



# DAILY AUDIO BIBLE WINDFARM PRAYER ROOM

## The History of Night and Day Prayer

This document is not intended to be an exhaustive account of every day and night prayer event that has ever happened throughout the Bible and Church history. It's intended to give context to the day and night prayer lifestyle and highlight some of the people and places that God showed up creating irreversible change in the world. It gives us a context for exactly what it is God has invited us into.

### OLD TESTAMENT ISRAEL

When we read the accounts of Moses leadership of the Children of Israel we're really sitting down in the front row to watch God create a culture. The Children of Israel were God's chosen people and the culture that emerged in the desert after God's epic invasion of Egypt to free them from slavery has enormous implications for us today.

"And Jehovah went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; that they might go by day and by night: the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, departed not from before the people." (Exodus 13:21-22)

"The fire must always be burning on the altar. It must never go out." (Exodus 6:12)

With the construction of the tabernacle in the desert God established His dwelling place among His people. The priests worked in shifts so that the temple was filled with prayer, worship and song and sacrifice day and night before Him. God established night and day leadership for Israel right away and with the construction of the tabernacle a night and day lifestyle of worship and prayer begins to emerge. Later when David ascended to the throne (about 1000 BC) he established unprecedented prayer and worship before the Lord. (1 Chronicles 15-17) The Ark of the Covenant that had traveled through the desert years and represented the visible reminder of the people's covenant with God was brought to the City of David (Jerusalem) and in grand fashion the King appointed priests, Levites, prophetic singers and musicians to worship before the Lord day and night. We see throughout Scripture that God will never leave His people but this is one of the most intentional instances in Scripture where we see God's people showing God Himself that they desire to never leave His presence either.

The history of Israel is one of great fervency for God followed by terrible idolatry and falling away. When the people abandoned God destruction fell upon them, when they returned humbled and passionate for change God always showed up to rescue His beloved. The Davidic style of worship before the Lord was reinstated many times over Israel's history as they returned to the Lord. Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Hezekiah, Josiah, Ezra and Nehemiah all organized worship after this fashion.

### EARLY CHURCH

After Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension the disciples and other followers of Christ congregated together and were "constantly united in prayer" (Acts 1:14.) It was in this night and day constancy that the Holy Spirit descended and the Church was given birth. The immediate repercussions were that 3000 believed in Christ the first day. For the first time in recorded history people were able to go directly into the presence of God as righteous saints. The work of Christ was complete and the Holy Spirit's presence was palpable. Acts 2:42 shows us that they devoted themselves to the teaching of God's Word,

community and prayer and this became the fundamental lifestyle. This lifestyle wasn't just a daytime or leisure event. They didn't get together for worship on Sunday, have a pot luck dinner and then go back to their secular lives. They lived in community together and prayed at all times.

Acts 12 tells the story of Peter being freed from prison in the middle of the night by an angel. The first thing he did before escaping the city was to go to Mary's house where the believers had assembled. They were all praying for him in the deep part of the night further showing us that the early church was committed to a lifestyle of constant prayer.

Throughout Church history we can see a precedent set. The "cloud by day and fire by night," that God used to lead his people has never left and as God's people have moved themselves to a lifestyle that joins them together in community with other passionate believer's the same power of the Holy Spirit that first came to the Apostles shows up in staggering ways.

## **CHURCH HISTORY**

### **100-300**

- Movements in North Africa and the Middle East broke out in fervent night and day prayer during the first centuries after Christ's ascension. Early church leader Cyprian challenged believers in Africa, "Let us not cease here at night also to pray and give thanks to God." Athanasius, the prominent theologian and historian who made an indelible mark at the council of Nicaea recalls that night and day prayer was a common occurrence throughout the first three centuries of Church history.

- In Syria, Alexander the Sleepless gathered together a devoted group of Christians who sold their possessions and gave the proceeds to the poor in order to pursue a passionate relationship with Jesus. So many flocked to the movement that they had to be divided by nationality. Romans, Greeks, Syrians and Egyptians were split into "tribes" that prayed in shifts around the clock giving them the moniker, "sleepless."

