



Pastor's Page

"God believes in Prayer"

Yesterday morning 7 of us from church began a 24 hour prayer chain. Many others in the church signed up for a "slot" from 12.00noon yesterday until 10.00am today. Quite an achievement! Next Saturday thousands of Christians will gather together to pray in a concerted effort as Birmingham hosts *The Trumpet Call*. The aim of this event is to bring Christians of every denomination, of every age group, from every area of the nation to come together on Saturday, 21 June 2008; the "longest 24 hours of the year" to worship, declare truths from Scripture and to pray for the British Isles. Two years ago I remember hearing a minister (Reverend John Pozzo) praying for England live on BBC Radio 5. However he wasn't praying for the nation to turn back to God but for the England football team to do well in the World Cup! (Another unanswered prayer?!)

Prayer is something that most people engage in at some point in their lives. I've heard it said that there were no atheists in the trenches in the First World War. These men cried out to God in their desperation. Prayer seems to be a very natural human activity particularly in trying circumstances and yet paradoxically we often find prayer very difficult. But does prayer really make any difference? How should we pray? Prayers for a football victory may feel inappropriate and prayers for earthquake victims may feel ineffective. No wonder one of Jesus disciples once asked "Lord teach us to pray". Jesus response was; ***When you pray say this; Father, may your name be honoured; may your Kingdom come. Give us day by day the food that we need. Forgive us our sins, for we forgive everyone who does us wrong. And do not bring us to hard testing*** (Luke 11:2-4 GNB) Jesus teaches us that prayer is primarily about yielding to God's will and seeking his purposes for his world and for his people. He also teaches us that in this context (desiring to see God's will coming to fruition in our world) he will provide all that we need both physically and spiritually for the journey. Praying for God's Kingdom to come is to pray for God's rule on earth as in heaven. And this begins when he starts to rule in our hearts and lives. Do we desire this? Do we seek to serve God or would we rather he served us?! Do we find ourselves praying "Lord, look after me and bless my life" or "Take my life and let it be; consecrated Lord to thee?"

The Bible tells us that after Jesus had risen from the dead he returned to heaven having completed his earthly mission. He left his disciples with the task of spreading the good news about himself being witnesses to the resurrection and God's Kingdom, which was now open to everyone through Christ. And though Jesus left them he promised that he would send the Holy Spirit to equip them for the task ahead. Jesus returned to heaven to do two things; prepare a place for them and us (***"I am going there (heaven) to prepare a place for you"*** John 14:2).and also to pray for us! ***"Christ Jesus.....is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us"*** (Romans 8:34)

God loves his world and the people that he created. In fact He loves the world so much that he sent Jesus to die for it and he welcomed him back to heaven to pray for it. Yes, God believes in prayer, how about us?

15th June 2008