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Designing And Implementing A Curriculum For Developing The Prayer Life Of The Piedmont Park Church Congregation

Frank Albert Tochterman

Anders University

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ABSTRACT

DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING A CURRICULUM
FOR DEVELOPING THE PRAYER LIFE OF THE
PIEDMONT PARK CHURCH CONGREGATION

by

Frank Tochterman

Chairman: Garth D. Thompson
Title: DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING A CURRICULUM FOR DEVELOPING THE PRAYER LIFE OF THE PIEDMONT PARK CHURCH CONGREGATION

Name of researcher: Frank Tochterman

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Garth D. Thompson, Ph.D.

Date completed: August 1987

Problem

While prayer is vital to every aspect of the Christian life, both laity and clergy fail in its practice. This may be due, in part, to a lack of understanding its importance, potential, and meaning. A study of the nature of prayer reveals that its primary intent is communion with God, not merely the means of registering requests. The task of this project was to lead the members of the Piedmont Park Church into developing stronger habits of personal prayer. To
achieve this objective, a curriculum was designed and implemented to communicate four aspects of prayer: importance, meaning, potential, and practice. An attempt was made to measure change resulting from the study.

Method

A seven-part prayer curriculum, comprised of the following, was applied during a six-month period: Proclamation of the Word, Meditation on Prayer, Prayer Partners, Mid-Week Service, Parish Week of Prayer, the ABC School of Prayer Video Presentation, and Systematic Prayer for the Membership. Both the Piedmont congregation and a comparison group (who did not receive the curriculum) were surveyed before and after the application of the curriculum. The purpose of this was to ascertain change, if any, within each group.

Results

The response to the surveys revealed an ironic twist. While the Piedmont congregation indicated an increase in understanding the importance, potential, and meaning of prayer, it indicated decline in actual practice. Conversely, the comparison group who did not receive the curriculum indicated a decline in understanding prayer but an increase in practice.
Conclusions

Weaknesses of the project were the length of the prayer curriculum and lack of "hands-on" involvement by the majority of the members. A maximum of ten or twelve weeks is recommended for a future prayer curriculum, along with definite steps to involving a majority of the congregation in prayer experiences.
Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING A CURRICULUM FOR DEVELOPING THE PRAYER LIFE OF THE PIEDMONT PARK CHURCH CONGREGATION

A Project Report
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Ministry

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APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

Garth Thompson, Chairman

Richard F. Hasel
Dean, SDA Theological Seminary

C. Raymond Holmes

Reuben A. Hubbard
Date approved 17 July 1987
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The importance of prayer in the Christian life is indisputable. Many writers on the topic suggest that more prayer is needed. Authors suggest that not only are laity slack in the practice of prayer, but clergy fall short in this most important area of Christian living. These ideas are verified by the personal testimony of members of practically every Christian persuasion. While many Christians find themselves weak in the daily habit of prayer, their need for more prayer is readily acknowledged. One author observes, "Christians who don't average fifteen minutes a day on their knees will be quick to say that nothing is more important than praying."\(^1\)

The Task

The purpose of this project was to lead the members of the Piedmont Park Seventh-day Adventist congregation (of which I am the pastor) into developing

stronger habits of personal prayer. To achieve this objective, a curriculum was designed and implemented to communicate four aspects of prayer: importance, meaning, potential, and practice. An attempt was made to measure change resulting from the application of the curriculum.

The hypothesis from which this project was approached is that personal private prayer increases when the true meaning of prayer is understood and its importance and potential are realized. Conversely, false expectations of prayer and a lack of understanding its power contribute to an inactive prayer life.

The Piedmont Park congregation, located in Lincoln, Nebraska, is a body of approximately 500 baptized believers. Average weekly attendance for worship services during the second quarter of 1986 was 306. While a majority of the members live within a five-mile radius, attendance at mid-week services fluctuates between twenty-five and fifty members. Attendance at other activities varies according to appeal.

The age demographics are noted in Table 1.
TABLE 1

AGE OF MEMBERSHIP OF CONGREGATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>No. of Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth - 13</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-18</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-35</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-60</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 60</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A review of the educational levels of the adult membership shows there are 18 with less than twelve years of schooling; 186 with at least twelve years; and 204 who are college graduates. These figures indicate the likelihood that many have "professional" careers, and observation confirms that fact.

A six-month period was chosen to provide ample time for study and contemplation by the congregation of the subject of prayer. The months of June through November were selected, more for my convenience than from the perspective of an "ideal time" for the project. Any six-month segment in the calendar year of the church would be handicapped by some interruptions, as well as conflicting and competing events.

The "curriculum" of the prayer project was not preplanned in minute detail but partially left to evolve and develop as study and application of the topic progressed. Vehicles for communicating with the church
body might include Sabbath School, worship service (particularly the sermon), mid-week service, special seminars, church newsletters, bulletins, parish ministries, pastoral visitation and care, and other appropriate means.

To help determine the effectiveness of the curriculum, a survey was completed by the congregation before and after the project. The same survey was applied to another (Seventh-day Adventist) congregation in the Lincoln area which did not receive the prayer curriculum. This latter administration of the survey was to establish a "control group" for the sake of comparison. The survey was intended to measure members' perceptions of the importance, potential, meaning, and practice of personal prayer.

Since prayer is learned by example as well as by teaching, a second, much smaller comparison group was chosen as "prayer partners" with whom I personally would pray. I endeavored to meet with these individuals for weekly fellowship and "modeling" of prayer. The survey was administered separately to the prayer partners with the intent of comparing its results with those of the congregation.

**Justification of the Project**

1. It is my observation that confidence in and practice of prayer are weak in the lives of many
Christians. This may be due, in part, to a superficial understanding of prayer and a preoccupation with prayer as a means of obtaining material benefits from God.

2. Scriptural and ecclesiastical teachings indicate that prayer is vital to all areas of Christian life and its primary function is to effect change in the spiritual nature of the believer, rather than merely to register requests before God.

3. The Biblical model for prayer is Jesus Christ Himself. The Christian of today is in need of following that example. From the record of Christ's life on earth, we may learn the importance, meaning, potential, and practice of personal prayer.

4. It is my observation that a common felt need in the lives of many Christians is for more serious and regular communion with God. This has been, on occasions, expressed to me as a pastor. I believe this need exists for both corporate and private prayer.

**Review of Similar Projects**

A survey of doctoral projects at Andrews University failed to reveal similar or closely related studies on the subject.

The services of the American Theological Library Association, Chicago, Illinois, were engaged, revealing 2,605 entries on "Prayer" and 72 entries under the two terms of PRAYER and PERSONAL. A brief review of a few
of these revealed that the majority were articles appearing in religious journals.

The services of University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, Michigan, were engaged. The word "Prayer" appeared in the title of 177 doctoral dissertations. After reviewing these titles, eight papers were selected as related to the task at hand. The titles are:

1. "A Model for Enabling Persons in the Spiritual Disciplines of Prayer and Meditation"

2. "Teaching Contemplative Prayer As a Tool in Spiritual Growth"

3. "Personal Prayer in Contemporary Religious Life"


5. "A Program to Develop Personal Life among Adult Members of First Baptist Church, Alamo, Georgia, That Will Result in a Caring Ministry to Others"


7. "A Model for Teaching Prayer in the Local Parish"

8. "Developing Personal and Group Prayer Through Proclamation and Ministry"

Four doctor of ministry projects from the above list were located, read, and studied. I report briefly on the content of these papers.

1. "Teaching Contemplative Prayer As a Tool in
"Spiritual Growth" was written by David Alan Knotts for Drew University, Madison, New Jersey, in 1981. Regarding the problem of alienation, Knotts recommends contemplative prayer as a means of reconciliation. "Reduced to its simplest terms," he states, "contemplation means to gaze at, to behold calmly, attentively, searchingly, and completely."¹ The focus of one's contemplation is God or an aspect of God as manifested in nature, art and music, Scripture, or words, phrases, and ideas.

Knotts taught a five-session course entitled "Toward a Deeper Prayer Life" at the Academy of Learning. Each session was two to two-and-a-half hours in duration. While the course was designed for a minimum of ten and a maximum of fifteen students, seven registered for the classes conducted January 4 - February 1, 1981. A description of the course might be gleaned from the goals of each class session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Goal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>Get acquainted; feel comfortable; develop an understanding of the nature of alienation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Allow participants to develop an operative definition of prayer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹David Alan Knotts, "Teaching Contemplative Prayer As a Tool in Spiritual Growth" (Doctor of Ministry
Three

Observe the rationale and nature of prayer as it relates to reconciliation

Four

Use the Scriptures as a vehicle for meditation

Five

Experience contemplative prayer

Evaluation of the project was attempted through a two-step process: (1) a typical questionnaire which class members were requested to complete at the conclusion of the final class, and (2) a biographical evaluation in which participants were interviewed in the month following the completion of the course. The course received high reviews and was considered "very helpful" by the seven participants.

2. Charles C. W. Idler conducted a study titled "A New Series of Spiritual Exercises" for the Lancaster Theological Seminary in 1976. The subheading of the paper provides a brief description:

A series of events designed to deepen the spiritual life of the Christian. A new approach to prayer and Bible reading that will lead to an awareness of the presence of God. A group approach to a personal faith.  

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1Knotts, p. 65.

The author states that his primary goal was to establish and enrich a daily prayer discipline. He defines prayer discipline as time spent in the deliberate and conscious presence of God. To accomplish this end, Idler designed and implemented a course of six two-hour sessions. Each session included the elements of reading, meditation, prayer with scripture, and contemplation. The titles of the six sessions were:

a. Prayer and the grace of God
b. Prayer, the natural expression of God's creatures
c. Prayer as confession of sin
d. Prayer and the renewal of life
e. Prayer and the problem of anxiety
f. Prayer as the expression of commitment.

The course was field-tested on seven diverse groups, differing in size, denominational background, sex, and age. Reviews were mixed, generally in the affirmative.

3. In 1982, Mary Ann Kvapil designed a model for the school of Faith and Life, a leadership development school in the Baltimore Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. The project resulted in her dissertation titled "A Model for Enabling Persons in the Spiritual Disciplines of Prayer and Meditation."

The model incorporated the traditional
approaches to prayer as well as the guidelines to the mystical. The author acknowledged, "Today there is an explosion of interest in prayer and meditation, and there have been mixed reactions to the escalation." She described the approach to her project as "holistic" in that it recognized the involvement of mind, body, and spirit. The course took the form of six two-hour sessions taught over a six-week period. Insights into the nature of the course might be gained by a review of its recommended texts:

*Live the Question Now* by Beth E. Rhude

*The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence

*The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas A. Kempis

*The Choice Is Always Ours* by Dorothy Phillips

The initial implementation of the course realized an attendance of fifteen, of which only four attended all six sessions, two attended five, four attended four, and two attended three. This made evaluation of the project difficult.

4. "Developing Personal and Group Prayer Through Proclamation and Ministry" is the title of a

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¹Mary Ann Kvapil, "A Model for Enabling Persons in the Spiritual Disciplines of Prayer and Meditation" (Doctor of Ministry dissertation, Drew University, 1982), University Microfilms International, No: AAD82-19972 p. 33.
project completed by Hayes Wicker for the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1979.

The author stated his main objective to be the equipping of Christians for a more effective Christian life in serving the Lord. The setting for accomplishing the project was the First Baptist Church, Mangum, Oklahoma, a congregation of some 900 members. The duration of the project was two months. The participants in the project were all who attended the worship services at that time and, particularly, those who became involved in different aspects of the prayer initiative.

Verification of need for the project was accomplished through a questionnaire. The survey revealed that the members felt a need for (1) daily quiet time, (2) regular family prayer, (3) attendance at Wednesday evening services, and (4) intercession for non-Christians. The project was based on these findings.

Approaches Wicker used in his project included:

a. Sermon series
b. A "How to Pray" small group using conversational prayer
c. Commitments to (1) daily quiet time, (2) prayer partners, and (3) family devotional time
d. A control group of key leaders for purpose of feedback
e. An intercessor in each Sunday School class.

The basic form of evaluation was the completion of essay questions and written comments by the participants. Also, the field supervisor assisted the author in the evaluation of sermon content and delivery. Indications were that the participants benefited greatly from their study of prayer.

Limitations of the Project

The first and most obvious limitation of the project at Piedmont Park Church is the immensity of the topic. Prayer is involved in a vast area of Christian life, touching many facets of faith and practice. Prayer, by essence, is interlinked with one's concept of and response to God. The Bible writers, as well as our Lord Himself, contribute to the mass and maze we have on this topic. There are also diversities of views as to the meaning and role of prayer in the God-seeking life. For example, Donald G. Bloesch, in The Struggle of Prayer,\(^1\) contrasts the "mystical" and "prophetic"

aspects of prayer. Friedrich Heiler identifies prayer in stages of its historical development.¹

To communicate that which one is currently learning, to communicate a subject so vast and wide, and to communicate an experience to which others are at different levels of understanding poses a task that can have only limited success.

Another limitation is the attempt to reach an entire church body. Mass communication is sometimes highly inadequate. While this project addresses the "active" portion of a 500-member congregation, the total active membership is never present at any given worship service. Nor does even a majority of the active members attend any one other service of the church. Vacations, illnesses, participation in other church programs, out-of-town business engagements, and school schedules are a few of the reasons why the attending active membership of a congregation is fluid.

The attempt to measure the status of prayer and the impact of a prayer curriculum brings with it the obvious limitation of subjectivity. There may be a bias in thinking of oneself and of one's performance in better terms than the facts bear. And although a survey may be anonymous, there may be the fear that "someone is

looking" over one's shoulder. How open and willing one is to "divulge" one's private life differs among people according to many variables. Sometimes, too, one does not realize what is actually happening in his/her life unless a day-by-day inventory is taken. It may also be true that a religious survey taken in the setting of the church may result in significant differences as compared with a survey completed at home.

In summary four obvious limitations are created by the vastness of the topic, inadequacy of mass communication, fluidity of the congregation, and subjectivity associated with self-reporting.

Definition of Terms

It is important that several key terms in this project be defined.

"Prayer" is defined in Chapter 2, The Nature of Prayer. There attempts are made to touch upon various aspects of the topic, particularly as revealed in Scripture.

"Biblical prayer" implies a definition of prayer as taught by or exemplified in Scripture. Teachings and examples of both the Old Testament and New Testament are included.

The term "Christian prayer" is used to further define "Biblical prayer" but emphasizes the essential contribution of the New Testament.
"Personal prayer" implies a definition of prayer as the private, secret, and devotional communication between man and God.

"Corporate prayer" is intended to mean prayer given in the context of a group, as opposed to private, personal prayer. Corporate prayer frequently involves one person addressing God verbally while the others present may follow and express their petitions in silence.

"Prayer curriculum" is used to summarize the means and schedule used for teaching prayer.

"Active congregation" is terminology for the fluid membership attending the services of the church. It is apparent from observation that the majority of the members who attend worship services attend the majority of the time. This does not mean, however, that these same individuals attend any other service of the church in the same plurality as the worship service.
Prayer is defined as "an approach to deity in word or thought,"¹ a conscious appeal to the divine, or a conscious effort to hold communion with the divine,"² "attempted intercourse with God,"³ and "communion with God, consisting usually of praise, gratitude, or entreaty."⁴

David Alan Knotts, in his doctoral dissertation "Teaching Contemplative Prayer as a Tool in Spiritual Growth," contributes to our understanding of prayer. He states, "... prayer is in essence a two-sided experience involving the participation of God and


humanity."¹ In defining prayer, he quotes John MacQuarrie: "We can see prayer as a very special form of discourse, giving shape and definiteness to that mysterious communion between God and man."²

Scripture does not explain precisely when and how the practice of prayer began. We are told that in the beginning the human family had open face-to-face communion with God.³ There is evidence that this was terminated with the entrance of sin and the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden.⁴ While the Bible does not record that people began "to call upon the name of the Lord"⁵ until the third generation, it may be assumed that when God clothed Adam and Eve with "coats of skins,"⁶ He also explained to them the gift of prayer.

A Universal Pursuit of Man

It is commonly recognized that prayer is not unique to Judaism or Christianity. People of all

¹Knotts, p. 13.
²Ibid.; p. 7.
³Gen 3:8-19.
⁴Gen 3:24.
⁵Gen 4:26. All Bible references are taken from the New International Version unless otherwise stated.
faiths, or of no faith, practice prayer. The distinguished psychologist-philosopher William James described it as "intercourse with an Ideal Companion."¹ Some have called it an "instinctive" part of man.² Bloesch states, "... it is well to note that prayer is a universal phenomenon, firmly rooted in the human condition."³ Karl Barth describes it as "incurable God-sickness."⁴ Henry Ward Beecher acknowledged this truth,

No other one exercise of religious feeling has been so universal to the human race. It is not peculiar to Jews and Christians. It is employed alike by men of the true faith and by men of other religions. The idea that the human mind may have commerce with the divinities or with the Deity has been uniformly recognized in all ages, by all nations, and under all conditions of intelligence and civilization. Though the details of prayer, its philosophy, its times and methods, and its possible benefits have been subjects of endless doubt and debate, yet the fact itself that a human being may commune with the Divine Father has been universally accepted.

The tendency to pray is original. It is innate. Provision for it is made in the structure of the mind. However much nations have differed in their customs and religions, the ripest and best natures


³Bloesch, p. vii.

