

DAY SEVENTEEN:

PRAY FOR WORKERS

INTRODUCTION

The second response that God calls for in 2 Chronicles 7:14 is to “pray.” There are many different ways of praying for revival as we have been discovering in the last few weeks. We confess and pray for forgiveness. We ask for personal closeness to God. We pray for God to work in power. We cry out for our nation. All these prayers are important. But today I thought that we could focus on a prayer that we may not have prayed so far in these devotions. It is a prayer that Jesus asked his disciples to pray so it must be important.

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 9:35-38

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

DEVOTION

The Greek word translated “compassion” in this Scripture is an intensely emotional word. Jesus was deeply moved as he watched the crowds and the hopelessness of their situation. He could not meet all their needs. These needs included their health problems and their poverty. But what really got to Jesus was the fact that they had no-one to look after them, no-one to lead them, no-one to protect them. They were like sheep who had no shepherd. They were lost and ravaged by wild animals. And this profoundly touched Jesus. He deeply felt the hopelessness of their situation.

So is this true of the people we mix with? On the surface it does not look like it. They seem happy. They seem satisfied. They seem self-sufficient and free of needs. But you just look underneath the surface and you find deep disappointment, debilitating depression, broken relationships, draining hopelessness and sapping confusion. People are not doing well, with divorce and suicide rates being just the tip of the iceberg. But who will care for them? Who will help them? Who will support them? Who will share Jesus with them?

Jesus called on his disciples to pray for God to send out more harvest workers. The opportunities to serve and reap were great, but there were not enough workers to meet the need. This must be our prayer as well. It involves praying for more Christians to share their faith and serve their communities (both here and overseas). It also means praying for God to raise up more leaders who will be good shepherds pastoring and supporting



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their people well. As we prepare for revival and a great harvest, we need to ask God to increase the harvest workers. We just do not have enough to meet the need now.

It is interesting to note that in the flow of Matthew's narrative, immediately after calling for this prayer for harvest workers, Jesus commissioned his twelve disciples to get out into the harvest field themselves (Matthew 10). In a way, the disciples were at least part of the answer to their own prayer. Maybe this will be true for you as well. As you pray for God to raise up godly leaders and effective evangelists and bold witnesses and community workers and caring missionaries, you might well find him calling you to become a harvest worker yourself.

One of the greatest privileges of being a harvest worker is helping people find Jesus. To have a role in someone's journey towards faith in Christ is very exciting and very precious. Revival will require loads of harvest workers who will shepherd the harassed and helpless to Jesus. Maybe you will be one?

PRAYER RESPONSE

Lord please increase my heart for the lost. Help me to see people the way you do – harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. Help me to feel your compassion. And please raise up the leaders and witnesses we will need to bring the lost home and to care for them well. And Lord if you want me to be one of those harvest workers, I am available.

PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

Lord we are praying for a great harvest. The kind of harvest that we have never seen before. But you will need to call and equip the workers that we need to bring in this harvest. There are not enough at the moment. Please call and send out lots more workers with your compassion to serve and evangelise and disciple those who have no Shepherd.

