see a sovereign move of God; indeed, it will have already begun! It is up to us to obey; it is up to God to do the rest (see 2 Chronicles 7:14, "If My people will ... then I will ...")

Thus revivals are born through prayer, and revivals inspire prayer.

#### Biblical examples

**Moses.** Moses was an intercessor. He spent two periods of 40 days on Mount Sinai, alone with God, in prayer and fasting. On one occasion as he prayed for Israel he so identified with his people whom he loved, that he said, "But now, if You will forgive their sin – and if not, blot me, I pray, out of Your book which You have written." (Exodus 32:32).

**Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah** (see previous studies).

**Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel.** Read Ezra 9:5-15; Nehemiah 9:6-37; and Daniel 9:3-20. Notice especially in these passages:

(a) Fasting and weeping accompanied their intercessions. These men were deeply moved in their spirits as they prayed in earnest for their people, and interceded for their nation.

(b) Identification with their people over the sins of the nation. Their sins were confessed specifically – by name – and repented of, publicly, before God. There was no desire to point the finger at other people's sins: "we have

sinned ...” Their sole desire was national repentance, confession and forgiveness (cf. Jonah 3).

(c) Casting themselves on God’s mercy. Reminding themselves of God’s goodness and greatness, of His promises, His desire to forgive and to bless, they cast themselves on God’s mercy. Intercession is very humbling!

**Anna.** Prior to Jesus’ birth and ministry, we see people like Anna who “did not depart from the Temple, worshipping with fasting and prayer night and day” (Luke 2:37). Probably Joseph, Mary, Simeon, Zechariah, Elizabeth and (later) John the Baptist were also looking forward to the coming of the Messiah with prayer and eager expectation (cf. Luke 2:25-32). The coming of the Son of God was thus prepared by prayer. “Prepare the way of the Lord!” (Luke 3:4). God obviously revealed much to John the Baptist in the wilderness, regarding the Messiah who was about to be revealed to Israel, and no doubt John prayed much for that day (cf. John 1:29-34).

**Jesus.** Jesus’ whole life was permeated by prayer. How else could He say that He only did those things which His Father told and showed Him? (John 5:19-20). Immediately after He was baptized in water and the Spirit, He spent 40 days in prayer and fasting in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-2), before He began His public ministry. He spent all night in prayer before choosing His disciples (Luke 6:12-16), and He spent several hours in prayer the night before He went to the cross. Even now, today, “He ever lives to make intercession for us” (Hebrews 7:25).

**The disciples before Pentecost,** together with the women, spent 10 days in united prayer and waiting for the promise of the Father (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:1 - 2:4, especially 1:14). Then God poured out His Spirit and Israel saw the greatest spiritual awakening ever as thousands upon thousands of people found Jesus Christ as their Lord, Saviour and Messiah, and went out with the Gospel to “turn the world upside down” (Acts 17:6).

There are many other examples in Scripture and throughout history, of individuals and nations being called to prayer and fasting in order to prepare for a move of God in revival, restoration, deliverance, repentance and forgiveness, etc. Nations were called to prayer and fasting, with repentance, and God moved to save them and restore them. Prayer and fasting

played a major part prior to all Old Testament revivals.

Tragically, the revivals usually only lasted a few decades at the most. Each generation needs its own revival, for we cannot live on the revival blessings which our parents received! “Revive **me**, O God!”

### Why pray?

1. Because prayer shows our total dependence on God. Nothing of eternal value is ever achieved by human might or power. It is only by the sovereign moving of God’s Spirit that such things are accomplished (Zechariah 4:6). Unless we pray, unless we cast ourselves upon God and His mercy, we will not see the revival we desire. We are utterly dependent upon God. No man can bring revival; it cannot be organised or worked up; it must be prayed down. We must pray!
2. Because God has told us to pray. “Ask and you shall receive” (see Luke 11:5-13). “You do not have because you do not ask” (James 4:2). In other words, there are some things God desires to give us and to do for us which we do not receive simply because we do not ask. See also Isaiah 65:1-2.
3. Because it is through prayer that God can reveal His ways to us. In seeking to move with God we need His revelation – a vision of what He is doing and going to do. “Surely the Lord God does nothing without revealing His secret to His servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7). We need to seek God in prayer, in order to know His will and be in such a place that we can move with God. As we seek God, so we get to know Him better. As we pray, God can reveal hindrances in our lives. As we wait on God, He can prepare us, to use us for His glory.

### The place of prayer in the NT Church

- Ten days of prayer preceded the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (the “promise of the Father”) on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:14)
- It was on the way to the place of prayer that a miraculous healing occurred, as a result of which about 5000 people were converted (Acts 3:1; 4:4)
- Prayer preceded a further outpouring of the Spirit and bold witness (Acts 4:24-33)

*(continued on page 2)*