

Could Prayer Really Be the Answer?

I recently participated in the National Prayer Assembly, a gathering in Washington DC of intercessors, held just before election day. We gathered to repent and do nothing but pray for our nation and the elections—in a non-partisan way.

It was held on the 16th floor of a hotel next to the Pentagon. We could look out of windows to see the Pentagon, Potomac River and downtown DC all laid out before us. Some powerful prayer took place there.

The format was supposed to be a presenter would take 10 minutes to present prayer points over an issue, then we would pray for at least 20 minutes. Every 30 minutes came a new section. Time was left every few hours to discuss “what was God saying to us?”

While there, I had a very interesting conversation with the guy who led us on the abortion issue. It should interest you to know that while abortion is still legal in this nation, the tide has definitely turned and the pro-life side is gaining more and more ground, plus public opinion is growing to a pro-life position. In fact in January there will be two court cases that reach the supreme court which could very likely rule favorably on two state laws that will severely restrict abortions within those states to only within 12 and 6 weeks, which would rule out more than 90% of abortions there.

Our conversation was more about the comparison with turning the tide on the abortion issue and the absolute steam roller devastation in the marriage issue of marriage being a man and a woman. Without knocking all those who fought valiantly (and even got arrested) in the early days of the abortion issue, my friend pointed out that the tide did not start to turn until

pro-life movement really started getting a prayer movement behind it. And that there is thus far little call for prayer in the marriage debate. We seem to be putting our hope more in the supreme court.

I wonder why believers—especially ministry leaders—do not immediately push for prayer as the primary answer to the problem? We seem to get caught up in the doing—especially with pushing a political solution, before we try to rally prayer. Those who do suggest prayer, it is usually as an afterthought: “Oh, yeah, we should pray, too. Don’t forget to pray.”

A recent request put forth on Facebook by a large Christian ministry, asked for people to sign a petition in support of a Christian in Pakistan who was to be hanged for her faith. Seems like a worthy petition, except that it was obvious the ministry was just trolling for names and email addresses. What in the world affect would such a petition have on the judicial situation in Pakistan? A better request would have been to try to rally prayer for her. [Click here](#) for some guides to help you do so (they still would have received their names). But we have to try something first, then maybe when that doesn’t work, prayer is the answer.

With the nation collapsing around us, we need to do better. I am not opposed to political solutions, or attempts to throw our clout around with petitions, and such. But any doing that comes before a concerted effort to pray, is misguided and often destined to fail. Pray first means pray first.

I am reminded by what S. D. Gordon once said: “The greatest thing anyone can do for God and for man is to pray. You can do more than pray after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed. Prayer is striking the winning blow, service is gathering up the results.”

—Jon Graf is the publisher of Prayer Connect.