



HAMILTON CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP HEARTBEAT



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Partnering to Fuel Passion for Prayer

by Andy Groen

“Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works...”

I have a confession: I have a hard time praying. Even though I work for a ministry that centres around prayer, I find it difficult to cultivate regular rhythms of prayer.

There is a gym on Main St. in Hamilton that I pass by several times a week. For a while it had a sign out front that read, “It’s not about having time, it’s about making time.” How true that is. If we wait until we have time to do something we know to be good - like prayer or working out

- we never will. We are busy, busy people. Who has time to pray?

Many, many times I have set my alarm early in the morning with the intention to wake up early and begin the day with an hour of prayer. The routine became all too familiar: 5:00 am my first alarm goes. I reason that 45 minutes of prayer is enough. Still in bed, 6:00 eventually rolls around and my kids are up and the day is upon me. Another morning of good intentions slips by. The spirit is willing the flesh is weak!

A major breakthrough came around this same time last year. I have a good friend who also wanted to grow in his prayer life. He suggested that we call each other every morning at 5am to wake each other up to pray.
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Profile: Solomon & Ebere

By Pastor Bob Cowling

Divine timing, secret agreement, lavish finances and travel abroad – sounds like a recipe for a successful Hollywood movie, but they are in fact just a few of the sensational ingredients in Solomon & Ebere’s journey from their hometown in rural Nigeria to Solomon studying for his doctorate at the McMaster University School of Divinity and finally here at HCF.

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Profile cont'd...

They were born in the same village of Isiugwu-ohafia, consisting of approximately 8,000 people in rural eastern Nigeria – but didn't know each other until their early 20's. What brought them together was their passion for the Lord. Solomon is the third generation Christian in his family and was off to bible college to become a church Pastor as soon as he graduated from high school. Ebere left the village at age 10 with her family but came back age 18 after high school. They met at a Christian outdoor crusade that Solomon was helping to organize in their village. Ebere made a recommitment to the Lord at the crusade and she was part of the group of people that Solomon was responsible to follow-up with regarding their ongoing walk with the Lord following the crusade. While Solomon was away at bible college in another city, he and Ebere kept in touch by mail, mostly to keep on track with Ebere's spiritual growth. Ebere says, "Solomon became my spiritual mentor".

Solomon responds to my question about how it transitioned from a friendship to a courtship? He says, "in class they were emphasizing the need for a pastor to maintain chastity, and they recommended marriage as one to do so. When I thought of who I would want that to be, I thought of Ebere, but I wasn't ready yet, my studies were going to take a few more years."

Solomon also found out that back at their village, Ebere had already been asked by a few young men, and one of them a Pastor already, if she would marry them. In Nigeria they ask Ebere's mother who in turn

asks Ebere, and she has the right to the final say, and so far had declined the offers. When Solomon was next at home he asked Ebere to come to his home to meet his parents. Ebere knew of their family and that they had a reputation of being very righteous. Solomon asked about the other men and if she refused the one guy because he was a Pastor. Ebere said 'no'. He then asked if she would have any objection to considering marrying the soon-to-be Pastor she was talking to. Ebere said 'YES' right there, and they agreed to begin a secret courtship that was supposed to last until Solomon was finished Bible College.

The only problem with the plan – the other young men in the village didn't know about it, and they kept coming to ask Ebere's mother if they could marry her. Finally, it was her foster dad that asked, "why do you keep saying 'no', you're not getting any younger?" She 'spilled the beans' to him that Solomon was who she was waiting for. Ebere quickly let Solomon know and he was soon back in the village to be the one to ask Ebere's parent for their permission to marry their daughter. Because her dad already knew, but Solomon still needed to ask, he put the request to her father this way, "there is a certain flower in your garden that I want to pluck for keeps before another person takes it". The father asked him to be more clear, and Solomon was glad to do so by asking for his daughter Ebere's hand in marriage. He said the mother needed to be consulted. Her first question was, "does your mother know of your plan?", to which Solomon replied, "No, she doesn't". Nothing would be settled until Solomon's mother gave her OK to the marriage too, which

is usually the way marriages are settled, between the mothers of the couple. Solomon's parents agreed, but the courtship lasted till after Solomon was done bible college, a full four years in total.

There were a few pastorates that they oversaw until finally Solomon was pastor of a Presbyterian church of approximately 1,200 people in the capital city of Abuja. While there Solomon wanted to grow in his biblical studies and so began a search as to where and decided upon Singapore. He was offered admission in Trinity theological College, Singapore, but a friend who had been to Canada mentioned all the fine bible colleges here and an application was sent to Knox College. Knox College admitted him but he could not secure the study permit. Another friend as part of encouraging him did recommend McMaster Divinity College. Solomon visited McMaster and had a rewarding discussion with the College's President. It looked promising for the following years enrollment, but it would cost over \$5,000 USD, just to fly his family to Canada and they did not have that kind of money.

Solomon's church asked what they could do to support his plans, and so he figured out how much he and his family would need for travel cost and to support themselves for one year and that was the answer that Solomon gave the church. The church, in an unprecedented act of generosity raised the funds and Solomon's family were soon to be here in Hamilton.

