Not Only Pray, but Ask and Work!

Then the king said to me, “What do you request?” So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, ... I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers’ tombs, that I may rebuild it.” Nehemiah 2:4, 5, NKJV.

While Nehemiah implored the help of God, he did not fold his own hands, feeling that he had no more care or responsibility in the bringing about of his purpose to restore Jerusalem. With admirable prudence and forethought he proceeded to make all the arrangements necessary to ensure the success of the enterprise....

The example of this holy man should be a lesson to all the people of God, that they are not only to pray in faith, but to work with diligence and fidelity. How many difficulties we encounter, how often we hinder the working of Providence in our behalf, because prudence, forethought, and painstaking are regarded as having little to do with religion! This is a grave mistake. It is our duty to cultivate and to exercise every power that will render us more efficient workers for God. Careful consideration and well-matured plans are as essential to the success of sacred enterprises today as in the time of Nehemiah....

Men and women of prayer should be men and women of action. Those who are ready and willing will find ways and means of working. Nehemiah did not depend upon uncertainties. The means which he lacked he solicited from those who were able to bestow.

The Lord still moves upon the hearts of kings and rulers in behalf of His people. Those who are laboring for Him are to avail themselves of the help that He prompts men and women to give for the advancement of His cause. The agents through whom these gifts come may open ways by which the light of truth shall be given to many benighted lands. These people may have no sympathy with God’s work, no faith in Christ, no acquaintance with His Word; but their gifts are not on this account to be refused.

The Lord has placed His goods in the hands of unbelievers as well as believers; all may return to Him His own for the doing of the work that must be done for a fallen world. As long as we are in
this world, as long as the Spirit of God strives with human hearts, so long are we to receive favors as well as to impart them.—The Southern Watchman, March 15, 1904.

This devotional is taken from To Be Like Jesus by Ellen G. White.