

Day & Night Prayer & Worship¹

We hear a lot about reform these days. There's call for government reform, welfare reform, health care reform...you name it—if it's set up by the world's system—it's eventually going to need to be reformed. But if you look back through all of history, when true reform was brought to a society or nation, it began with God's people being reformed. I heard a sermon recently about God pouring out His Spirit and raising up those who will be used to dynamically reform the Body of Christ, along with aspects of society in various places. Nehemiah was a classic example of a reformer who impacted the church *and* society. He is an excellent case study in courage and Biblical leadership in a time of reformation.

The Scriptures describe incredible advances in the Kingdom of God with works of justice in society. This will increase dynamically in the end times. Jesus will shake all that can be shaken, so that the works founded on His words and purposes will become apparent, as they alone will “remain” through the shaking. Hebrews 12:28 says: “Wherefore we, receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.” God's end-time judgments will remove all that hinders love and His plans and purposes from being accomplished, especially all that involves injustice and oppression.

New Hope's mission fits with this perfectly, as we seek to help those who have been damaged by injustice and oppression of the enemy. It is a mission work at the local level with the Biblical Counseling Center, and further reaching with our ministry materials and the Retreat Center vision.

Throughout the Scriptures, day and night prayer and worship in the temple was always at the center of God's plans for reformation. The purpose of the temple was to be first and foremost a place of encounter with God. But the continual prayer and worship was also strategic in the spiritual realm. It did something in the spiritual realm. It does something to the enemy and it does something regarding the angelic warriors of God.

God has revealed His heart for His places of worship in His Word:

- The fire (which was a symbol of worship) was to be burning upon the altar *continually*—never going out (Leviticus 6:13).
- The Singers were to sing day and night (1 Chronicles 9:33).
- They were to offer praises to God with instruments (1 Chronicles 23:5; 25:6-7).
- Continual Prayer: “And will not God give justice to His elect, who cry to Him day and night? Will He delay long over them?” (Luke 18:7).
- God asked for watchmen on the walls to put Him in remembrance day and night (Isaiah 62:6-7).

We believe God is going to raise up day and night prayer and worship centers all around the world. After Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, he led the nation to make a covenant to obey God (Nehemiah 10:1-27). They put it in writing, which the leaders signed, and the people agreed to. They emphasized four specific areas in this covenant to obey God (Nehemiah 9:38-13:3).

1. To uphold godly standards in family life (Nehemiah 10:30).
2. To keep the Sabbath (to honor a day of rest with God) (Nehemiah 10:31).
3. To financially support day and night worship (Nehemiah 10:32-39).
4. To refuse to make any unholy alliances (Nehemiah 13:1-3).

These are four areas that God's Word insists on in principles throughout the Old Testament *and* New Testament. One thing these commitments guarded against was compromise. Following these principles equips us to be messengers of Truth, faithful witnesses, and reformers. We must *all* take these principles

very seriously and convey them to those under our influence. Everyone has areas of influence (their home, family, friends, school, work place, public service, government, church, ministry, etc.) and God wants you to be reformers in your areas of influence.

Nehemiah confronted the people for the lack of financial support for the continual prayer and worship (Nehemiah 13:10-14). He understood the dynamic spiritual effects of continual prayer and worship on God's people as a whole, so he set up ordinances that provided financially for it to be reestablished (Nehemiah 10:39; 11:23; 12:45, 47; 13:5, 10-11). They set it as a priority—we must also make it a priority.

King David was the one who first established this day and night worship (see: 1 Chronicles 6:31; 9:33; 15:16; 16:1-37, 41-43; 23:5; 25:1-7; 2 Chronicles 5:12-14; 23:18; 29:25-30). The support of those providing the worship music was also established (see: 2 Chronicles 8:14; 31:5-21; Nehemiah 10:39; 11:23; 12:45-47; 13:5, 10-14). An important thing to know is that it wasn't just a good idea *David* had; 2 Chronicles 29:25 tells us that it was a commandment of the Lord.

