

Call to Obedience #503  
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA  
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## The Priesthood of All Believers

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*You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood... (1 Peter 2:5, 9).*

The office of the priesthood, with all its privileges allowing one to come to the throne of God every day, is bestowed upon each new convert on the first day of his life with God. It is a most sacred, precious and royal calling. It is an office to be fulfilled during the rest of his lifetime without vacation or variation. So when Peter says: "You are...", he means no one is left out. And everyone truly born of God is spiritually prepared, equipped and designed to fulfill this priestly office just as a bird is designed to fly and a fish is designed to swim. And the best thing you can do for any new convert after his rebirth is to immediately invite him to a prayer meeting. This is the new convert's new home and if he moves in here, there are great prospects that he will succeed in his Christian life. Praying is as important to the spiritual man as breathing is for the physical man. So, the devil knows that if he can stop a man from praying, he can choke him to death. Because the devil knows that when the new convert begins to pray, he will begin to wear the armor of God—becoming invincible to the devil's tricks and assaults. All who are born of God need their private prayer closets and also prayer fellowship with other saints.

This gets us to the book of Exodus where we have the first picture of a corporate prayer meeting. Having been delivered out of slavery in the land of Egypt, the twelve tribes of Israel were almost immediately attacked by the Amalekites. The Amalekites had weapons and were trained for warfare. The Israelis had no weapons; they were not trained for warfare; and they had no war experience. And what saved Israel from being totally destroyed by the Amalekites? The answer is found in these striking words recorded for our learning:

*And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it.*

*And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun (Ex. 17:11-12).*

The Amalekites (the devil) were defeated by three men out of 1,500,000 people who exercised their spiritual office as priests of God. It did not matter how many soldiers Moses had in the field. What did matter was how many people Moses had with him in prayer. And here you can see that just three men fulfilling their priestly duty defeated a whole nation. This is the record of the first prayer meeting in the Bible and it set the stage for what even the smallest prayer meetings can do. This should give you great encouragement. Do not belittle having only three people in your church prayer meetings. Do not pity yourself and do not try to push others to attend a prayer meeting when they really do not want to be there. Rather, get happy and have faith. Indeed, for thousands of years, the church has survived and prospered mostly by just a few mighty men and women of God who exercised their priestly office. It is because of them that the prophecy spoken by the angel Gabriel shall be fulfilled: *Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end...* (Isa. 9:7). It is because of those thousands of prayer meetings where three or four people prayed together that Christianity has been carried from generation to generation.

Unfortunately overall, the success of church ministries is measured by the number of people in the pews on Sunday mornings instead of by the number of people engaged in spiritual warfare. Of course this is an old, old story. When the enemy came against King David, David wanted to be assured of his victory before the battle began. He ordered the numbering of the soldiers of Israel and Judah (2 Sam. 24:1) even against the advice of his commander. His confidence was in the troops, the soldiers. And because he did so, the end result was disastrous. I said: "disastrous." Indeed, we need to heed these words: *Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the LORD our God (Ps. 20:7); He does not delight in the strength of the horse; He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man (Ps. 147:10).* Can we begin to understand this? In the eyes of God, a pastor who can raise up three priests like Moses, Aaron and Hur is more successful than the one who can bring thousands of people into the pews whose spiritual lives have been choked to death.

So then when Jesus came to earth, there were some things He did away with, such as the ceremonial law. There were some things He changed and

there are some things He left unchanged. The latter is the case as we see in Jesus' partial reference of Isaiah: *Also the sons of the foreigner who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him... Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer...* (Isa. 56:6-7).

Notice that God did not call the temple a house of worship, but He did call it a house of prayer because when the first temple was dedicated, it was made a house of prayer by King Solomon. And when Solomon was done offering the first prayer ever prayed in that place, the fire came down from heaven and the glory the Lord filled the house (2 Chron. 7:1-3). But when Jesus came, the temple had become a den of thieves and a house of rituals. With this, He cleansed the temple viciously and soon after prophesied its destruction.

Prayer is the highest form of worship and it allows us to get in touch with God. It gets us involved with God and puts us into a partnership with Him. Prayer gets things done that God wants to get done. With all of this, Jesus lifted up the importance of even the smallest prayer meetings by saying: *Again, I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them* (Matt. 18:19-20).

This all means that when the apostle speaks of *not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together...* (Heb. 10:25), he means we are not to forsake praying together. And if we are prayerless when we gather together, we have a religion without Christianity.

So is it any wonder then that when Jesus departed from earth, He gathered together His disciples and admonished them to pray every day and not to stop praying *...until they were endued with power from on high* (Luke 24:49). Then, as 120 of them gathered together and prayed for 10 days, they got what was needed: the Holy Spirit came down and birthed the church, the church filled with the Holy Spirit, the Bride of Christ. There were 3,000 new converts that same day who were born into a praying church: *And they continued stedfastly...in prayers* (Acts 2:42). What followed then is this: *And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved* (Acts 2:47). Are our new converts today born into praying churches? Then, shortly after the birth of the church, there came persecution and the new converts were scattered everywhere, preaching the gospel. Remember that praying Christians are witnessing Christians. Oh, what a rich time that was.

Again, for the people of the early church, going to church meant primarily going to prayer meeting and interacting with one another. There were no programmed worship services as we know them today in most of our churches. When we come up with our own programs, we squeeze out the Holy Spirit. We may have church meetings about Him but not with Him.

In this vein, William Law, a friend of John Wesley's, remarked something like this: "It is very observable, that there is not one command in all of the gospel for public worship; and perhaps it is a duty that is least insisted upon in all of the New Testament. Rather it is devotion to God, the entire giving of ourselves to Him seven days a week in all circumstances of life which is at the core of all New Testament writings." In many churches, prayer and praises are more often than not relegated to a few people who have nothing else to do or to the eccentrics. In fact, it has become universally acceptable that busy people are to be excused from such meetings. The devil fully accepts those excuses. However, there are many scriptures that prove that such excuses are unacceptable. Just look at Joseph and Daniel for example who were both busy prime ministers of empires, yet they were also mighty men of prayer. It is the carnal nature that seeks after and finds excuses. The spiritual nature has no excuses; it just joyfully does what needs to be done.

In summary, I have written all of this to remind you of your high, holy, priestly calling and privileges as a royal priest. I did not write this for you to overturn the tables in your church as Jesus did in the temple. That is not yours to do. Instead, I encourage you to find a prayer meeting and join it: *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds* (2 Cor. 10:4).

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