⁴Ibid.
have tended toward commerce with invisible superior beings, or with the Supreme.\(^1\)

M. L. Andreasen has described this natural impulse of the human heart in still other terms:

[God] has implanted deeply in every heart a consciousness of Himself to which men instinctively turn in moments of sorrow or danger. This can be explained on no other ground than that God has made the human heart for Himself and that souls find no rest until they find it in God.\(^2\)

The Psalmist repeatedly reminds us of our universal hunger for God. Psalm 63:1 illustrates this. "O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water."

"Prayer" is universal. Simply speaking, it is an expression of mankind's quest for God. The need to pray is part of the human condition.

**A Self-Revealing God**

While "prayer" may appear to be a generic term used by people of all religions, the Biblical concept of prayer is definite and may differ significantly from other forms of prayer. It begins with "God reaching out to humanity and calling for a response of obedience, not as humanity rising to God in order to become one


with Him."¹ Heiler describes this as "prophetic" prayer.² Barth agrees: "Prayer means that we address ourselves to Him who has already spoken to us in the Gospel and in the law."³ As we acknowledge Christ as the Author and Finisher of our faith, we see that "Prayer is a grace, an offer of God."⁴

So, biblically, prayer rests on the fact that God is a revealer of Himself. He is a living God, both personal and infinite. He both hears and has the power to act. He is omnipresent and omniscient. He is everpresent, recurring and inescapable, and He sees and knows all.⁵

It is this same God who speaks to the depths of man's soul. In turn, man responds by recognizing his need and by seeking communion with Him. "My soul finds rest in God alone," the Psalmist cries (Ps 62:1).

Bloesch describes the chain of events in these words:

Prayer has two poles, a divine and a human, but the first is prior to the second. Barth perceives

¹Bloesch, p. vii.
²Ibid.
⁴Barth, p. 20.
that 'however difficult it may sound, the hearing really precedes the asking. It is the basis of it. It makes it real asking, the asking of Christian prayer.' . . . 'it is the answer of faith to God's love, truth and goodness, the acknowledgement of God's fatherhood.' When God speaks . . . and when man responds, God too responds, and a reciprocal or dialogic encounter is then in progress.¹

Prayer is not primarily "recitation (as in formalistic religion) or meditation (as in mysticism) but . . . dialogue between a living God and the one who has been touched by His grace."²

It is for this reason, then, that Barth says:

We are not free to pray or not to pray, or to pray only when we feel so inclined, for prayer is not an act that comes naturally to us. It is a grace, and we can expect this grace only through the Holy Spirit. This grace is there, with God and his word in Jesus Christ. If we say yes to all that, if we receive what God gives, then everything is done, everything is settled, not on account of our good pleasure, but by the freedom we have in obeying him.³

Thus we see prayer not so much as a practice that stands alone, but an indispensable part of a whole. It is the communicative aspect of a relationship initiated by God, responded to by man. From man's perspective, it begins when he hears God speaking to him and listens. Next, he responds to the voice of God

¹Ibid., p. 55.
²Ibid., p. vii.
³Barth, p. 28.
speaking within his soul<sup>1</sup> by expressing his need and want.

**Scriptural Terms**

Both the Old Testament and New Testament words for "prayer" and "pray" contribute to our understanding of the nature of prayer. Nine Hebrew verbs and three Hebrew nouns are used. They are:

**Verbs:**
- bea, beah — to petition, pray
- chanan — to entreat grace
- athar — to entreat, make supplication
- paga — to come up, strike against, intercede
- palal — to judge self, pray habitually
- tsela — to bend, bow, pray
- shal — to bow down, meditate, pray
- chalah — to smooth down, deprecate

**Nouns:**
- lachash — a whisper
- siach — meditation
- tephillah — prayer, song of praise.

*Palal*, used by the various Bible writers 75 times, means "to judge," "to interpose as umpire," "to mediate." The noun *tephillah* appears 76 of the 79 times a noun is used. It is usually translated "prayer" or "song of praise."

The New Testament uses five verbs and four nouns to describe prayer.

**Verbs:**
- deomai — to want, pray, beseech
- erotao — to ask, interrogate
- euchomai — to pray, wish

---

<sup>1</sup>Bloesch, p. 54.
parakaleo — to call for, or alongside of
proseuchomai — to pray or wish for

Nouns: deesis — beseeching, prayer, supplication
tenetuxis — intercession, prayer
euche — a wish, supplication
proseuche — a prayer, pouring out

Of the 116 times a verb appears, it is erotao 14 times and proseuchomai 84 times. Erotao means "to ask" or "interrogate." Proseuchomai means "to pray or wish for." The two dominant nouns are deesis, appearing 12 times, and proseuche, appearing 36 times. Deesis conveys the thought of "entreaty," "beseeching," "supplication," thus prayer for particular benefits. Proseuche conveys the thought of "intercession," "a pouring out," thus prayer in general, not restricted with respect to its contents.¹

In these Scriptural terms we find action words describing man's response to God. Man seeks, beseeches, entreats, petitions God to meet the need revealed to him by God Himself.

A Biblical Survey of Prayer

A brief review of Biblical history reveals the important and increasing significance prayer held in the faith of God's people.

Little is said about worship and prayer in the opening pages of the Old Testament. It is not until we come to the life of Abraham, the "friend of God," that we find an example of meaningful prayer. Six forms of prayer were employed by the early patriarchs.

1. Dialogue as prayer
2. Intercession as prayer
3. Personal communion as prayer
4. Patriarchial blessings as prayer
5. Oaths as prayer
6. Vows as prayer

It may be surprising to find so little mention of prayer in the last four books of The Law. While the ancient sanctuary service is described in minute detail, the term "prayer" does not appear. This, however, should not be understood as a depreciation of prayer. Prayer surely is implied. Rather than a prescribed task, it is left as "a spontaneous expression of human needs."2

Andreasen also points out that the sacrificial services in themselves were forms of prayer.

[The way of prayer through Christ] was first prefigured by the sacrifices offered God in Old Testament times. . . . The sacrifice signified two

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2Ibid.
things: man's acknowledgement of the justice of God in requiring punishment, and a demonstration of the mercy of God in providing and accepting a substitute to die in the sinner's place.¹

At the time God appointed judges over the people of Israel, He did so as a response to the people's request. Repeatedly found in the book of Judges is the phrase "when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord." (Judg 3:9,15; 6:6,7 KJV). These appear to be direct references to prayer.

Samuel, an early prophet, was known as a great intercessor before the Lord. (Jer 15:1). Intercession was part of the prophetic office. Of the numerous prayers recorded in the books of 1st and 2nd Samuel and 1st and 2nd Kings, many were intercessory.

David, who shared in the prophetic office, was perhaps the greatest contributor of prayer in the Old Testament. Several psalms are titled, "A Prayer of David." Many more, credited to David, mention "praise" and "prayer." Frequently David's prayers were a pouring out of the heart to God in behalf of himself or in behalf of the nation. Various moods and motives were evident in his prayer. Material and external blessings were sometimes the topic, while at other times communion with God, forgiveness for sin, or a desire to know God's will was the expressed need. At still other times, the

¹Andreasen, pp. 4,5.
urgency to induce God to hear was the desire for vengeance.¹

The Babylonian captivity, exile, and return prompted the practice of prayer for another reason. When the temple services ceased, the burden of worship became centered in prayer. Andreasen sums up the transition: "When Israel came to regard sacrifices in themselves as efficacious and forgot that what God demanded was a humble and contrite heart, God abolished the sacrifices."²

The people of Israel sensed an abandonment by God. It was then that they returned to God in more meaningful prayer. Earnestly they sought to learn "the explanation of His dealings and return of His favour."³

The New Testament contributes much to our understanding of prayer. Because of the significance of its impact, the discussion of much of its contribution is reserved for a separate heading. In brief, Jesus Christ Himself became the greatest example and teacher of prayer.

The newly founded church described in the book

¹A Dictionary of the Bible, 4:41.
²Andreasen, p. 6.
³A Dictionary of the Bible, 4:40.
of Acts is a praying church.\textsuperscript{1} It depends upon prayer as the means to its power and success. The miracles wrought in the early church are the fulfillment of prayer.

The Apostle Paul stresses the importance of cooperation with the Holy Spirit in prayer.\textsuperscript{2} It is the Spirit that interprets and intercedes. Paul also provides an example of intercessory prayer, as he constantly prays for his converts and newly formed congregations.\textsuperscript{3} Furthermore, he teaches the importance of "striving" in prayer.\textsuperscript{4}

The book of Hebrews teaches about the free access God's people have to the throne of God. "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."\textsuperscript{5} James warns of the dangers of doubt\textsuperscript{6} and encourages the prayer of faith in times of happiness as well as need. "Is any one of you in

\begin{enumerate}
  \item Eph 6:18; 9:40; 10:9; 11:5.
  \item Rom 1:9; 2 Cor 13:7; Phil 1:9; Col 1:3, 9; 2 Thess 1:11.
  \item Rom 15:30.
  \item Heb 4:16.
  \item Jas 1:6-8.
\end{enumerate}
trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise."¹ John explains that prayer requests must be asked according "to his will" and "for his name's sake."² And the book of Revelation concludes with a prayer: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."³

Basic Assumptions

Biblical examples and teachings of prayer bring with them several basic assumptions. Three are considered here.

1. God is a person who is approachable. The nature of God is fundamental and foundational to an understanding of prayer. Prayer assumes the existence of God. It assumes God is approachable.

   The Psalmist invites, "Taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps 34:8). We may approach Him, address Him, and communicate with Him. We may open our hearts, express our trust, inquire for answers, submit our will, and expect an answer. Prayer assumes that God is approachable and that the one who prays can have a personal relationship with Him.

2. God is a God who hears. This is essential to His approachability. The Psalmist asks, "He who

¹Jam 5:13.
²1 John 5:14; 2:12 KJV.
³Rev 22:20 KJV.
planted the ear, does he not hear? He who founded the eye, does He not see?" (Ps 94:9 KJV).

J. R. Miller speaks to this matter in The Golden Gate of Prayer. He says,

May we pray? The question is a very important one. There are some who tell us that we may not, that there is no ear to hear, no one anywhere who cares for us and who could do anything for us if he did care. A great force at the centre of things cannot hear the cries of human distress on the earth or answer them. If that is the only God there is, prayer is vain and nothing comes from it but mocking echoes.

If, however, we accept the teaching of Jesus Christ concerning God, there is no doubt that we may pray. There is one to hear, and that one is our Father.1

The approachability of God is dependent upon His willingness to hear. How beautiful is the thought, "We have a God . . . who can hear the faintest cry of His children."2

3. God is able and willing to answer our prayers. This is an essential part of His nature. Ellen White describes it this way:

Our heavenly Father waits to bestow upon us the fullness of His blessing. . . . God is ready and willing to hear the sincere prayer of the humblest of His children. . . . God's heart of infinite love

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yearns toward them, ready to give them more than they can ask or think. . . .1

The assurance is broad and unlimited, and He is faithful who has promised. When we do not receive the very things we asked for, at the time we ask, we are still to believe that the Lord hears and that He will answer our prayers. . . . God is too wise to err, and too good to withhold any good thing from them that walk uprightly.2

Because God is both compassionate and mighty, Luther sees Him "wanting" to answer. Luther says, "The Lord is great and high, and therefore He wants great things to be sought from Him and is willing to bestow them so that His almighty power might be shown forth."3

Barth believes the entire subject of prayer should be approached "from the given fact that God answers."4 God is a God who both hears and listens. What He hears affects and influences His actions. "This is what the word 'answer' means."5 Barth adds:

In question 129 of the Heidelberg Catechism it is stated that the answer to our prayer is more certain than our awareness of the things that we request. It seems there is nothing more sure than the feeling of our desires, but this Catechism says that God's answer is still more certain.6

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2Ibid., p. 96.
3Bloesch, p. 68.
4Barth, p. 21.
5Ibid.
6Ibid.
The question of why some prayers are answered and some are not is often posed. In an essay titled "Some Pray and Die" an anonymous author says:

Who gets the breaks in prayers? Nobody. There is no such thing. We get what God in His infinite love and foreknowledge, [sic] sees fit to give. That's not always the same as getting what we want. But it ought to be. . . .¹

Warner Hutchinspn describes the answering process in these terms:

If there is to be God's blessing in our lives and in our witness, it will be only as there is prayer. Yet this is not a mathematical formula: so much prayer—so much blessing. Why and how God sovereignly moves we cannot fully know. We only stand in wonder.²

Evelyn Christenson contributes another slant to the topic:

God's answer to a prayer is His means of accomplishing His will here on earth. The way He answers reveals to us His sovereign will, His plan, His reasoning, and His perspective on the subject. We must ask, "What does God expect to accomplish with this answer?"³

In summary, these are three assumptions of prayer: God is approachable, God hears our petitions, and He is able and willing to answer.


Unique Christian Contributions to Prayer

Christian prayer is unique. With the fuller revelation of God through His son Jesus Christ came a fuller understanding of prayer, its potential, and its possibilities. In addition, when the Lord ascended to heaven, a new dispensation of prayer began. He became our Intercessor and gave to us the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Bloesch mentions six contributions Christ made to prayer. These, briefly elaborated, are:

1. "Jesus Christ makes possible the life of genuine prayer first of all in His role as Revealer."¹ Jesus reveals to us what God is like. "Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9) He says. Ellen White explains, "When we realize His great love we should be willing to trust everything to the hand that was nailed to the cross for us."²

The revelation of Jesus Christ showed that God is not only holy but also compassionate. His mercy is equivalent to and part of His righteousness. Because of the height, and depth, and breadth of His love, we may feel comfortable in approaching Him. And we may be certain that our prayers will be heard.

¹Bloesch, p. 34.
²White, p. 104.
2. "Christ gives reality to the life of prayer in His role as Reconciler."\(^1\) By His atoning sacrifice on Calvary, Christ brings God and man together. Man, in Christ, is no longer alienated from God by sin. Christ reconciles him to God. The righteousness of Christ provides both justification and sanctification. His atoning act makes provisions for both. Man, in Christ, is given a new standing before God. As the Apostle Paul said, "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand" (Rom 5:1,2). Karl Barth states: "We are not separated from God, . . . By Jesus Christ, humanity is in the presence of God. God looks at Christ and it is through Him that He looks at us."\(^2\)

3. "Christ establishes the life of prayer in His role as Redeemer."\(^3\) The sacrifice of Christ made possible our redemption. Christ "purchased" and "rescued" us from the power of sin by giving His life as a ransom. We now belong to Him, are members of His family, and "are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works" (Eph 2:10).

\(^1\)Bloesch, p. 34.
\(^2\)Barth, p. 22.
\(^3\)Bloesch, p. 34.
4. "Christ gives our prayer form and substance in His role as Intercessor in heaven."¹ An intercessor is a "go-between." The Christian has one in heaven who presents his prayers to the Father in his behalf. John Calvin states: "Our mouths are not clean enough to sing the praises of God's name until Christ's priesthood intercedes for us."² It is as though we pray through the mouth of Christ. Barth says, "... and we ourselves pray as though with his mouth, inasmuch as He gives us access and audience, and intercedes for us. ... God cannot fail to answer, since it is Jesus Christ who prays.³

This, of course, brings with it responsibility. God's promises and workings are not blank checks. While He invites us to ask whatever we will in His name, He does not mean a mere mention of His name at the beginning and close of prayer. "It is to pray in the mind and spirit of Jesus, while we believe His promises, rely upon His grace, and work His works."⁴ "... He is ready to give the very thing I want just now! And what

¹Bloesch, p. 35.


³Barth, p. 22.

⁴White, p. 101.
do I want? That is, what does my new life in Christ want? Whatever Christ desires."

5. "Christ makes a genuine prayer life possible. . . by His dwelling within the hearts of believers." Jesus said that it was "expedient" for us that He ascend to heaven because then He would send the Holy Spirit in His place (John 16:7 KJV). One manifestation of the Spirit is His indwelling in the lives of the believers. The Apostle Paul describes this experience in Gal 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." In another place he asks, "Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you?" (2 Cor 13:5). This inner presence of Christ is the promise to everyone who is in Christ. It is sometimes called "The Divine Indwelling." Prayer is a natural sequel to the indwelt life.

6. "Christ is our example in prayer." Not only did Jesus teach about prayer, but while He dwelt among men He was often found in prayer. Numerous passages of Scripture speak of His prayer life. Ellen White comments:

Our Saviour identified Himself with our needs and weaknesses, in that He became a suppliant, a

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2Bloesch, p. 35.
3Ibid., p. 36.
petitioner, seeking from His Father fresh supplies of strength, that He might come forth braced for duty and trial. He is our example in all things.

.. And if the Saviour of men, the Son of God, felt the need of prayer, how much more should feeble, sinful mortals feel the necessity of fervent, constant prayer.¹

Dr. Leslie D. Weatherhead, the noted minister of the City Temple in London, says:

Since our master Himself found it essential to rise early in the morning to pray, and jealously to guard time for quiet meditation, we may safely say that it is impossible for His followers to manage the difficult business of living without doing the same. We must look up into the face of God, to offer our lives afresh to Him, to seek guidance for the day before us, to listen to His voice and to lift up our hearts in petition and intercession.²

And not only did Jesus give to us the example to pray but also an example of what prayer can do.

Thus we see that Christ the Revealer, Reconciler, Redeemer, Intercessor, Indweller, and Example opened to mankind a new and awesome vista of prayer.

Prayer as Communion

Thus far in this paper, prayer has been defined in terms of communication. It is my purpose now to consider prayer as more than mere conversation. For this purpose the term "communion" has been chosen,

¹White, pp. 93,94.
signifying the sharing of oneself. Communion may be thought to be fellowship, heart experience, and genuine dialogue.

