

# Apostolic Moments

with Pastor Mary-Alice Isleib

Walking into an apostolic prayer meeting is often like walking into the middle of a spiritual battlefield. Apostolic and prophetic believers have a warring grace that pursues and possesses a thing. These believers also have an anointing that commands spiritual enemies to bow, declares hard heavens must open, and takes authority over every hindrance to preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom. In short, apostolic believers get prayer answers.

THE VOICE caught up with Pastor Mary Alice Isleib to discuss what characterizes the prayer lives of apostolic believers, why prophetic intercession is so important and other critical prayer strategies for this hour. An Apostle of Prayer, Mary Alice has been serving God for more than 20 years. She is author of the best-selling books "Effective Fervent Prayer" and "Healing Toxic Emotions" and has taught the Word of God in more than 45 countries. Her National Prayer School is raising up strong prayer warriors who are getting breakthrough prayer answers by applying her practical teachings on time-tested Biblical principles.

THE VOICE: Why is fervent prayer so vital to getting prayer answers?

PASTOR MARY ALICE: In James 5:16 the Bible gives us two ingredients to powerful prayer. The Amplified Bible says that the effective fervent prayer of a "righteous person makes tremendous power available." The Scripture says we have to be effective, which means praying according to God's patterns and God's principles in the Word, but we also have to pray fervently. The combination of those two - the effectiveness and the fervency - makes available the power that affects individuals, changes nations, and creates an environment for the Holy Spirit and the power of God to manifest. In prayer we are given permission by God to be very passionate. Our worship is to be passionate, and so is our prayer. When you study different Bible characters and the situations and circumstances that they were in, you will recognize that they prayed fervent, passionate prayers.

THE VOICE: What role does praying in tongues play in bringing God's will for our lives to pass? Why should we do it?

PASTOR MARY ALICE: There is a Scriptural basis for praying in tongues. First of all, we are encouraged both by the Apostle Paul's writings and other New Testament authors that we are to pray with the Spirit. Paul is our example of praying in other tongues. He said, "I thank God that I pray in tongues more than all of you." He was writing to a whole church. So he was saying that he prays in tongues more than all of them put together, which probably meant that they didn't pray much, that he prayed a lot, and he wanted them to pray more. In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul also said that when it came down to the final conclusion of the prayer life, he prayed with the Spirit and with the understanding. So praying in tongues was a vital key in his prayer life. Secondly, when we pray in tongues, according to Romans 8:26-28, the Holy Spirit takes hold with us. So when we don't know what to pray or how to pray, then we have a really wonderful tool that God has given us. Praying in other tongues allows us to pray the mind of God and the will of God and work with the Holy Spirit to see God's will to come to pass because He prays the perfect prayer. Then, of course, in Jude we are exhorted that we should pray in other tongues to build ourselves up. So we do it because we want to do it and we do it because it's a Biblical teaching on an effective way for a Spirit-filled Christian to pray.?

THE VOICE: What characterizes the prayer lives of apostolic believers?

PASTOR MARY ALICE: In the Book of Acts we see that the prayer life was an absolute in the church. They were dedicated to it. They were committed to it. They all knew how to pray. It wasn't a back room ministry. Acts 2:42 says there are four pillars to church life. The last, but not the least, is prayer. It wasn't put off. It wasn't in the back room. It wasn't given to specialty intercessors. When people got saved they came right into church life. They all knew what church life was about, and prayer was as much a part of church life as teaching was. They were exposed to it and lived in it from the beginning. Secondly, they prayed with passion. I mentioned earlier that passion is a very important part of prayer. In Acts 4, the believers went back to their own company after they got persecuted, and we know that they prayed with passion because the Word of God said the building was shaken as a result of their prayers. That's definitely not going to be a boring prayer meeting, nor is it going to be a passive, ineffective prayer meeting. Obviously, they were all filled with boldness, and there was something going on there in their hearts and in the spiritual world. Then, of course, in Acts 12 there is a beautiful picture of commitment and fervency blended together when the Apostle Peter was put in prison and the believers did what they did best - had an all night prayer meeting. They prayed fervently. We know that because they prayed all night and when Peter came to the door they were so involved that they didn't even recognize him until he actually came in the room. Then they celebrated because their prayers were answered and even reached further into the spiritual world to help advance the work of God at that time.

THE VOICE: What impact does prayer coming out of an apostolic church have on the region where that church has been established?

