

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Effective Prayer

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There is an email message that is being widely distributed by caring people entitled “2 Chronicles 7:14.” God is speaking to Solomon after the house of God in Jerusalem had been finished and dedicated. Jehovah appears to Solomon at night and says, “*If my people, who 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.*”

The purpose of the email is emphasizing the power of prayer. An example from World War II reminds readers that an advisor to Churchill organized a group of people in England to collectively pray for one minute every night. The amazing effect was that the bombing stopped. Now people are wanting to organize a similar group to pray one minute each night at 9:00 P.M Eastern Time on behalf of America.

Often, prayer is described as “powerful”. The email reminds us that “Our prayers are the most powerful asset we have”;

and “Remember, prayer is very powerful...”. So, pray. We should pray. But, should we not progress from looking at the power of prayer to desiring effective prayer?

2 Chronicles 7:14 gives us some insight into what should accompany prayer to make it effective. In times of trouble it would be good for the people of God to “humble themselves, and pray...” but they must also “turn from their wicked ways”. Then, God would “forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” How effective is prayer if God is not heeding our petitions? The power in prayer is not my words, but the action of God in His answer. A bomb may be powerful, but if it explodes in a deserted place, it is not very effective. God’s forgiveness and healing of the land will not occur until prayer is accompanied with seeking God’s face with repentance.

Effective prayer is emphasized throughout Scripture. James writes, “*The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working*” (James 5:17). What prayer accomplishes in its working is what God wants us to focus upon. And a man living righteously before God is what makes prayer effective.

John writes, “*and whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasant in his sight*” (1 John 3:21). Effective prayer is the prayer that sees us receiving our petitions. Such prayer is only effective when we keep God’s commandments and do what is pleasing to Him.

Our prayers are not effective nor powerful when we are living unrighteously. The husband who does not honor his wife has his prayers hindered before God (1 Peter 3:7). If we regard iniquity in our hearts “*the Lord will not hear*” (Psalm 66:18).

I agree that prayer is a powerful asset, and our country’s leaders need the petitioning of our almighty God. But prayer will only be effective if we who pray are living righteously before God and keeping his commandments. Prayer for healing America’s land will only become a reality when citizens repent of their wicked ways and seek God. Individual and collective prayer is needed. But heed the real teaching of 2 Chronicles 7:14. It is emphasizing effective prayer, which requires more than just praying.