



The role of prayer in our leadership

by Godfrey Mmagawo

What would the impact of your leadership be if you gave yourself fully to the work of prayer?

I recently had the privilege of attending the Alpha Leadership Conference. One of the stories that captured my heart, was the story of Adebisi Mohammed. Adebisi is not a “leader” in the conventional sense of the word. She is a single mother whose life is committed to prayer and specifically praying for her children and the youth. She was raised in Nigeria, but later moved to the UK. As a result of unfortunate events in her life, she had to raise her 3 biological children and 3 adopted children as a single mother. Needless to say, she experienced all sorts of challenges in life as a mother, but one thing she clung to was prayer. Her children today are incredible leaders who are advancing the kingdom of God in different industries in the UK, all thanks to a mother who was committed to praying for them.

As I was listening to Adebisi’s story, not only did it stir gratitude in my heart for my late mother who had to walk the same journey, but it got me reflecting on the question, “What would the impact of my leadership be if I gave myself fully to the work of prayer?” That is, to lead from a place of perpetual communion with my Father. After all, Oswald Chambers says, “Prayer does not fit us for the greater work; prayer is the greater work.”

I must confess that I have had moments in my life where I acted as though prayer was a waste of time. I would have never confessed it so bluntly, but the reality was, my calendar was a true reflection of the role I thought prayer could play in my leadership. There have been moments as the old cliché says, where I was busy doing the things of God, so much so that I neglected the God of the things. I know there is a healthy balance to maintain in that we are called not only to have faith, but to put our faith into action. If you asked me, I don’t think we have a problem with putting our faith into action. I do, however, think we have a problem with creating space for the all-important work of prayer.

Matthew 9:36-38 says, “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.’” I find it fascinating that as Jesus was spending time in his town, he saw the great need among the people. To be honest, if I was Jesus, the

first thing I would have done would have been to mobilise as many people and resources as I could to meet the great need that existed. Contrary to this, Jesus calls the disciples to first pray earnestly. I don't want to neglect the fact that in the next chapter, Matthew 10, Jesus does send his disciples out to spread the good news of the Kingdom, but that proceeds out of first calling them to pray. This leads me to the conclusion that every strategy for Kingdom work needs to be birthed in prayer.

I want to invite you to reflect on the following scripture. This is an example of great leaders in the Bible of what it looks like to give ourselves to the work of prayer as leaders:

"And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers." – Acts 1:13-14 ESV

R E A D - Read this scripture slowly several times. If possible, read it out loud.

R E F L E C T - Reflect upon the words being read. Listen carefully. Is there one word or phrase which stands out to you? Focus on the words. Repeat them. Allow God to speak to you.

R E S P O N D - Respond in prayer to God. Tell Him what you think about what you've read. Tell Him how it makes you feel. Tell Him what comforts you and what challenges you. Ask for His help to live out the truths you've uncovered.

R E S T - Stop. Be still. Stop talking, stop asking and rest. Spend some time in silence sitting with God. Invite the Holy Spirit and allow Him to transform you from within.