

Blog

Help!

What do we do when we don't know what to do?

“Help, LORD!” (Psalm 12:1) This may not have been one of David's more articulate prayers. But on this occasion it summed up his heartfelt cry. Probably, we can all identify with David. Surely, we have been confronted by situations that we didn't know how to handle. Sometimes the only word we can think to pray is, “Help!”

The answer to most problems lies in a combination of thinking, prayer, wise counsel, experience and common sense. However, sometimes we really don't know what to do or where to turn. What do we do when we don't know what to do?

There is an incident on the Old Testament where Jehoshaphat, king of Judah encountered an impossible situation that threatened his life and the survival of his people. An alliance of nations came against him with a vast army and Jehoshaphat was terrified. What was he to do when he didn't know what to do?

“We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.” (2 Chronicles 20:12)

From Jehoshaphat's story there are a few tips that may help us in our own trials when we don't know what to do.

Get praying - he sought God

“Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah assembled to seek help from the Lord; from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord.” (2 Chronicles 20:3-4)

Jehoshaphat’s immediate reaction was to pray. So serious was his terror that he combined his prayer with fasting. He then gathered everyone around him to pray and in his alarm proclaimed a national call to prayer. The key to every crisis is prayer. When disaster looms we pray. Help comes when we pray. What do we do when we don’t know what to do? We get praying.

Get prophetic - he heard from God

“And the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel. And he said, “Listen. Thus says the Lord, ‘Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed, for the battle is not yours but God’s. Tomorrow go down against them. You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm, hold your position, and see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf.’”” (2 Chronicles 20:14-17)

Jehoshaphat generated an environment where the prophet could speak. In response to prayer, the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel and he prophesied. As the enemy amassed around them, God spoke. Through the dark clouds of terror shone the word of the Lord. New Testament believers have the Holy Spirit who speaks into any situation through a variety of ways. In response to prayer we can expect God to speak directly to our dilemma, giving clear guidance, strategy and confidence. What do we do when we don’t know what to do? We get prophetic.

Get practical - he obeyed God

“And they rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness. Jehoshaphat stood and said, “Believe in the Lord your God, and you will be established; believe his prophets, and you will succeed.” He appointed those who were to sing to the Lord as they went before the army. And when they began to sing and praise, the Lord set an ambush against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, so that they were routed.” (2 Chronicles 20:20-22)

Jehoshaphat followed the prophet’s advice and did what God said. It took considerable faith because the strategy for victory was quite strange. A choir was to accompany the soldiers singing, “Give thanks to the Lord, for his steadfast love endures forever.” (2 Chronicles 20:21) But Jehoshaphat had nothing to lose, and so he did it. Obedience is a major part of faith. If we trust God, we will obey him. Having prayed and received direction from the Lord, Jehoshaphat was able to get practical and organise everybody so that the strategic plan would work. In any difficulty, if we pray and hear from God, we will know what to do. Then we can get on and do it. What do we do when we don’t know what to do? We get practical.

For Jehoshaphat the strategy worked. Prayer, prophecy and getting practical worked. A miracle happened and the enemy was routed. A similar action plan will work for us. God hears our prayer for help and will respond with the specific answer we need. What do we do when we don’t know what to do? We get praying, we get prophetic and we get practical.