We may also think of prayer in the terms of fellowship. Because He first loved us, we love Him and seek His fellowship through prayer. True prayer leads us into an experience of knowing God's presence. It is then that we have fellowship with God, life with God. Brother Lawrence, author of The Practice of the Presence of God, wrote:

If I'm washing dishes I do it to the glory of God and if I pick up a straw from the ground I do it to the glory of God. I'm in communion with God all the time. . . . The rules tell me that I have to take time off to go alone to pray, and I do, but such times do not differ any from my regular communion. ¹

Fellowship implies companionship with God. There may be the sharing of thoughts and feelings, but there is definitely the sharing of each other. God wants our company, and we seek His. There is joy in simply being together.

There may be communion of heart and spirit without any outward recognition. Of words there may be none; but love, friendship, allegiance, are there, and quiet joy and surpassing happiness. . . . Life with God may be experienced here and now.²

In an essay on prayer F. W. Woods describes four


²Andreasen, p. 16.
levels of praying. First, there is supplication; second, there is intercession; third, there is delighting in God; and fourth, there is cooperation with God. He describes the third level, delighting in God, like this:

But there is still a higher altitude of prayer to be reached. That is delighting in God and longing to be close to Him. Then the dominant desire is just to be consciously near Him, the reconciled soul then joys in God through our Lord Jesus Christ and the renewed spirit soars into its native element to commune with the great Father of spirits. When these heights are reached, personal needs and the needs of others are temporarily forgotten in the calming sense of being at home with God.

In this experience we are not unlike a small boy who, tired of playing with the toys his father had given him, gently knocked at the door of his father’s room asking, ‘Father, can I come in?’

‘What do you want to come in for?’ the father asked.

‘I just want to be with you.’

Sometimes prayer may be simply quiet communion with God.

There is quiet communion which rests and refreshes. When the mind is weary God’s communion does not increase its burden, when the spirit is worn God’s communion does not bring any deepened strain. This is the prayer of rest, not a prayer for rest but a communion which refreshes and restores. It is well that all kinds of prayer should contain this turning to God in silent, adoring communion.

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2George S. Stewart, The Lower Levels of Prayer
Ellen White encourages such an experience.

Let the soul be drawn out and upward, that God may grant us a breath of the heavenly atmosphere.

We may close every door to impure imaginings and unholy thoughts by lifting the soul into the presence of God through sincere prayer. Those whose hearts are open to receive the support and blessing of God will walk in a holier atmosphere than that of earth and will have constant communion with heaven.

By calm, simple faith the soul holds communion with God and gathers to itself rays of divine light to strengthen and sustain it in the conflict with Satan. God is our tower of strength.¹

We may also think of prayer in terms of a heart experience. Prayer has been described as "the opening of the heart to God as to a friend."² What is meant by "the opening of the heart"?

Mabel W. Thurston describes the experience:

Prayer is opening our lives to God so that His love and power and joy can fill them, it is opening our hearts to the great friendship, not once, but day by day, just as we open our hearts to our human friends. ... But real prayer ... [means] as has been said, opening the life to God and keeping it open.³

The heart experience of prayer is unique in that the soul is opened to God in solitude. No one but the prayer-hearing God hears the pleas and cries of the

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¹White, pp. 98,99.
²Ibid., p. 93.
Each time man prays, he has a private audience with the Lord. The editors of Guideposts ask,

If you could believe that you could come face to face in loving intimacy with the creator of the universe, tell Him of your difficulties, and ask Him for advice and help, all with perfect assurance that you would get it—would not your whole being be suffused with happiness?

People who pray do so believe.¹

True prayer must be an experience of the heart. Nothing less will do. "It is essentially a thing of the heart."² It is the outpouring of the heart to a God who responds in like manner. Barth says:

... prayer must be an act of affection; it is more than a question of using the lips, for God asks the allegiance of our hearts. If the heart is not in it, if it is only a form which is carried out more or less correctly, what is it then? Nothing!³

Prayer may also be thought of in terms of dialogue. Delighting in His presence and opening the heart to Him is complemented by two-way communication between God and man. Heiler explains: "To pray means to speak to and have intercourse with God."⁴ Ellen White notes: "In order to have spiritual life and energy, we

¹Editors of Guideposts, What Prayer Can Do (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1953), p. 82.
²Beecher, p. 11.
³Barth, p. 27.
must have actual intercourse with our heavenly Father."¹ Bloesch describes prayer as "dialogic encounter."² Martin Buber says simply, "God made no tools for Himself, He needs none; He created Himself a partner in the dialogue of time, and one who is capable of holding converse with him."³

True prayer, like true conversation, must be dialogue, not monologue. If prayer is to be conversation with God like that with a friend, there must be time allowed for both sides. Elizabeth Yates describes this dialogue.

Prayer is talking with God and listening to God. It is a secret conversation between friends. The words may be no more than a cry for help in the dark night of pain or sorrow, a shout of joy in the bright morning of work, a plea for strength in the noontime of continuing tasks, a quiet return of thanks in the evening of rest and accomplishments... It is through prayer that we learn to walk confidently with God, to face life courageously, and to act lovingly with our fellows; for prayer is the mountaintop of vision from which we see the good that can be ours.⁴

Charles Blanchard remembers when Andrew Murray described prayer as dialogue.

¹White, p. 93.
²Bloesch, p. 50.
I heard Andrew Murray say that too many times we make prayer a monologue when it ought to be a dialogue. "Often we keep talking to God, asking for things, telling Him things, when He would like to have us stop and give Him an opportunity to speak to us. Many times it would be well if, in prayer, we should stop and say 'Father, what hast Thou to say to Thy child?'"¹

And Amy Carmichael encourages the silent side of prayer.

Do not be afraid of silence in your prayer time. It may be that you are meant to listen, not to speak. So wait before the Lord. Wait in stillness. Wait as David waited when he 'sat before the Lord.' And in that stillness, assurance will come to you. You will know that you are heard; you will know that your Lord ponders the voice of your humble desires; you will hear quiet words spoken to you yourself, perhaps to your grateful surprise and refreshment.²

Prayer is communion in the fullest sense. It demands time for fellowship, a oneness of minds resulting from a heart experience, and "a dialogue between two persons who love each other."³

Conditions to Prayer

While it is true that prayer is different things to different people, Biblical prayer, and particularly Christian prayer, is defined and governed by the


parameters of Scripture. The editors of *Guideposts* describe it well. "Prayer is not a science, but it is a process that is governed by laws."\(^1\) Andreasen adds, "Even prayer must conform to law to be effective. Law, being the will of God, is supreme. All must bow to it."\(^2\)

Like every other gift of God, prayer is limited by the laws that govern it. It has an assigned sphere, a particular field of operation.\(^3\) Prayer that is outside of its sphere and/or is no longer governed by its own laws is no longer true prayer. It is a misuse of prayer.

John Sutherland Bonnell in *The Practice and Power of Prayer* specifies five things that prayer is not.

First, it is not a blank check on which God's signature appears, guaranteeing us anything on which we may set our hearts.

Second, prayer is not a rabbit's foot or other charm, warranted to preserve us from misfortune.

Third, it is not a 'parachute project,' to be reserved for use in some extreme emergency.

Fourth, prayer is not a child's letter to Santa Claus. It is not just an appeal devoted to securing.

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\(^1\)Editors of *Guideposts*, p. 24.

\(^2\)Andreasen, p. 37.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 31.
Fifth, true prayer is never an attempt to change God's mind, or to bring him around to our way of thinking.¹

These, we recognize, suggest common misuses of prayer.

For sake of definition, we conclude that prayer is communion with God inclusive of fellowship, heart-experience, and genuine dialogue. As such, we must acknowledge laws that govern communion. Barth rightly points out:

Calvin justly declares that in prayer also we cannot act as strangers, but as citizens of the City of God we must accept its constitution, its law, and its order. Only under this condition can we expect a hearing and a reply to the problems of our life.²

I suggest there are at least six laws that govern communion.

1. There is the law of relationship. Communion implies it. Prayer is not something separate or apart from the continual relationship between a man and his God. The practitioner of prayer cannot state a declaration of independence. Indeed, answers are dependent upon relationship. Jesus said, "If you remain [abide, KJV] in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you" (John 15:7).

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²Barth, p. 25.
2. There is the law of dependence. Closely akin to relationship, it is the sense of need. God promised, "I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry land" (Isa 44:3). Jesus Christ declared in the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" (Matt 5:6). "Prayer is the expression of man's dependence upon God for all things. What habitual reverence is to praise, the habitual sense of dependence is to prayer."\(^1\)

Ellen White states; "There are certain conditions upon which we may expect that God will hear and answer our prayers. One of the first of these is that we feel our need of help from Him."\(^2\) "... if we come to God, feeling helpless and dependent, as we really are, ... He can and will attend to our cry, and will let light shine into our hearts."\(^3\)

Ole Hallesby, who terms "helplessness" as an essential ingredient to a correct spiritual condition for prayer, devotes a major portion of his definition of true prayer to helplessness. He says:

Prayer is something deeper than words. . . .

\(^1\)Unger, p. 879.

\(^2\)White, p. 95.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 97.
Prayer is an attitude of our hearts, an attitude of mind.

What is this spiritual condition? What is that attitude of heart which God recognizes as prayer?

In the first place, helplessness.

This is unquestionably the first and the surest indication of a praying heart. As far as I can see, prayer has been ordained only for the helpless...

Prayer and helplessness are inseparable. Only he who is helpless can truly pray.

3. There is the law of faith. Faith is as essential to prayer as it is to every other aspect of the Christian life. The writer of Hebrews states: "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him" (Heb 11:6).

Hallesby states:

I come now to another aspect of that attitude which constitutes the essence of prayer. Without faith there can be no prayer, no matter how great our helplessness may be. Helplessness united with faith produces prayer. Without faith our helplessness would be only a vain cry of distress in the night.

"The essence of faith is to come to Christ."  


2Ibid., p. 27.

3Ibid., p. 29
Ellen White describes our object of faith and its practice.

The assurance is broad and unlimited, and He is faithful who has promised. When we do not receive the very things we asked for, at the time we ask, we are still to believe that the Lord hears and that He will answer our prayers.¹

4. There is the law of perseverance. Closely associated with perseverance are diligence and practice. Hallesby understands practice and perseverance as requirements to acquiring the art of prayer.² White comments, "Perseverance in prayer has been made a condition of receiving. We must pray always if we would grow in faith and experience."³

5. There is the law of cooperation. While it may appear contradictory to the law of faith, it need not be. Just as prayer has its parameters, so does faith. Cooperation may be likened to obedience. While God desires faith, He also desires obedience and cooperation.

Andreasen says,

. . . He might well answer, 'I will do what I can. But I must have your cooperation.'

. . . God desires our cooperation, and . . . He is handicapped when He does not get it. He is anxious

¹White, p. 96.
²Hallesby, p. 40.
³White, p. 97.
for us to become His colaborers, and as we do, He prospers and blesses.

We are to work and pray as well as to watch and pray.¹

6. There is the law of attitude. This involves the spirit of the mind and heart. With what attitude do we approach God? Luther stresses humility. Barth explains:

Luther is right: the position of a man at prayer requires utter humility as well as an attitude of boldness and virility. There is a good kind of humility; it consists in accepting, through liberty, this place that we have in Jesus vis-à-vis God. . . . because of Jesus Christ, God can answer our prayer in spite of our unworthiness.²

There are other aspects of attitude. Ellen White states that the spirit of love and forgiveness is essential.³ Blanchard teaches the need for a "childlike" state of mind and heart.⁴ This includes love, confidence, submission, obedience, and gratitude as essential ingredients of the heart when we approach the Lord in prayer.

Man's Need of Prayer

It was stated at the beginning of this chapter that all men pray. The intervening paragraphs attempt

¹Andreasen, pp. 34,36.
²Barth, p. 26.
³White, p. 83.
⁴Blanchard, p. 15.
to define Biblical and Christian prayer. I believe "communion" is the ideal term for personal prayer. While it is through prayer that God bestows all the fullness of His blessings, it must be remembered that the Lord's most significant blessings are not of the material nature. Tozer, in an article titled "Missing Jewel," asks the question, "Why did Christ come?"

The answer . . . is, 'To make worshipers out of rebels; to restore us again to the place of worship we knew when we were created.'

Because we were created to worship, worship is our normal activity, not something stuck on or added. It is something that is built into human nature. . . .

Worship is a moral imperative.¹

Prayer is an imperative part of worship. The two cannot be separated. It might be said that prayer is worship. Auguste Sabatier remarks, "Nothing reveals to us better the moral worth and spiritual dignity of a form of worship than the kind of prayer it puts on the lips of its adherents."²

If it is God's desire to make worshipers of us, it is His desire that we pray. We may participate in the highest spiritual exercise available to the soul. Hallesby states, "The fundamental law in prayer is this:

¹Tozer, p. 1.
²Heiler, p. xvi.
Prayer is given and ordained for the purpose of glorifying God.1

To this end God works. Heiler notes that the motivation for "primitive prayer" is two-fold: self-gain and fear. "Necessity teaches man to pray."2 This is sometimes true. Andreasen comments, "God has many ways to incite men to prayer."3 He continues:

The fear or sorrow that awakens the consciousness of God may not be the highest motive for seeking God, any more than was the hunger that brought the prodigal son to turn home. But God is willing to accept almost any ground as long as it accomplishes His purpose. So the father received the prodigal with open arms, though the son's purpose was chiefly to get something to eat. God accepts and uses sorrow, hunger, affliction, disaster, fear in calling men.4

Ellen White contributes these thoughts:

Our heavenly Father waits to bestow upon us the fullness of His blessing. . . .

Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him.5

Murray addresses the topic of "The Sin of Prayerlessness." In a chapter by the same heading, he

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1 Hallesby, p. 127.
2 Heiler, p. 3.
3 Andreasen, p. 28.
4 Ibid., p. x.
5 White, pp. 94, 100.
gives four results of neglected prayer.¹ Let us consider these four objections.

1. "What a reproach it is to God." Scripture portrays God as the seeker and searcher of man. He is the good shepherd that searches, the widow who sweeps the house, the good father who awaits his son's return. He is also the great provider. "I am the way, the truth, and the life." "I am the bread of life." He is the one who can meet all of our needs. "He's the need-meeter."²

The basic assumptions of prayer recognize a personal God who is approachable, who hears, and who is able and willing to answer. The elements of Christian prayer imply relationship, faith, perseverance, and child-like spirit. These God desires. This is the reason Jesus came.

2. "It is the cause of a deficient spiritual life." If prayer is "the heart of spirituality,"³ the heart throb in the life of a saved person,⁴ "the

²Tozer, p. 6.
³Bloesch, p. vii.
⁴Hallesby, p. 35.
breath of spiritual life to the soul,"¹ then it is logical that its neglect causes a deficiency to the spiritual life.

Barth describes the relationship between prayer and the Christian life.

... it is not possible to say, 'I shall pray,' or, 'I shall not pray,' as if it were an act according to our own good pleasure. To be a Christian and to pray are one and the same thing; it is a matter that cannot be left to our caprice. It is a need, a kind of breathing necessary to life.²

The Reformers remind us that prayer is not a matter of convenience; it is, in the life of a Christian, a necessary and essential act, which must come by itself. ... Wherever there is the grace of God, man prays. ... It is the Spirit of God that incites us and enables us to pray in a fitting manner. We are not skilled to judge whether we are worthy or capable of praying, or whether we have sufficient zeal to pray. Grace in itself is the answer to this question.³

Prayer is vital. It is the very soul of our faith in Christ. It is our connection to the Saviour.

Taylor G. Bunch states it appropriately:

Prayer is the very soul of the Christian religion. ... It is prayer that gives religion its vitality, and spirituality its radiant glow. There are many religious practices, but prayer is the most holy exercise of the soul. It takes the worshiper into the holy of holies of devotion, the

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²Barth, p. 23.
³Ibid., p. 24.
inner sanctuary of spiritual experience. It is the secret of the beauty of holiness.  

3. "The church suffers dreadful loss as a result of prayerlessness of the minister." "A minister cannot lead a congregation higher than he is himself," Murray adds. The Apostle Paul tells us that if one member of the body (the church) suffers, all suffer. This is much more true when it is the minister! Weatherhead explains by comparing the health of the soul to the health of the body.

Indeed, the very health of the soul—and as I should claim, the body also, especially the nervous system—depends on our maintaining this quiet time regularly. . . . Health is correspondence with environment. The health of the body depends on the correspondence of the body with its physical environment.

In a similar way the health of the soul is the maintenance of a correspondence between the soul and its environment, which is God. Disturb that correspondence and the health of the soul suffers. And since no part of an organization can be truly healthy if any part is in a state of disease, body and mind will, to some extent, suffer because the soul is thrown out of its true relation to God.  

4. "The impossibility of preaching the Gospel to all men . . ." Prayer connects the believer to his Saviour. From Him man receives the wisdom, strength, desire, and power to share the Gospel with his fellow

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1Bunch, p. 7.

2Murray, p.21.

3Weatherhead, p. 64.
man. Prayer is the channel of all God's blessings. Thus we see that "personal and corporate prayer lie at the heart of any effective work of God."¹ This is why Hallesby says, "Prayer is the most important work in the kingdom of God."²

Christenson explains how the work of God is dependent upon our prayers.

