

PRAISE the Lord for:

- ★ **The results from our Impact Africa mission trip. We have received notice of 120 first time commitments from our children's ministry with a record attendance of 527.**
- ★ **The 1076 lives that were touched over 3 weeks through Impact Africa Prison ministry. 330 first time commitments; 515 sign-ups for discipleship course; 231 prison officials signing up for discipleship course.**
- ★ **His overwhelming faithfulness to the ministry of Challenge. Thank you Lord for using the Challenge paper so effectively around the world**
- ★ **The many ministries and individuals that continue to use the paper for evangelism.**
- ★ **The opportunities Carl and Bob had recently promoting the paper throughout southern WA**

Last month I endeavoured to indicate that the church needs to get back to the basics of what it is that makes us the church. Whilst methods, strategies and programs are necessary for every church, without the basics of the Word of God, prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit, they achieve little, if any, lasting fruit.

We touched on the subject of prayer and why it is that Christians and churches neglect to pray. This month I want to focus on wrestling in prayer with God. In **GENESIS 32:22-32** we read of Jacob wrestling with the Lord all night. There are a number of things to be learnt from this passage.

Firstly, we need to get alone with God. We can look at this from the point of view of a quiet-time each day, or times of special prayer or prayer with fasting. Then we can look at it from the perspective of corporate church prayer. I can't speak strongly enough for the need of persistent and consistent prayer.

However, having said that, *why* is getting alone with God so necessary. We need to be free from distractions ... people, noise and anything else that takes our focus off God. This then allows us to pray frankly to God and for God to talk frankly with us. Thus freedom from distractions enables us to hear God and then to respond appropriately to God's direction or instruction. So we need to be free from the distraction of time restraints: to understand that dealing honestly with God on key issues is not something that can be dealt with in an instant. Those of us who have a busy lifestyle must not fall into the error of trying to organise God into our schedule.

Secondly, we need to be determined to meet with God. Once again we cannot escape the fact that our determination to meet with God is often reflected in the time spent with God. The obvious area to look at is our daily devotional life. There are a number of questions that should be asked – (i) do you have a daily time with God; (ii) do you hear the voice of God through His Word and prayer? Our quiet-time is not just going through the motions; (iii) are there times when we spend extended times with God.

If this is not a reality then, as in Jacob's case, God may allow a crisis to bring us to prayer. Sometimes God has to allow circumstances beyond our human ability to fix, to bring us to a point of humble prayer. However, if we are walking with the Lord then prayer will not be something that happens in a crisis, but rather spawns out of conviction.

Continued over

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PLEASE TURN OVER

Contact us by phone (08) 9453 3311 or fax (08) 9453 3006
Email: info@challengenews.org

PRAYER needed for:

- ★ **Andrew and Karen Trezona as they continue to head up the work in USA. Pray particularly for Andrew's health as he is constantly on the road. Pray for continued safety for Karen and the girls while Andrew is away from home.**
- ★ **Continued growth of the paper in USA. The prison edition continues to grow but Main and Spanish editions are not consistent.**
- ★ **Funding to assist and grow the prison edition of the paper for USA. Sponsorship for each edition is vital and needed**
- ★ **Carl while in South Africa for the promotion and development of the prison side of the work and also for deputation to New South Wales**
- ★ **A full time Editor to free Carl up to concentrate on promotion and development of the ministry in Australia and overseas**

Thirdly, we need to be determined to be blessed by God. Jacob was determined not to let God go until he had been blessed of God. Prayer and fasting is all about laying hold of God until there is a break through. However, the idea of persevering in prayer for anything nowadays is considered out of fashion. This is mainly because we live in the age of the instant – instant coffee, entertainment, money, buy-now-pay-later and so on. You find people getting extremely impatient waiting in a queue for anything.

We need to understand that to God time is meaningless in comparison to the realm of eternity. Thus we need to recognise that God has a divine schedule. He may want to achieve several different things within our lives or the life of the church, quite apart from answering our specific prayer request. So God not only has a divine schedule in place but also wants to achieve divine purposes.

We can recall the blessing of Jacob's reuniting with his brother Esau. Fearing the worst, God turned it into a wonderful time of reconciliation.

There are numbers of churches and Christian families in dire need of reconciliation. There will be no blessing for either until it happens. Sadly there are Christians who have wandered in the spiritual wilderness of unforgiveness, for twenty years or more. Look at the church splits that have been a running sore for years, because of an unwillingness to allow God to heal.

We experience God's blessing when we are willing to persevere in prayer, and as a result we become a wonderful blessing to others. Prayer in essence changes us from being me-centred to being God-centred.

CARL CARMODY, EDITOR OF CHALLENGE

MY RESPONSE

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With God's help I would like to be a partner in supporting the ministry at Challenge in the following way(s):

Prayer: Please send me updated prayer information

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