

## New Life Family Matters June 2008

### New Life: A Community of Priests and a Call to Prayer

Most of Jesus' followers would nod their heads in agreement that "prayer is the most powerful force in the world", but these same followers would also admit that their life of prayer doesn't truly reflect this belief. Throughout history, every significant movement of God began with His call for His people to pray on behalf of others. Answering this call to pray, to stand before Him on behalf of others is the role of the New Testament "priest" or "representative". I sense in my heart that our Master is calling us to take our place among the thousands of other believers in being part of His shield of prayer for our nation and beyond. Will you answer this call to pray?

Our nation experienced a powerful outpouring of God's Spirit just before the civil war. **Charles Finney**, one of the men God used to proclaim Christ during this time and see thousands of people respond to Christ, said this about prayer's role in this outpouring. "*When I was in Boston, a gentleman stated that he had come from Nebraska and had found prayer meetings established throughout all the vast expanse of our country over which he had traveled.*" During this same period of time, a man named, **Joseph Lamphier** became greatly burdened for the lack of spiritual concern in the church. He began a daily prayer meeting at noon in New York City. Almost no one attended at first. Sometimes it was attended by only a few. But God honored the efforts and before long as many as 3,000 people attended the meeting. From this humble beginning, many prayer meetings continued to spring up across our nation with the participants numbering in the tens of thousands. History tells us that hundreds of thousands of people came to know Christ and some are of the opinion that this outpouring saved America in the turbulent decades that followed. Two decades after the civil war ended, **R.A.Torrey**, an evangelist equal to **Billy Graham** in effectiveness of his preaching said this about prayer and the revival of the mid 1800's, "*The whole emphasis was on prayer and our whole nation was shaken by the power of God as it had never been shaken before, and perhaps has never been shaken since.*" (The Power of Prayer, page 44)

Our Father is calling out to His Church to pray and seek Him on behalf of others during this turbulent season of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Prayer is the act of faith that believes God to be true to His Word. He says to, "*call out to me, and I will answer.*" (Jeremiah 33:3) Our Father stated this promise to answer prayer to Jeremiah while he was imprisoned and Israel was in exile. In the midst of trying circumstances God calls His people to give themselves to this ministry of prayer on behalf of others. Our lives today are busy and harried, but there are life giving principles of sacrifice and priority that provide the impetus for us to engage in prayer even while we are incredibly busy and stretched (see Mt 6:33; 16:25; Acts20:35).

A final quote about the power of prayer:

*“The greatest thing anyone can do for God and man is to pray. It is not the only thing; but it is the chief thing. The great people of the earth today are the people who pray. I do not mean those who talk about prayer; nor those who say they believe in prayer; nor yet those who can explain about prayer; but I mean those people who take the time to pray.” (S.D. Gordon)*

Will you join me in fulfilling our destiny as people of prayer for such a time as this?