What is it, then, that releases greater amounts of God's power? Our prayers, of course! God sends His power in response to adequate praying.

God, through His answers, accomplishes what He has wanted to do all along but has been hindered by our lack of prayer. And although He is sovereign and can and does do as He chooses without the help of believers' prayers, He has chosen to operate extensively in response to them.³

Murray offers this thought-provoking comment: "It is on prayer that promises wait for their fulfillment, the kingdom for its coming, the glory of God for its full revelation."⁴

¹Hutchinson, p. 48.
²Hallesby, p. 68.
³Christenson, pp. 12,13.
CHAPTER III

MEASURING BELIEF IN AND PRACTICE OF PRAYER

AT PIEDMONT PARK CHURCH

One person's urgency to study and practice personal prayer is a subjective felt-need and is very difficult for another to measure. A pastor may believe there is an interest in the topic, and even sense the need for study of prayer by the congregation, but this, too, is subjective. How, then, can belief and practice of prayer be measured? To what standard of objectivity does one compare the belief and practice of prayer in a congregation?

Prayer, like the Christian walk per se, is a growth experience. There is no objective standard by which one can know whether he or she is praying enough, too much, or too little. The nature of prayer dictates this conclusion. Communion with God is usually subjective. Outside of the "sketchy" examples of prayer by Bible characters, including that of our Lord Himself, Scripture gives no indication of a standard for all. This is due, in part, to the parallel growth of Christian life and prayer.

It is, however, advantageous to seek a means for
measuring the belief in and practice of prayer so that one might determine if growth is actually occurring. The results of such measurement may be used for justifying a study of prayer or as a means of evaluating the effectiveness of such a study. The latter was its purpose in this project.

With the help of Roger Dudley of the Institute of Church Ministry of the Seminary at Andrews University, I devised a survey comprising of 16 questions. See Appendix 1. The questionnaire was divided into four categories. The first three categories (Importance, Potential, and Meaning) addressed "beliefs," while the fourth (Practice) sought to measure "actions." The survey, far from exhaustive, was designed to be completed in a relatively short period of time, ideally at a worship service.

The four categories of questions were chosen because they bore directly upon the thesis of this project: belief in and practice of personal prayer as communion with God will increase as greater understanding of prayer is obtained. In other words, when the importance, potential, and meaning of prayer are more fully understood, practice of prayer will increase.

This survey was given to the Piedmont Park congregation on May 17, 1986, prior to the implementation of a six-month curriculum on prayer. The
same questionnaire was administered to the Northside Seventh-day Adventist congregation on May 24, 1986. The Northside congregation would not receive the prayer curriculum and thus would serve as a control group.

The survey was distributed during the worship hour at both churches. I attempted to explain the survey and lead in its completion in both congregations. Each question was read aloud with time allotted for response. The surveys were collected immediately after completion.

The results of the surveys are not analyzed for the purpose of comparing the two congregations but for determining change within either church body. When comparing the results of this survey with those of the the same survey taken at a later date, it was expected that increased or decreased levels of belief in and practice of prayer would be found. While the two congregations differ greatly in size, and thus in the number of surveys completed, percentages would assist in comparison.

An attempt was made in the prayer curriculum to model prayer in a small control group of the Piedmont Park congregation designated as "Prayer Partners." I endeavored to fellowship and model prayer with this group on a weekly basis. It was intended that the survey data from this group would be separately tallied to
determine whether personal example and fellowship increases the results of the curriculum. The final results of the surveys are discussed in chapter 5.

The initial survey results are presented in Appendix 1 in two forms: (1) by number of responses to each question, and (2) by percentages, for the purpose of future comparison. When a larger number of "no responses" appear, this may indicate that the question was "difficult" or "vague," or the respondent needed more time than allotted to respond. This is particularly noticeable in the fourth section, Practice of Prayer. It should also be noted that the measurement by percentage is based on the total number of answers received, not on the total surveys received.

Responses to the questions in the first three sections of the questionnaire (having to do with belief in prayer) reflected prior expectations. In both applications of the survey the results revealed strong belief in the importance, potential, and meaning of prayer. In all but one of the twelve questions the majority of the respondents agreed with the statement or felt that it was correct. This majority ranged consistently in the upper 80's to the 100 percentile. The one exception (Question 1 under Meaning of Prayer) had an opposite response, as predicted. The majority disagreed with the statement, "Prayer changes God," but
not by the same margin with which they agreed with the other statements.

The percentage points in the responses between the two congregations frequently differed by only a few percentage points and never more than five. While the results are not for the sake of comparing the congregations with one another (as already stated), this seems to support the validity of the instrument in terms of being correctly understood. It is probably even more significant that the trend of both surveys is almost identical. That is, the response from both congregations to a given question was either greater or less than to the prior question in the survey. Again, this suggests that the general meaning of each question was consistently understood.

The fourth section of the questionnaire, Practice of Prayer, closely followed the trends of the first three sections except the responses were not always in the upper 80's to 100 percentile. This portion of the questionnaire produced more varied results because it measured not just beliefs but lifestyles. This variation in responses may be seen within each application of the survey and in comparisons of the results of the two applications. While one may be tempted to draw conclusions from this portion of the questionnaire as to the need (or lack of need) for the
prayer initiative, its primary significance is seen in comparison with its latter application. See Appendix 1 for a complete copy of the prayer survey.
CHAPTER IV

DEVELOPMENT OF A SIX-MONTH PRAYER CURRICULUM

Six months (June 1 through November 30, 1986) were allocated for the study at the Piedmont Park Church. This segment of time was interrupted by both foreseeable and unforeseeable events. Some of these were the annual Kansas-Nebraska Camp Meeting (no local church services), vacation, sermons by guest speakers, annual pastors' retreat, seminary extension class, church centennial celebration, and the death of a relative. These events necessitated that I be absent from the church parish 44 of the 183 allotted days, or 24 percent of the time the project was under way. This, regretfully, was a much greater time than desired.

The following seven modes of communicating and teaching prayer were employed: Proclamation of the Word, Meditation on Prayer, Prayer Partners, Mid-Week Service, Parish Week of Prayer, the ABC School of Prayer Video Presentation, and Systematic Prayer for the Membership. Table 2 illustrates the sequence of events during the six-month curriculum.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Sermon</th>
<th>Meditation</th>
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<td>Luther's Prayer</td>
<td>Hallesby - 1</td>
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Fuller explanations of the modes of communicating and teaching prayer are given below.

**Proclamation of the Word**

 Probably the most effective time for communicating with the "active" membership of the Piedmont Park Church is at the Sabbath morning worship service. More members attend the worship service than any other service of the church. The congregation expects the weekly sermon to be Christ-centered, Bible-based, and relevant to every day living. It is for these reasons that the proclamation of the Word was chosen to be the chief mode for communicating and teaching concepts of prayer during this project.

Of the twenty-six worship services during the allotted time of study, I had opportunity to deliver sixteen sermon messages about prayer. My initial approach in the sermon series was that suggested by Andrew Murray,\(^1\) "Change the World School of Prayer,"\(^2\) M. L. Andreasen,\(^3\) and others. In brief, it begins with the fact that Jesus Christ is the greatest teacher of prayer. Therefore, it is from His teachings and example

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\(^1\)Murray, pp. 13-17.

\(^2\)Change the World! School of Prayer (Studio City, Calif.: World Literature Crusade, 1976), pp. 58-63.

\(^3\)Andreasen, pp. 159-165.
that we learn the importance, potential, meaning, and practice of prayer.

I arrived at my sequence of sermons by first studying the references to "prayer" and "pray" in the Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible. While other terms are employed for prayer in Scripture, this study provided a basis from which to work. Particular attention was given to passages in the gospels in which Jesus made reference to prayer. These were then identified and grouped in sermon topics. It was my purpose to present as many of these passages as feasible.

The first twelve sermons were derived from the teachings of Jesus. The next three sermons were based upon three outstanding prayer experiences found in the Old Testament. The series concluded with a final sermon based on the teachings of Jesus. Below is a brief description of each sermon. The complete texts of three sermons are included in Appendix 2.

Sermon #1  Occasion:  June 14, 1986, the first sermon of the curriculum

Title:  "Empty Closets and Untold Secrets"

Primary Text:  "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."  Matt 6:6 KJV
Supporting Texts: Matt 5:43-45; 6:5-8

Theme: A daily appointment with God is essential to Christian living.

Thoughts: Jesus is our chief teacher of prayer. He expects us to pray. He instructs us to have both a time and a place where we meet with Him daily. Prayer becomes, therefore, communion of heart and spirit with God.

Sermon #2  Title: "The All-Prevailing Plea"

Primary Text: "And will not God bring about justice for His chosen ones, who cry out to Him day and night? Will He keep putting them off? I tell you, He will see that they get justice, and quickly." Luke 18:7,8a NKJV

Supporting Texts: Luke 18:1-8; Matt 7:9-11; 2 Tim 1:7; Heb 4:15,16; Matt 28:18; Acts 1:8

Theme: The assistance of God is amply available for the asking.

Thoughts: The Father is waiting, ready, and willing to answer our pleas. Prayer is our greatest weapon against Satan. We can prevail with God through the power (authority) of Jesus Christ.

Sermon #3  Title: "Striving Toward Intimacy"

Primary Text: "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed." Mark 1:35 NKJV

Supporting Texts: Luke 5:15,16; 6:12; 9:18,28; 11:1; 22:39-41; 2 Chr 7:14; Phil 4:6,7; John 14:27; Matt 3:16; Luke 3:21,22; 4:1,2-
Theme: Intimacy with God is possible through prayer.

Thoughts: Prayer is being intimate with God. Jesus demonstrated strong prayer habits. He enjoyed intimate communion with His Father. Through it He received power to be all that God wanted Him to be.

Sermon #4 Occasion: Observance of the Lord's Supper

Title: "The Flesh is Weak"

Primary Text: "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." Matt 26:41 NKJV

Supporting Texts: Matt 26:36-41,33-35,42-44

Theme: We must spend much time in prayer because "the flesh" is weak.

Thoughts: In Gethsemane, Jesus agonized and prayed while His disciples slept. He asked, "Could you not watch with Me one hour?" He added, "Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation." Our spirit may be willing, but the flesh is weak. Only power received from Christ in prayer will sustain us.

Sermon #5 Title: "Pray, Pray for These"

Primary Text: "But I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." Matt 5:44 NKJV

Theme: Prayer burdens are a gift from God. They need to be needed. In the teachings of Jesus we find four.

Thoughts: Jesus said,
1. Pray for those who spitefully use you.
2. Pray the Lord to send out laborers.
3. Pray that your Sabbaths be sacred experiences.
4. Pray that you be counted worthy.

Sermon #6 Title: "Power in Prayer - 1"

Primary Text: "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God, for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." Luke 18:14 NKJV


Theme: Humility is a prerequisite to power in prayer.

Thoughts: Self is our own worst enemy. We must know our real condition, understand our danger, and desire to be helped. Prayer is for the helpless. Self-renunciation, humility, and helplessness are prerequisites to power in prayer.

Sermon #7 Title: "Power in Prayer - 2"

Primary Text: "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites. . . . I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full." Matt 6:5 NKJV

Supporting Texts: Matt 6:5-8; 16-18; 23:14; Isa 59:2; Mark 11:25; Jas 4:3
Theme: Honesty is a prerequisite to power in prayer.

Thoughts: Honesty is just as much a prerequisite for power in prayer as humility. We must have an honest relationship with God, honest communication with Him, and honest motives in approaching Him.

Sermon #8  Title: "Power in Prayer - 3"

Primary Text: "And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name and I will do it." John 14:13,14 NKJV

Supporting Texts: John 14:13,14; Luke 10:17; Mark 16:15-18; Acts 3:6; 4:12; John 16:23,24; Mark 11:22-24; Jam 1:6,7; Isa 41:10; Heb 4:14-16

Theme: Jesus' name is a prerequisite to power in prayer.

Thoughts: We are admonished to pray in Jesus' name. To pray in His name means to pray according to His will, believing in Him as the incarnate Son of God, to pray believing His words and promises, and to pray claiming Him as our High Priest, Intercessor.

Sermon #9  Title: "Power in Prayer - 4"

Primary Text: "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do. . . . but when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face. . . and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." Matt 6:16-18 NKJV
Supporting Texts: Matt 6:16-18; 9:14,15; Mark 3:14,15; Jer 29:13; 23:12

Theme: At times, fasting is a prerequisite to power in prayer.

Thoughts: Jesus implied that His disciples would fast. The New Testament basis for fasting is not to earn salvation by works. Spiritual impotence can be cured through fasting. Fasting can draw us closer to God, thus becoming the means of victory over temptation.

Sermon #10 Occasion: Observance of the Lord's Supper

Title: "Discoveries"

Primary Text: "Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father.' So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir." Gal 4:6,7 NKJV

Supporting Texts: Matt 6:5-7; Gal 4:6

Theme: We may have communion with the Father as Jesus experienced.

Thoughts: Communion is an intimate experience between God and man. Jesus intended it, as prayer, to be personal. In the Sermon on the Mount He said, "When you (singular) pray". Each of us may know God as "Abba," just as Jesus knew Him.

Sermon #11 Title: "Pracitics of Prayer - 1"

Primary Text: "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." Matt 7:7 NKJV

Theme: Practical aspects of prayer are considered.

Thoughts: Prayer is communicating with God. We can pray any time, any place. To be effective, however, it must become a habit. A time and place for personal prayer is essential. Fervency, not correct language, is important. There are times when it is appropriate to kneel in prayer and when it is appropriate to pray aloud. Prayer can effect change in God's plans.

Sermon #12 Title: "Practics of Prayer - 2"

Primary Text: "This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.'" Matt 5:9 NKJV

Supporting Texts: John 16:27; Matt 7:11; John 14:6,13; Rom 8:26,27; Matt 6:9; Acts 7:60; Deut 27:15-26; Rev 3:14; Ps 55:7; Dan 6:10; Prov 14:12; 1 John 5:14; John 15:16; 14:13,14; Acts 4:10,12; Matt 18:20; Acts 1:14

Theme: Congregational questions on prayer are answered.

Thoughts: We may address God the Father, God the Son, or God the Holy Spirit in prayer. "Amen" means "certainly," "surely," or "truly." Old Testament morning and evening sacrifices give to us the example of morning and evening prayer. "Feelings" are not a reliable measure of
God's presence. There is power when praying in Jesus' name. The goal of public prayer is the participation of everyone present. Asking for a sign may bring misleading results.

Sermon #13 Title: "Wrestling through the Night"

Primary Text: "So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak." Gen 32:24 NJKJV

Supporting Texts: Gen 32:22-30; Jer 30:5-7; Hos 12:3,4; Luke 6:12

Theme: God's will may be known through intense experience in prayer.

Thoughts: As Jacob wrestled with the angel, so we may wrestle with God. As Jacob received blessings, so we may receive blessings. Our assurance of victory tomorrow is our deep experiences with Christ today. Two frequently overlooked aspects of prayer are prevailing with God and listening to God when praying.

Sermon #14 Title: "David and Bathsheba"

Primary Text: "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." Ps 51:10 NKJV

Supporting Texts: Eph 6:12; 2 Sam 11,12; Ezek 36:26,27; Jer 24:7; Ps 51

Theme: Genuine repentance is a gift that comes from God.

Thoughts: We are all vulnerable to sins of the flesh. The experience of David and Bathsheba is filled with tragedy. There is release from guilt and restoration with God through genuine repentance. True repentance is a gift from God received through Christ. He
Sermon #15  Title:  "A Quick Mind, A Large Heart, and A Tender Spirit."

Primary Text:  "Now, O Lord my God. . . . give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong."
I Kgs 3:7,9 NKJV

Supporting Texts:  1 Kgs 3; Ps 10:17

Theme:  God provides everything we need when we seek His glory.

Thoughts:  Our fondest dreams and desires should be to glorify God. All else is vain. Solomon sought for humility for himself and the gift of wisdom to glorify God. Humility is a prerequisite to success with God. Wisdom includes being humble, sensitive, and tender hearted.

Sermon #16  Occasion:  The concluding sermon of the curriculum

Title:  "Spirit of the Living God"

Primary Text:  "If you then, though you are evil, now how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"  Luke 11:13 NKJV

Supporting Texts:  Matt 7:7-11; Luke 11:12; 
Isa 49:14-16; Luke 9-13; 
Matt 6:33;Rom 8:34,26,27

Theme:  The Holy Spirit is ours and He desires to manifest Himself in us.

Thoughts:  Jesus is the provider of all good gifts. He knows our needs better than we know them. It is
impossible for Him to reject the cry of a needy and longing heart. His greatest gift is the Holy Spirit and His spiritual gifts. For this reason there is no reason why the gospel should lack power in our lives.

Meditations on Prayer

It was my intent to coordinate each worship service with the theme of the sermon. Hymns, Scripture readings, children's stories, etc., were chosen to relate either to the specific theme or to the general topic of prayer. An addition to the worship service during the curriculum on prayer was the Meditation on Prayer. This material usually appeared as a separate handout, distributed just prior to its reading. Usually the meditation was a prayer, several prayers, or a Scripture selection about prayer. Variety was sought so that the meditation would be fresh and interesting. Below is a list of the meditations. Copies are included in Appendix 3.

1. June 14 Luther's Prayer
2. June 21 Prayer of Peter Marshall

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1Martin Luther, "Luther's Prayer," The Ministry, February 1969, inside cover.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>June 28</td>
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<td>July 26</td>
<td>A Prayer by C. H. Spurgeon⁴</td>
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<td>The Prayers of a Boy⁶</td>
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<td>&quot;A Prayer of Praise&quot;⁷</td>
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<td>Aug. 23</td>
<td>A Prayer by J. H. Jowett⁸</td>
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³Murray, p. 184.


