

**PRAYER FOR THAT WHICH
WE ARE HERE FOR**

19th June 2005

Romans 15:14-33 I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another. I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done-- by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. Rather, as it is written:

"Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand."

This is why I have often been hindered from coming to you. But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to see you, I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to visit you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while. Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the saints there. For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings. So after I have completed this task and have made sure that they have received this fruit, I will go to Spain and visit you on the way. I know that when I come to you, I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ.

I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there, so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and together with you be refreshed. The God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Romans 15:14-33

- Concludes Paul's letter to a church he had not met!
- Encouragement to them
- Paul's plans for mission
- A moving request for prayer for his ministry in 30-33 – such ministry, to the church and the lost, is “what we are here for”!

Who is he asking to pray?

- “I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.”
- [Link to our small group ministry](#)
- Reminds us we are all ministers – not just the Pastor!

What would Paul think of PBC?

- “Good, complete, competent” ...like the Romans...
- ...but also like them, needing reminders of the gospel
 - The wonder of God’s grace and salvation
 - That we are in a spiritual battle with the forces of darkness
 - That without the Holy Spirit our ministry – and prayer for it - is in vain

The prayer

- “I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there, so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and together with you be refreshed. The God of peace be with you all. Amen.”

The Trinity

- I urge you, brothers, by our **Lord Jesus Christ** and by the love of the **Spirit**, to join me in my struggle by praying to **God** for me. Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there, so that by **God's** will I may come to you with joy and together with you be refreshed. The **God** of peace be with you all. Amen.”

Fruits of the Spirit

- I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the **love** of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there, so that by God's will I may come to you with **joy** and together with you be refreshed. The God of **peace** be with you all. Amen.”

