The value of biblical prayers

1. Introduction

a. As we begin to look towards returning to the prayer room it is a good time to look again at some of the values that underpin New Forest House of Prayer. These values help us to stay focussed on our mission and to build in harmony and unity.

b. For the last 16 years we have built NFHOP on seven values:

i Enjoying intimacy with the beautiful God

ii Living a fasted lifestyle

iii The importance of combining worship and intercession

iv Team ministry

v Carrying a prophetic spirt

vi Scripture based prayer

vii Understanding end times and Israel's significance

c. At the heart of this community are a people who have chosen to give themselves to a lifestyle of prayer and worship believing that intercessory worship is the primary means by which God has chosen to release His power on earth in this age and in the age to come. In this, we express our agreement with the Lord. In worship we agree with ***who He is,*** and in intercession we agree with ***what He promised to do***.

John. 4:23 *[23]The true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.*

d. We believe that the primary principle of intercession is simply to tell God what He tells us to tell Him as the means of releasing His power. It is profoundly simple. Its mystery lies in its "weakness," simplicity, and accessibility to all. Intercession is God's brilliant strategy for including the saints in ruling with Him in power.

e. We see this principle clearly in Genesis 1 where the Father's plans were spoken by Jesus, and then the Spirit released power. The Father has many plans in His heart and ordained that Jesus speak them out in intercession. We see Jesus's work in the phrase "and God said" ten times in Genesis 1. Jesus is identified as the Creator who said, "Let there be light"

Gen.1:1-3 *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. [2] The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.[3] And God said, "Let there be light", and there was light.*

John 1:1-3 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] He was in the beginning with God. [3] All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made*

Psalm 33:6 *By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host.*

f. As we speak the words that are on the Father's heart and mind so we release His will into the earth and the Holy Spirit moves in power to bring them into being.

2. The benefits of praying biblical prayers

a. ***Benefit 1***: ***Renews our faith***—Speaking God's Word in intercession causes us to internalise His Word and thus renews our faith, draws us into intimacy with God, and transforms us. *God's words are spirit and life*—they impart God's life to us

John 6:63 *The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.*

b. Each time we say what God says, it marks and changes us. Each time we receive a small impartation of His life, which illuminates our mind and tenderises our heart. This process renews our faith. As a programmer rewrites lines of code when developing a program, we "rewrite lines of code" in our heart by speaking God's Word.

c. ***Benefit 2***: ***Increased understanding***—Intercession releases spiritual insight (Eph. 1:17). As Daniel prayed, Gabriel visited him and gave him "skill to understand" spiritual things (Dan. 9:20-23).

Eph. 1:17-18 *[17]…the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, [18]the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know…*

Dan. 9:20-23 *[20]Now while I was speaking, praying…and presenting my supplication before the LORD … [21]yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel…[22]said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. [23]At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved…understand the vision…*

d. ***Benefit 3***: ***Release of God's power***—Intercession releases God's power and justice as it changes the spiritual atmosphere (Lk. 18:8). When Daniel prayed, angelic activity increased and demonic activity was hindered in the spirit realm (Dan. 10). There is an irrefutable law we observe in history, that revival is released in a far greater measure when night-and-day prayer is offered.

Luke 18:7-8 ***[7]*** *And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them?* ***[8]*** *I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"*

e. ***Benefit 4***: ***Love and Unity***—Intercession is a practical expression of loving people as it releases deliverance for the needy and unites our heart to the people and places for which we pray.

2 Cor.1:11 *You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.*

Phil.1:19 *for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance*

f. ***Benefit 5***: ***Multiplied blessing***—Intercession for others causes God's blessings to multiply by returning back on the life of the intercessor. Every prayer to release God's blessing and power on another is a prayer that God also returns back on you and your family. The law of the kingdom requires that we always receive more than what we give away by faith.

Luke 6:38 *…. give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."*

g. ***Benefit 6***: ***Long-term impact***—Intercession makes a long-term impact. Our prayers for people and places have an impact both now and in the age to come. The prayers of the saints from history are stored in a bowl near God's throne and make an impact in the end times

Rev. 5:8 *And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.*

h. ***Benefit 7***: ***Inheritance***—Intercession gives us an "inheritance" in the people and places for which we pray. We have a spiritual investment with a sense of ownership, as well as eternal blessing and joy in all the people and places that we regularly pray for and serve

i. Intercession is God's strategy for including the saints in ruling with Him in power. The activity of intercession renews our *faith*, transforms and draws us into *intimacy* with God, increases *understanding*, releases God's *power*, expresses *love*, leads to *unity*, multiplies our *blessing*, has *long-term impact*, and increases our *inheritance*.