⁵The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal "Prayer" (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1985), p. 798.


⁸Ibid., p. 66.
11. Aug. 30 "A Unique Privilege"¹
12. Sept. 6 Prayers by Evelyn Christenson²
13. Oct. 11 God's Nail³
14. Oct. 18 Praying the Bible Way⁴
15. Nov. 15 Psalm 51⁵
16. Nov. 22 1 Kings 3:5-14⁶

Prayer Partners

There is a saying that "Some things are better caught than taught." Prayer may be one of them. One observes in Scripture that Jesus both taught and modeled prayer. His disciples, who lived constantly in close proximity to their Master, learned from His example as well as from His words. Frequently they observed Him in communion with His Heavenly Father. Each time He faced

⁵The Holy Bible, New International Version (East Brunswick, New Jersey: International Bible Society, 1984), Ps 51.
⁶Ibid., 1 Kgs 3:5-14.
a crisis or important event in His life, Jesus was found in prayer.¹ These experiences taught in a practical way the importance, meaning and potential of prayer.

For these reasons, an attempt to model prayer was included as part of the prayer curriculum presented to the Piedmont Park congregation. Twelve members were chosen from the "active" membership to be Prayer Partners with whom I might pray weekly. Each was asked in person to participate. Each accepted. It was decided that the most convenient time to meet would be just prior to the weekly worship service. I explained that I wanted to pray with the group each week prior to the presentation of a sermon on prayer. A letter was sent to confirm the appointments. See Appendix 3.

The first meeting convened in my office on the morning of June 14. Ten of us were present. Matters for prayer were briefly discussed and each had opportunity for a short prayer. The Prayer Partners met again in two weeks prior to the second sermon on prayer. The group continued to meet for eight consecutive weeks. Attendance varied between four and ten. When attendance was less, it allowed more time for serious prayer. When attendance was greater, there was

less time for prayer and the meetings seemed somewhat rushed. Because the meetings of the Prayer Partners were not widely publicized, interruptions sometimes occurred. In spite of these and other handicaps, blessings of strength, unity, and support were experienced by those who participated.

Summer interruptions and unavoidable "breaks" in the sermon series plagued the continuity of the Prayer Partner sessions. Postcards were mailed twice to the Prayer Partners, but after a six-week break, about midway in the curriculum, participation dwindled to a halt. While the initial intent was to survey the Prayer Partners separately to determine the impact of "modeling," this was not carried through because of the discontinuation of the meetings.

**Mid-Week Service**

Another avenue for teaching prayer and other spiritual principles is the Mid-Week Service, sometimes referred to as "Prayer Meeting." While the format, style, content, and even location of the Mid-Week Service has varied at Piedmont, the customary time is Wednesday evening, at 7:00 or 7:30 p.m. Historically, attendance for the service varies between ten and fifty. Thus it is not a means for reaching the majority of the membership.

Attendance in summer and winter is usually
lighter than in spring and fall, and on most every occasion more females than males are present.

On June 11, 1986, an eleven-week study was begun on the famous classic titled *Prayer* by Ole Hallesby. Twenty attended the initial meetings. This, however, steadily increased as the series continued until more than forty were present. The format used was an informal discussion following a brief song service, as participants sat in a circle of chairs. The discussion was led either by me or someone appointed by me. The meetings concluded with a specific form of prayer.

One chapter of the Hallesby text was studied each week, stimulating much healthy discussion and thought. The climate contributed to spontaneous testimonies on prayer, including candid discussion of prayer problems as well as prayer victories.

Each session concluded with a pre-determined form of prayer. This not only provided interest, but also contributed blessings and enjoyment. Some variations in prayer included:

- Entire group standing in circle holding hands, several praying
- Entire group kneeling in circle, one praying
- Groups of four kneeling, each praying
- Choosing prayer partners, kneeling, both praying
- Everyone scattering, kneeling, praying silently
Groups of six or eight standing holding hands, having three rounds of conversational prayer sentences

Groups of four or six standing, forming hand pile in center, each praying

Prayer requests delegated to three or four, everyone kneeling

Assigning partners, kneeling, each praying

Entire group standing, having conversational prayers.

Mid-Week Services continued on September 10 and 17 with a study of the Lord's Prayer. The format continued much the same as the previous study, with a discussion leader and those present in a circle. The first session was an impromptu discussion, verse by verse, of the Lord's Prayer as found in Matt 6:9-13. The second session was a continuation of the discussion after each participant had a week to research and study the meaning of the passage.

In the last ten weeks of the prayer curriculum, a new format was adopted in the Mid-Week Service. To increase participation and interest in the Wednesday evening service, a series entitled "Family Life" was created. It continued the existing Mid-Week Service and Pathfinder (youth scout-like organization) aspects of Wednesday evening activities in the following format:

6:15 Soup Supper

7:00 Choice of four seminar classes (babysitting provided) (Pathfinders)
8:05 Family Life Worship
8:25 Dismissal

Brief, five-minute devotional presentations on the topic of prayer were given for the Family Life worship. These usually were direct quotations from contemporary books on prayer. Adult attendance increased on Wednesday evenings to about sixty, but not everyone remained for the "worship" segment of the evening. Average attendance varied between forty and fifty.

**Week of Prayer**

Every fall the Seventh-day Adventist Church has a tradition of observing a Week of Prayer, or Week of Spiritual Emphasis as it is sometimes called. A fair amount of success and involvement has been achieved at Piedmont Park by observing the Week of Prayer in our ten geographical parishes. Nightly meetings are arranged in each parish, rotating to a different home each night. One hundred copies of the daily devotional readings (published by the *Adventist Review*) are distributed at the parish meetings to families who do not have a copy. The customary practice at the meetings is to read and discuss the devotional readings and conclude with a time of prayer.

The theme for the Week of Prayer, November 1-8, 1986, was "Getting Ready for Heaven." Attention was
given to the two devotional readings at the worship services that initiated and concluded the week. Similar attention was given to the readings at the regular Wednesday and Friday evening services of the church. Meetings were arranged in homes for Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings. Attendance was as high as fifteen and as low as three in the parish meetings.

Guide sheets were provided each parish leader for the four evening meetings within his/her parish. The purpose of the guide sheets was to initiate discussion on the topic of prayer, to assure the consideration of prayer requests, and to vary the method of prayer each evening. Each leader was requested to complete and return the guide sheets for his/her parish. Four of ten parish leaders returned the forms. Below are the discussion questions and the answers received.

**Sunday discussion question on prayer:** Should we pray for Jesus to come? What good will it do if we do?

**Answers:** 1. "Praying will help us focus more fervently on our hope of His return and work toward that end." 2. "Yes, and we should pray that we will be ready so He can come. It opens communication lines to the throne and helps prepare us to be ready." 3. "The church has not met conditions; that's why we are still
here." 4. "Yes, because it helps us. It will give us peace of mind, restore confidence, and help us spread the gospel."

**Monday discussion question:** Does it make any difference if I pray or do not pray?

**Answers:** 1. "It does make a difference, if we couple our prayers with actions, rather than using prayer as a substitute for action."
   2. "Yes. Indication of relationship with Christ. Keeps lines of communication open with heaven. Changes us and makes us more in tune with God." 3. "The concensus was that it does." 4. "Yes, it is our conversation with God. Does God really need my prayers to change things? Prayer changes things, but it also changes me. God changes not. 'If I pray or do not pray' is the question that each of us has to answer to ourselves. If we do not pray, then we are voting for the enemy. Prayer is the one avenue that the Lord has given us to communicate with Him."

**Tuesday discussion question:** How do I pray for victory over sin?

**Answers:** 1. "Go beyond just asking for help. Claim God's promises to deliver us. Accept His help. Also, we need to pray for enlightenment
as to what is sin and what isn't, in our own lives." 2. "Ask God to help identify what is sin in our lives. Claim the blood of Jesus when praying for victory." 3. "Pray that God will forgive my sins. The Bible says, 'Ask, and it shall be given, seek and ye shall find.' All we have to do is pray and ask and then believe that He has answered that prayer."

**Thursday discussion question:** What has been your most powerful or touching answer to prayer? **Answers:** (Several outstanding testimonies were shared in the groups.)

**ABC School of Prayer Video Presentation**

Another attempt to teach the ramifications of prayer was a five-evening video presentation of the ABC School of Prayer\(^1\) by Glenn A. Coon. Ten 45 minute videos were shown November 23-28, Sunday through Wednesday, and Friday, 7:00-9:00 p.m., in the Youth Chapel of the church. Topics for nightly series (two per evening) were:

- **Sunday**
  - Prayerology of Jesus
  - He Is Eager

- **Monday**
  - How I Discovered Christ's ABC's
  - His Incredible Gifts

\(^1\)Coon, Glenn, *ABC School of Prayer, Video* (Escondido, Calif.: Video Evangelism).
Attendance was surprisingly light: Sunday, 9; Monday, 8; Tuesday, 6; Wednesday, 21; and Friday, 14. One reason for the small attendance may have been the timing—the presentations were shown during Thanksgiving week. Another reason may have been that members had become weary of the topic.

The emphasis in this series was on presenting practical insights and helps. Each message was Bible-based, containing a strong emphasis on possessing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Among the topics discussed were the meaning of Bible promises, the willingness of Jesus to answer prayer, the importance of seeking an answer, conditions to answered prayer, the laws of choice and humility, the joy of trust, and principles of communication.

Systematic Prayer for the Membership

Another approach to communicating the importance of prayer is found in the example of prayer conveyed by the church pastor. Frequently a minister is requested to pray for others. It is expected that he do so. Sometimes members "suppose" their pastor is praying for
them. This is sometimes mentioned in conversation. But
the truth of the matter is that frequently ministers
fail to pray for specific persons or problems. Some-
times they forget, and at other times they become
overwhelmed with the needs of too many people. No doubt
every minister has failed at times in this endeavor.
How does a minister, particularly a minister of a large
congregation, meaningfully pray for his people? The
answer, I have found, is in systematic prayer.

The membership of the Piedmont Park congregation
was arbitrarily divided into groups of seven families.
To enhance the prayer endeavor, a letter was mailed to
each family several days in advance informing them that
they would be the subject of prayer on an upcoming date.
They, in turn, were asked to reciprocate by praying for
the pastor and the ministry of the church. See
Appendix 4.

Each morning I discussed with the church
secretary the specific needs of the families for whom
prayer would be offered. Then we prayed in their
behalf. Many favorable comments were received from the
membership, but the most important result was the
valuable experience it was for me. Someone has said,
"The most we can do for another is pray." I
discovered that there is a sense of accomplishment when
a pastor systematically prays for his people.
CHAPTER V

EVAULATION OF THE PROJECT

At the conclusion of the prayer curriculum, the Piedmont Park and Northside congregations were given the prayer survey a second time to determine if there was a change in beliefs and practices regarding prayer. The second survey was administered December 13 at Piedmont Park, 210 days after the first, and December 6 at Northside, 196 days after the first.

The second survey results, when compared with those of the first, revealed that the Piedmont Park respondents reported an overall increase while the Northside respondents reported an overall decrease, in the measures of belief in prayer. In response to the twelve questions on the importance, potential, and practice of prayer, Piedmont members indicated increased values on seven questions, while Northside members indicated decreased values on eight items.

In the area of practice, however, the survey results appear to have an ironic twist. While the Piedmont Park results showed a slight overall increase in understanding the importance, meaning, and potential
of prayer, they also revealed a slight decrease in the number who actually practice daily personal prayer. On the other hand, the Northside congregation, which showed a slight decline in understanding the importance, meaning, and potential of prayer, had a significance increase in the number who said they practice daily personal prayer. This may lead us to the assumption that an increase in understanding does not necessarily cause an increase in practice.

While, according to the indications of our measurements, this may be true, it should be noted that the content of prayer (measured by Question 3) reportedly decreased in the control group in every category. At Piedmont the respondents showed an increase in prayer content in five out of six categories. Both congregations expressed an increased awareness of need for more prayer. The cause of prayerlessness varied between surveys in both groups.

The decline in actual daily personal prayer time may reveal the lack of practices in the prayer curriculum. In retrospect, it seems more emphasis should have been placed on personal testimonies (in regards to prayer), discussion of prayer difficulties, special sessions of prayer, challenges to experimentation with prayer, and calls to commitment for
stronger prayer lives. The actual "hands-on" approach now appears to have been weak.

The results of the second surveys are given in Appendix 6; included are graphs of comparison with previous survey results.

**Improving the Curriculum**

A first observation is that the six-month prayer curriculum was too long. While enough time must be allocated for ample presentation of the topic, one must be careful not to weary the potential beneficiaries. I observed members at Piedmont Park becoming weary of the topic.

Another observation is that a segment of time must be chosen with few interruptions. A concentrated effort should be made. The study at Piedmont Park was too "fragmented" by interruptions in the six-month approach.

For these reasons I would prefer a maximum of ten or twelve weeks for a prayer curriculum. This may be augmented by a later six-week series and a yearly emphasis thereafter. I favor a New Testament approach for the initial prayer curriculum and, perhaps, a study of Old Testament prayers for the six-week follow-up. Below is a suggested prayer curriculum I plan to use in future presentations of the topic with other congregations.
Planning and Implementation

Approximately eight weeks before the emphasis, plans need to be presented to the church board or governing body of the church. I would want to explain the needs of the congregation and the potential benefits to be derived from the study of prayer. I also would request their interest and prayers so that this venture might be successful in enriching the spiritual lives of the congregation.

Next, I would select a small group, possibly three, of the key church leaders as a steering committee for the project. This select group would be informed on every detail and plan of the prayer emphasis. I would request their initial input and assign them the responsibility of providing feedback, constructive criticism, and suggestions throughout the duration of the emphasis.

The entire church body would need to be informed via a letter to each church family, newsletter, and/or bulletin and public announcement of the upcoming emphasis a short time before implementation. The purpose of doing this is to inform, build anticipation of blessings, and solicit involvement.
Eight-fold approach to teaching prayer

1. Proclamation of the Word. The primary impact of any prayer emphasis would be through the proclamation of the Word. Presenting Christ as the teacher of prayer, I would base the sermon messages upon ten passages from the Gospel. The ten sermons I would select from the foregoing prayer curriculum are:

   a. "Empty Closets and Untold Secrets"
   b. "The All-Prevailing Plea"
   c. "Striving Toward Intimacy"
   d. "The Flesh Is Weak"
   e. "Pray, Pray for These"
   f. "Power in Prayer - 1"
   g. "Power in Prayer - 2"
   h. "Power in Prayer - 3"
   i. "Power in Prayer - 4"
   j. "Spirit of the Living God"

2. Prayer Meditations. The contemplation of great prayers of the past enlarges our understanding of prayer and helps us to appreciate more fully its vast realm. I would again insert a weekly prayer meditation into the order of the worship service. I prefer that, whenever possible, the meditation be read in unison. It is important that the meditation correspond with the sermon theme. Sample prayers are
found in many resources. Appendix 3 includes the ones used in this project.

3. Questions and Answers on the Practices of Prayer. Another innovation that might be included in the worship service is a brief segment of time when questions concerning the practical aspects of prayer are presented and answered. I would request that members put in writing questions they have concerning prayer. These may be received weekly. The questions which would benefit the congregation the most would be presented and answered the following week. Either I or a qualified layman could handle this segment of worship.

4. Prayer Ministry and Letters. Regular systematic prayer for church members is important. The members, however, may not be fully aware of this. During the emphasis on prayer, I would send letters to the church families identifying a time when prayer will be offered in their behalf. This letter may also serve as another invitation for involvement in the prayer curriculum and for commitment to prayer.

5. Mid-week Service. The mid-week service is another opportunity to benefit the membership with a knowledge of and experience in prayer. In most situations, however, it should be acknowledged in advance that only a small portion of the membership will be reached. This could be increased, however, by
distribution of "study guides" or "questions for discussion" to be used in the mid-week service to all who attend the regular worship service.

There are many fine books on prayer that would benefit a congregation. Once a text is selected, I would make it available to the entire membership. Perhaps, through a subsidized plan, every church family could receive a copy. In this way, more than just those who attend mid-week service would benefit. Several books that might be considered are:

a. **Prayer** by Ole Hallesby

b. **What Happens When God Answers** by Evelyn Christenson

c. **Prayer** by M. L. Andreasen

d. **Handle With Prayer** by Charles F. Stanley

e. **Sense and Nonsense About Prayer** by Lehman Strauss

f. **The Believer's School of Prayer** by Andrew Murray

g. **Power through Prayer** by E. M. Bounds

h. **How to Pray** by R. A. Torrey

i. **The Secret of Positive Prayer** by John Bisagno

6. Parish Ministries. An important aspect of teaching prayer is the personal touch. A "must" is meeting on either a personal or small-group basis with as many of the members as possible. This may be done through an existing parish system or by temporarily
dividing a church territory into smaller geographical areas for the purpose of small-group meetings.

During a ten-week curriculum on prayer, I would plan to meet with one parish per week, possibly on Friday evening or Saturday afternoon, to discuss a topic of prayer. A study of the Lord's Prayer would be very appropriate. The purpose of the meeting would be to discuss on a much more personal basis the elements of a daily personal prayer time.

