

Is Increased Prayer a Lot of Hoo-Ha?



When I wrote this column I had recently returned from Washington, D.C., where I participated in events surrounding the United States' National Day of Prayer (2017). It was an exciting time. We heard about all the events across the country on that day—more than 47,000, according to the National Day of Prayer Task Force. If that number is even close to accurate (and assuming an average of 50 people per event—some in the thousands), that means more than two million people were praying for the nation on May 5, 2017!

We also heard about a number of other significant prayer initiatives and events that have taken place or will soon: Pray As One, Appeal to Heaven, Prayer Force One Sunday, Azusa Now, United Cry DC16, Together 2016, and many others.

As the publisher of *Prayer Connect*, I am seeing much more information and interest surrounding prayer for our nation. Within the past year, three national leaders have released books on praying for the nation: Dutch Sheets, *An Appeal to Heaven*; Dave Butts, *With One Cry*, and Anne Graham Lotz, *The Daniel Prayer*. Clearly we are on an upswing regarding the numbers of people who feel compelled to pray.

This excites me for two reasons.

First, historically, many significant revivals have come during times of intense desperation within a nation. Things

were very bad in the U.S. just before the First and Second Great Awakenings and before the prayer revival of the late 1850s through the 1860s. When His people get desperate, God responds to a united crying out in prayer. Believers in the United States are feeling the growing desperation and are seeking God. This gives me great hope that a move of God's Spirit is on the way.

Second, I know the truth of this statement (attributed to different individuals): "When God sets His people to praying, you know He is up to something."

Many believe we are under the judgment of God in America. I do not doubt that. I believe we are. But, historically, as people have cried out to God, He has responded with mercy and blessing. If we were under a judgment that can never be removed, why would God be drawing His people to pray? Why wouldn't He say to us, like He said to Jeremiah regarding Israel at one point, "Do not pray for this people or offer any plea or petition for them, because I will not listen when they call to me in the time of their distress" (Jer. 11:14)?

The fact that He is calling believers all across the nation to pray—millions of them—gives me great hope as well. He is not done with this nation!

I do not know what a move of God might look like. I don't know how it might impact the cultures of both the Church and society. But I do believe—with great hope—that a move of His Spirit will be poured out on this nation in the coming days.

—Jonathan Graf is the publisher of Prayer Connect magazine.