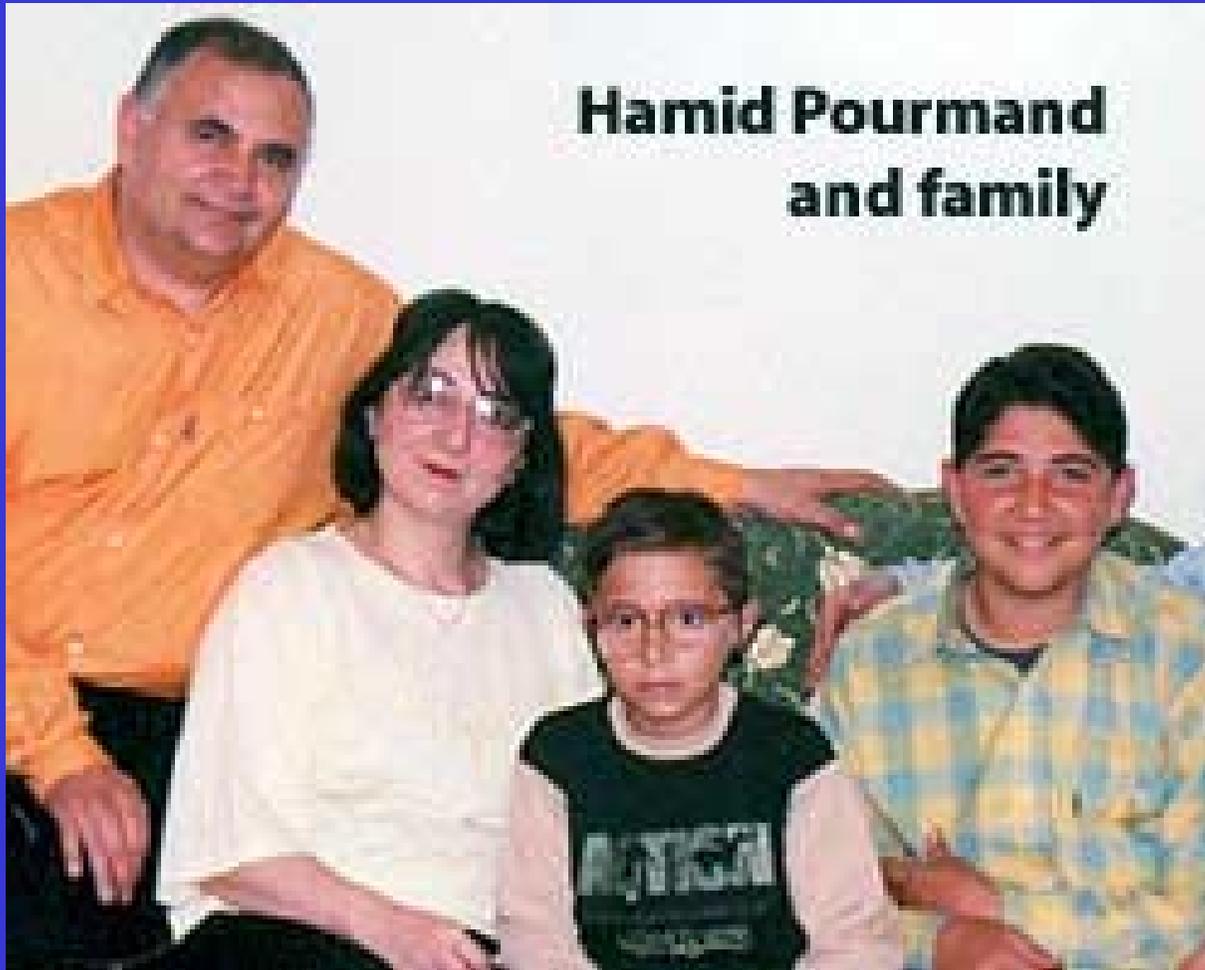
The key points

1. Prayer for ministry is effective at a distance
2. Prayer for ministry is engaging in a struggle
3. Ministers need prayer against enemies
4. There is a need for prayer for acceptance of ministry
5. Prayer is essential for ministry plans

Prayer for ministry at a distance

- Romans 1000 miles from Jerusalem but Paul knew their prayers were effective
- Rachel's prayer group for the suffering church has same ministry
- Hamid Pourmand, an Iranian Christian, accused of deceiving the army, apostasy and proselytising
 - Judge: "I don't know who you are, but apparently the rest of the world does. You must be an important person, because many people from the government have called me, saying to cancel your case." Islamic court acquittal

Your choice on Monday evening – prayer....



...or alternatively

- **20:00 EastEnders** Dennis and Sharon's return causes havoc in the square and drives Zoe to breaking point.
- **20:30 Coronation Street** Shelley is terrified of facing Bev as Charlie orders her to evict her mother from the pub, Hayley convinces Roy that erasing his details from Amy's birth certificate is for the best and Dev and Sunita are at loggerheads thanks to some winding up from taxi driver Lloyd - played by Craig Charles of Red Dwarf fame
- **21:00 Celebrity Love Island.....**
- **Time for a TV fast?**

Prayer for ministry as a struggle

- Paul: “join me in my struggle by praying to God for me”
- “Fixedness, faith and fervency in prayer”
 - Jacob – and Ephesians 6: “Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”
- Combat is best conducted in a platoon – Rambos don’t survive!
 - Christian leaders in the front line of the struggle, need prayer support “join me”!

- PBC applications:
 - Prayer support for Alpha
 - Wayne's Pastoral ministry, the Monday Group, Little Rascals, Youth all need prayer support.
- PBC opportunities:
 - Thursday 1.50-2.50 prayer at Rachel's for the church and the village
 - Every other Monday at 9.00 am prayer for the school
- Don't leave the old warriors to battle alone!

- Motivation for committing to the struggle
 - Not our own resources – as prayer is a spiritual battle, anything is more attractive!
 - We can only be motivated “by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit”.
 - Jesus, our saviour, himself bids us to struggle in prayer for the ministers who do his work
 - The Holy Spirit equips us by his love to do so with the full armour of God that E6 outlines to us

Prayer for ministers against enemies

- Engagement in ministry = opposition
 - Paul: “that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea”
- PBC: ill will from individuals but also Satan’s role – he longs to see the downfall of this church
 - using some of us to serve his purposes through our weaknesses
 - seeking to prolong minister’s illnesses
 - prolonging bouts of depression

- Remember Christ's victory over Satan:
 - “Having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.” (Col 2:15)
- And ultimately:
 - “The devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” (Revelation 20:10)
- Till then we must pray for protection from evil...
- ...and not doubt the existence of it!!

Prayer for acceptance of ministry

- Ministry can be undermined by lack of appreciation in congregation:
 - “Pray that...my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there”
- Prayer for softening of hard hearts in receipt of gifts....
-examine our own hearts – do we have anything against our leaders or each other, which could undermine PBCs ministry?
-pray that hearts in the village will be softened to accept our ministry of Community projects and Alpha course.

Prayer for ministry plans

- Paul's errand to Jerusalem, and thereafter visiting Rome and mission in Spain
- God expects ministers to plan prayerfully, not "holy autopilot"!
- Our plans:
 - In short run the Noise, the Alpha course and the two-service innovation
 - In longer term ten possible projects for the community and the broader longer-term vision of the church

A positive message for our plans!

- Jesus said “Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.” (Isaiah 6:9)
- Paul says: “Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand.” (Isaiah 52:15)
- **Red to Green!** We are in the era of hearing and understanding due to Christ’s work and the coming of the Holy Spirit!
- "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." - out there!

Answered prayer

- Was the outcome a stern message that prayer may not be answered?
- ...or rather that God answers in his own way?
 - Paul was rescued
 - Paul's gifts were well received
 - Paul came to Rome although in chains, and “For two whole years...he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.”
- A personal example of prayer for ministry

Summary

- Pray for ministers, for the ministry of the church, and for one another, for we are all ministers
- Pray energetically that the church will be protected from evil, and that our message will be well received
- Pray that God will indeed send workers into his harvest field
- Pray for God to preserve our integrity so that we might be true ambassadors of Christ
- **Pray that we would be filled with the Holy Spirit so in prayer God's power is released among us to undertake these ministries**