

Please welcome...

Preaching for us again today is **John Buttrey** from the West Anaheim church- Be sure to welcome him back and thank him!

Prepare

Reminder: just one week until our “Last-Saturday-in-February” meeting with our speakers **Dave Whilden, Leonard White and Bob Owen.** Let’s all pray for a successful meeting!

Address

Pray for **Mike and Kim Bruni:** home address: 69638 Antonia Way, Rancho Mirage, CA 92270. City of Hope (for next 2-3 weeks)...1500 Duarte Road, Room 5131, Duarte, CA 91009

February Birthdays

8 Zoie Perales 18 Hazel Brouillette 24 Jonathan Munayco

March Birthdays

2 Gonzalo Medina 9 Jessica Aguiar
8 Drina Zamarripa 18 Buddy Cashion 30 Barrett Hoffman

March Anniversaries

6 Harold and Dortha Gentry 24 Chuck and Pat Limburg

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.
Sunday.....6:00 p.m.
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

Preacher:
(Vacant)

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“Prayer...”

Building a House of Prayer

By Allen Webster

A very timid woman wanted to participate in the visitation program of her church, but was petrified by the thought of actually visiting somebody. The preacher, sensing her anxiety, recommended that she pray before each visit. He noted God’s promise to give peace which surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:6).

A week later the woman was walking on “cloud nine”. She jubilantly told the preacher, “You were right—prayer works! Before each one of my visits I prayed that the people wouldn’t be home, and they weren’t!” Her prayers worked against the best interests of the church. What about mine? Do they work for the church? What could happen in the local congregation if I prayed?

GOD INCREASES LOVE WITHIN A CONGREGATION IN ANSWER TO PRAYER. For what is the church I attend best known? “That’s the church that doesn’t use pianos.” “That’s the church that believes in baptism for salvation.” “That’s the church whose members think they are the only ones going to heaven.” “That’s the church that doesn’t have Sunrise services at Easter or Cantatas at Christmas.” “That’s the church that doesn’t call its preacher ‘reverend.’”

These are all good things for the community to know about us, but are any of these the thing for which Jesus would want His church best known? Wouldn’t it be better if they said of us, “That’s the church that loves each other” (cf. John 13:33-34), or, “That’s a church that really believes in prayer”? A loving, praying congregation will outgrow an unloving, prayerless one every year. Love shows the community that these are Christ’s followers in a way sermons never could. How do we get our members to love each other? Several ways, but one is to pray for it. Paul said, “*And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more*” (Philippians 1:9).

GOD UNITES A CONGREGATION IN ANSWER TO PRAYER. Some churches seem to believe in prayer about as much as a ship's captain caught in a storm. When it was evident that the ship would not survive a storm, the captain called out to his crew, "Does anyone here know how to pray?" One volunteered with, "Yes, sir, I do." "Good," the captain replied. "You pray while the rest of us put on our life jackets. We're one short."

Congregations need an "all for one, one for all" attitude. If it were not possible for unity to come about through prayer, then Jesus would never have prayed, "*for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me*" (John 17:20-21). The early church continued "*with one accord in prayer and supplication*" (Acts 1:14).

Is a congregation you know of suffering from disunity? Are brethren "*biting and devouring one another*"? (Galatians 5:15). Pray for them. Churches grow in love's greenhouse, but die in a freezer.

GOD GRANTS CHURCHES WISDOM IN ANSWER TO PRAYER. How many churches are trying to live down the mistakes of past decisions? Some are "boxed in" because they did not have the wisdom to buy enough property; others have properties not conducive to growth because they are so out-of-the way visitors must have directions to find them. Some store up money as if the church were a bank while missionaries and good works go unsupported; others pay interest on hundreds of thousands while missionaries and good works go unsupported. Some have built great sprawling facilities they can never pay for with their membership base; others built too small and had to add on before they got it paid off. Some failed to practice church discipline and now the church is weak and worldly; others practiced it with poor judgment and split the church (cf. 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Thessalonians 3).

Preachers and members with poor business and ethical judgment have ruined the influence of the church in the community (and then moved on). Some have preached hard and mean and turned away those who were not yet ready for meat (Ephesians 4:15; Hebrews 5:12-14; Mark 4:33); others have set the church up to be led astray

by never preaching and teaching on doctrine and important contemporary issues (2 Timothy 4:1-6).

Churches have invested in missionaries and Christian education without sufficiently checking the soundness and/or work ethic of those involved and hurt the Cause instead of furthering it.

Churches need wisdom much more than they need money or members. If we have wisdom, we will eventually get money and members. And without wisdom we will likely lose the money and members we now have. Solomon wrote, "*The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools*" (Proverbs 3:35) and, "*There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up*" (Proverbs 21:20).

How do we keep from making serious mistakes? Pray for wisdom! James promised God gives it freely in answer to prayer (1:1-6). Paul told the Ephesians, "*making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him*" (Ephesians 1:16-17). He also prayed that the Philippian church would have judgment to "*approve things that are excellent*" (Philippians 1:9). He told the Colossians that he did "*not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding*" (Colossians 1:9).

After World War II a great cry arose because the Allies never bombed the railroad tracks which led to Auschwitz. Although they knew hundreds of thousands of Jews and Slovaks were being transported along these tracks to death camps, the Allied forces never bombed the tracks. They had the power but refused to use it.

What about us? Are we less to blame if a congregation and individual Christians are dying and we could help stop the process? Do we use the prayer power available to us to change evil into good? Do we use prayer as a weapon against the things we complain about in our world or even in our congregations?

"Let's have a word of prayer."

Something to think about...

"Satan does not care how many people read about prayer if only he can keep them from praying." - Paul E. Billheimer -