7. Initiate a Prayer Ministry. An ideal time to initiate a prayer ministry (or ministries) within the local church is during a study of prayer. This might take any one of many shapes or forms. I would want to determine in advance of the prayer emphasis which prayer ministry would best meet the needs of the church. A few possible prayer ministries are:

a. Prayer intercessors. An intercessor in each Sabbath (or Sunday) School class.

b. Prayer sessions. Special prayer sessions after each worship hour.

c. Prayer chains. Organize members who volunteer to be on call to pray when needs arise. Requests could be relayed by telephone.

d. Prayer partners. Encourage each member of the church to have a prayer partner with whom he/she prays on a regular basis.

8. Prayer Journaling. The pencil is the mind's eye. There are many benefits to recording aspects of our spiritual lives, including matters of prayer. To
assist the membership in starting, I would prepare and distribute on a personal basis spiritual notebooks. Perhaps an ideal time for distribution and explanation of this tool would be at the parish meetings.

Conclusions

I feel that both the Piedmont Park Church family and I benefited from this study of prayer.

The benefits to the congregation were both immediate and long-ranged. The survey results indicated an increase in understanding and quality of prayer. While a corresponding increase in members having a daily personal prayer time was not recorded, there was an indication that the awareness of need for prayer increased. This, I believe, will bear fruit at a later time. The openness with which prayer was discussed at mid-week service and the prayer experiences that took place will have a lasting and bonding effect. Some members testified of answered prayer, while others acknowledged an increased awareness of communing with God.

Most of all, the prayer emphasis was an opportunity for spiritual growth for each member. To what extent each benefited depended upon each one's involvement and participation. Spiritual benefits may have lasting results and even fruitage at later times.
I benefited both professionally and personally. Professionally, I learned the importance of good techniques in presenting prayer. Prayer must be modeled as well as taught. There is no substitute for the "hands-on" approach to teaching prayer. One does not learn about prayer without praying, and one cannot be a teacher of prayer without praying with his students.

Furthermore, the importance of systematic prayer by a pastor in behalf of a congregation was deeply impressed upon me. While it may be true that the members of a congregation "expect" their minister to pray for them, the real motive for systematic prayer in behalf of the parishioners is found in the nature of ministry itself. Like prophets of old, the Christian minister is called to a ministry of intercession. When he understands the importance and nature of prayer, the love of Christ compels him to pray for his people. Every pastor needs a prayer-based ministry.

Because a minister's professional life and personal life cannot be separated, the causes that necessitate prayer in ministry also motivate personal prayer. I am impressed with a daily need for personal private prayer time with God. A Christian life without prayer is not Christian living. I have found that early morning prayer provides strength and courage for each day. Even more important is the peace of surrender to
Christ and the opening of my life to His guidance and leading. To be open God-ward is a personal goal of each day that is obtainable only through prayer.

The last benefit I would mention is the discovery by both the congregation and myself that we have just begun in the school of prayer. As long as time and life last, there will be new depths, heights, and discoveries for us to obtain at the feet of Christ, our Teacher of prayer.
APPENDIX 1

PRAYER SURVEY RESULTS - 1
Piedmont Park 1 PRAYER SURVEY May 17, 1986

Importance of Prayer (circle a number on scale of 1 to 10)

1. Daily personal prayer is _________ important to me.
   6
   NR not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 very important

2. If you have a need, it is _________ important that someone else is
   praying for you.
   5
   NR not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 very important

3. If you have a next door neighbor who is dying of cancer, it is _________ important that you pray for your neighbor.
   9
   NR not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 very important

4. I believe that personal prayer is _________ important to personal
   spiritual growth.
   5
   NR not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 very important

Potential of Prayer (circle a number on scale of 1 to 10)

1. Lack of personal prayer results in the loss of many blessings.
   10
   NR disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 agree

2. Prayer is the key to finishing God's work on earth.
   5
   NR disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 agree

3. Prayer can affect the saving of souls.
   4
   NR disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 agree

4. Miracles and healings are wrought through personal prayer.
   3
   NR disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 agree

Meaning of Prayer (circle a number on scale of 1 to 10)

1. Prayer changes God.
   13
   NR disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 agree

2. Prayer changes me.
   6
   NR disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 agree

3. Prayer changes others.
   7
   NR disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 agree

4. Prayer changes circumstances (situations, happenings, events).
   10
   NR disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 agree NR = No Response
**Practice of Prayer**

1. Do you have a specific time for personal prayer?
   - NR: YES
   - NO
   (circle one)

2. I pray the following times each day (circle YES or NO)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mealtimes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mornings</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-day</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evenings</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed time</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other times</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. My prayers tend to be made up of the following (circle YES or NO)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thanksgiving</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praise</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requests (petitions)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercession</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confession</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking about every day things</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. I need to spend more time in prayer (circle a number on scale of 1 to 10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>NR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   NR: disagree

5. The following keeps me from praying more (circle YES or NO)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I do not have time</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not see the benefits</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praying is hard work</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm just too tired</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm too discouraged</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NR</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   NR: No Response
Northside 1  
PRAYER SURVEY  
May 24, 1986

Importance of Prayer (circle a number on scale of 1 to 10)

1. Daily personal prayer is _________ important to me.
   
   not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 very important
   
   3 1 4 5 4 31

2. If you have a need, it is _________ important that someone else is praying for you.
   
   not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 very important
   
   1 1 7 7 3 6 6 17

3. If you have a next door neighbor who is dying of cancer, it is _________ important that you pray for your neighbor.
   
   not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 very important
   
   1 4 2 4 6 31

4. I believe that personal prayer is _________ important to personal spiritual growth.
   
   not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 very important
   
   2 3 3 40

Potential of Prayer (circle a number on scale of 1 to 10)

1. Lack of personal prayer results in the loss of many blessings.
   
   disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 agree
   
   1 2 3 4 34

2. Prayer is the key to finishing God's work on earth.
   
   disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 agree
   
   1 5 4 5 3 29

3. Prayer can effect the saving of souls.
   
   disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 agree
   
   3 1 4 2 4 34

4. Miracles and healings are wrought through personal prayer.
   
   disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 agree
   
   2 2 2 4 5 33

Meaning of Prayer (circle a number on scale of 1 to 10)

1. Prayer changes God.
   
   disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 agree
   
   32 2 1 1 1 5

2. Prayer changes me.
   
   disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 agree
   
   1 2 2 1 4 38

3. Prayer changes others.
   
   disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 agree
   
   1 1 4 5 7 4 4 21

4. Prayer changes circumstances (situations, happenings, events).
   
   disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 agree
   
   1 1 4 4 5 6 23
Practice of Prayer

1. Do you have a specific time for personal prayer?
   NR YES 26 NO 21 (circle one)

2. I pray the following times each day (circle YES or NO)
   YES 48 NO 0 Mealtimes 11 NR YES 25 NO 12 Evenings
   9 NR YES 32 NO 7 Mornings 6 NR YES 35 NO 7 Bed time
   18 NR YES 16 NO 14 Mid-day 5 NR YES 38 NO 5 Other times

3. My prayers tend to be made up of the following (circle YES or NO)
   3 NR YES 45 NO 0 Thanksgiving
   6 NR YES 39 NO 3 Praise
   1 NR YES 45 NO 2 Requests (petitions)
   1 NR YES 45 NO 1 Intercession (praying for others)
   4 NR YES 42 NO 2 Confession
   6 NR YES 35 NO 7 Talking about every day things

4. I need to spend more time in prayer (circle a number on scale of 1 to 10)
   disagree 1 2 3 1 6 2 3 3 agree

5. The following keeps me from praying more (circle YES or NO)
   13 NR YES 15 NO 20 I do not have time
   8 YES 24 NO 16 I forget to pray
   14 NR YES 3 NO 31 I do not see the benefits
   15 NR YES 6 NO 27 Praying is hard work
   13 NR YES 11 NO 24 I'm just too tired
   13 NR YES 7 NO 28 I'm too discouraged
   NR = No Response
I believe that personal prayer is important to personal spiritual growth.

4. I believe that personal prayer is important that you pray for your next door neighbor.

If you have a next door neighbor who is dying of cancer, it is important that you pray for your neighbor. It is important that someone else is praying for you.

Piedmont Park Importance of Prayer May 17, 1986

Northside May 24, 1986

Percentage of total responses indicating importance 6-10 on scale.
1. Lack of personal prayer results in the loss of many blessings.

2. Prayer is the key to finishing God's work on earth.

3. Prayer can effect the saving of souls.

4. Miracles and healings are wrought through personal prayer.

Percentage of total responses indicating agreement 6-10 on scale.
Piedmont Park
Northside

Meaning of Prayer

May 17, 1986
May 24, 1986

1. Prayer changes God.
2. Prayer changes me.

3. Prayer changes others.
4. Prayer changes circumstances (situations, happenings, events).

Percentage of total responses indicating agreement 6-10 on scale.
5. The following keeps me from praying more:

- I do not have time (93%)
- I forget to pray (34%)
- Praying is hard work (15%)
- I do not see the benefits (15%)
- I'm just too tired (34%)
- I'm discouraged (15%)
- I do not see the benefits (15%)

4. I need to spend more time in prayer.

3. My prayers tend to be made up of the following:

- Praise (96%)
- Thanksgiving (96%)
- Intercession (98%)
- Requests (petitions) (96%)
- Other times (88%)
- Bedtime (88%)
- Evenings (88%)
- Midday (86%)
- Mornings (89%)
- Mealtimes (55%)
- Talking about everyday things (19%)

2. I pray the following times each day:

- Bedtime (88%)
- Evenings (88%)
- Other times (88%)
- Mornings (89%)
- Mealtimes (55%)

1. Do you have a specific time for personal prayer?

Piedmont Park Practice of Prayer

May 17, 1986
Northside Practice of Prayer

May 24, 1986

I. Do you have a specific time for personal prayer? __________

2. I pray the following times each day:

   - Morning: 90%
   - Mid-day: 82%
   - Afternoon: 83%
   - Evenings: 53%
   - Bedtime: 68%
   - Other times: 88%
   - Thanksgiving: 99%
   - Requests (petitions): 96%
   - Intercession: 96%
   - Praise: 100%
   - Talking about everyday things: 86%
   - Confession: 88%

3. My prayers tend to be made up of the following:

   - I do not have time: 94%
   - I forget to pray: 4%
   - I do not see the benefits: 60%
   - Praying is hard work: 18%
   - I'm just too tired: 31%
   - I'm too discouraged: 20%

4. I need to spend more time praying.

5. The following keeps me from praying more:

   - I do not have time: 94%
APPENDIX 2

THREE SERMONS FROM THE CURRICULUM
This morning I would like to begin a multi-week study with you on the subject of prayer.

A good starting place is to begin where Jesus began. You see, it is from Jesus Himself that we learn the most about prayer. Have you ever noticed that of all the Bible writers and characters it is Jesus who teaches about prayer. Not Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, not Moses, not David, not the Apostle Paul, and not Peter -- the sole teacher about prayer in the Bible is Jesus.

How appropriate! Who would know more about the subject than Him? The One in whose name all effectual prayers are to be prayed, the One to whom all petitions ascend, the One who bears our prayers to the Father -- is the One who tells us the most about prayer and even today teaches us how to pray.

And who, my friend, should learn prayer more than God's elect, God's remnant, God's peculiar and special people in these last days? The ones to whom He says . . .

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

The ones who were told, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings."

The ones who are given the promise, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come."

These are the ones who need to learn the power and practice of prayer.

Will you come with me this morning to the feet of Jesus? Will you sit with me this morning looking up into His beautiful face? Will you listen with me to His tender voice as He speaks words of wisdom? Will you be willing to apply the divine prescription He gives for the cure of our many ills? If you will, I invite you at this time to tell God so.

Heavenly Father, helpless and empty we come with our great need and needs. We come seeking a blessing, seeking to be led, taught, and convicted from the lips of Jesus. Speak to us this hour. Make us willing receptacles of truth that will change our lives, and the world around us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

We begin where Jesus began when He addressed His first disciples in His first public teaching. It happened in the Sermon on the Mount. We find it in the first gospel -- Matthew 5, 6, and 7.

Here Jesus teaches about God, the kingdom He came to set up, and the rules of His kingdom. He pictured God not just as a King, but also a loving, caring Father -- a Father more than willing to answer the prayers of His children.

And He teaches about prayer. Approximately 1/10 of the Sermon on the Mount is on prayer. Prayer, you see, is a vital part of His new kingdom. His kingdom would be established upon prayer.

The first place prayer is mentioned is 5:44. Listen to verses 43, and 44 . . . 45A.

Jesus instigates, He takes for granted, that the subjects of His new kingdom would pray. Prayer would be an instinctive part of His kingdom. At least three times He says, "When you pray . . ." Not "If you pray" or "If ever you pray" but He said, "When you pray."

Think about what does His words mean about God's kingdom.

Several years ago a baptist preacher announced his topic for the Sunday evening service as "The Greatest Sin in America." That night the church was packed. Everyone wanted to hear what the greatest sin of our beloved nation was. Would it be adultery, would it be greediness, would it be homosexuality, would it be alcoholism? No. The subject that night was this: Prayerlessness . . . The Greatest Sin In America."
Have you ever tried to figure out the greatest sin of Adventism?  

"The holy and most glorious God invites us to come to Him, to converse with Him, to ask Him for the things we need, and to experience the depth of blessing there is in fellowship with Him." — Andrew Murray, *The Believer's Prayer Life*, Page 19

What a reproach it is to God when we neglect prayer! Do we not show disrespect and dishonor when we say we do not have time to pray?

"He has created us in His own image and has redeemed us by His own Son, so that in conversation with Him we might find our highest glory and salvation... what use do we make of this heavenly privilege?" — Andrew Murray, *The Believer's Prayer Life*, Page 19

E. M. Bounds, a respected and prolific writer on prayer, wrote:

"What the church needs today is not more machinery or better, nor new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use. Men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men — men of prayer."

Another author on prayer put it this way:

"Prayer is the first thing, the second thing, and the third thing necessary for a Christian worker. Pray, then, my dear brother, pray, pray, and pray." — Edward Payton

In Christ's new kingdom every subject is a Christian worker, and every subject is expected to pray. In fact, that is one of the identifying marks of the subjects of His kingdom. It's in the sixth chapter of Matthew that we find the Lord actually teaching us about prayer. While it is the sixth verse that I would like us to focus upon this morning, for context sake, let us read 6:5-8...

Jesus says, "When you pray... when you pray... when you pray." The verb used in these phrases denote continual action. In other words, you will be praying, you will be praying; it is also important to point out that at this place in the Sermon on the Mount the Lord switches from the plural to the singular.

"When you (singular) pray." Jesus is addressing private, personal prayer. He says, "But you (singular), when you (singular) pray..." (Read verse 6)... Public prayer, family prayer, corporate prayer, prayer with a friend will not take the place of private, personal communion with God.

Ellen White gives these words of counsel in the book *Steps to Christ*, page 98...

The Saviour is crystal clear in His instructions to us in this passage.

First He says, "Go into your closet and shut the door." The Lord teaches that each one of us must have a secret, solitary place for prayer.

The King James Version says "Enter into thy closet." The same word is used in Matthew 24:26 and is translated "Secret Chamber." The word actually describes a small storeroom or pantry where dried figs, fruit and the like were kept.

The Lord wants each of us to have a specific place, a fixed spot, where we meet with Him daily. Abraham had a special "High Place", Daniel had a prayer "Chamber", Isaac prayed in the field, Habakkuk had a watch tower, and our Lord had special places where He went for prayer. Frank Peterson shared with us his discovery when he visited Australia and toured the former home of Ellen White. The house was built...
by Ellen White and included in the plans was a small room just for the purpose of a prayer closet.

The Lord says we are to have an "inner room," a fixed place, where daily we meet with our Schoolmaster. That place may be anywhere — but it must be somewhere.

And it must be a secluded place, so that one's prayers are not hindered by a lack of privacy. Isolation is a valid law of personal prayer. Jesus says, "Shut the door." Shut yourself in with the Lord. Be apart, be alone, be secluded with the Lord. You must do this. This is the counsel of Jesus.

From MB p 84 "Jesus had select places for communion with God, and so should we. We need often to retire to some spot, however humble, where we can be alone with God."

Friend, there we can pour out our most hidden secrets, our hidden longings to the Father of infinite pity. "Shut away from men, shut up with God, there the Father waits for you."

(Andrew Murray, The Believer's School of Prayer, page 26)

Think now my friend, of your home. Think of your daily schedule. What is the time, and where is the place you will literally fulfill these words of Jesus? Not once, not twice — not for a week, not for a month — but for the rest of your life. A place where you can kneel on a section of carpet and the impress of your knees will be molded into that carpet for eternity.

There must be a time; there must be a place for you. Where shall it be; when shall it be? You must decide. This is perhaps the most important decision you will make for a long time. And you must make it, for not to make is deciding against the very words of Jesus. Please make it. Decide now that you will choose a time and place to meet with Jesus daily.

Next Jesus says "To pray to your Father who is in secret."

Once you have found your time and place, once you have entered your prayer-closet and closed the door, then you must meet with your Father.

You meet in the living presence of the Father. Just you and the Father. Alone with God. The purpose: To know God, to receive more of Jesus.

"God's acquaintance is not made by pop calls. God does not bestow His gifts on the casual or hasty comers and goers. Much with God alone is the secret of knowing Him."