### **400 AD**

- By the dawn of the fourth century, Christianity had spread so far and so fast that the Roman Empire was overrun with it regardless of their attempts to stamp it out through creative persecutions like feeding Christians live to lions in the Coliseum before thousands of spectators. The irony is that the very people that put Christ to death ended up being the greatest protector of Christianity. Faith in Christ was thoroughly endorsed throughout the Roman Empire under Constantine.

This wasn't enough for some. Culture and the politics of the newly freed Church made many "check out" of society and set up a very simple and humble existence in the desert. This lifestyle of self-denial had, at its core, total devotion to prayer in every aspect of life. Those that embraced the solitary life became known as the Desert Fathers and Mothers. Their writings are still in existence and have been some of the most influential observations on the subject of devotion to Christ ever written. As it turned out, the wasteland of the desert became the fertile soil of the first missionaries. From the wilderness missionaries went forth and evangelized the Celts who also embraced the lifestyle of constant prayer and service.

### **500-1000 AD**

- The city of Constantinople became a strong tower of prayer with the establishment of the Acoemetæ. One monastery in the Black Sea area devoted itself to constant prayer and from this one grew many massive monasteries throughout the region. The Acoemetæ were well revered for their knowledge and commitment to constant prayer and worship.

- In the town of St Maurice in Switzerland, the Abbey of St. Maurice stands. Legend has it that the Abbey was constructed on the spot where some 7,000 Roman soldiers were executed in the 200's AD for refusing to sacrifice to the Roman god Mercury whose temple was where the Abbey now stands. The soldiers were ordered to put down a revolt in the area but upon

discovering the faith of those they were to kill they refused to attack other Christians and were subsequently executed themselves. The Abbey of St. Maurice is best known for its brand of "Perpetual Psalmody" known as *laus perennis* which means, "night and day." Choirs would sing in worship before the Lord in shifts around the clock with the worship never ceasing. This night and day worship and prayer went on until the ninth century, nearly five hundred uninterrupted years!

- In Ireland the Bangor Abbey was established based on the founding principles of the Acoemetæ. Because this commitment to perpetual prayer and missions was in their DNA from the beginning, Bangor Abbey's powerful prayer movement went on to send missionaries throughout all of Europe throughout the Dark Ages. One missionary sent from Bangor Abbey was Columbanus who brought the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the mainland in Europe and was responsible for founding several monasteries that became known as seats of education and artistic community. Probably the most influential was the Abbey at Bobbio which still stands today.

- Coming from this time and continuing to this very day is The Order of St. Benedict. Benedictine Monks embraced the ritual of praying in public seven times a day, seven days a week. Benedict is credited with constructing the lifestyle of work and rest while remaining in continual prayer. The Benedictine influence is felt the world over.

## 1700 AD

- The reformation that arrived in the sixteenth century was desperately needed as the European church had grown sluggish because of political control struggles, rebellion, heresy and subsequent revival and the establishment of new power struggles. Many of the monasteries that were once repositories of incredible outpourings of the Holy Spirit had grown spiritually dead and were closed. It wasn't until the beginning of the eighteenth century that a bright spot glowed on the horizon. Count Nicholas Ludwig Von Zinzendorf was born to a wealthy, well connected and religious family and was taught with deep conviction the love of Christ. He was a well educated man in both religion and law and had accepted a career path that would have led him into politics had he continued.

In 1722 He purchased from his family the Berthelsdorf Estate and established a Lutheran Church on the premises. Later that year he learned of the terrible Catholic on Protestant persecutions happening to the believers in Moravia through a Moravian minister named, Christian David. Zinzendorf was so moved by their plight that he offered safe haven on his lands to any that would relocate. The offer was accepted and the community of Herrnhut (the watch of the Lord) was born. Around three hundred populated Herrnhut and in short order division was rampant throughout the community. So committed to the success of the endeavor was the Count that he resigned his court position and took the reins of leadership in Herrnhut.

