

## How to Ignite a Fire God's Way! By Melanie Imel

How many of you reading this right now desire to see a move of God in this country? To see your loved ones, your children come to know the Lord? To see the Glory of God fill our churches to the point that when someone is dying of cancer, their FIRST thought is to get to the church where the healing power of God is available?

I have been studying the Azusa street revival. We are still reaping the benefits of this mighty move of God. But great preaching did not ignite this revival; neither did anointed worship or any plan or committee. What started this fire that no man could stop was PRAYER. Prayer birthed this revival that changed the entire history of the church. Prayer that came from a group of people whose hearts were yearning with the unquenchable thirst for more of God. I believe that great preaching alone will not bring revival to the church...wearing blue jeans and cool shirts will not bring revival to the church... even cutting edge media and the latest Hillsong worship music will not bring revival to the church! Now, none of the above is wrong. Thank God for strong preaching, worship, great media presentation, *(and I think God is more concerned about our heart than our jean selection)*, but, without prayer, we don't have the power... and it's the power that makes the difference! God desires YOU to pray and seek His Face, to be a vessel of prayer and to pray in the harvest of souls. We, as individual believers, have the God given privilege and responsibility to pray and intercede for our president, nation, the lost, our family, and our churches.

I was recently reading an account of Evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson's meetings in a little country church in the early 1900's. A newspaper reporter was there to prove Sister Aimee to be a fraud. He believed that she was hooked up with some electrical wiring system causing people to be shocked when she laid her hands on them! The reporter approached Aimee and asked her where the power for her meetings came from. She replied in the basement. The reporter was sure he had caught her and hurried down to the basement. When he opened the door, he truly saw what the power source was for Sister McPherson's meetings. There on their knees were fifty praying grandmothers! Aimee Semple McPherson knew the power of prayer.

Prayer brings the visitation of the Spirit. That is why it is so important to have strong prayer in our churches and in our homes. And this is also why Satan will do whatever he can to stop us from praying. In Matthew 21:13 Jesus tells us that "My house shall be called a house of prayer." Yet in some churches we see very little praying and because of this, we see very little fruit and very little power. Because of this lack of fruit and power, many scramble to find out what is wrong, what can we change?, what can we do?, when it is not what we can do but what HE can do. Paul Yonggi Cho was asked his advice to preachers in America and he replied "you preach too long and pray too little".

In 2 Chronicles 7:14, the word says, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." Here we are told to: 1.humble ourselves 2. pray 3. seek. 4. turn or repent. THEN God will: 1. hear 2. forgive 3. bring healing. Notice that this progression starts with the church in humility and prayer. Many churches and individuals ARE hearing the cry of the Spirit to return to this secret place of prayer and they ARE seeking the face of God. I heard a prophet of God say that soon those churches that have prayed and sought the face of God, that have cleansed themselves and cried out for the Glory, will see an overflow of power, finances, and people flocking to the churches that have the power and Glory of God. People are hungry for the REAL THING! They are tired of religion. And this prophet went on to say that he saw the churches that refused to preach and sing about the blood of Jesus, and refused to pray and repent of their sin, begin to dry up and empty out. When the church comes together in prayer, hungry for God, desperate for His presence, THEN and only THEN will we see a genuine move of God's Glory and Fire in the church.

Another supply that prayer brings is the power and the anointing to do the work of God. It is

going to take more than a donut and a cup of Starbucks to change people today. In case you have not noticed, people have real issues today, multiplied hurts and sin, and it is going to take supernatural power from Almighty God to minister to them. Being involved in pastoral ministry for years, I have faced many situations that required the move of the Spirit and the wisdom of God. I remember several years ago one particular incident that made me grateful to know how to pray. After a church service, a young mother of two asked to speak with me. As I sat down to talk with her, she immediately let me know that she was planning to commit suicide, but she was concerned about leaving her two small children. I was young in the ministry and could feel the fear trying to grip me. I knew that if I didn't minister to her correctly, she might proceed with taking her own life. She needed more than being signed up for a class to overcome depression. For too long the church has tried to counsel problems out, or meet needs by programs, all done without the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit. I asked the Lord what to do and I heard the voice of the Lord gently speak to me, "Get her to the throne room and I will deliver her." In that moment, I did not have a lot of ministry experience to fall back on, but I did know how to pray and usher someone into the presence of God. I began to pray and God delivered her from the depression that had plagued her for several years. When we get into the presence of God, we have a supernatural supply from God to meet any need we encounter.

Another benefit of Prayer is that it can stop the plans of the enemy from increasing or even manifesting. The church must walk in our authority and boldly proclaim that "no weapon formed against us shall prosper,"(Isaiah 54:17). I was in a church service once and I saw a vision of weeds growing up in the church sanctuary and all of a sudden something like a lawn mower quickly mowed the weeds right down. As I prayed about what this meant, I realized that the Lord was saying strife and problems were trying to come up like weeds against the ministry and families of this church, but because of the prayers covering this particular church, like a spiritual lawn mower, the prayers just came in and mowed the strife and problems right down to nothing! Prayer kept this church clean and strife free! The attacks that Satan has been preparing and forming against the Church will not manifest or increase when prayer goes forth in authority. Many times our problems are simply symptoms of prayerlessness. God knows all things and He will give you inside information that can only come from intimacy in prayer.

In Galatians 4:19 we are told that the church is to make intercession for new believers when they become born again until Christ is formed in them. This is a responsibility of the church. Many times we lose new christians to attacks against their minds or families that could have been stopped if we had only stood in the gap and prayed for them.

Our pastors and leaders should also be prayed for on a regular basis. Leaders have tougher paths to walk than those who follow behind. I have met pastors who have quit the ministry or secretly want to quit because of the constant battles. The harvest fields they work in are often booby-trapped with spiritual and emotional landmines hidden there by the enemy. One of the greatest ways you can bless your pastor is to pray, pray, pray for him or her! When Peter's life was in danger, Acts chapter 12 records that the church was in constant prayer for him to be safely delivered. The Apostle Paul asked the church to pray for him that the Word of God would not be hindered. Paul also asked for prayer to be delivered from wicked and unreasonable men (2 Thes. 3:1,2).

My prayer is that YOU will hear the calling voice of God to pray, seek God, be hungry and thirsty for Him like never before. We are in a season of spiritual destiny and the enemy knows this. God needs His church to unite, to cry out for our nation, cry out for our churches, and pray for our pastors.

Prayer is what will ignite this world once again with the power and glory of God!

Blessings,  
Melanie