Solomon came first, to find a home and he settled on an apartment in Westdale. Once the family was here came the task of finding a home

church. They visited the Presbyterian churches that were within walking distance, but Solomon wasn't sure they were a fit as the Nigerian Presbyterian church is more charismatic than their cousins here in Canada. One day while admiring Victoria Park, Solomon walked by HCF and in his words, "I could feel the presence of God just walking around the building". So he walked by again on a Sunday, which happened to be when we were having our outdoor baptism service, and this time not only could he feel the presence of God, but he was asked to come in and have some food with us by a member in our congregation. Solomon appreciated the invitation, though he turned it down on cultural grounds. Together with the entire family, they came to check out the church, and Ebere said, "the first time I visited HCF I knew this was our new spiritual home in Hamilton".

Solomon & Ebere, and their four children; David, Daniel, Diane and Paul, have adjusted to our Canadian winter, the different choices in the grocery stores and so much else that is not the same as in their native Nigeria. But one thing remains the same. Their love of God and His Presence has not only brought them together and here to our country, but is daily meeting their needs and helping them through every trial they encounter. ❤️

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www.facebook.com/HCFchurchfamily/

Passion for Prayer cont'd..

I suggested that we meet together instead. And so we did. We met at his apartment at 5am and prayed till 6. The first week we met three times. The second week we met five times. By the third week we were meeting 7 days a week - and others were joining!

How important it has been for me to recognize the role of partnerships in spiritual growth! I realize that I need friends, I need co-pilgrims on this journey who share a passion for prayer. This has revolutionized how I think about growth and discipline. If I think to myself,

I would like to grow in such-and-such an area, my next thought now is, Who could I do this with? Who is hungry for the same thing? Who might be willing to commit themselves, for some time, to work towards this goal together?

While this has been a revolutionary shift for me, it hasn't solved everything. I still am working at personal discipline in the areas of prayer, study, fasting, scripture reading, etc. and probably will for some time. But I can admit that I need help; and a little help goes a long, long way to keep a passion for Jesus alive. ❤️



**“If Christ be anything, He must be everything. O rest not til love and faith in Jesus be the master passion of your soul!”
(Charles Spurgeon)**





Brenda Tarasenko

After hearing a message about how God hands out talents and that we are responsible to bring Him back dividends, Brenda decided to seek Him to find out what her talent might be. She had heard it said that if she had a certain passion, it could point her in the right direction. Painting was that passion for Brenda. She promised the Father that if He sent opportunities her way to learn what she could do for Him, that she would say yes and step into it. God set her on the path of prophetic art and Brenda describes it as an adventure as she shares her gift with others. Brenda oversees the art department in her church, Forest City Destiny Church, in London, On, and has led many workshops both locally and far from home, sharing her joy in hearing the voice of God thru painting.

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 Robert and Lisa Cowling - Senior Pastors Andy Luchies - Associate Pastor

MARCH 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 The Big Ask Men's Prayer and Worship 5am Prayer for Canada 9:00 am	2 The Big Ask Men's Prayer and Worship 5am Operation Exodus/Aliyah Prayer 10am Kids Prayer and Worship 4pm Worship and Warfare 7pm Fire By Night 7pm	3 Preparedness Prayer 1-2 pm Band of Brothers 7 pm	4 Worship With The Word 7 pm	5
6 Community Sunday 10 am Parent's Prayer 8:30 am	7 The Big Ask Men's Prayer and Worship 5am	8 The Big Ask Men's Prayer and Worship 5am Prayer for Canada 9:00 am	9 The Big Ask Men's Prayer and Worship 5am Operation Exodus/Aliyah Prayer 10am Kids Prayer and Worship 4pm Fire By Night 7pm	10 Preparedness Prayer 1-2 pm Band of Brothers 7 pm	11 Worship With The Word 7 pm	12
13 Worship Service 10 am Parent's Prayer 8:30 am	14 The Big Ask Men's Prayer and Worship 5am	15 The Big Ask Men's Prayer and Worship 5am Prayer for Canada 9:00 am	16 The Big Ask Men's Prayer and Worship 5am Operation Exodus/Aliyah Prayer 10am Kids Prayer and Worship 4pm Worship and Warfare 7pm Fire By Night 7pm	17 Preparedness Prayer 1-2 pm Band of Brothers 7 pm	18 Worship With The Word 7 pm	19
20 Worship Service 10 am Parent's Prayer 8:30 am	21 The Big Ask Men's Prayer and Worship 5am	22 The Big Ask Men's Prayer and Worship 5am Prayer for Canada 9:00 am	23 The Big Ask Men's Prayer and Worship 5am Operation Exodus/Aliyah Prayer 10am Kids Prayer and Worship 4pm Fire By Night 7pm	24 Preparedness Prayer 1-2 pm Band of Brothers 7 pm	25 Worship With The Word 7 pm	26 Movie showing of "Holy Ghost" True City Event
27 Worship Service 10 am Guest Speaker: Faytene Grasseschi Parent's Prayer 8:30 am True City Event	28 The Big Ask Men's Prayer and Worship 5am	29 The Big Ask Men's Prayer and Worship 5am Prayer for Canada 9:00 am	30 The Big Ask Men's Prayer and Worship 5am Operation Exodus/Aliyah Prayer 10am Kids Prayer and Worship 4pm Worship and Warfare 7pm Fire By Night 7pm	31 Preparedness Prayer 1-2 pm Band of Brothers 7 pm		HHOP Building ■ HCF Sanctuary ■ Other Location ■