Zinzendorf proved to be a good leader and an atmosphere of brotherhood emerged. The community began to encourage and challenge one another to a deeper walk of faith. On August 13, 1727 God showed up. Zinzendorf recalled it was, "A day of the outpourings of the Holy Spirit upon the congregation; it was its Pentecost." Within the month the community had committed to praying in "intercession watches," and was praying without ceasing around the clock. This perpetual prayer movement at Herrnhut would last 125 years. By 1776 well over 200 missionaries had been sent out of a community that began its day and night prayer watch with 300. Some were so passionate about certain people groups that they sold themselves into slavery to reach them. This Moravian community had a profound effect on the fledgling country that had just declared its independence across the Atlantic. Many missionaries traveled to America establishing communities and proclaiming the Gospel from Pennsylvania to Georgia. It was through the missionary endeavors of the Moravians that John Wesley came to a sincere faith.

- On New Year's Day, 1739 John Wesley, his brother Charles, close friend George Whitefield along with several others gathered to pray through the night. As Wesley puts it, "about three in the morning as we were continuing constant in prayer the power of God came mightily upon us in so much that many cried out for exceeding joy and many fell to the ground". This profound supernatural event was to have a stunning impact across Europe and America as Charles penned some of the greatest hymns of the Church while brother John and George Whitefield won multitudes to Christ through their compelling sermons.

## 1900 AD - PRESENT

- In the year 1906 at 312 Azusa Street in a Los Angeles suburb the Holy Spirit showed up again. By the time the movement hit the newspapers it was already gaining unprecedented momentum as the strained relationship between black and white was obliterated by the blood of Christ. For three years day and night prayer with powerful supernatural events occurring on a regular basis similar to those spoken of in the Book of Acts took place giving birth to the Pentecostal movement around the world. The missionary efforts of the Azusa Street revival are still reverberating today.
- The Asian country of South Korea is home to the largest church in the world. David Yonggi Cho pastors the 830,000 member Full Gospel Church in the city of Seoul. In 1973 Pastor Cho launched Prayer Mountain, a retreat center for day and night prayer able to facilitate 10,000 people at one time. The inspiration was drawn from the Korean Christians of the 1800's who faced persecution and even execution from the invading Japanese. As they were unable to practice their faith openly they would escape to the mountains long before dawn and cry out to God until the first rays of light only to return after dark to intercede day and night before God for their land.
- In the 1980's in Kansas City God invited Mike Bickle to lead his congregation into a lifestyle of prayer and intercession. This led them to ultimately continue a 12 hour a day prayer meeting for many years. On September 19, 1999 a 24 hour perpetual day and night prayer meeting began that continues to this day without ceasing. The International House of Prayer (IHOP) Missions Base continues the heritage of the Abbey of St. Maurice by praying and worshiping in shifts perpetually and the Moravians by sending missionaries all over the world and assisting the launch of day and night prayer rooms domestically and internationally.
- Also in September, 1999 across the Atlantic in Chichester, England Pete Greig along with about 200 others committed to praying nonstop for thirty days. This prayer room went on for over three months and gave birth to the 24-7 Prayer movement all over the world. 24-7 Prayer has been instrumental in educating the local church body worldwide in short and long term 24-7 prayer meetings that have changed the atmosphere and culture of thousands of congregations.
- In 2006 the Daily Audio Bible was born on the internet with the basic premise that the Bible could speak for itself and that exposure to its words every single day without fail would transform a person from the inside out. What launched January 1, 2006 quickly became a community and grew to be a movement back to the fundamental truths of the Christian life: Daily exposure to the Scriptures in large expansive chunks, Conversational intimacy with Jesus and Vibrant community. The WindFarm Prayer Room was born out of this "virtual" community of tens of thousands of believers around the world in 2008 and exists as the only fully functioning virtual prayer room based on the internet.
- Many other movements have exploded on the earth. The Jerusalem House of Prayer for all Nations prays at all twelve of Jerusalem's city gates each day for two hours. There are prayer towers in Indonesia and 24 hour prayer rooms in prisons. All over the globe people are crying out to God night and day. Throughout history when we see people moving into the lifestyle of a servant willing to sacrifice whatever is necessary to maintain a deep and true intimacy with Jesus without fail God shows up. This is who we are and as we go deeper into Jesus each day we're likely to have another front row seat to a staggering move of God among us.