

## Back to prayer

These days I am reviewing the call to prayer that the Lord put on my heart years ago. This call originally came as an inward conviction through our involvement on the mission field, where we became convinced that intercession was the major key in breaking strongholds among the unreached, and the chief factor in protecting and providing for missionaries. This prayer call was also rooted in me from the Word of God. The words of Jesus still burn in my heart: *“Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest that He will send out laborers into His harvest.”* And I remember the day when Psalm 2 was opened up to my spirit, which later became a foundation Scripture in our ministry: *“Ask of Me, and I will give the nations as your inheritance, the ends of the earth as your possession...”*

I also recall the day when it dawned on me, while reading the "Lord's prayer", that prayer is not an option for those who call Him Father. It is a necessity, if we want to see His will take place on the earth. He told His disciples to pray in this way: *“Let Your kingdom come! Let Your will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven...”*. It became evident to me that God was requiring and inviting us to “pray down” His will! What a mystery! What an awesome privilege! What an inescapable command!

Later I was impacted by the words of Andrew Murray: *“If the church only knew that God rules the world through the prayers of the saints.”*

And then I read E.M. Bounds classic, *Power Through Prayer*. These words struck me with a force from which I have never fully recovered:

*“Where are the apostolic leaders who can put God’s people to praying? Let them come to the front and do the work and it will be the greatest work which can be done...We do greatly need somebody who can set the saints to this business of praying. We are not a generation of praying saints. Who will restore this breach? The greatest will be of reformers and apostles, who can set the Church to praying.”*

God will call each of us to a variety of tasks and ministries in our lifetime, many yet unknown to us. However, this one thing we do know: at the heart of all that we do will be the call to prayer, and the call to lead others to prayer.

John Matthews