

FIRESTARTERS 5

PRAYER TOOL

Igniting Prayer for Revival in our City • 5 Minutes to Read • 5 Minutes in Prayer

FOR THE WEEK OF July 26 - Aug 1, 2020 - Vol 13

THEME VERSE:

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Romans 12:12

THE GOD OF REVIVAL:

The 1st Great Awakening of the 1730's - 1740's: Northhampton Revival

The 1st Great Awakening is often talked about as a time of intense spiritual renewal in the American colonies in the 1700's. But the roots of this revival actually trace back to Germany among the Moravian Christians who themselves experienced revival praying together for God to unify them and to send them out on mission to the world. God would use the powerful prayers of the Moravians and their pure devotion to God to influence key leaders in the 1st Great Awakening, like John Wesley and George Whitefield.

The colonies in North America in the early 1700's were busy and prosperous but also arrogant. The original desire of the early settlers to seek God above all else had given way to spiritual apathy. Christianity was still present in the culture, but dead orthodoxy had replaced a vital relationship with the Savior. Christians were divided into denominations that did not mix with one another, and intellectual pride flowed freely within the churches. Many became deists, who believed in the generic idea of a god who exists but who does not involve himself in the daily lives of mankind.

The first burst of revival in this awakening happened in Northhampton, Massachusetts, in 1734. Jonathan Edwards was a pastor there, and he was a thoughtful, prayerful, preacher of God's Word, spending more than 10 hours each day in reading and prayer. He rejected the notion that Christianity was just a club of people trying to do good deeds. Faith had to go beyond mere intellect and be rooted in one's heart. In the fall of 1734, he started preaching with a passion to see the lost turn from their sin and put their trust in Jesus for forgiveness. They needed to experience a new birth that was accomplished by God's grace and through their faith. In late December, the Spirit of God started moving swiftly through the town. Half a dozen church members gave their lives to Christ, and one young woman known for her immoral lifestyle was deeply transformed as she trusted in the Lord. The flames of revival soon spread through every home, and people saw God instilling joy in their worship, renewed love for one another, and a hunger for more of God's presence. There was soulful conviction of personal sin, but even more, there was an unbridled passion for God that was ignited in the hearts of the townspeople.

Edwards wanted to encourage others in New England to also seek after this same awakening, so he published a call to all intercessors to gather to pray for revival. He also published stories of what God was doing to awaken His people. Over the next few years, God would stir up bursts of spiritual awakening in numerous towns in America as the revival spread. God also poured out a great revival upon the country of England during this time, and the next phase of the 1st Great Awakening would ignite as the Spirit raised up and sent out British revivalists to America.

THE GOD WHO ANSWERS PRAYERS:

- **PROGRESS AMIDST COVID-19.** Despite the sad news of an increased number of infections in various states across our nation, praise God that many states hardest hit earlier this year (like New York) have made great progress in keeping their hospitalization and death rates low. And

we continue to learn rapidly how best to treat those who get sick. Thank God that early estimates predict that the overall COVID-19 recovery rate is higher than 97% and should improve as we gain insight and skill in caring for patients.

PRAYER REQUESTS THIS WEEK:

FOR THE NEEDS OF THE CITY:

- Please pray for the COVID-19 testing backlog as there is an increasing shortage of testing personnel, facilities & supplies across the city. As a result, many are experiencing very long lead times to determine if they're positive and if it is safe for them to return to work or be with family.
- Pray for the many small business owners who have had to shut down their businesses, some permanently, that they won't lose hope and that they will trust in the Lord for a path forward out of their current circumstance.
- Pray for strong leadership on the part of managers in setting the tone of love and respect for employees, customers, suppliers and each other and in establishing safe work guidelines.

FOR THE NEEDS OF THE WORLD AND MISSIONS:

- Besides praying for our city and nation, we want to take time to keep the world in prayer also. Pray this week that ministries in Israel would reach out to new Jewish immigrants so that they would hear the Gospel and come to know the Messiah!
- Pray for Caleb Company, a ministry to Israel and the Middle East. Their partners are distributing food and showing love to the normally closed ultra-orthodox community in Tel Aviv that has some of the highest rates of Coronavirus of everyone in Israel.

FOR LOCAL CHURCHES AND REVIVAL:

- **LOCAL CHURCHES.** Pray for wisdom on how to serve children and families as the new school year prepares to begin. With uncertainty on meeting in schools, and the pandemic continuing, churches can step into the gap to serve our communities. Pray that we will do it well and be a witness for Christ in word and action at the forefront. Some churches are already preparing to offer their facilities as study locations so parents can work and students can learn.
- **REVIVAL:** The enemy of our souls wants to discourage and distract us from God's Word and His will for us as we live through these times of pandemic. Pray for genuine revival to begin in individuals and families, spreading to neighborhoods and churches, so that the Church might rise up for such a time as this and God might send spiritual awakening to sweep across our cities and nation. He is able!

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