

Pray for the Persecuted Church

JAMES 5:13-18

We Christians all know the power of prayer and we know the importance prayer is in our walk with God. Yet, it seems that prayer is sadly lacking in the Western Church. We talk about prayer, we write about prayer, we sing about prayer, we teach about prayer, we seminar about prayer and we even have prayer meetings, or meetings about prayer. Jesus said, ‘when you pray’, meaning we should actually PRAY, not just talk about it.

I believe the reason we do not pray as much as we should and like we should is because we do not know to pray. Anytime we do not know how to do something, we find it awkward and difficult to do that thing. So it is with prayer.

Each time I travel to our friends that are persecuted, they ask me to ask the Christians in the free world, in Canada, The USA or Europe to pray for them. They really want us to pray for them. I trust we will not let them down or disappoint them.

In James 5:13-18, Pastor James gave some simple, practical instructions and encouragement in regards to prayer . . .

The first instruction is that we should pray when we suffer or are sick and we should pray with the family of God. In Matthew we read, ‘that where 2 or 3 are gathered, Jesus is there and where 2 or 3 agree God will answer if we pray in His will.’ James says, ‘call for the Elders of the Church, and let them pray over the sick person, anointing them with oil in the name of The Lord’, so we should pray together with the family of God.

The second thing is, we should ‘pray the prayer of faith and that faith prayer will save the sick.’ There is no use praying if we do not believe that our prayers will be answered. We cannot see an invisible God and so the only way to reach Him is through Faith. ‘Without faith, it is impossible to please God’, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him’ (in prayer) Heb. 11:6

The third admonition is to pray fervently. ‘The fervent prayer of a righteous person avails much’. In this passage, Elijah prayed earnestly or fervently that it would not rain, and God heard that prayer. Then again, he prayed fervently that it would rain and God heard that prayer too. God seems to want us to express our prayers earnestly. This indicates a serious almost desperate situation where we ask God to meet us in our time of need.

The fourth and final instruction is to pray frequently. The example here again is Elijah when he prayed again and again. I do not think that God needs us to repeat our prayers because He needs to hear them over and over; but we need to hear ourselves pray again and again because this generates faith and we then convince ourselves that we really want this petition from God. So, we can and should pray frequently and see our prayers answered by a loving God.

So, I urge you readers to learn to pray with family, in faith, fervently and frequently. I’m sure that you will see more answers to prayer and a greater God awareness in your lives. However, let us not just pray for ourselves but also pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ who are beaten, in prison and persecuted. They really need us to pray effectively for them on a daily basis. Look in this newsletter for stories and prayer needs from the Persecuted Church. God Bless you as you grow in your prayer life and your walk with God

Written by Rev. Mel Wiebe Canada