(Andrew Murray, The Believer's School of Prayer, page 26)

Why pray? Simply to get things? No. Rather, to become acquainted with God. To know God. "We pray because we love Him who first loved us ... We pray not to get what we want, but to find out what He wants. We pray not to get Him to change His mind, but to have our minds changed. We pray not to have Him change His plans for us, but to ask Him to help us willingly to accept His plans ... We pray not to escape hardship or trials, but for patience to endure them. We pray not to escape work, but for wisdom to know how to do it, and do it well. We pray, first and last, because we love Him who has so loved us, because we treasure His fellowship."

(M. L. Andersen, Prayer pp. 17, 18)

Dr. E. Stanley Jones: "In prayer you align yourselves to the purpose and power of God and He is able to do things through you that He couldn't do otherwise. For this is an open universe, where some things are left open, contingent upon our doing them. If we do not do them, they will never be done. For God has left certain things open to prayer — things which will never be done except as we pray."

You have chosen a time, you have chosen a place; you have entered your prayer-chamber and shut the door. Now you say to yourself "I must meet with my Father." "He waits for me." Then you experience the wonder of meeting with the infinite God. You look up and say, "My Father." And in childlike trust, in simple every day words, you commune with God. You open your heart to Him. He warms you with His presence. It is a time that only you and God know about.
There is fellowship. There is love. There is communion of heart and spirit. There your spirit interfaces with His spirit.

There you experience joy and happiness no other knows but you.

Third and last, Jesus says "And your father who sees in secret shall reward you openly."

"We pray in secret. God sees in secret. But the results of prayer are not secret!" (Jack R. Taylor, Prayer: Life's Limitless Reach, p. 101)

You will receive a daily baptism of God’s spirit.
You will find you have greater love for God’s word.
You will know cleansing from sin.
You will receive more of Jesus.
You will find you have more humility.
You will have increase in faith.
You will possess greater love for people.

The blessing of the prayer closet does not depend on the strong or fervent feeling with which you pray, but upon the love and the power of the Father . . . Remember, your Father is, and sees, and hears in secret. You may go to Him there with confidence that He will reward you openly. You go to one whose wish is to give. You don't have to coax, pester, or batter. He is more ready to give than we are to ask.

Isn't it strange then there are empty closets and untold secrets!

These need not be.

Matthew 6:6 quote.
It was eight weeks ago, on June 16, that our youngest daughter and I arrived in Medford, New Jersey. My brother's youngest son, Scott Palmer Tochterman, was graduating from the 8th grade.

The ceremonies were held outdoors at a football stadium. Parents, relatives and friends of the nearly 300 graduates found seats in the bleachers. It was a beautiful evening -- blue sky, slight breeze, comfortable temperature. The band played, the students marched onto the field, and the outdoor public address system made the words of the speakers distinct and clear.

A local protestant clergyman had been invited to give the invocation and benediction. His prayers were expressions of gratitude for the happy occasion and a bit of humanistic philosophy. And, each prayer concluded with the words, "We pray this prayer in the great name of God the Father."

To the untrained ear, to the ecumenical-minded, to the hundreds present who lacked spiritual discernment, it was fine. Prayers well spoken. But to some, and to the One who "so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," something very essential was missing! The name of Jesus.

Many public school boards, especially in areas with a Hebrew minority, have requested clergymen not to use that name. So that none will be offended . . . and many well-meaning Christians who want prayer put back in public school fail to understand the issue.

But not only in public institutions, but also in Christian churches, and sometimes even in our own devotional lives, we fail to grasp the meaning of praying in the name of Jesus.

In the Gospel of John 14:13, 14 Jesus said . . .

This morning, again, I want to study with you the means of achieving power in prayer. We will focus upon the question, "What does it mean to pray in the name of Jesus?"

I'd like to invite you at this time to seek with me a special measure of God's Spirit. Shall we pray?

Gracious Father, we thank you for the opportunity of having access to the very throne of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Teach us more today of the meaning and power of that Holy Name. We pray through Jesus. Amen.

The scriptures are very clear that there is power in the name of Jesus.

In Luke 10 Jesus sent forth the seventy two by two to preach the gospel. In Luke 10:17 they returned and gave an account of their experience. They said, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your Name!" There is power in the name of Jesus.

At the conclusion of the gospel of Mark, as Jesus was about to ascend into heaven, return to His Father, He gave the great gospel commission. Notice what He said. Mark 16:15-18 . . .

There is power in the name of Jesus.

As the lame man laid at the gate of the temple, Peter and John approached. The man wanted alms. Peter and John had none, but they had more. Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." (Acts 3:6)

There is power in the name of Jesus. And this is why scripture says plainly,"There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

The scriptures are replete with references such as these.

Devils were cast out in that name. New tongues were spoken in that name. Harm was miraculously averted in that name. The sick were healed in that name. Men's hearts were changed by that name.
In 1885 Frederick Whitfield wrote:
"There is a name I love to hear, I love to sing its worth; It sounds as music in mine ear, The sweetest name on earth."

O, How I love Jesus . . .
Because He first loved me.
Hymn #248

It is in that name that we are admonished to pray. Listen again to Jesus' words:
John 16:23,24 . . .

Friends, these are promises of power. What do they mean? How are they translated into our everyday lives? How do we put them into practice?

Does praying in the name of Jesus simply mean that we add to the end of our prayers, "In Jesus' name we pray," "Through Jesus I pray," or "In the mighty name of Jesus" or "For Jesus' sake?" Does praying in the name of Jesus mean more than this?

Surely it does. There are no magical phrases in prayer. While one may conclude that a prayer should definitely have such a phrase or make direct reference to Jesus, to pray in His name means much more than that.

May I share four conclusions from my study of this subject?

First, to pray in Jesus' name is to pray according to His will. You say, "Ah, ha, so that's the catch." Listen carefully. It is not to say, "If it is thy will" at the end of each prayer. Rather, it is to know His will and to pray in harmony with Jesus.


Jesus' promise is preceded by a condition. It is addressed to the one who "The works that I do he will do also."

In the ancient world, a name was closely related to the nature of its bearer. That is why we are told to "Hallow" God's name -- not to "Blaspheme" God's name.

To pray in Jesus' name is to pray according to His nature, in His Spirit, and in His Attitude. It is a prayer in harmony with Jesus. If Jesus were in my circumstance, is this the prayer He would pray?

Notice the Lord's words in Chapter 15:7 . . .
The context is the relationship between the vine and the branches. The condition to the promise is abiding -- if you abide in Me and my words abide in you -- then ask what you desire, "And it shall be done for you."

Now, this is not less of a promise than what we just read in the preceding chapter. It is the same.

The same bible writer states this promise again, this time toward the end of the bible. 1John 5:14,15 . . .

To pray in Jesus' name is to identify with Him, to be in harmony with Him, to will the same as He wills.

Notice the three-fold promise in this text. First, He promises to hear if we pray according to His will. Second, He promises that we already possess what we have asked for. And third, He promises that we may know that we have what we have asked for.

So when we pray according to His will, He hears us, we have what we ask for, and we know that we have what we ask for."

(Charles F. Stanley p. 75)
Second, to pray in the name of Jesus is **to believe in Him**, to have faith in Him.


The promise is preceded by "Have faith in God." Before we can have faith in His words, we must have faith in Him as a person.

Another promise is John 16:23, 24 . . . Don't be confused. In the first line, Jesus is addressing the time when He will return and all our needs are met. Meanwhile, He says, verse 23 B . . .

Jesus is saying that a new day has arrived. The Saviour has come. He can say "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me," because the Saviour took human flesh. There is a relationship between power in prayer and belief in the incarnation.

Now you can have faith in the promises of God for now you know the One who made the promises. Promises are only as good as the One who made them.

The illustration is used of going to a bank and cashing a check. If you have no money in your account . . .

Consider the words of the apostle Paul in Philippians 2:5-11 . . . (It's like going to the bank of heaven when I go to God in prayer. I have nothing deposited but Jesus has unlimited credit . . .)

The name of Jesus is powerful and the name of Jesus prevails with God because He took human flesh after 4,000 years of sin and came away victoriously. His name is above every name. "You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

To pray in the name of Jesus is to have wholehearted faith in Him and believe in Him as your Saviour. The Father is not obliged to give audience to any person who does not regard and respect His Son.

Any one who does not honor and glorify Jesus Christ has no right to expect God to answer his or her prayers.

Only when we know the Son of God as our Saviour, substitute, sustainer and example, are we praying in the name of Jesus. It is then that God enters the heart to dwell and to work -- to convict us of His promises.

And that takes us to our third point. Praying in the name of Jesus means believing what He says.

Again we call upon the text that we read a few minutes ago. Mark 11:22-24 . . . A good teacher = a mountain remover, removing mountains -- a common Jewish expression. You must believe what He has promised.

In Mark chapter 9 Jesus responds to the Father with a boy who was deaf and dumb -- Mark 9:23 . . . "If you can believe, all things are possible to Him who believes." You must believe what He has promised.

And to the centurion whose servant was ill, Jesus said, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." (Matthew 8:13)

You must believe what He has promised.

James 1:6,7 "But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord."

You must believe what He has promised.

To believe His words means you believe enough

1. You are willing to take your problems and difficulties to Him. This is the first test. Do you believe Him that much?

2. Next, you must trust that He will fulfill His promise. Jesus stressed the principle of asserting faith when presenting our prayer requests.
"Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it and it will be yours."

Believing that you have received it when you ask for it precedes it being yours.

Most people wait until they see or feel the answer before they believe that they have received their requests. "I'll believe it when I see it" is a common expression. But Jesus declares that when we ask for something we are to believe then that we have received it. Then He answers and the blessing is ours.

In the book *Desire of Ages*, page 200, Ellen White expresses it this way: When we come to Him in faith, every petition enters the heart of God. When we have asked for His blessing, we should believe that we receive it ... Then we are to go about our duties, assured that the blessing will be realized when we need it most.

In the bible there are hundreds of promises God has made to His children. These promises are expressions of God's will toward you. In them He declares what He wants to do for you.

Now we must not take them out of context. We must not say "This promise applies here" when it does not. It is true that we must be careful not to walk on the ground of presumption. But, on the other hand, it is important to realize that there is sufficient grace in God's promises for our every need.

For example, consider Isaiah 41:10 ... Here is a universal promise given to all God's children. This promise you may claim when you are fearful, worried, or lack strength to cope with your problems.

You may fall on your knees with open bible before you and say,

Lord, I come to You in this my time of need. I am troubled with fears. I need Your sustaining presence. I need strength and help. Lord, I ask that you fulfill these promises to me just now. Grant me your presence as the cure for my fears. Bestow on me now this strength, help, and upholding as you have promised.

Lord, I take you at Your word in these promises. You are a true God. Your promises never fail. Your words are always true.

Do for me now as You have said in these Your promises. I thank you that just now You give to me Your sustaining presence and strength and help according to Your promise. Through the wonderful Name of Jesus. Amen.

To pray in the name of Jesus means to take God at His word, to believe what He has promised.

Fourth and last, to pray in the name of Jesus is to claim Jesus Christ as our High Priest.

Why are we instructed so explicitly to pray in the name of Jesus? Why is there available to us such power in the name of Jesus?

The answer to these questions is found in Hebrews 4:14-15 ... He came to this earth, He left His throne in heaven He left the songs of the angels He left the sights of the crystal rivers He left the never-dying trees He left the shining walls of heaven To live in our behalf and to die in our behalf.
And then He returned . . . to His throne in heaven . . . to the songs of angels . . . to the sights of the crystal rivers . . . to the never dying trees . . . to the shining walls . . . to the presence of His Father. To live for us.

And because He lives for us, the writer of Hebrews continues, verse 16 . . .

Do you see, friend, when we pray in Jesus’ name, our prayers are taken right to the throne room of God!

Jesus has requeathed us His name — full of power. His name links our prayers with Christ Himself. He is the High Priest of our confession. He is the High Priest of all our prayers.

The presence of Christ is with the Father where He intercedes for us.

"It is as though He inspires the prayers in us, accompanies them to the Father, and presents them in our behalf. He never leaves from the beginning to the consummation of the prayer process."

(Bill Austin, p.69, 79)

He is the High Priest of our prayers, and when we pray in Jesus’ name, our prayers become His prayers.

To conclude we must say, “Yes, it is to make reference to Jesus in prayer” but it is much more.

To pray in Jesus’ name means:

--To pray according to His will
--To pray believing in Him as the incarnate Son of God
--To pray, believing His words and His promises,
--And, last, to pray claiming Jesus Christ as High Priest, intercessor with the heavenly Father.

There is power in the name of Jesus.

To have power in prayer, is to pray in His Mighty Name.
Do you ever suffer from insomnia? Are there times when you just can not fall asleep until a problem is solved, a situation is corrected, or peace-of-mind is obtained?

If so, you are not unlike many other Americans. Estimates on the number of people who have difficulty falling asleep range between 14 percent and 32 percent. Some sleep specialists estimate that as many as one out of every two Americans has trouble sleeping on occasion and that in one out of seven cases the problem is serious.

The problem is serious, for you my friend, if you are seeking peace with God; if you do not have assurance of God's forgiveness.

The problem is serious, for you, my friend, if you have a very important decision to make, and you do not know which way God wants you to go. You must know.

The problem is serious for you, my friend, if you have a prayer-burden on your heart and you must discuss the matter with God.

The problem is serious for you, my friend, if spiritual things are no longer important to you; if you are discouraged and you sense you are losing your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This morning we will discover God's answer to a sleepless night. We will discover a spiritual experience that must be obtained today if we will have victory tomorrow.

This morning I want to discuss with you the matter of "wrestling through the night."

Let us first seek the Lord in prayer.

Gen. 32:22-30 . . .

"And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two maidservants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok. And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had.

And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.

And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob.

And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.

And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."

Years ago lived a man named Jacob. He was a fraud, deceiver, an embosser. He deceived his own family, even his aged, half-blinded father. This so infuriated his brother that this man had to leave town -- even the state, or his brother certainly would have killed him. So, he fled for his life.

This man stayed away for 20 years. But you know how things are. People are often drawn back to their origin -- as we say, they want to go back to their old stomping grounds.

So he gathered his family, help, servants and belongings and started back. As he approached his homeland, he sent word ahead that he was coming. No reply came back. The closer he came to home, the more he began to fear. He was haunted by the recollections of old wrongs he had done; he was tormented by an accusing conscience. Then he learned that his brother with an army of 400 men was on his way to meet him. The worst appeared inevitable. His brother was going to seek revenge. At last, his brother was going to settle matters between them.

What would he do? It was too late to run -- he could not escape in time. He had no arms to defend himself or his family. He had made a terrible mistake. He should never
returned home. Now his wives, children, and servants would have to suffer because of his mistakes of the past. At last he decides on a plan. He divides his family, servants, and belongings into two camps. If his brother should come and destroy one camp, the other might escape — not all would be lost. But this was scarcely a satisfactory solution. Here was a crisis for which only God had the answer. So he went out to a lonely place and fell on his face before God. And there he wrestled with God throughout the night.

In the story of Jacob we find the key to having victory with God, to knowing God's will, to receiving God's assurance. It is by wrestling with God.

This experience that Jacob went through is known as the time of Jacob's trouble. Scripture foretells that this time of Jacob's trouble will be experienced by God's people before Jesus returns.

Jeremiah 30:5-7

Putting this scripture into the context of last-day events, it fits after the close of human probation. Just before Jesus appears in glory He closes His work as our Mediator. The words of Rev. 22:11 are spoken, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still . . . he that is righteous let him be righteous still." The time that transpires between that pronouncement and the Lord's appearing seems to be relatively very short. During this interval, the time of Jacob's trouble will be experienced by God's people before Jesus returns.

Jeremiah 30:5-7

It is a time of fierce persecution. Like Jacob of old, they will fear for their lives. Like Jacob of old, they will find no earthly help. But more important, like Jacob of old, they will seek from God spiritual strength and assurance.

Listen to this quotation from GC 621.

The time of Jacob's trouble is described in Scripture in great detail because this experience will be shared by God's people. But not just at the close of probation. That experience of Jacob of wrestling with God is one you and I must have today if we are going to be faithful until the time of trouble.

Listen as I continue that quotation from GC.

I submit to you that the experience of Jacob is an experience that we must have often. Listen friend,

—You can know that you are forgiven.
—You can have spiritual power in your life.
—You can know God's will for you in specific matters of life.

These things you may receive only through earnest, fervent, persistent, persevering prayer experiences like Jacob's. Never experience these, and you'll never experience a close Christian walk. Neglect these and I will guarantee you that you will lose your hold on God.

Let us turn to Jacob's trouble: Genesis 32:24-30.

Jacob knew that God alone could save him from Esau's anger. So, alone on the northern bank of the Jabbok River that he meets with God.

There a man wrestles with him.

Hosea 12:3, 4 = "angel" also verse 3 = "God" Genesis 32:30 = "God" Jacob wrestled Christ.

This wrestler uses only human power until "he touched the hollow of his thigh". Supernatural power!

Even still, Jacob held on. "I WILL NOT LET THEE GO EXCEPT THOUGH BLESS ME" Not claiming protection but complete forgiveness from sin. Through humiliation, repentance, and self-surrender he fastened his trembling grasp upon the promises of God.

Jacob was claiming that which God had already promised to him. But notice his earnestness. He was serious. He wasn't saying, "well, its free, I'll take it." He didn't have a take-it or leave-it attitude toward salvation or toward knowing God's will. To him, it was a life or death matter. The picture is of a perspiring wrestler straining every muscle, summoning every last ounce of strength. He prayed to point of exhaustion.
His name changed from "Deceiver" to "Victor of God" meaning complete spiritual renovation had taken place.

