

Does Prayer Precede All?

“We can’t do more than pray before we have prayed, but we can do more than pray after we have prayed.” –A.J. Gordon.

Prayer must precede all of the actions of a leader. After prayer, action becomes our mandate.

Prayer is necessary but not sufficient.

Action is necessary but not sufficient.

We see a powerful demonstration of prayer, then action, in Nehemiah.

In Chapter 1, Nehemiah prays the leader’s prayer:

“... hear the prayer of your servant, which I now pray before You, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against you” (verse 6).

After offering a prayer from his heart as a leader, we know that Nehemiah set out to rebuild the wall. Prayers for the wall to be rebuilt were surely offered by others who didn’t build. But Nehemiah prayed and then took action.

In 2 Thessalonians, we read that Paul first asked the brothers to pray for him and pray that the Word would “spread quickly and be glorified” (3:1). After prayer, he told them all to get to work.

For when we were with you, we commanded you that if any will not work, neither shall he eat” (2 Thess. 3:10). Prayer wasn’t going to fill their bellies.

It almost seems facile to exhort a leader to pray before taking action. Yet, I’m often reminded to pray a specific prayer prior to engaging in a very specific effort.

Without prayer, I act on my own. I tacitly declare my independence.

I dare not lead from a position of independence.

“He told them a parable to illustrate that it is necessary always to pray and not lose heart. He said: ‘In a city there was a judge who did not fear God or regard man. And a widow was in that city. She came to him, saying, “Avenge me against my adversary.” He would not for a while. Yet afterward he said to himself, “Though I do not fear God or respect man, yet because this widow troubles me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she will weary me.”’ And the Lord said, ‘Hear what the unjust judge says. And shall not God avenge His own elect and be patient with them, who cry day and night to Him? I tell you, He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?’” (Luke 18:1-8).

PLATFORM Tip No. 3

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