**Intercession: A Powerful Tool**

As we journey through Covid-19, it has been interesting – at least in the beginning – to see how our country began to close down. It wasn’t long before we were all in lockdown and using our computers to not only work but hold meetings via zoom or teams and meet with our spiritual family through worship online.

I will admit to you that I am a homebody. My home is my haven. When I come home at the end of the day, I shut the door, I switch off and find respite from the world. That being said, as the weeks went by, I found myself struggling a little as I had to both work and relax in the same space. So, after a week or two working from my dining room table, I decided that I could make the basement my place of work. So, I now enter the basement in the morning, work throughout the day, and then journey up the stairs, close the door behind me and enter my respite at the end of the day. This has worked out very well for me over the last month, but we have now been in lockdown for some time and even this ‘homebody’ is beginning to feel that it’s time to reenter the world.

In thinking and praying about the effects of Covid-19, my mind has been drawn to a story in the Old Testament recorded in Exodus 17:8-13. It’s the story of the Amalekites defeat by God’s people, the Israelites at Rephidim.

When the Amalekites began to invade the Israelite camp, Moses instructed Joshua to identify some men to go and to fight them. He also told Joshua that during the battle, he would go and stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in his hands (v 9).

So, Moses along with Aaron and Hur, made their way to the top of the hill and Moses lifted his staff. While ever that staff was held high the Israel army was winning the battle but whenever he lowered his hands because he grew tired, the Amalekites began to win (v 11). Noticing this, Aaron and Hur provided a rock for him to sit on and they held his hands up – one on each side (v 12).

Now, of course in reading through Exodus we become aware that this was not the first battle that the Israelites had fought. In chapter 14, at the Red Sea with the Egyptian army close behind them, the Lord told Moses to hold out his staff over the sea. God miraculously parted the waters and the people walked on dry land to the other side. When the people had crossed over, the Lord again said, “stretch out your hand over the seas so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horseman” (14:26).

At the Red Sea (chapter 14) God had shielded His people, but here in Exodus 17, it was a different battle, a battle that the people, along with God, fought together. This was both a physical and spiritual conflict, and again God helped his people triumph over their enemy.

The staff of Moses had always been a great reminder to the Israelites of God’s power and presence with them. But interestingly here in Exodus 17, Moses needed the assistance of other human beings to support and sustain him during this battle.

Something to think about:

In these unusual days there are many people who are finding the going difficult. There are many who are in need, so …

* Sit quietly before the Lord and ask Him to help you identify who, in your circle of friends and colleagues, you should think about and bring before Him in prayer.

There are those who have been impacted by the disease personally and I think we have also become aware of the needs impacting of our communities during this time. There are those who we know who have lost their jobs, have had to go on unemployment and delve into their savings to pay their mortgage or even put food on the table for the families. Many people are facing a very uncertain future.

* Identify the difficulties people are facing.
* What can you do to support them?

Prayer is a valuable tool, a powerful tool, but I also believe we were created for relationships, not only with God – which is our most important relationship – but also with each other.

* Is there someone today that the Lord has placed upon your heart? Who can you be an Aaron or Hur to as they battle their enemy (whatever that may be) during the Covid-19 lockdown?
* Name them. Pray for them specifically.

My prayer is that God might use us each, powerfully, to support and lift each other up to Him during these days.

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