

“Balancing Prayer and Action”

by Jim Liebelt

“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly as I should.” Colossians 4:2-4

It has been reported that seconds after the kickoff in a memorable soccer match between Corinthians and Rio Preto at Bahia Stadium in Brazil, Corinthian striker Roberto Rivelino scored a goal, after a single pass, with a left foot drive from the half line. The ball sailed past the ear of Rio Preto goalkeeper Senhor Isadore Irandir while he was kneeling in the goalmouth finishing his pre-match prayers.

Here is a reminder to seek a healthy balance between prayer and action. Prayer is the foundation of our ongoing recognition of God’s rightful place in our lives and that He is our Creator and King. There is no doubt from the Scriptures that God’s people are to be people of prayer. Action is our recognition that God does not primarily work His will in the world without our participation in that work. Notice from the Scripture above that the Apostle Paul asked people to pray for an open door of opportunity. I think it is significant that in this prayer, Paul didn’t ask God to somehow proclaim the good news of Jesus supernaturally – without Paul’s involvement – but rather that God would provide the opportunity for Paul to minister the gospel effectively. A healthy view sees that both prayer and action are normal parts of how God works to accomplish His will.

Over my years as a Christ follower, I have experienced the tension that exists between prayer and action. It’s not always easy to know where and when to move beyond prayer to action or vice versa. Perhaps like me, you know people that seem focused solely on prayer and those who seem focused solely on action. Neither of these approaches is the complete answer. It’s likely that most of us need to pray more! For some, a willingness to move beyond prayer to action is needed. I believe that each situation in our lives requires us to seek the delicate balance between prayer and action. Like the goalkeeper, I’ve found that there almost always comes a time when we need to get off our knees and act.

When it comes to your life’s situations, what do you tend to focus more on prayer or action? Consider whether or not you need to become more balanced between prayer and action. Ask God to give you wisdom in finding the balance you need between prayer and action.

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