

Prayer: the Key to Peace



I am an avid Boston Red Sox fan. One of my favorite players is David Ortiz, who was with the Sox for 14 seasons. He was a highly paid, star player who made more money in two days than I make in a year! As a rich, bigger-than-life star, Ortiz could have an attitude of entitlement and bravado. But Ortiz, given the nickname “Big Papi,” is a very humble man who gives back to the community of Boston in some very significant ways.

From the Dominican Republic, Ortiz spends his winters, not on this warm tropical island in the Caribbean, but in snowy, cold Boston, being an ambassador of good will. Ortiz and his wife give of themselves to sick children—particularly children from the Dominican who need medical help—spending time with them, paying for operations and for their families to stay in Boston where they are being treated, etc. The Ortizes visit kids in the hospital, and they raise and give millions of dollars each year to children in need.

In a crude way, that is a picture of the truth of Psalm 95. Verses 3-5 talk about the awesomeness of God: “For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.” But then they come around to the fact that this awesome God, this creator of the universe, has at the center of His heart, us! The more familiar verses of this psalm, go on to say: “Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of

his pasture, the flock under his care.”

This concept is also at the center of one of the greatest blessings of prayer. As we struggle to cope with our lives—its issues and situations that can bring anxiety and possibly despair—we only have to turn to this great God. Despite being the creator and ruler of the universe, He cares about us, and will offer comfort and resources if we surrender to His care.

Philippians 4 says it best, “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

When we share our anxieties and needs, along with a thankful heart that this great God cares for us, something happens. Peace! Sheep haven't a worry in the world when the shepherd is present. And neither do we. It is hard to let go of things like fear, worry . . . control. But prayer is the best tool in our arsenal when it comes to handling the situations of life. Remember that. With prayer comes the peace of God that scripture says is supernatural, beyond understanding.

Another reason to encourage those to whom you minister, that prayer is such a crucial aspect of their relationships with God. It will make a tremendous difference in their outlook on life.

—Jonathan Graf is president of the Church Prayer Leaders Network and a popular speaker and author. You can contact him at jong@harvestprayer.com