

# SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM

*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. ~Matthew 6:33*

*Dear friends and family,*

We pray that this letter finds you doing well in body and spirit. We are very thankful to the Lord for putting you into our life. And we are grateful to you for all you mean to us, including your financial support and especially your prayers.

Ever since we married last fall, Rebecca has done most of the writing for our newsletters, and she has done a fabulous job, hasn't she? This time, I (Rob) wanted to share some things that are on my heart, specifically regarding prayer. My hope is that you will be encouraged to pray.

Jesus' disciples came to Him one day with the request, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). I believe they saw power in His life that they recognized flowed from His connection to the Father. Over the next couple years, Jesus taught His disciples many important lessons about prayer. When He was about to depart, He left them (and us) with the incredible promise, "Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13).

The story of Gospel for Asia is one of faith and dependence on the Lord. The ministry had small beginnings, but has rapidly grown to become one of the largest missions

movements in the world. This has come about in answer to much prayer. The ministry was birthed from prayer, and will continue to have the power of God in it only as we all continue to pray.

One of the things I most appreciate about serving at GFA is the atmosphere of prayer. The staff have several times of prayer together each week. I have often gone into prayer meetings feeling discouraged, but I have almost always come out refreshed, having met with God. These are sweet times of God's people coming together to worship, hear from God, and speak to Him. People who have visited or interned at GFA have often said the thing that most impacted their life during their time with us was the prayer life of the ministry.

Prayer is woven through each day. Here is what a typical Friday looks like for us. Rebecca and I start the day with a few minutes of prayer together. On Fridays we go in to the office early, at 7:00, to pray for a few of the staff members at their desks (we rotate through everyone over the course of a few months). At 8:00 we join the rest of the staff for prayer meeting until 8:45. We pray for specific needs both on the field and in our home office. At 9:15 we have

an IT departmental prayer time; on Fridays we give thanks for what happened during the week. In late morning and mid-afternoon, everyone throughout the office stops what they are doing for 10 minutes to gather in groups to read a psalm and pray for current high priority items. Before going to bed, Rebecca and I have another time of worship and prayer together.

And it has been awesome to see God answer many of our prayers, sometimes in remarkable ways.

Yet I fall so far short. I am still just a novice, saying, "Lord, teach me to pray." I am ashamed at my lack of faith, passion, and diligence. If you look back at the prayer requests in my newsletters from the past 10 years, you might notice I have often asked that you pray that I can grow in prayer.

We do take your prayers seriously. Please keep us and the ministry in prayer, and let us know how we can be praying for you. Thank you so much.



On duty as prayer moderator

## *Prayer Meetings: Where the Work Gets Done*

One of our sayings at GFA is, "the shortest distance between two points is prayer." Therefore, we consider our staff prayer meetings to be one of the most important things we do – whether it's a morning prayer meeting to start off the day or one of our evening prayer meetings after the work day is over. Rob and Rebecca are both on the rotation of prayer leaders who plan and direct these staff prayer meetings. Rob is also one of the three "prayer moderators" who oversee and coordinate the prayer meetings on a higher level.

Even planning a prayer meeting involves prayer. Rebecca starts off by praying for the Lord to show her

what topics He would have us pray for as the staff body. Then she sends her proposed schedule to the prayer moderators for review. After they approve or modify her plan, she contacts a few people on staff and asks them to share the topics.

Serving as a prayer leader means more than just preparing and directing a schedule; it is also her responsibility to help the presenters understand how to share the prayer topics with clarity and purpose. During the meeting she is responsible to keep the flow of the prayer sessions moving, but she also has to be flexible and ready to change the schedule at the last minute if other topics or needs arise.



Rebecca's yard project: keeping the garden beds free of weeds and grass

## Recent Events

Playing "foosball" with clothespins and pillow mints at a recent baby shower for Laurie (Rebecca's sister)



We had a potluck for the IT department, to praise the Lord for all He has done over the past few months. The "challenge" of the evening was to organize all of the weekly praise reports by date.

God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Corinthians 1:9

## Milestones

The past couple of months we have celebrated some significant milestones, both at the ministry and in our personal lives. These milestones highlight just a few ways that we have seen God answering prayer and demonstrating His faithfulness.

### Ministry milestones

- ◇ May 11: Ten years ago the GFA South Africa office opened! Now we have 2 full-time staff serving there.
- ◇ May 21: Three years ago Pastor Prem (one of the missionaries serving in South Asia) was released from prison, after being incarcerated 3 years for showing a film on the life of Jesus.
- ◇ May 30: Five years ago the TV station on the field went live. God is using it to touch millions of lives!

*Our brothers and sisters in Asia understand the vital role prayer has in effectively carrying out their work for the Lord. This report tells of one sister who prayed faithfully and with perseverance for her friend's salvation, trusting that God would hear and answer. We get multitudes of reports like these that tell of God working mightily through the prayers of His people.*

## She Prayed for Two Years



Ridhima hadn't eaten for three days. Her stomach protested. Her body felt weak. One more time, she clasped her hands, closed her eyes and lifted up a prayer to the Lord Jesus. But she didn't pray for food—she prayed for Jesus to touch the heart of one of the women in the village. She asked Him to save Manjyot.

Ridhima and Manjyot had known each other for about two years, ever since Manjyot had moved into the village. Ridhima, a Gospel for Asia national missionary, had lived in the village for some time and worshiped the Lord at a local church she had helped start.

When Ridhima and Manjyot first met, Ridhima couldn't help but tell Manjyot about her Savior, Jesus. She even offered Manjyot some booklets about Him, but Manjyot didn't want them. She said she didn't believe in such things.

For two years, the two women interacted like this. Ridhima always overflowed with love for Jesus in their exchanges, while Manjyot rejected every word. She'd even tell others not to listen to Ridhima or believe anything she said when she would overhear Ridhima sharing about Christ with other villagers.

### Personal milestones

- ◇ May 22: Ten years ago God confirmed His call on Rob's life to join staff at GFA. We took some time together to read his journals from that season.
- ◇ June 4: Four years ago the Lord called Rob's mom home to heaven. Before she passed, she made recordings of many of the songs she wrote. We remembered her life by listening to those songs together.
- ◇ June 20: One year ago we got engaged. :) We celebrated by re-reading the three engagement letters Rob had written to carry out his plan (and Rebecca still wonders how she could have been so oblivious...).

*"In no other way can the believer become as fully involved with God's work, especially the work of world evangelism, as in intercessory prayer."*

-Dick Eastman

But Ridhima did not lose heart. She regularly prayed for Manjyot, trusting the Lord would touch her in a special way. After a particularly intense time of fasting and prayer, Ridhima saw God working.

Manjyot started showing some interest in Jesus. She sometimes listened when Ridhima spoke.

One day, she even took Ridhima up on her offer and decided to attend a worship service.

That morning, as the pastor spoke about Jesus' great love and power to save and forgive, Ridhima saw her prayers answered in a powerful way. God touched Manjyot's heart, and she believed.

Today, the young woman who didn't trust a single word Ridhima said now stands beside the missionary, telling others about the great love of her Savior.

With love,

*Rob and Rebecca*



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