

Take a Knee Before You Go

I once read a quote that said, “We can’t do more than pray before we have prayed, but we can do more than pray after we have prayed.”

Prayer is the weapon of choice for effective leaders.

Prayer must precede the steps of a leader. But after prayer, action becomes our mandate.

Prayer is necessary but not sufficient. Likewise, action is necessary but not sufficient.

We see a powerful demonstration of prayer followed by action in the book of 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. Both my father’s house and I have sinned”* (v. 6).

We know that after offering a prayer from his heart as a leader, Nehemiah set out to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem. Prayers for the wall to be rebuilt were surely offered by others who didn’t build.

But Nehemiah prayed and then took action. It was his love for the Lord—and His love for his fellow Israelites—that propelled him to prayer and action.

In 2 Thessalonians, we read that Paul first asked the brothers to pray for him and to pray that the Word would *“quickly spread and be glorified”* (2 Thess. 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.

But I dare not lead from a position of independence. Without Christ, I am nothing.