

The One Needful Thing

By Brad Bush

IN ONE **ACCORD**
Thoughts on Revival



From the day of Pentecost, there has been not one great spiritual awakening in any land which has not begun in a union of prayer, though only among two or three; no such outward, upward movement has continued after such prayer meetings have declined. –A.T. Pierson

A study of revivals from the day of Pentecost until today reveals certain characteristics that define these outpourings of the Spirit, both leading up to the revival and during it. The most consistent and prominent among them is prayer. Prayer is almost universally acknowledged as the one thing you need in revival. Have you ever wondered why?

Let's apply one of the most widely quoted portions of Scripture regarding revival prayer—from 2 Chronicles 7:14.

If my people, who are called by my name. All true prayer for revival begins in the new birth (John 3:6–9; Rom. 8:14–15). The same Holy Spirit who gave you a new heart gives you the ability to pray. Only a child of God will be motivated to pray for an outpouring of the Spirit.

Will humble themselves. All true prayer for revival is the expression of humility (Ps. 10:17; James 4:6–10). It is an expression of need, desire, and dependence. Self-sufficient, self-important, and self-satisfied are not characteristics of people praying for revival.

And seek my face. All true prayer for revival comes from seeking the face of God (Hos. 10:12; Heb. 11:6). This reminds

me of the 12 disciples in John 6:67–68 when asked by Jesus, “You do not want to go away also, do you?” Those praying for revival can paraphrase Peter’s response, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You alone have the authority to pour out the Spirit according to Your promise!” Seeking the face of Christ for revival is our only hope.

And turn from their wicked ways. All true prayer for revival comes from a heart that has come clean with God (Isa. 55:6–7; Ps. 66:18–20). Let’s face it, holding on to known sin while attempting to pray for revival from the Holy Spirit is going to be hard. People who truly pray for revival are not likely to be willfully harboring sin. The Holy Spirit will see to that!

Expressed in Partnership All revivals are relational. Revival is the presence of God poured out in the person of the Holy Spirit. It permeates and penetrates the hearts of those who are lost without Christ by regenerating them, and restores a first-love fervor for the Lord Jesus Christ and His Kingdom among His saints.

Prayer is like that, as well. It is an intimate heart communication between the Lord and His followers. It is premised on the character of God and on the promises in His Word. The movements of the Holy Spirit guide it in the intimate recesses of the redeemed soul.

Redeeming hearts, reviving hearts, responding to believing hearts—prayer for revival begins with something as intimately personal as prayer for something as deeply relational as revival. That is why the interplay of asking and receiving is so integral to prayer for revival. It is rooted in relationship and expressed in partnership between the Lord and His people.

During the Welsh Revival in 1904, an evangelist visited the

meetings. He stood up and said, "Friends, I have journeyed into Wales with the hope that I may glean the secret of the Welsh Revival." Evan Roberts, leader of the revival, instantly rose to his feet. With an uplifted arm toward the evangelist, he replied: "My brother, there is no secret! Ask and ye shall receive!"

Jesus Christ models this unique relationship between prayer and the outpourings of the Holy Spirit. Two ministries of our ascended Lord continue to be prayer and revival. He is our Intercessor and our Reviver—the One who baptizes His Church with His Spirit (Heb. 7:24–25; Acts 2:32–33). His earthly ministry began in the context of prayer and the outpouring of the Spirit: "And as He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on Him . . ." (Luke 3:21–22). It continued with His disciples, "After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit . . ." (Acts 4:31). And it continues with us today.

In the mid 1950s, there was a popular song titled "Love and Marriage." The first line of the song went like this, "Love and marriage, love and marriage go together like a horse and carriage. This I tell ya brother, you can't have one without the other." Prayer and revival are like that. Prayer is the one needful thing.

BRAD BUSH was pastor of Maple Ridge Community Church in West Lafayette, IN, and director of the International Revival Institute until his passing in 2016.

(C) 2014 *Prayer Connect* magazine.