The temple functioning as a place of continual prayer and worship is a sacred theme throughout Scripture. It is so much on God's heart, because it is the place of encounter with Him. It attracts His attention when His people have zeal for it. This "Levitical calling" is an expression on earth of the continuous prayer and worship that is taking place around God's throne in Heaven, and it is based on declaring the greatness of God and the worthiness of the Lamb (Revelation 4:8-11).

This continual prayer and worship on the earth is so essential to the release of the fullness of end-time revival before Christ's return. The most emphasized aspect in end-time prophecy is the end-time worldwide prayer and worship movement that will spread, crying out to God for the injustice and oppression taking place in our homelands and throughout the world (here are just a few: Luke 18:7-8; Matthew 21:13a; Revelation 5:8; 8:3-4; Isaiah 19:20-22; 24:14-16; 25:6-9; 26:8-9; 27:1-6, 13; 30:18-19; 42:10-13; 43:26; 51:9-16; 52:7-12; 59:16-21; 62:6-12; Jeremiah 31:7; Joel 2:12-32; Zephaniah 2:1-3; Psalm 96:1-13; 102:17-22; 122:1-9; 149:1-9; Zechariah 8:19-23; 10:1; 12:9-10; 13:9).

When Israel went astray, God raised up reformers with a vision to restore worship as David had instituted it. All seven "revivals" in the OT included restoring Davidic worship (*under David and Solomon* – 2 Chronicles 8:14; *under Jehoshaphat* – 2 Chronicles 20:19-28; *under Jehoiada* – 2 Chronicles 23:16-18; *Hezekiah* – 2 Chronicles 29:25-27; *under Josiah* – 2 Chronicles 35:3-15; *under Zerubbabel and Nehemiah* – Nehemiah 12:45-47).

I believe that we might be able to accomplish more politically by raising up and supporting Prayer & Worship Centers across this nation, than we are by battling in the political arena. Yes, we *need* to battle in the political arena, but we need to do *more* battling in the spiritual arena! *I believe God is raising up spiritual reformers with a vision to restore this same kind of worship! Over the past couple years, He has been giving us at New Hope a vision and passion for this.*

God responds to this kind of continual worship and crying out to Him in prayer. 2 Chronicles 5:13-14 provides a little taste of it: "It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endures for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD; So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God." Here is another example: "Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the

LORD had filled the LORD'S house. And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endures for ever” (2 Chronicles 7:1-3).

We believe our heart’s desires match God’s to see His people worshipping Him like this, and to make an impact in the spiritual realm, which will make an impact on society and the *world*. This is not something that comes from the few minutes of prayer or the several minutes of praise and worship songs we sing at our Sunday church services. The corporate services in our churches are so absolutely essential and fulfill God’s desire for His people to meet together and serve one another in a community of Believers. They are the places where our Pastors deliver messages for God’s people and teach them from the Word of God, among many other great things. *A continual prayer and worship center serves an entirely different purpose.*

The dramatic story of rebuilding the temple in the days of Zerubbabel is powerful encouragement to those seeking to build a place of prayer and worship in this day and age. God’s desire was for the temple to function as a place of prayer and worship that continued day and night. The account is recorded in three passages (Ezra 1-6; Haggai 1-2; Zechariah 3-8) and highlights four leaders who worked together to help the remnant of Israelites rebuild the place of prayer and worship. They were Zerubbabel (the governor of Judah who functioned as a leader who mobilized the people to build the buildings complex), Joshua (the high priest who was responsible for overseeing the administration of the day-to-day functions of the priests and Levites in the place of worship), Haggai (who gave four messages concerning the call to build the worship center – Haggai 1:1-11; 2:1-9; 10-23), and Zechariah (the prophet who also delivered a message to the remnant and had eight visions concerning the building of the place of worship – Zechariah 1:1-6; 1:7-6:8; 1:16; 4:6-10; 6:12-13).