3. Apostolic prayers

a. For years we have used the prayers of the Bible believing that the prayers that Jesus, Paul, and Peter prayed are recorded for our benefit. We refer to these prayers as the ***"apostolic prayers"*** because they are the prayers that Jesus prayed as our chief apostle (Heb. 3:1) and that the Spirit gave to the apostles.

b. We believe that the apostolic prayers are a valuable gift to the church being the prayers that burned in God's heart and give us the language of His heart. He never changes, so we can be assured they still burn in His heart today.

c. These prayers are also guaranteed! They are like cheques already signed in heaven and waiting only for a co-signer on the earth to be cashed. They are as relevant today as they were in the early church. In future weeks we shall be looking at some of these apostolic prayers but this morning I want us to consider why they are so powerful and why we focus on them in intercession.

d. **Apostolic prayers are God-Centered.** All the prayers in the New Testament are God-centered prayers; each one is addressed to God. Not one apostolic prayer is addressed to the devil. God-centered prayer, including spiritual warfare prayer, is the model set forth in the New Testament. It is the model the early church used in resisting and dislodging demonic forces and cultural strongholds (Eph. 6:12; 2 Cor. 10:3-5). All the prayers of Jesus that are recorded in the Bible were directed to the Father (Jn. 14:16; 17:5, 11, 15, 25). Jesus taught His disciples to direct their prayers to the Father (Mt. 18:19; Lk. 11:2, 13). The apostles' prayers also teach us to address the Father when we pray. In the "warfare epistle" Paul wrote to the Ephesians, he addressed all his prayers to the Father (Eph. 1:16–17; 3:14, 16, 20).

e. **Apostolic prayers are positive.** The apostolic prayers are positive prayers asking God for the *impartation of positive things* instead of the *removal of negative things*. For example, Paul prayed for love to abound instead of asking for the removal of hatred (Phil. 1:9). He prayed for the impartation of unity instead of praying against division (Rom. 15:5). He asked for peace to increase instead of fear to be removed (Rom. 15:13). He did not pray against sin but asked for an increase of holiness, purity, and love (1 Thes. 3:12-13). Even Paul's requests to be delivered from evil men are positive in focusing on the deliverance of God's people rather than on exposing or bringing down the evil men persecuting them (2 Thes. 3:2).

f. Praying for the impartation of positive virtues, instead of focusing on removing negative characteristics, enhances unity and love in the church. Some pray "negative prayers" that focus and often such prayers feel judgmental and angry. Others in the prayer meeting do not agree with the view or tone that was expressed in the negative prayer, so the prayer results

in creating an unnecessary division among some of the people at that prayer meeting. Positive apostolic prayers facilitate unity, impact our emotions, and build our faith. The Father is the "Great Psychologist." He designed these prayers to help human hearts flow well and work together in unity with a spirit of encouragement and faith.

g. **Apostolic prayers are usually for the** church**.** The vast majority of the apostolic prayers are focused on strengthening of the church, not on the lost or the transformation of society. This does not mean that God is ambivalent about the lost or society or that we are not to pray for these things.

h. However, God's primary plan to reach the lost or to impact a place is by anointing His church with power and love. When we pray for the whole church in a place to be revived in love and power, the answer to these prayers will have an immense impact on the lost. Many unbelievers will inevitably come to Jesus and society will be changed as the church in that place walks in the power of the Spirit.

i. When preachers are anointed and the church is revived, the saints will speak the Word and do the works of the kingdom with great consistency and a multitude of unbelievers will come to Jesus. As we labour in prayer for an increase of the measure of the Spirit's anointing on the church we know that a harvest will surely result. No power can prevent the lost from coming to Jesus in great numbers when the church is revived and operating together in the anointing of the Spirit.

j. We see this principle at work in the city of Ephesus(Acts 19) where God raised up a large, anointed church with congregations across the city which was so powerful that everyone who lived in Asia "heard the word of the Lord" from Paul and others in this church.

Acts 19:10 *This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.*

k. As we pray for the church, especially the church in our own town or region, so we grow in love for all our brothers and sisters. We will love those for whom we pray consistently. God knows that we will love the church more as we pray for it regularly. His divine strategy is for the hearts of the intercessors to connect and grow in love towards the church for which they consistently pray.

4. Conclusion

a. As we look in detail at some of these apostolic prayers in future weeks we will see two primary requests that Jesus exhorted us to make of the Father when we intercede. Firstly, the release of a greater measure of the Holy Spirit and, secondly, the release of a greater measure of justice. This is the intercessory cry at the heart of the prayer room as we come together again. In engaging in this mission we see transformation both in our own lives and the people and places we pray for.

b. As we begin to gather together once again let us recommit to stand together in worship and prayer before Him. To cry out for revival and justice; for wisdom and revelation; for the poor and the oppressed; for the sick and the weak; as we are empowered by the Holy Spirit through a lifestyle of prayer, worship and fasting. To exalt Jesus and to prepare His Bride for His return through the transformative power of biblical prayer.