PASTOR MARY ALICE: A Scriptural reference is Matthew 16:18. Jesus said that the gates of hell would not prevail against the Church. What Jesus is building in the end times and the focus of His attention is the Church taking her place as a presence in the spiritual world. There are basically four purposes of the church: to teach, to prophesy, to raise up believers, and to dominate in the spiritual world. That is an avenue of dominion in the spiritual world because Jesus said whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. It is a Scriptural pattern of divine authority given not just to an individual, but also to a local church. So the prayer impact that's combined with commitment and fervency challenges the principalities and powers. It's the way a local church enters into the wrestling. Paul says in Ephesians 6 that we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but we do wrestle.

THE VOICE: Why does spiritual warfare seem to go hand in hand with apostolic churches?

PASTOR MARY ALICE: I've always heard Dr. Chuck Pierce and Apostle John Kelly say that if you are going to spell apostle with three letters, then you spell it W-A-R. An apostle is created for breakthrough. Naturally, the very giftings of an apostolic church, the very mantle of an apostolic church, is to break through spiritually. When the victory is manifested in the spirit then it can be accomplished in the natural. We can't do that without spiritual warfare.

THE VOICE: Why is prophetic intercession so important to the Body of Christ in today's times?

PASTOR MARY ALICE: Prophetic intercession is important because it is praying the mind of God. It is prayer that is not only led by the Holy Spirit, but also empowered by the Holy Spirit with the word of the Lord as a weapon. With prophetic intercession we are speaking prophetically while we are praying. That's important because it is the word of the Lord. Prophetic intercession is praying the direct heart and mind of God, and it is very accurate and specific.

THE VOICE: How does fasting and prayer work together to get breakthroughs?

PASTOR MARY ALICE: Fasting is an important piece of the believer's life. Fasting doesn't change God but it positions us in the spirit to be more yielded to the Spirit of God. It also is a form of consecration and dedication that God honors as we pray and set ourselves apart to him as vessels. There are really two ways to receive things from God: faith and giving. People think we get things by receiving, but we get things from God in the Scriptural pattern by giving. So fasting positions us to be surrendered and open, thus we receive something even more from God through our offering our bodies as reasonable service through fasting.

THE VOICE: What key strategies should corporate prayer groups implement for successful outcomes?

PASTOR MARY ALICE: Number one, you have to be consistent. You have to meet consistently and you have to pray and never give up. Short-term prayer groups are not as effective as long-term groups because we need to be there for the long haul. The corporate prayer groups should be part of the local church life and they should be praying in line with the vision of the house. Therefore, as long as the church is there the corporate prayer is going to be there. It is very important for each group member to be committed. Our presence is what makes the difference in our prayers. Not just our prayers as words, but our presence. We are dominating in the spiritual world and our presence is God's presence. We don't want to back down. I am of the opinion that corporate prayer meetings that are too long wear people out. In our church, we always pray for only an hour because Jesus asked, "Could you not watch and pray for one hour?" People can pray more than one hour, but if you get a group of committed people praying together on a regular basis with effective fervent prayer for one hour every time they are together, then you will see tremendous things happen.

THE VOICE: What is the most overlooked type of prayer and what are we missing by overlooking it?

PASTOR MARY ALICE: The most overlooked prayer is the prayer of forgiveness. We are missing the opportunity to release other people from their trespasses and having peace in our own hearts so we are free from bitterness and hurt stemming from relational situations that affect us all.

THE VOICE: Do you sense a spiritual change in seasons?

PASTOR MARY ALICE: Yes. First of all, I see the emphasis is no longer on individual ministries but on local churches. Secondly, in the local churches I see the believers rising up as workplace apostles as their own gifts and ministries are loosed. Thirdly, I see the next generation of leaders coming and it's not youth. It's 40- and 50-year-olds that have been in ministry for many, many years and have a treasure inside of them that God is ready to use in the Body of Christ.

THE VOICE: How are the spiritual climates in the United States different from Europe? How does this affect prayer strategies?

PASTOR MARY ALICE: One of the reasons the climates are different is because the United States is a Christian nation. In Europe, there are many nations with an atheistic background. They are Godless. So the climate is different just by the

basis of the roots. However, it doesn't mean that the climate is any better or worse because in the U.S. climate we have much more responsibility as a Christian nation to keep being a Christian nation. The climates are different, but both require apostolic believers with strong prayers to change the climates to help bring breakthrough to a region. Our approach in prayer doesn't necessarily have to be different, other than the requests that believers have for the region. It does not affect the fact that we are supposed to pray effective fervent prayer. Based on the patterns of the New Testament Church in the Book of Acts, the goal is to advance the Gospel, to establish the kingdom of God, and to change the spiritual climates so that the Gospel can be preached to every single person. It's harder for U.S. believers to respond, in a way, because we have a plague of lethargy, a lack of passion, and backslidenness in our nation. That's something that I think is more challenging to overcome than just trying to get people saved.