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Helpless against our prayers

The preacher read from the first chapter of the Gospel according to Mark "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed." The biblical account goes on to say that, with his disciples, he then went out to where the people were and preached and performed miracles. The challenge came in the opening words 'early in the morning' and 'a solitary place'.



At the end of that same Gospel (and in Matthew's account also) Jesus commissioned his disciples, and by its wording us also, to go and preach, to make disciples and to perform miracles! Hopefully we take up that challenge. OK the miracles might be a little harder to perceive but, in a less obvious form than in New Testament times, they do happen. Lives are being changed by the power of Jesus Christ and from time to time healings are experienced which medical science cannot explain. Week in and week out through our churches and, I trust, in our individual lives we seek to tell and show the love of God to those around us.

But where do we go from? Is it from that 'solitary place' which in the busyness of life might only be found 'very early in the morning'? The actual place and time is less important than the fact that there is such a place where we can hear what God the Father would say to us. Jesus could say that he spoke and did only those things that his Father told him and him. Would that we could say the same!

In making us a 'kingdom of priests' (Revelation 1:6) God has given us the ministry of representing him to those around us and of representing them before him. That brings the preaching and the praying together. It was the 20th century pastor J Sidlow Baxter who said "Men may spurn our appeals, reject our message, oppose our arguments, despise our persons, but they are helpless against our prayers."