It was a long and difficult journey for the little band of Israelites to even get to where they began building. When they finally did arrive, they were faced with an impossible looking job. They laid the foundation first, but then because of discouragement and lack of financial support, gave up and quit for 16 years. The tactics of the enemy are revealed in their story. One group of their “enemies,” which are symbolic of our spiritual enemies, had moved into the land when Israel went into captivity and aggressively opposed their return to reclaim their land. This particular enemy caused them to struggle with spiritual lethargy, compromise, and fear. Other enemies identified as “adversaries” of Judah, tried to discourage them and “weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building” (Ezra 4:1-4). They even “hired counselors against them, to frustrate their purpose” (verse 5). They then went so far as to write to the king, making “an accusation” against them and lying about what they were really doing (verse 6). In verse 23, we find that they actually succeeded in stopping them by force, but after 16 years had passed, God sent prophets to stir up the leaders to start building again.

It was Haggai’s first message, a call to action, which the Lord used to stir up the spirit of the people to continue the work (Haggai 1:1-15). It was a call to consider their ways and repent, because they had gone back to taking care of themselves first, when God’s work was being left undone (*I’m not making this stuff up—it’s all recorded in plain words*). In the second message, God encouraged the people through Haggai: “Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of Hosts” (Haggai 2:4). He reminded the people of the covenant they had with Him: “so My Spirit remains among you: fear not” (verse 5). He also reminded them: “The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, saith the LORD of Hosts” (verse 8). We need to remember that all of the gold and the silver are still His today, and He usually provides it through His people, giving them what they need to be able to give to His Kingdom works. God ended His message to the people by again promising to

bless them because of their work—and because of their giving. “The earth is the LORD'S, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein” (Psalm 24:1).

God also wanted to change how they *saw* their labors (Haggai 2:3-9). He wanted them to see the spiritual connection between what they were building, with the bigger picture of prayer and worship going on in the Heavenly Worship Sanctuary (Revelation 4:5), *and* the Worship in the Millennial Kingdom (Zechariah 6:13).

He called them to *be strong*, to be resolved to not quit in the midst of pressures. They were called *to work*, to be diligent and grateful for the privilege of working on something God was so zealous for. They were called *to not fear*, to see the evidences of the Spirit's work among them and to be confident that His Spirit would remain with them.

Zechariah's first message was also a call to repent (Zechariah 1:1-6). His second message came from a vision he had (and it contains a verse we all like to quote, which we can now see in its context): “This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of Hosts. Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace to it. Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and you shall know that the LORD of Hosts hath sent me to you. For who has despised the day of small things? For they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth” (Zechariah 4:6-10). This reminds me of 2 Chronicles 16:9: “For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him.” He knows our heart concerning this place of Prayer & Worship we desire to build for Him. To our mountains of human obstacles we shout, crying: *Grace, Grace* to them! We believe our God will make those mountains a plain and the work *will be completed*, just as theirs was.

We at New Hope decided we needed to begin with what we have, desiring for the Lord to find us faithful in little, even at this stage. Prayers and proclamations from God's Word that we pray often in our personal and staff prayer times, have been recorded onto CDs, which we have been playing on a continuous loop at the Center for over a year now. We also have worship music playing continually 24/7. This is our beginning of day and night prayer and worship. As we look forward to having an actual Prayer & Worship room in New Hope's facility, here are our goals to begin with, to schedule different times for:

- Worship music focus with CD's playing.
- Prayer Volunteers scheduled to come to the Center for live prayer at certain times. Recorded prayers will be played at the times when no one is physically there praying.
- Quieter worship music for more of a prayer opportunity focus.
- Internet feed of live worship on a big screen.
- Live worship music with local groups and worship teams.
- It will be open to anyone to come in to take part in the prayer and worship setting at any time, day or night.
- New Hope could also provide a pattern with written instructions on establishing a Prayer & Worship Center like this as we do with our New Hope Counseling Kits and Ministry Materials.

We believe there are others whose hearts the Lord has been stirring up for something like this, and who will want to be a part of it. Acts of service are what flow from a prayer and worship focus like this,

which for New Hope are seen in the Counseling Center and Retreat Center ministries. If God begins stirring up *your heart* concerning this, please come, and join in.

You don't have to live here in this local area to join in. Listen to this quote from J. Vernon McGee: "*In warfare it is estimated that for every soldier out on the fighting front there have to be ten people behind him getting supplies to him—food, clothing, medical care, and ammunition. This is also true in God's army.*" This is definitely true in our situation today. Through your united prayers, you would be a part of getting the supplies to us. This is truly the way it works—this is the only way we are going to get the needed supplies for this project. It is *too big* and *too impossible* in the natural. God has made this clearly known to us and we have made the decision, in obedience to Him, to look to *Him only* as our Source.

