

CALL OF THE WATCHMEN

September 2019

Seeking God together – a spiritual turning point

This prayer letter is somewhat different. In the past years God has encouraged us greatly through answers to prayer and the richly blessed prayer conferences. However, the challenging developments in our land in many areas of politics and society (polarisation and hate, the growing influence of gender-mainstreaming, anti-Semitism, declining church attendance, etc.), and the rapid turning away from Christian values, cause us to sit up and take notice, and to personally make time to be still before God.

Therefore in this month we want to seek God, our Father, with all of our hearts. We have clearly heard his call to us for this and we are ready to respond. We feel that God wants to bring us into line once again with him, and his ways which up to now have been and are still hidden from the eyes of the world. As a prayer network for Germany we therefore want to seek God together in our prayer groups all over our land during this month. For, if we seek him with all of our hearts, we will find him. (Jeremiah 29:13).

Our task is to pray for the welfare of this land, for politics and society, and to stand alongside Germany through our intercession. This is now particularly important in these challenging times of radical change. We want to be touched and equipped anew for this task.

God is also shaking our nation, removing what can be shaken (Hebrews 12:26,27), so we must not consider everything that is now happening as “a bad thing”. There is much for which we can be thankful to God in these times.

God values my and your prayers. We really sense that God’s hand is on our land. Thankfulness is an important key that God has given to us so that we remain constantly aware of his gracious ways of dealing with us as a nation. *“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end;”* (Lamentations 3:22). Therefore we want to continue to approach God with much thankfulness. At this time of shaking we are looking for a greater breakthrough of God’s kingdom into our land than one which just comes at a point in time when our prayers against negative developments are answered. We therefore want to take time and really listen in a radically new and submissive way to how God wants to lead us in our prayers.

Seek God “empty handed”

“Lord, teach us to pray”, asked Jesus’ disciples (Luke 11:1), and this is exactly our request to God in this prayer letter. We want to allow God to give us his perspective on prayer. This requires that we let go of our own thoughts and ways to make room for his thoughts and ways. (Isaiah 55:8). For we want to see (understand, evaluate) the way in which he sees (understands, evaluates) prayer! It appears that it is time to hand over everything that we have held in our hands up until now, including what has perhaps given us a sense of security in our prayers, and stand “empty handed” before him. In this way we want to be prepared to hear the call of God that comes to us through the prophet Amos: **“Seek me and live ...”** (Amos 5:4).

This call to seek God was given to the people of Israel, whom Amos accuses of a multitude of specific sins in God’s name (Chapter 5). At the same time this call includes an important warning: *“... do not seek Bethel, do not go to Gilgal, do not journey to Beersheba. For Gilgal will surely go into exile, and Bethel will be reduced to nothing.”* (Amos 5:5). Amos was announcing a dangerous risk to their security which he expected Israel to take. For the Israelites, Gilgal, Bethel and Beersheba were all significant religious places where God had met with their forefathers. And God was clearly saying that they should let go of all their religious customs and seek him alone.

So we also feel that God is challenging us to come to him **empty handed, poor in spirit**. The call is also connected with Isaiah 30:15: *“In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it.”* **But we say to God that we want to have it!**

We do not want to trust in our own strength, nor rely on all that God in his grace has given us and where he has blessed us until now. We want to go forward and seek the Lord in an entirely new way! **Without preconditions!**

It is not primarily about making things better for ourselves or our land. It is only about God and knowing him more. That we allow him to teach us, that we examine ourselves, and that he is able to direct us in a new way as intercessors for this land of Germany.

How do we seek God – in practice?

Isaiah helps us to turn away from the problems and needs, turn to God and be still and wait on him. What does he want to reveal to us? What is on his heart? From the Bible we learn that people have often fasted when they have determined to seek God once again. Therefore we ask you to consider fasting on your prayer day. Then we would have a continuous fasting chain in September leading up to Rosh HaShana, the Jewish New Year Feast, on the final day (30th). Some of you may want to fast for a longer time – that would be great!

How else can we pray?

We have the promise that the Holy Spirit will help us when we simply admit that we are not sure how we should pray for our land in these times. *“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.”* (Romans 8:26).

And we have the prayer that Jesus taught to his disciples – which we now call the “Our Father” or the “Lord’s Prayer”. This should be enough for us as a guide to prayer in this month. As a simple aid to your prayers, we have written a few lines in italics under each section of the Lord’s Prayer to further guide you.

Please let us know what you have experienced during your prayer time this month and what God has revealed to you.

Praying in accordance with the Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven

Our Father is in heaven and our home as his children is also in heaven. We honour you as our Father, who loves us, and indeed loves all people, wanting to draw them to yourself. What does God reveal to you, as you reach out to him with all your heart?

Hallowed be your name

It's all about hallowing and honouring his name – in what areas in your life and in our land is this declaration in prayer needed right now?

We want to declare the honour, glory and lordship of God in the unseen and seen world. Speak out, who God is, how holy and precious he is.

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven

Some specific areas:

- *State elections in Brandenburg and Saxony (September 1st) and Thuringia (October 27th), and the subsequent forming of a state government.*
- *National governmental decisions regarding Israel and Iran.*
- *New legislation proposals which further restrict freedom of expression – prohibition of conversion therapy for homosexuals on request, donation of organs after death, etc., and whatever God puts on your heart.*

Give us today our daily bread

We thank you for all your care and provision, for the wealth in our land. We pray for our agricultural sector and for sufficient rain for the harvest in times of drought.

We pray also for "spiritual bread". Germany lives not from bread alone, but from every word that comes from the mouth of God. We ask you to speak and work in all areas of society, for our dealings with nature and agriculture, the media, entertainment, the economy, in politics and for families, etc.

Forgive us our debts

Let us take direct personal responsibility to confess our sins by name – this is about "our debts" – "our sins".

As we also have forgiven our debtors

Who should you personally forgive? Who should you as a local prayer group possibly forgive?

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one

What is God revealing to you about where you/where we as a country need protection and deliverance?

For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever.

- *Proclaim the coming of his kingdom and the lordship of Jesus.*
- *What is God now revealing to you in a new way about himself? Speak out clearly, who God is. Quote from his Word!*

Amen

So be it, in the name of our Lord Jesus!

Dates for your prayer diary

- 30.08.-01-09 **Polish-German Friendship Conference and March of Life in Gdansk/Danzig, Poland**, to mark the 80th anniversary of the German invasion of Poland in 1939 and the start of World War II. Please also pray for this event to have a lasting influence on Polish-German relations.
- 01.09. **State elections in Brandenburg and Saxony.**
- 17.09. **National elections in Israel.** Pray especially for the subsequent coalition negotiations and the formation of a new national government.
- 21.09. **March of Life in Berlin** against anti-Semitism.
- 23.09.-26.09 **Autumn General Assembly of the German Bishops Conference** (Catholic) in Fulda.

*We are excited to seek God together with you!
Rosemarie Stresemann, Alexander Schlüter and Team*