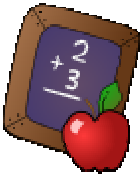


All Through the Night

By Mary Kane

I had a big decision to make. I was working at the elementary school that my children attended. I loved my job and my boys seemed to be happy at their school. I was not even thinking of leaving until one spring morning I saw a sign posted in the chapel that was very disturbing. The sign was an advertisement for a movement that was about to be launched in our church that was not biblically sound. I



I remember very clearly how I looked at that poster in shock and felt a rock solid directive from God to leave that church, school and my job. I immediately prayed for God's direction and researched other schools in which to place my children. God very quickly led us to a small Christian school where I registered my children with the deep abiding assurance that we were following His will.

As I did not have a job, I paid the registration fees on faith that God would provide the \$5,000 needed for the rest of the tuition. Very few people understood and supported my decision to change churches, schools and jobs. Some of them said things that hurt me very deeply, but I knew that while I wasn't pleasing many people, I was pleasing God.

On the surface my decision to leave the school where we were situated seemed to make little sense; I made a decent wage, my boys received a free private school education and we had many friends. However, staying meant sacrificing the one thing I wasn't willing to do without—an education based on a foundation of Biblical truth. Through a series of phone calls, prayers for God's will to be done, interviews and many highs and lows, I was hired at the school where my children were enrolled (yeah, God!) and by way of a generous discount, the tuition was no longer a problem.

Looking back, this was one of the most exciting, scary, growing times of my life! God was kindly and gently teaching me how to walk by faith, persevere through persecution and to pray continually.

Please read Luke 6: 12-16.

In a nutshell what is happening in Luke 6:12-16?

Having grown up going to church, I was very familiar with the Twelve Apostles, their names and the fact that they worked with Jesus. As a matter of fact one of my earliest memories of Catechism Class was singing a little song about Jesus calling the Apostles. However, it wasn't until writing this study that it began to dawn on me from clues in the text that the choosing of the Twelve was a hugely significant event that Jesus covered in prayer. Let's look at these "clues" which will be brought to light by a question or statement, and expand upon them.

According to verse 12 where did Jesus go and for what reason?

Clue 1. Jesus got away by himself to pray.

What do you do when you have something big on your mind that requires some prayer? I like to find a quiet place to be by myself and pray. Pending on the need and my emotional state at the time, I like to get on my knees or even lay on the floor to pray. These prayer times are just between God and me. I don't want anyone else around—not my husband, my children or my best friend. I want to be able to let myself "go" in prayer without having to worry about what others are thinking of me. We see in scripture that Jesus had a solitary prayer habit. Sometimes big events drove him to a quiet place for prayer such as the death of John the Baptist or the eve of His crucifixion (Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane). At other times Jesus sought a quiet place to pray because he needed to refuel after a day of casting demons and healing diseases.

How long did Jesus spend in prayer (verse 12)?

Clue 2. Jesus spent the *whole night* in prayer.

What is the longest segment of time that you have spent in prayer? It's probably safe to say that most of us have never spent an entire night in prayer. Sometimes I think we shy away from extended periods of prayer because they are hard work! The battles of our Christian life are often won or lost during our times of prayer. When we engage in prayer we often engage in combat against the enemy. Battling is hard work!

The phrase "and continued all night" in the original language is *dianuktereuo* which literally means "to pass the whole night, continued all night, and to sit up all night." A synonym for *dianuktereuo* is *abide*. I like the thought of *abiding* or *living* in prayer. It is significant that the only time this word is used in the entire Bible is in this passage. David Brown states in the BlueletterBible, "so here we find the Lord Himself in prolonged communion with His Father in preparation for the solemn appointment of those men who were to give birth to His Church, and from whom the world in all time was to take a new mould. How instructive is this!"

Not even before His own crucifixion did Jesus devote an entire night in prayer. The usage of *dianuktereuo* in this passage emphasizes the importance of the calling of the Twelve. Remember, the Twelve Apostles were given the incredible responsibility of launching and managing the New Testament Church. Jesus spent the whole night in prayer discussing with His Father the details of this important decision.

Please write the opening phrase of verse 12 in the space provided.

Clue 3. The usage of the phrase, "Now it came to pass in those days..."

Does this phrase sound familiar to you? As I read verse 12 the phrase, "Now it came to pass in those days..." struck a chord in my memory. I looked up this phrase on my Bible software and discovered that every time it was used, a major event was about to unfold. Let's look up these references concerning this phrase and see what we can discover.

What important event was about to take place in:

Luke 2:1

(Our Savior was born!)

Mark 1:9

(The birth of Jesus' earthly ministry!)

Luke 20:1 (Look back at verse 28 if needed)

(Jesus ushering in the birth of the New Covenant!)

Acts 9:36-42:

(The rebirth of Dorcas!)

Luke 6:12-16

In Luke 6:12-16 we see the birth of man's involvement in the plan of redemption apart from the priesthood. "In one sense, there was nothing in Jesus' three years of ministry before the cross more important than this. These were the men who would carry on what He had done; without them, the work of Jesus would never extend through the whole world. No wonder Jesus gave this an entire night of prayer" (*The Blue Letter Bible CD*. CD-ROM, version 2.11. Sowing Circle, 2006.).

Jesus had a big decision to make. According to our text, what can we learn from Jesus about prayer and the decision making process?

- 1. Get alone.** Go to your favorite praying place and bring the issue before God. Some things are just between you and Him.
- 2. Get praying.** Some issues will need continuous prayer. Continuous prayer can mean one session covering several hours or many shorter sessions over a period of days, weeks or months.
- 3. Get an answer.** Do not quit praying until you know God's answer to your prayer. He'll either give you what you ask for or He'll give You something better. Sometimes we'll have to wait for His answer. We must learn to wait upon His timing.

4. Get going. Jesus did not delay once He knew God's answer and God's timetable. Act on your answer!

Is there anything else you can add to the list above?

Take a moment to take stock of your life right now.

Are you facing a big decision right now? If so, what is it?

Are you willing to lay aside your own prayer agenda and ask that God's will be done? One of my very close friends and two of my sisters are facing major life-changing decisions at the present time. I also have a big decision to make concerning a ministry opportunity that may greatly affect the course of my life. Another friend has decided to change careers and go back to college. With the state of the economy many others are in the same boat. Let us follow Jesus' example and spend some time praying before we make any decisions. When you are walking with Jesus life is never boring! Make sure you cover every decision in prayer. Pray on!

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