We have determined to not have our focus on fundraising for this vision the Lord has given us. We are to look to *Him only* as our Source and receive from Him what is needed through effectual, fervent prayer (James 5:16). We are asking you to join us in purpose, passion, and prayer. *Will you make a commitment to unite with us in looking to God only as our Source? Will you be a part of New Hope's Building Project Prayer Warriors team?*

Go with us on this faith journey. We have put together a special prayer booklet called, "Prayers & Proclamations for the New Hope Building Project," to give you prayer starters and even exact things to pray, so that we can all be praying united and in one accord. This can be downloaded free from our website at: www.NewHopeMinistryCC.org from the page called "Vision for the Future" (or if you don't have access to the Internet, you can request for it to be mailed to you). We believe that in response to your prayers, God will send in funding for this "House of Prayer & Worship." It could come from anywhere. Continued funds to run it will also be needed.

We believe that God reveals to us *what* to pray, to bring about His will on earth as it is in Heaven. He gives us strategic words to pray in His Word. We teach people through New Hope that when they have a problem or situation, to find Scripture that speaks of that particular thing and read, pray, and proclaim it. Where is there an example in the Bible of a *building project*? The book of *Ezra* provides a good example. No, we are not building "The Temple" in Jerusalem, but it is recorded in God's Word not only for the sake of history, but for us to learn principles from, and to use and apply them to our lives.

Please join with us in these prayers and proclamations from words of the book of *Ezra* (for starters). Because *it is written* what the enemy did to frustrate and even delay the building of the House of God recorded by *Ezra*, God has given us instructions on how to pray *against the enemy's tactics* now. We are not fighting the physical enemies they were fighting at that time; "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12). So when we pray against our "enemy" in these prayers, we are not praying against *people*; we are praying against the devil and demonic enemies that will and already are coming against us.

When God calls you to do something, you must pray it through, no matter what happens, no matter what things look like, no matter what things seem like. The key is to *not* give up and quit praying—but to keep on believing God—and praying it through until it is on earth as it is in Heaven.

How awesome would it be for you to be a part of New Hope's *Building Project Prayer Warriors* through which God supplies all that is needed for the New Hope Prayer & Worship Center/Counseling Center/Retreat Center, and then for you to come for a week or weekend Retreat and be ministered to in the very place your prayers helped build?! Or for you to come and spend some time in the New Hope Prayer & Worship Room and know what it is to experience continuous day and night prayer and

worship? Each of us on the Leadership Team of New Hope have personally experienced being in a place like that and we can tell you—it's something that will affect you for the rest of your life!

As in the days of Ezra, let all who want to be a part of the building of the Lord's House, *come*. Come with united hearts to let the Lord do a great and mighty thing through *you*, to bring about the plans and purposes He has revealed. Please—join with us as we look to *God only* as our Source and be a part of the army that prays it down from Heaven to earth.

This will probably sound completely upside down to the world, but that's the problem. So much of the time, fundraising is done in the way of the world and men get the glory. God's strategy is: *Give Him all the Glory*. As He performs His miraculous work, only He can get all the credit for all that is done. Through all that God has been doing around us and in us over the past few years, we have now come to the place where we don't just agree in our head that He is our Source—we now know and understand with our hearts that *He is our Source*, and if we look to no other source—He will provide for the work of His ministry in a way that will surpass anything we can even think or imagine. He is the God of Immeasurably More (Ephesians 3:20). Do you know what the very next verse in Ephesians 3 says? It says: "To Him be Glory..." It's really only when we come to look to *Him only* as the One "that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," does He get all the Glory. There it is again—*the Glory*. It's all about His Glory.

¹ Adapted from sermons by Mike Bickle: "Nehemiah: Model of Spiritual Reformation" and "Building the House of Prayer: A Prophetic Call to Action (Haggai 2). Sermon notes at www.IHOP.org