

Dear Friends and Family,
Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness,
And for His wonderful works to the children of men!
Psalm 107:8

This has long been one of my favorite verses in the Psalms. The Psalmist repeats this invitation of thanksgiving three more times, in verses 15, 21, and 31. Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men!

I was reminded of this verse over the past couple of weeks as we prayed for our 5-year-old grand daughter Maren. She was in ICU with life threatening complications from pneumonia .

In Psalm 107, people were in distress. These were very imperfect people, just like you and me. They were hurting, fearful, suffering, but they cried out to God. The theme of this Psalm is God's steadfast love. A perfect and faithful God who loves very imperfect and even unfaithful people , and who hears and responds when we cry out to Him. In Psalm 51:17 we are reminded, A broken and contrite heart, these O LORD, you will not despise.

However, there was something I had never seen before in this Psalm. The commentary notes in my Bible point out that the psalmist himself, is declaring thanks to the Lord, but also declaring that as a community of believers, we together, are to give thanks to the Lord for His goodness and His wonderful works toward us.

This idea of a community giving thanks together became such a reality to me over the past couple of weeks. At times Chuck and I felt very alone as we prayed over Maren, cried over the situation, ached for our daughter and son in law, grieved over not being able to be there with them during this time. But as we shared our distress with others here at our church and online through Facebook, blogs, and emails, we began to experience what the Psalmist was talking about.

The community, the family of believers around the world, embraced our family in His love, prayed for Maren, prayed with us, grieved with us, and encouraged us with precious promises from the Word. TOGETHER, a community of imperfect people, cried out to the Lord and He heard us. Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men!

Maren is home from hospital but still undergoing blood tests as her platelets are still too high. Please keep her in prayer, giving thanks to the Lord for His goodness!

***** GLOBAL WARMING *****

I knew that would get your attention. Since December, we have had freezing temperatures on most days and the cold has taken a toll on my health. In the past 5 months, I have had four bouts of some kind of flu virus, with each one lasting 7 to 14 days. I am just getting over one now and that is the reason this February update is now a March update. I would appreciate your prayers.

***** WHAT'S GOING ON IN OXFORD? *****

Last month I mentioned the following:

*Pray that the unsaved will come and lives will be transformed through Christ. Although about 20 new folks have joined us in the past year, all of them were already Christians.

They come to us from churches that have split, or are teaching false doctrine, or have just abandoned teaching the Bible altogether.

Only about 1% of British people attend a church service each Sunday. An entire generation has grown up not knowing who Jesus is.

Pray that God will prepare people's hearts to receive the Gospel.

UPDATE: Some of the young people in the church have gathered together and are praying about evangelistic outreaches this summer in Oxford and seeking the Lord for direction for reaching out to our local community.

***Please pray for this group and please continue to pray for God to prepare people's hearts to receive the good news of Jesus.

***The 2 worship teams have now blended and it is working beautifully. It is exciting to see the Lord raising up the next generation into ministry. It's also been great to be able to take a week off now and then as that way I have so much more energy for those precious kids in Sunday School. Chuck enjoys running sound or the power point when not leading worship.

*** SPECIAL NEEDS MINISTRIES ***

Chuck and I have discussed and have prayed about conducting a monthly service for learning disabled adults and children. That's as far as it's gone. This monthly service would be outside of our church and on a Sunday afternoon at a local community centre where we could rent a room for the service. We enjoyed so much the singing ministry that we had at a day center for several years, but the manager of that center has retired and that door has closed now. What we are thinking of would be more like a regular church service, but one that would meet special needs. Please pray with us.

If any of you know of a church implementing such a ministry, could you send me an email contact. I'd really like to talk to someone who is already doing this kind of ministry and get some information and insights.

We close this letter with a heart full of thanks.

Thank you dear brothers and sisters for joining us here, through your prayers and finances. Together, we reach out to others who don't know the goodness of our Jesus.

Today we thank the Lord for His goodness and His wonderful works toward us all !

With love from your fellow workers in Christ,

Chuck and Anita

*** CONTINUED PRAYER REQUESTS ***

*Because of the growth the need for a place of our own is becoming more pressing. Our Sunday School room is too small. The school-hall the adults meet in is almost full capacity. Please pray the Lord will direct us to a building of our own.

*Pray for the church leadership, Pastor Phil, Jonathan, Chuck, John and Andy and Robin. Love, wisdom and unity.

*Pray for the "special friends" ministry with the learning disabled.

*Pray that God will use Calvary Chapel Oxford to reach our community.

* Pray for the Youth ministry Alan and Anna are heading up.

* Pray for our children, their spouses and our grandchildren. Our greatest desire, prayer, and joy for them is that they walk in truth (3 John 4), seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. (Matthew 6:33) * Pray the same for us!

“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown or rejoicing? It is not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?”

1 Thessalonians 2:19

PS: If any of you are on Facebook, invite us! It is a great way to keep in touch.

*** Calvary Chapel Oxford Website***

<http://www.calvarychapeloxford.org.uk>

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