

# BE ENCOURAGED AND STRENGTHENED IN PRAYER

by Ken Burnett

“Thus in Judah, it was said, ‘The strength of the Burden Bearers is failing, yet there is much rubbish . . . Then I stationed men in the lowest parts (at the exposed places) and I stationed the people in families with their swords, spears and bows.’” Neh 4:10, 13.

The wall had been quickly half-finished, even in the face of enemy anger, “. . . for the people had had a heart and mind to work.” But at that very point, fury erupted from Sanballat and company in a conspiracy (Heb ‘kasher’) to stir up trouble and hinder the work. So it is with those seeking to pray for Israel. There are many unseen, unrecognised spiritual forces opposing us. “Be not surprised at the fiery ordeal among you as though something strange were happening to you . . .” (1 Peter 4:12). It is healthy to be aware of this fact – it will lead to our own spiritual growth, and eventually to greater effectiveness in prayer.

It is particularly important to note how Nehemiah stationed his workers in ‘families’. Thereby was provided multiplied strength, mutual encouragement, protection of one another and even ‘body’ operation – (conducive to spiritual revelation). Herein we find the most basic principle of prayer – ‘togetherness’! This particular article is designed for all prayer partners but especially for those who are not members of a PFI prayer group. Ideally, such groups are best attached to a local church.

So, beloved prayer partner, here are some guidelines to help you become more fruitful and effective in prayer.

1. Remember that within PFI prayer there is a ‘giving of yourself’ to the Lord on behalf of others. “Give and it will be given to you, good measure, pressed down and running over.” Luke 6:38.

2. Confirm the burden in your heart for Israel and the Jewish people by keeping the word of God before you. Terms such as Israel, Jacob, Zion, Jerusalem, Judah etc mean that, if you read your Bible through once a year, you will be reading names directly concerning Israel on average 12 times every day!

3. If the strength of the workers in Nehemiah’s day was failing, it is symbolic of what we may expect today (1 Cor 10:11). Take this wonderful 4th chapter of Nehemiah as your compass for the days ahead!

4. Nehemiah (= Comforter, Consoler, a type of the Holy Spirit) set people together, and ensured they were armed. They had not only to work to build but also to guard against the enemy, who would attack them as well as the work of rebuilding. The sword? “And take the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.” Make sure that it is the Spirit, not the flesh, wielding the sword! (Eph 6:17-18).

5. Exposed places were observed and covered. PFI Prayer groups, partners, leaders, workers etc. themselves need more covering today than ever as a No. 1 target of the enemy. “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities . . . powers . . . rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Eph 6:12). Nehemiah made

detailed arrangements to stay linked, including the use of warning by trumpet.

6. If you cannot join a PFI Prayer group as such, seek to form even a Prayer Cell. Two or three people only. "Two are better than one for they have good return for their labour . . . if one fails, the other will lift up his companion" (Eccles 4:9-10). This can be particularly helpful for those in more remote country places. ("One shall chase a thousand and two – ten thousand.") If you need help in this, write to the PFI Office.

7. On Jesus' last approach to the city of Jerusalem He wept (bewailed, bitter tears) over it (Luke 19:41). He knew of His coming rejection by His very own people. He knew of the resultant destruction, the 2000 years of scattering, suffering and slaughter. He knew not only of the rejection of Himself, but also of the coming rejection of His Church of the people He came to save.

8. Dear prayer partner, have you beheld the city? Or have you like many of us, maintained your distance? You have not shared in the Messiah's tears. Pray along Philippians 3:10 lines, and ask the Lord to mingle faith in with your tears and lead you into believing, intercessory prayer.

9. A related issue to all of this is not merely the subject of Israel, nor of prayer, nor even of gathering together. It is the issue of your heart. "Guard your heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." (Prov 4:23). Our whole walk with God and our prayer life hinges upon the things in our hearts, our motivations and our utterances.

"For thus says the high and lofty one that inhabits eternity, whose Name is Holy: 'I dwell in the high and Holy place; also with

him that is of contrite and humble spirit, in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite." (Isa 57:15).

10. Finally, don't give up when the wall is only half finished! You can find a hundred reasons daily for being discouraged from the ministry of prayer. When God is at work, there will always be rubbish to deal with. Take in some or all of the points listed here – and be amongst those able one day to say: "I have fought the fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith... henceforth . . ." (2 Tim 4:7-8).

[Ed - This most relevant article is reprinted from PFI Prayer Bulletin of Nov / Dec 1998.]

**Often people ask us to link them with a prayer group in their area. Please let us know if you currently lead a prayer group. Also if you led one before and now are no longer able to do so, please let us know at the PFI OFFICE.**