

A Time to Pray

Today, you have entered into a *kairos* moment in time marked on the calendar of heaven. America for Jesus could be a historic event for our nation, yet even before the first prayer is spoken here in Philadelphia, the historical and biblical significance behind the actual date of this gathering is apparent. The same was true of the Washington for Jesus rallies of 1980, 1988 and 1996—all organized by One Nation Under God. All were held on April 29 and/or April 30—dates full of spiritual significance in the unfolding story of America.

The settlers who founded Jamestown, America's first permanent English colony, landed on the shores of Virginia and planted a cross on April 29, 1607. Led by their chaplain, Robert Hunt, they dedicated the New World to God. Years later, on April 30, 1789, George Washington was sworn into office in New York, where several Christian meetings were held to prepare for the inauguration of America's first president. Another great American commander in chief, Abraham Lincoln, decreed that April 30, 1863, would be a "day of national humiliation, fasting and prayer" to seek God and repent for their sins.

More than a century later, on April 29-30, hundreds of thousands of believers gathered to pray for America at the Washington for Jesus national solemn assemblies held in our country's capital. Many believe that these moments of massive intercession and fasting influenced the nation.

What about the dates of America for Jesus in Philadelphia? What is the significance of Sept. 28-29? Beside the fact that it is exactly 40 days before election time, marking a call to 40 days of prayer and fasting, there is a biblical meaning. Messianic Jewish Rabbi Jonathan Cahn says that the 29th holds significance throughout Scripture as a time for repentance. On the Hebrew calendar, it falls exactly between Yom Kippur (Day

of Atonement) and the Feast of Tabernacles. It was the same season when Solomon dedicated the temple to God, and when God first proclaimed 2 Chronicles 7:14, which says: "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 will forgive their sin and heal their land."

Though this verse speaks of Israel's prayers from the ancient temple, it holds the key that reveals principles of revival that God still responds to today. These include the church's humility, prayer, focus and repentance—all God's prerequisites for national healing.

Many Christians feel an urgency to ask God to turn our country in the right direction. I believe that unless we come to God in the right way, the way He requires, then we will have little success.

Psalm 24:3-4 says: "Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart." Our attitude, heart and motives must all be right to call on God for a day of grace for our nation. If we can't come before the Lord the right way, then we shouldn't come at all. As thousands gather in front of Independence Hall during this historic moment, and as Christians pray around the nation for America, we must keep these three things in mind:

1. We must humble ourselves. Pride has brought great division and disunity in the church. We've separated ourselves from one another, seeking superiority and self-promotion rather than unity and brotherhood. We must learn to have tolerance for differences in the little things and unify around the main truths of Jesus Christ that we all believe.

2. We must turn from our wicked ways. We can't throw stones at immorality in the world when it exists in the church. In Philadelphia, we'll confront the seven deadly sins of America

that the church has widely ignored or compromised with. Through Christ we have victory over pride, envy, gluttony, lust, anger, greed and sloth.

3. We must cry out to God to heal our land and to manifest His presence in every area of our culture so we can witness revival in the church and an awakening in society. As we pray and seek His face, God is faithful to keep His promise.

In this *kairos* moment in time, we will make a renewed “salt covenant” in which we will commit to be holy as He is holy and to live set apart by His grace. We can no longer afford to be salt with no flavor, as Matthew 5:13 indicates. The church can’t be so much like the world that onlookers cannot tell the difference. God’s people must become “salty” again and become a preservative in the culture that is a conscience to the nation.

We are His people, and we are coming to Him in humility, asking for mercy on America and a new outpouring for a new generation. Abraham Lincoln declared, “It is the duty of nations as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions, in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.”

When we have the right approach, He surely will hear us.

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