Will You Help Make 2004 A Year Of Prayer For Revival?

By Lois J. Stucky

With a new year approaching, many Christians feel inspired to make a fresh start in their lives in one way or another, to take a step higher. I would like to propose that we in the Herald of His Coming family take inspiration from articles in this issue of the paper and make a sincere endeavor to pray more intently for revival in this coming year of 2004 than ever before. Will you be one to make an effort to this end?

Surely God desires that His people take seriously their responsibility to press in for a powerful moving of His Spirit on a languishing Church and on a lost world. We shudder to read of awful judgments in the end-of-time days and realize that we are steadily growing closer to those days when ungodly multitudes will be swept away into eternal destruction. And we hear God's voice saying, *"Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die…and not that he should return from his ways, and live?"* (Ezek. 18:23). Can you not sense in that declaration the plaintive tone of a God who longs to extend mercy to the penitent? And He looks for those who will intercede and *"stand in the gap"* that He might grant repentance and do His mighty works of salvation and restoration.

To His people who have a warm heart toward Him and desire to help that His gracious purposes for mankind be fulfilled, God says, *"Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not"* (Jer. 33:3). And again, *"The desire of the righteous shall be granted"* (Prov. 10:24). Jesus encourages us in Luke 11:9: *"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."* And in 1 John 3:22 we read, "*Whatsoever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight."* It is not hard to find other Scriptures indicating God's urgings to His people to rise to their place of responsibility in prayer.

If revival is already a high priority on your prayer list, God refresh you and keep you faithful! If we are ones who could take more time and pray with greater fervency and faith for revival, would we be willing to make this a definite purpose and seek God's help in the doing of it? And might we not only pray ourselves, but encourage others to pray likewise.

A pastor in particular has great opportunity to encourage the members of the congregation to pray. Perhaps he can arrange for two's or three's to come to the church at stated times to pray for an hour or so together. Housewives unable to leave their home and families can invite several ladies into their home to pray together for a time. If there is someone free to do visitation of fellow church members, he or she could prearrange a time to call in various homes with the understanding that together they would pray rather than engage in casual conversation.

If the church prayer meeting has fallen by the wayside, revive it! It might be possible to institute an early morning prayer meeting for those en route to places of work. Take time in church prayer gatherings to call out earnestly to God for revival – revival for those praying, as

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well as for the local church, the city, the nation, the world! A call was recently issued in this community for people of all churches to participate in a week of prayer for revival in whatever way the individual church should decide and then to gather together for a concluding all-night of prayer at the end of the week. The emphasis was on revival. If you have a similar opportunity, support it with your presence and with your might. We are not only being *divinely* called to prayer, but *these crucial days*, with escalating problems and with sin abounding, are a piercing call to prayer.

Praying in the Spirit

Setting aside a time of prayer is not enough by itself. We must continually endeavor to have an "alive" time of prayer. It is easy to fall into a routine of prayer without much heart in it. At its best, prayer is an overflow of a Spirit-filled life. It is the blessed Holy Spirit who helps our infirmities in prayer (Rom. 8:26-27). Ever seek His anointing in prayer. We have great need of His insight and wisdom and faith in prayer as well as in all phases of the Christian life.

Real prayer is communion with God, the eternal God, the creator of the universe! What a privilege to come to Him in prayer! What loss we suffer, what risk we take when we are negligent, casual or formal in prayer. "Prayerlessness is a horrible sin!" writes John R. Rice. For some of us, seeking God's forgiveness for our prayerlessness will be a necessary preparation for striving with new vigor for faithfulness in prayer.

The songwriter speaks of "the beautiful garden of prayer." To some this may seem a fanciful, feminine view of prayer. It doesn't appeal to them. Keep in mind, however, that a true meeting with God in prayer is unsurpassed in its lofty, inspiring up reach, and some of the most tender and loving times of our life may be as we are melted and yielded at His feet in prayer. In that sense, "beautiful" could be well fitting.

But maybe you are a person who likes action and challenge, who even likes a good fight. Prayer is certainly not lacking in that element as well. To even start, it takes discipline and self-denial to set aside time for prayer. Will you overcome your selfish inclination to enjoy a pleasant social time, an entertaining hobby, or a lively sport activity, or even sleep or an occasional meal in order to pray?

Then when you go to prayer, for some it is a challenge to stay awake and to stay focused in prayer. It takes deliberate effort to stir oneself up to fervency and desperation in prayer. In prayer is involved "the good fight of faith" in the face of seemingly hopeless situations. Prayer takes perseverance when the answer is delayed. Prayer calls for patient forbearance toward the spiritually immature or the foolish or the stubborn. If you want action, if you want a challenge, you will find it in prayer. It tests the metal of the strongest.

The enemy Satan and his cohorts are ready to give anyone a good fight to keep them from praying. He well knows, and so do we, that when prayer prevails and when God pours out His Spirit in great measure, marvelous works of salvation and deliverance are wrought. Satan's kingdom is plundered.

And God is glorified! Is this not what we want above all? We want to see His Name preached

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among the nations, and His glory to be seen in all the earth. We want multitudes to turn to Christ, acclaiming Him as their King and Master. Even as we are abundantly satisfied in our beloved Lord, we want Him to be satisfied by the abundant fruit brought forth through His suffering and death.

What Shall We Pray?

Go to God's Word. Find portions that stir your heart and put a cry to God on your lips. Find pertinent promises. Some good ones I read recently were in Jeremiah, chapter 3: "*Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause Mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God… Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings."* As God dealt with Israel, so He deals with backsliders today. How His mercy inspires hope and faith even in this sinful hour when such serious attacks are being made on the God-given foundations of our society and our nation!

A hymn book is a help, especially to those who are musically inclined. Many hymns are heart cries in themselves and express for us what we have difficulty putting into words. I think of "Rock of Ages," seldom sung these days, but very fitting as we humble ourselves before God in prayer:

"Not the labors of my hands can fulfill Thy law's demands; Could my zeal no respite know, could my tears forever flow, all for sin could not atone; Thou must save and Thou alone. Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling; Naked, come to Thee for dress, helpless, look to Thee for grace; Foul, I to the fountain fly, wash me, Savior, or I die!" – A. M. Toplady.

Charles H. Spurgeon's article on preparation for revival provides good help on preparation for praying for revival as well. Maybe you will want to study it further. And please pray for us at Herald of His Coming, that God will enable us to do our part in praying for revival in 2004. Thank you!

Praise God –

*** For the seasons of refreshing and restoration God sends to graciously advance His people and His work here on earth, that His people might walk worthy of their exalted God and might bring to Him a harvest of souls.**

*** For the friends who partner with Herald of His Coming, and are indispensable for the continuation of the ministry. Pray God will keep them aware of His and our appreciation for their help to sustain His ministry here.**

Please Pray –

*** That this issue of Herald of His Coming will be anointed and will rally much prayer for revival, even desperate prayer that will prevail. Pray against the powers of darkness that will make a mighty effort to prevent prayer.**

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*** That Herald readers will prayerfully send additional names to be added to the Herald mailing list, of ones who might welcome and respond to the messages of Herald of His Coming.**

*** That God will bring us more opportunities for distribution of Right Choice Salvation Herald, Truth For You to warn of the occult, and Hear, O Israel for unsaved Jewish people. Pray these smaller papers will be mightily blessed to the eternal salvation of many.**

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