

OUT OF SERVICE AGAIN

I shared with you last month how our e-mail was down for 10 days after somebody hacked into it. We could send out e-mails after a few days but could not receive any until Bell could resolve the issue. I did not like being unable to receive my e-mails for that length of time. I was worried that I was missing important messages and wondering if people were questioning why I was not responding to their e-mails. We have become reliant on e-mail as one means of communicating and staying in touch.

This weekend I experienced the problem of not being able to receive messages again. Thankfully my e-mail was not hacked this time. On Friday night our smart phone which has our home phone number on it began to overheat. An error message popped up on it saying we needed to shut it down to save the device. Nadine turned it off and let it cool for a few hours. Before we went to bed that night, she tried turning the phone on again only to get the same warning. We turned it off for the entire night and went to bed. On Saturday morning we tried turning the phone on again only to have the same error message come up that the phone was overheating. Nadine did some reading on the internet to see if there was something we could do to fix the problem but many of the sites she looked at said the phone was probably beyond repair. Here we were again, just like with our first e-mail issue, not being able to receive phone calls or messages from others. Not that we get a lot of phone calls some days, but a pastor needs to have a reliable phone so people can reach me if there is a pastoral emergency. I felt so helpless once again knowing that I might be missing out on people trying to reach me.

It is amazing how reliant we have become on our internet and phone providers to communicate with others. As much as we appreciate the advancements we have made in these areas of communication, there are times when our devices or our providers can fail us. As I was experiencing this problem again on Saturday morning, I began to think about how we communicate with God. Prayer truly is an amazing and special gift that God has provided for us in order to communicate with Him. Prayer is so different from the other ways we tend to communicate nowadays. For instance, Psalm 4:3 tells us how God hears every prayer:

You can be sure of this: The Lord set apart the godly for himself. The Lord will answer when I call to him.

This is such a different experience for us from when we try to call and send e-mails to others. Sometimes we need to leave a message when we call because the other person is not available to answer. There are other times when I call people that the connection is weak and as a result, they cannot hear me on the other end of the line. Other times I have sent people e-mails and they have not responded. The difference when it comes to prayer is we know God is listening and is there. It does not matter what time of day we pray, whether it is in the early hours of the morning, or the late hours of the night God is there. We are reminded of this truth in Psalm 121:3-4: **He will not let you stumble; the one who watches over you will not slumber. Indeed, He who watches over Israel never slumbers or sleeps.**

As the psalmist states here, God is always available because He never sleeps, and He is faithfully reliable by never letting us stumble. It was these two attributes about God and prayer that I was reminded of as I was thinking about my circumstance on Saturday morning being without a phone to receive calls.

Our internet and cell phones are with Bell. We want to be with a reliable provider who is available to us when we need them to help us with any issues we may have. Sometimes Bell has been reliable and dependable and other times they have not like last month when some miscommunication errors on their part caused a ten-day delay in our e-mail problem being resolved. We can have these experiences with any of the internet and phone providers out there. Thankfully, this is not the case with our communication system with God. **God is always reliable, dependable, faithful, and available.** He is just one quick prayer away. He is at the tip of our praying fingers and tongues basically. I am so thankful that God's communication system with us works this way. It is so reassuring and comforting for me to just stop whatever is worrying me to pray into that situation with God. In fact, when it came to the issue with our phone on Saturday that is exactly what I did. I had a funeral Saturday morning at 11:00 a.m. I was able to spend an hour before the funeral looking up the costs of various phones in case we needed a new one. I prayed about it and asked God to help us get a phone as quickly as

possible. I knew I could not be without our home phone for more than a day or two. I went to the funeral and left Nadine to do more research. I took the phone with me though and told Nadine I would stop into our nearby Bell store to see what options were available to us. After the funeral, I went into the store and told the customer representative the problem our phone was having with overheating. She took the back off the phone and discovered there was some water inside. She dried everything out, and sure enough the phone started working again. This representative did not think the phone would work for very long, but I brought it home and it has been working fine ever since. This time Bell was reliable and available, but I know in my heart of hearts this was God answering my earlier prayer that we needed that phone working again sooner rather than later. The moral of the story is sometimes our communication providers can be available and reliable, **but all of the time God is when we talk to Him in prayer.**

We have our internet, cell phones, and tv services with Bell. In the last month both the internet and cell phone have caused us problems. I am hoping and praying next month I am not writing you about my television service causing me problems.

Keep Praying to our always available and reliable God

Pastor Dean