

Dear praying friends,

Do you ever wonder if your prayers are doing any good? Not long ago, in a message in our church here in Vienna, I made the provocative statement that I did not believe in prayer or the power of prayer. That raised a few eyebrows. I went on to say that I have not put my faith in prayer, but in God. All the good that can come when we pray happens only because God is wonderfully and graciously at work. If we think prayer puts us in the driver's seat, we have not understood what prayer is all about. (I know this is only one part of the story, so hold on to those objections.)

That said, Lynette and I experienced God's answers to our prayers last week in two ways: We found out shortly before leaving on a seven-day road trip (of nearly 1200 miles) that our tires were not fit for wet weather and needed changing asap. It was too late to get the tires changed and rain was predicted for at least two of those days. We and others prayed for dry roads – AND we had them.

Another answer to prayer is illustrated by the following: While away from home, we were able to take one rainy day and hunker down in a beautiful place for a kind of "spiritual retreat," spending time alone and together in Bible reading, prayer, worship, reading aloud to each other, and (for me) working on a prayer journal. One of our prayers was for our neighbors, that the Lord would open up new opportunities to talk with them about spiritual things. When we arrived home on Saturday, as I was unpacking the car, one of our neighbors, St, walked by and stopped to talk. He wanted to tell me about some crazy people he had heard about who were atheists. He remembered that I believed in God! So, what did I think? Here is part of the dialogue:

Jim: "I bet we could find out some interesting stuff about that if we read the Bible."

St: "I have never read the Bible."

Jim: "Maybe we could read it together. I would like that."

St: "Have you never read the Bible either?"

Anyhow, St is open to reading the Bible with me. Please pray that this is not just a polite response, but actually happens. Immediately after we got unpacked, we headed over to another neighbor's house, who had invited us to help celebrate her 50th birthday with a few friends. We only knew her (SR) and her common-law husband (F). In the course of sitting around a large table with strangers, several interesting conversations (including some with spiritual content) took place. At one point, I was discussing with a retired Roman Catholic "religion teacher" the reason Abraham was looking at the stars (she said he was looking for information about his future; I suggested there was another reason... ☺). It was a friendly exchange, but I noticed that several people were paying very close attention. We may never see those other folks again, but SR and F are kind and friendly (but lost) neighbors, who know that we are believers. Please pray that the seeds planted at that party will bear fruit (Mt. 13:23).

Thank you for praying for us. Here are a few bullet points to update you:

- Some of have asked about “X”, whom we mentioned in our last email. We continue to pray for her and the other refugees on our street, but have only seen her once briefly since then.
- Praise God for safe and productive travel in September. I was able to meet with two of my direct reports (one of them for over a day to talk about a number of critical issues on his field), plus do two interviews for my doctoral research on BAO.
- Pray for a September 30 all-day event at church to talk about the problems and challenges we are facing (rumblings of discontent).
- Pray for St and SR/F, mentioned above.
- Pray for a presentation I am giving on September 28 at the EVAK Bible school graduation ceremony. I will be speaking on a topic I did some research on over the past couple of years, which I call “holistic maturity.” Pray for the one week I have to finish my preparation.
- Pray for my/our travel and big events in October, which is significantly above average:
 - Oct. 1-2 – Jim in Frankfurt for a 24-hour GEM leadership meeting;
 - Oct. 4-8 – Jim and Lynette in southern Romania (flying to Bucharest, then driving 3 hours) to be with the GEM team and see one of the ministries with a strategic partner first hand;
 - Oct. 12-14 – Jim’s Central Europe Leadership Team (CELT) is coming to Vienna for an annual retreat; we are hosting and Jim is leading this working retreat.
 - Oct. 25-28 – Jim and Lynette in central Austria for a national conference for evangelicals.

Thank you for your kindness and your share in this ministry. Your prayers for us are huge. The Lord continues to take care of us. Lynette is doing very well.

Yours in Christ,

Jim and Lynette

The words of Jesus for 2018:

"Seek first the Kingdom of God..." (Mt. 6:33) "... for apart from me you can do nothing." (Joh. 15:5)

Die Worte Jesu für 2018:

"Trachtet zuerst nach dem Reich Gottes..." (Mt. 6,33) "... denn ohne mich könnt ihr nichts tun." (Joh. 15,5)