

JUST PRAYER or PRAYER FOR JUSTICE?

It is estimated that there are currently 2,998,030,000 people in the world who have never had the opportunity to hear about Jesus.¹ **How do you even begin to pray for so many?** Sometimes it seems difficult enough to keep track of the prayer requests of people we know, let alone those we have never met. When we start to talk about a number with that many zeroes, we can find it easier to tune out, particularly when we have no name, face, or story to put with such an obscenely large figure.

And yet the God who knows the number of hairs on my head is also concerned for each and every one of these billions of people. His desire is that they hear the Good News; that they receive the invitation to enter into His Kingdom through His Son.

Too often I find myself using the word “just” in my prayers, “Lord would you just...?” or “Father I just ask ...” I wonder if this demonstrates a lack of faith in what God can do, or a false humility in not wanting my request to be too much of a ‘bother’ to God. In contrast, the Bible calls us to pray with boldness and confidence, knowing that when we ask in accordance with God’s will, He hears and answers.

The Bible also clearly teaches us that it is God’s will that the Gospel be proclaimed to all people in the entire world! Praying for those who haven’t had a chance to hear is certainly in alignment with God’s will and something He wants us to be praying for. When we don’t know what to ask for, the Bible gives us plenty of starting points:

- Ask God to open doors for the message of the Gospel (Col 4:3)
- Ask God to unveil the eyes of many so that they might see the light of the Gospel that displays the glory of Christ (2 Cor 4:4)
- Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers to bring the good news (Luke 10:2)
- Ask our Father to pour out His Spirit of wisdom and revelation so that people might know Him better (Eph 1:17)
- Pray that God’s will (that many would come to repentance 2 Peter 3:9) will be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matt 6:10)
- Pray that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honoured. (2 Thess 3:1)

When we talk about Just Prayer, we’re not talking about ‘merely’ prayer, as if it was some small, token thing we do! Because prayer is the first and most important thing we can do to participate in God’s mission. What we’re talking about is prayer for justice. Prayer that recognises the huge need experienced by so many people for the most important gift that God has to give. It acknowledges that we too often spend the majority of time praying for things for ourselves and those like us, rather than seeking God’s will for the whole world.

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¹ See www.joshuaproject.net