

Seeking God for

A new Alliance chapter is about to begin as we join our predecessors in praying *The Prayer of Years*

BY DAVID CHOTKA



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50

Some prayers take years. Some prayers have no words. “Groaning too deep for words,” says the apostle. Perhaps you have seen the speechless groaning, wrenched out of the deepest heart as innocents who are made to suffer, cry out in anguished and extreme despair.

The children of Israel cried out like that.

Their release from starvation as a people under Joseph had gradually turned from freedom into slavery. Frequent beatings, the loss of human dignity, meaningless labour for people who didn’t give a rip, the removal of human choice and a complete absence of hope led them to cry out for deliverance: “God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob...” (Exodus 2:24 NASB).

God heard their ‘prayer of years.’

It was an unusual answer—but most of God’s answers are. One

of their own, raised in Pharaoh’s household, had tried to help them once before. Forty years later, Moses, an old man of 80, steeped in Egyptian, Midianite and Hebrew culture, was called by God to lead his people to a new hope in place of despair.

For us today, it would be like an answer to a prayer prayed in 1969. In an age of microwave ovens, the World Wide Web, high-speed communications and a culture that glorifies youth, this is a jarring reality.

Some prayers take years.

An elder in my church had served in Côte d’Ivoire. While there, a fellow Christian brought a Muslim Imam to see him. The Imam regarded Jesus as a great prophet, second only to the founder of Islam, Mohammed. He had never read the Bible though—only the Koran. He most certainly had never read the Gospel of John.

But he had a dream.

“I wonder if you could tell me what this means. The prophet Jesus appeared to me in a dream last night and said these words to me: ‘I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’ Could you tell me what these words mean?”

The quote was uttered in flawless French—stated exactly as the Bible translation read—and the man had never seen a Bible in his life.

It had been the prayer of this elder’s life that he could share his faith with Muslims—and now that prayer was answered. So began a conversation that lasted for weeks between the elder and the Imam. He showed the Imam the words of our Lord in John 14:6, told him the Lord had appeared to him to reveal himself, and challenged him to embrace the gospel of Christ.

The elder said there had been a

great emphasis on praying for ‘the 10/40 window’ (that portion of the world with the greatest concentration of unreached people groups). He attributed the dream of this man to the focused praying of hundreds of thousands of people over a period of years; those people had been asking God to reveal himself by dreams and visions to those in the Muslim world who did not know him. Those prayers were answered.

Some prayers take years.

Another prayer began in the 1920s. My grandmother prayed God would raise one of her descendants to be a priest of the Lord. She prayed every morning, usually for three hours a day. She gave birth to 14, and ten lived. My dad was the youngest.

When my dad-to-be was 19, his father was dying. On his deathbed, my grandfather beckoned him over, and said, “You shall have three sons. The middle one shall be a priest of the Lord to answer the prayers of my wife.” With those words he died. My father thought these words were the delirious rantings of a dying man—and so he forgot them, until life unfolded to reveal what the Lord would do.

I was born ten years later, the middle son of three boys.

Eleven years after my grandmother died, thirty years after the death of my grandfather, God called me to the ministry. Dad never told the story of grandma’s prayers or grandfather’s deathbed prophecy. At the time, he didn’t believe in them.

There is no boasting on my part; I am an answer to the sacrificial prayers of my grandmother—a woman I hardly knew. She began praying in the 1920s. I was called in the ’70s, and began preaching the gospel in 1985. She knew it would be so, though she died before it happened.

Some prayers take years.

So let’s get praying! And the generations to come will know the effect of our fervent intercessions.

We are beginning a new chapter in our Alliance history. We will be holding Assembly on ‘unreached turf.’ We will be seeking God for the advance of the gospel in a country dominated by another faith. We will see first-hand our Founder’s original vision—to reach the utterly unreached, to declare the gospel to them and so hasten the return of our Lord (see Matthew 24:14).

When Jesus rose from the dead, he appeared to the disciples for a period of forty days (see Acts 1:1-14). He called them to himself and told them to remain together, waiting for the presence of the Holy Spirit to come and give them power (see Acts 1:8).

Then they prayed for ten days and nights.

There were 40 days of teaching and ten in focused prayer. Then came Pentecost.

Fifty days in the presence of the Lord, learning about the Kingdom of God, praying, pleading, asking, and then receiving God’s empowering presence that sent them out to win a lost world for Christ.

We will have 50 days of prayer, starting February 14, 2010. We will be praying through General Assembly to Easter. We will be praying, as those original disciples were, for divine enablement, to ‘receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon us,’ to be sent to the nations. And then we will be praying as our delegates travel to many fields of service following Assembly.

Our Alliance forbears pleaded with the Lord for the nations to come to faith, that the conditions for Christ to return be met. For 50 days, we are joining our prayers to that of our predecessors. Our prayer of 50



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More than this, we are joining our praying to the praying of the Resurrected Lord, who ever lives to intercede for us (see Hebrews 7:25). ☩

Rev. David Chotka is Chair of the Alliance Pray! Team and Senior Pastor, Spruce Grove Alliance Church. He is the author of Power Praying and will be developing a weekly Bible/Prayer Study for our 50 days of prayer emphasis

Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance,
And the very ends of the earth as Your possession (Psalm 2:8 NASB).

