

## **Lord - make me a kneeling Christian**

May 1993

by The late Dr John Blackburn MP

published in The Wilberforce Quarterly

**The late Dr John Blackburn MP reflects on the importance of prayer. There then follows an obituary from Michael Alison.**

**· Christians in politics - as in every walk of life - must not forget the power and the importance of regular prayer.**

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"Prayer, prayer, prayer" is the cry of the committed Christian in his individual life and testimony for God. It is also the plea of the Church which seeks to be a witness to the Glory of God. It is the cornerstone of the Christian engaged in politics. When we commit ourselves to God in faith, we each bring with us gifts ~ which are developed under the influence of the Holy Spirit - by prayer.

These gifts can be those of evangelism, preaching, ministry, music, healing, teaching, charity, benevolence, hospitality, pastoral care, or even writing. All are without value unless these gifts are accompanied by the supplication of the kneeling Christian.

When we consider the Roll of Honour of kneeling Christians, we are thrilled that William Wilberforce proved the force and power of prayer in the world of Parliament. Spurgeon held a prayer meeting each Monday of his ministry. John Knox's prayer was "Oh give me Scotland or I die".

Mary Bunyan was beautifully described as a "praying Christian woman", whilst Nelson at 7am on the 21st October 1805 prayed the following inspiration prayer - "I commit my life to Him who made me, and may His blessing light upon my endeavours for serving my country faithfully. To Him I resign myself and the just cause which is entrusted to me to defend." This surely is the prayer of the Christian engaged in public and political life.

### **Prayer in the Bible**

There are within the confines of Holy Scripture a revelation of God's Laws in connection with prayer, and we study and accept them to our profit.

- 1. God's need to hear the prayers of His Children. Romans Ch 8 v 26, 27*
- 2. The promises of prayer to the kneeling Christian. Romans Ch 10 v 13*
- 3. What is prayer? It is a petition - ask me, try me, prove me. Philippians Ch 1 v 4-11*
- 4. How should we pray? Earnestly, without ceasing, even in agony. 1 Thes. Ch 5 v 17*
- 5. How does God answer prayer? He reveals his mind to the child of God.*
- 6. Who may pray? Prayer is the joy of a child of God.*

### **The power of prayer**

A Christian's experience, when serving in the High Court of Parliament at the House of Commons, is that prayer is going daily to the secret place of the Most High - it is the place of the kneeling Christian. A child has the right to the care of a father's love, protection, and provision. No child can enter into a family without being born into it - born from above. John Ch 3 v 3-5.

The kneeling Christian discovers the power of prayer, and that prayer changes lives, homes, relationships, characters, careers, places of worship, and nations. The kneeling Christian needs Divine help for prayer - and we have that promise.

How the Holy Trinity delights in the prayers of the kneeling Christian. God the Father listens. The Holy Spirit dictates. The Eternal God presents the petition, and intercedes on our behalf.

It is a joy for us as we seek to place "Christianity at the Heart of Britain" to know that it can be achieved, but only by the prayers of the kneeling Christians. It is also a challenge to know that within the House of Commons there are prayer groups meeting day upon day to intercede at the Throne of Grace for the certain knowledge that God is in command of the affairs of our beloved nation. This is the purpose of the Conservative Christian Fellowship, of which I am humbled to be a dedicated disciple.

Wilberforce led a life to the Glory of God that was saturated with prayer, and the blessing which flowed is a constant source of encouragement to us who currently serve in the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

My own personal testimony of walking with Our Lord is that the kneeling Christian believes that prayer is our highest privilege, our gravest responsibility, and the greatest power that God has put into our hands. Prayer to the kneeling Christian, real prayer, is the noblest, the most sacred, the most stupendous act that any Child of God can perform.

For the kneeling Christian to pray with all his heart and strength is without doubt the last and indeed the greatest achievement of the Christian's warfare on earth, and it is recorded in Heaven.

My prayer, as I serve God as a praying politician, is very simply "Oh Lord make me a kneeling Christian" - may this be your experience and your own individual prayer before God.

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### **Rt Hon Michael Alison MP pays tribute to the late Dr John G Blackburn MP.**

Dr Blackburn was a great supporter of the CCF and he will be sorely missed but our thoughts and prayers are now with his widow and family - may God comfort them at this difficult time.

Any of those who knew John Blackburn in the House of Commons and that goes for most of its membership will feel that a dark cloud has blotted out a radiant shaft of sunlight as a result of his sudden death on 12th October 1994. His passing will be particularly and acutely felt in the ranks of the All Party Houses of Parliament Christian Fellowship.

John was one of the most openly known and respected Christian MPs, and there were few such Parliamentarians who were so bold and so forthright about their Christian faith and commitment. But even if John had not articulated his Christianity (which he did!), his character and personality alone would be sufficient to alert people that there was something specially warm, loving, friendly and good natured about John.

He exuded friendship and cheerful, caring concern and interest in others. John was a regular and assiduous supporter and attender of the functions of the Parliamentary Christian Fellowship. He often took the chair at our Tuesday Bible study and prayer meeting at Westminster, and invariably led us with deep insight and originality into the scripture passages studied.

And when he led us in prayer, it was as if we were in the presence of an Old Testament prophet on the heights of Mount Horeb or Mount Zion! He led us with the reverberating and passionate intimacy of one at ease in direct communication with his loving Creator, and in deep devotion to Gad and his fellow human beings.

His loss is incalculable both to the Christian Fellowship and to the wider world of Westminster. But he has travelled ahead to a well-founded destination, and his humorous twinkle will now be surveying us and monitoring us from a far loftier viewpoint than was possible for him even at the high point at Westminster of our national Parliamentary life.