Someone has described prayer as "talking to God as to a friend." It is this, but sometimes prayer is talking to God as to God.

Prayer is more than saying Grace. It is more than a quick "God Bless, now I lay me down to rest."

Charles Spurgeon, the great English preacher, said this . . .

But you see, friends, neither this nor our quick repetitions are true prayer.

Prayer must be the earnest pleading of the soul with God. This is what it was with Jesus, our example. Daily He received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. He knew He must strengthen His humanity by prayer. In order to be a blessing to men, He must commune with God, from Him obtaining energy, perseverance, steadfastness.

After His work for the day was finished, He went forth, evening after evening, away from the confusion of the city, and bowed in prayer to His Father. Frequently He continued his petitions through the entire night. Luke 6:12 says, "He went out into a mountain to pray, and continue all night in prayer to God."

Prayer must be the earnest pleading of the soul to God. William McGinty said "Only real earnestness can propel a prayer far enough to be heard by God." God does not hear us because of the length of our prayer, but because of the sincerity of it. Prayer is not measured by the yard, the pound or by the hour. It is measured by the deep seated craving, the desire, the earnestness behind it.

I'd like to speak to you briefly about two aspects of prayer often overlooked.

The first is the need of prevailing prayer.

There are times when we need to prevail in prayer as Jacob. This means "to fight on" in prayer until an answer comes. We do not wrestle against God but with God. Prevailing prayer has the patience to wait and continue until an answer comes. We might describe it "praying a matter through."

Early in her experience as a messenger of God, Ellen White asked an accompanying angel why there was not more faith and power. He said . . .

And the second aspect of prayer frequently overlooked is the importance of listening to God. This aspect of prayer might be illustrated by this brief story:

One day a mother noticed that her little girl was in her room a long, long time and she had said she was going to pray to Jesus. Finally, when the little girl came out, her mother asked her what she was doing in her room for such a long time when she had just gone in to pray.

"I was just telling Jesus that I love Him and He was telling me that He loves me. And we were just loving each other." Certainly no one will ever learn the secrets of another if he refuses to listen to that friend.

In listening prayer we must learn to quiet our bodies and our minds, and put ourselves in a receptive attitude, an attitude of waiting, of listening. Only as we listen can we learn.

A story is told of a steamboat company that was seeking a wireless (telegraph) operator. Interested applicants were notified to report for a job interview on a specific day. Numerous persons arrived at the stated time and soon the waiting room was alive with conversation. So involved in idle talk were the men that only one heard a soft series of dots and dashes coming over a loud speaker hanging in a corner of the room. Suddenly the man jumped to his feet and bounded through an office door. Later he walked from the office with a smile of fortune. He had received the job. Because the man was listening he was hired.
Friends, each one of us must have our Jabbok River experiences, our own Gethsemane experiences. We must have prayer experiences in which we plead and wrestle with God as though our very lives were dependent upon it. There are times that we must remain before God until we obtain the sweet evidence of pardoned sin, until we obtain direction or wisdom, or until He creates within us fresh and new longings for salvation.

It may be at 2:00 in the afternoon or 2:00 in the morning. It may take 15 minutes or it may take for three hours. God wants you to know His forgiveness. God wants you to have spiritual power in your life. God wants you to know His specific will and plan for your life. But only as you wrestle with God as did Jacob, will God give to you the assurance, wisdom and peace you need.

"When in the night season I am unable to sleep, I lift my heart in prayer to God, and He strengthens me and gives me the assurance that He is with His ministering servants in the home field and in distant lands. I am encouraged and blessed as I realize that the God of Israel is still guiding His people, and that He will continue to be with them, even to the end." 2 SM 406

"The greatest victories to the church of Christ or to the individual Christian are not those that are gained by talent or education, by wealth or the favor of men. They are those victories that are gained in the audience chambers with God, when earnest, agonizing faith lays hold upon the mighty arm of power." PP 203

God's love for His children during the period of their severest trial, is as strong and tender as in the days of their sunniest prosperity; but it is needful for them to be placed in the furnace of fire; their earthliness must be consumed, that the image of Christ may be perfectly reflected.

... The period of probation is granted to all to prepare for that time. Jacob prevailed because he was persevering and determined ... All who will lay hold of God's promises, as he did, and be as earnest and persevering as he was, will succeed as he succeeded. Those who are unwilling to deny self, to agonize before God, to pray long and earnestly for His blessing, will not obtain it. Wrestling with God -- how few know what it is!

Spurge on:

"There is a vulgar notion that prayer is a very easy thing, a kind of common business that may be done anyhow, without care or effort. Some think that you have only to reach a book down and get through a certain number of very excellent words, and you have prayed and put the book up again."

Luke 6:12 "He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer."

William McBirnie: "Only real earnestness can propel a prayer far enough to be heard by God."

EW 73 Angel "Ye let go of the arm of the Lord too soon. Press your petitions to the throne, and hold on by strong faith . . ."

DA 363 "Everyone needs to have a personal experiences in obtaining a knowledge of the will of God. We must individually hear him speaking to the heart. When every other voice is hushed and in quietness we wait before him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God."
LUTHER'S PRAYER

O Almighty and Everlasting God, how terrible this world! Behold, it opens its mouth to swallow me up, and I have so little trust in Thee... How weak the flesh, and Satan, how strong! If only in the strength of this world I must put my trust, all is over... My last hour is come; my condemnation has been pronounced...

"O God, O God!... O God, help me against all the wisdom of the world. Do this! You should do this... You alone... For this is not my work, but Yours. I have nothing to do here, nothing to contend for with these great ones of this world.

"I wish that my days would flow along peaceful and happy, but the cause is Yours... and it is a righteous and eternal cause. O Lord, help me! Faithful and unchangeable God, I place my trust in no man. It would be in vain. All that is of man is uncertain. All that comes of man falls...

"O God, my God, don't You hear me?... My God, are You dead?... No, You cannot die. You're only hiding Yourself. You have chosen me for this work. I know it well... Act then, O God;... stand at my side, for the sake of Your well-beloved Jesus Christ, who is my Defense, my Shield, and my Strong Tower."

After a moment of silent struggle he continues:

"Lord, where do You keep Yourself?... O my God, where are You?... Come, come, I am ready... I am ready to lay down my life for Your Truth... patient as a lamb, for it is the cause of justice, it is Yours... I will never separate myself from You, not now nor through eternity..."

"And though the world should be filled with devils—though my body, which is still the work of Your hands, should be slain, be stretched upon the pavement, be cut to pieces, reduced to ashes,... my soul is Yours... Your Word is my assurance. My soul belongs to You, and shall abide with You forever... Amen... O God, help me!... Amen."

EDITORIAL NOTE: The above prayer was offered by Martin Luther as he approached the city of Worms to appear before the Diet. This kind of praying could go far toward ushering in Revival and Reformation today.
Prayer

Lord Jesus, we come to Thee now as little children. Dress us again in clean pinafores; make us tidy once more with the tidiness of true remorse and confession. Oh, wash our hearts, that they may be clean again. Make us to know the strengthening joys of the Spirit, and the newness of life which only Thou can give. AMEN.

Mr. Jones, Meet the Master
A Prayer by Peter Marshall
Edited by Catherine Marshall
PRAYERS FOR MEDITATION

The Prayer of a Pharisee: "I thank you, God, that I am not greedy, dishonest, or an adulterer, like everybody else. I thank you that I am not like that tax collector over there. I fast two days a week, and I give you one tenth of all my income."

—Luke 18:11,12 (TEV)

The Prayer of a Tax Collector: "God, have pity on me, a sinner!"

—Luke 18:13 (TEV)

The Prayer of Self Renunciation: "Lord, take my heart; for I cannot give it. It is Thy property. Keep it pure, for I cannot keep it for Thee. Save me in spite of myself, my weak, unchristlike self. Mold me, fashion me, raise me into a pure and holy atmosphere, where the rich current of Thy love can flow through my soul."

—Ellen White (COL 159)
THE FIRST PRAYER IN CONGRESS

December 17, 1777

by

Rev. J. Duche, Chaplain

O Lord, our heavenly Father, High and Mighty, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who dost from the Throne behold all the dwellers on earth and reignest with power supreme and uncontrolled over all kingdoms, empires and governments; look down in mercy we beseech Thee on these American States, who have fled to Thee from the rod of the oppressor, and thrown themselves on Thy gracious protection desiring henceforth to be dependent only on Thee. To Thee they have appealed for the righteousness of their cause. To Thee do they look up for that countenance and support which Thou alone canst give. Take them therefore Heavenly Father under Thy nurturing care. Give them wisdom in counsel and valor in the field. Defeat the malicious designs of our cruel adversaries. Convince them of the unrighteousness of their cause, and if they persist in their sanguinary purpose, O let the voice of thine own unerring justice, sounding in their hearts, constrain them to drop their weapons of war from their unnerved hands in the day of battle.

Be Thou present, O God of wisdom and direct the counsels of this honorable Assembly. Enable them to settle things on the best and surest foundation; that the scent of blood may speedily be closed, that order, harmony and peace may be effectually restored, and truth and justice and religion and piety may prevail and flourish among Thy people. Preserve the health of their bodies, and the vigor of their minds; shower down on them and the millions they represent such temporal blessings as Thou seest expedient for them in this world, and crown them with everlasting glory in the world to come. All this we ask in the name of and through the merits of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Savior. Amen.
A PRAYER by Andrew Murray  
(taken from The Believer's School of Prayer)  
p. 184

Father, with my whole heart I praise you for this wondrous life of never-ceasing prayer, never-ceasing fellowship, never-ceasing answers, and never-ceasing experience of my oneness with Him who ever lives to pray. God, help me to dwell and walk in the presence of your glory always so that prayer may be the spontaneous expression of my life with you.

Blessed Saviour, with my whole heart I praise you that you came from heaven to share with me in my needs and cries, that I might share with you in your all-prevailing intercession. And I thank you that you have taken me into the school of prayer, to teach the blessedness and the power of a life that is all prayer. Thank you most of all, that you have taken me up into the fellowship of your life of intercession that through me too your blessings may be dispensed to those around me.

Holy Spirit, with deep reverence I thank you for your work in me. Through you I am allowed to share in the intimate relationship between the Son and the Father, and enter so into the fellowship of the life and love of the Holy Trinity. Spirit of God, perfect your work in me; bring me into perfect union with Christ my Intercessor. Let your unceasing indwelling make my life one of unceasing intercession. And so let my life become one that is unceasingly to the glory of the Father and to the blessing of those around me. Amen.
A Prayer By C. H. Spurgeon

Our Father, Thy children who know Thee delight themselves in Thy presence. We are never happier than when we are near Thee. We have found a little heaven in prayer. It has eased our load to tell Thee of its weight; it has relieved our wound to tell Thee of its smart; it has restored our spirit to confess to Thee its wanderings. No place like the mercy seat for us.

We thank Thee, Lord, that we have not only found benefit in prayer, but in the answers to it we have been greatly enriched. Thou hast opened Thy hid treasures to the voice of prayer; Thou hast supplied our necessities as soon as ever we have cried unto Thee; yea, we have found it true: "Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear."

We do bless Thee, Lord, for instituting the blessed ordinance of prayer. What could we do without it, and we take great shame to ourselves that we should use it so little. We pray that we may be men of prayer, taken up with it, that it may take us up and bear us as on its wings towards heaven.

And now at this hour wilt Thou hear the voice of our supplication. First, we ask at Thy hands, great Father, complete forgiveness for all our trespasses and shortcomings. We hope we can say with truthfulness that we do from our heart forgive all those who have in any way trespassed against us. There lies not in our heart, we hope, a thought of enmity towards any man. However we have been slandered or wronged, we would, with our inmost heart, forgive and forget it all.

We come to Thee and pray that, for Jesus's sake, and through the virtue of the blood once shed for many for the remission of sins, Thou wouldest give us perfect pardon of every transgression of the past. Blot out, O God, all our sins like a cloud, and let them never be seen again. Grant us also the peace-speaking word of promise applied by the Holy Spirit, that being justified by faith we may have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let us be forgiven and know it, and may there remain no lingering question in our heart about our reconciliation with God, but by a firm, full assurance based upon faith in the finished work of Christ, may we stand as forgiven men and women against whom transgression shall be mentioned never again for ever.

Dear Saviour, we are Thy disciples, and Thou art teaching us the art of living; but we are very dull and very slow, and beside, there is such a bias in our corrupt nature, and there are such examples in the world, and the influence of an ungodly generation tells even upon those that know Thee. O, dear Saviour, be not impatient with us, but still school us at Thy feet, till at last we shall have learned some of the sublime lessons of self-sacrifice, of meekness, humility, fervour, boldness, and love which Thy life is fit to teach us. O Lord, we beseech Thee mould us into Thine own image. Let us live in Thee and live like Thee. Let us gaze upon Thy glory till we are transformed by the sight, and become Christ-like among the sons of men.

Let the benediction of heaven descend on men, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

C. H. Spurgeon's Prayers
pp. 73-77.
798

PRAYER

"When you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites:
they love to say their prayers standing up in the synagogues
and at the street corners
for people to see them.
I tell you solemnly,
they have had their reward.

"But when you pray,
go to your private room
and, when you have shut your door,
pray to your Father who is in that secret place,
and your Father who sees all that is done
in secret will reward you.

"In your prayers do not babble
as the pagans do,
for they think that by using many words
they will make themselves heard.
Do not be like them;
your Father knows what you need
before you ask him."

"If you forgive others their failings,
your heavenly Father will forgive you yours;
but if you do not forgive others,
your Father will not forgive your failings either."

"Ask, and it will be given to you;
search, and you will find;
knock, and the door will be opened
to you.

"For the one who asks always receives;
the one who searches always finds;
the one who knocks will always have the door opened to him.

"Is there a man among you who
would hand his son a stone
when he asked for bread?
Or would hand him a snake when he asked for a fish?

"If you, then, who are evil,
know how to give your children what is good,
how much more will your Father in heaven
give good things to those who ask him!"

—From Matthew 6 and 7, Jerusalem.
(The Lord's Prayer is No. 81.)

Taken from: Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal
Responsive Reading
"The Prayers of a Boy"
Illustrated by Tom Dunbin

DEAR GOD, PLEASE HELP THE TEACHER TO BE NICE TO ME TODAY.

THINGS HAVEN'T BEEN GOING WELL LATELY.

SHE HASN'T SMILED AT ME AS OF LATE SINCE SHE FOUND JUJUS IN MY PET LIZARD.

SLEEPING BETWEEN THE LETTUCES AND TOMATO IN HER VEGETARIAN BURGER.

DEAR GOD, PLEASE DON'T LET THE TEACHER PICK ON ME IN CLASS TODAY.

YOU KNOW I HAVEN'T READ MY ENGLISH LIT ASSIGNMENT.

IF SHE ASKED ME IF I'VE READ IT, I'LL HAVE TO LIE TO HER.

YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO MAKE ME LIE, WOULD YOU?

DEAR GOD, TODAY I SMILED AT THE TEACHER AND SHE SMILED AT ME!

DID YOU KNOW THAT WHEN SHE SMILES, HER TEETH GLEAM LIKE A MOUTH FULL OF PEARLS?

...HER TEETH ARE PERFECT, LIKE A MOUTH FULL OF PEARLS.

IS IT AGAINST SCHOOL RULES TO FALL IN LOVE WITH YOUR TEACHER?

DEAR GOD, SEVERAL WEEKS AGO I ASKED YOU TO HELP THE TEACHER TO BE NICE TO ME.

INSTEAD YOU TAUGHT ME HOW TO BE NICE TO THE TEACHER.

IF IT HAS WORKED VERY WELL, BUT NOW I HAVE A NEW PROBLEM.

DO YOU THINK YOU COULD MAKE ME A LITTLE TALLER?

Taken from INSIGHT, March 3, 1984
"A Prayer of Praise"

Almighty and holy God,
we thank you for
your goodness, never-ending,
your will, sometimes so baffling,
your love, constant and unchanging,
your mercy, always compassionate,
your forgiveness, offered freely,
and your nurture of us,
tender and solicitous.

Our heavenly Father, we thank you
that you never leave off creating
and providing for us. Even as it
is the nature of fire always to
burn, and snow always to chill, so
it is part of your nature to con­
tinue to love and provide for us.
We worship and adore you. Amen.

—Mildred Tengbom
Mealtime Prayers
p. 30
A Prayer by J. H. Jowett

O God, our Father, we thank you for all the bright things of life. Help us to see them and to count them and to remember them that our lives may flow in ceaseless praise. For the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

--by Mildred Tengbom
Mealt ime Prayers
"A UNIQUE PRIVILEGE"

Father, thank You for the privilege of entering Your holy presence through prayer -- at any time and in any place. Thank You that I can approach Your "throne of grace with confidence" in order that I may receive mercy and find grace to help in my time of need. Thank you for Jesus Christ who sits at Your right hand representing me and serving as my mediator. May I never take this privilege for granted.

--by Gene A. Getz

Praying For One Another, page 26
Oh, God, I confess that there is not enough prayer in my life. Father, you are not able to do many of the things You desire to do here on earth because of my lack of praying. I long to see Your exceeding, abundant answers over and above anything I could ask or think. Lord, I commit myself to spend more time in prayer daily. Help me to discipline myself to more actual praying. 

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Oh, God, I confess that I have violated Your holiness and, thus, our relationship is broken. Please, God, cleanse me from all known and unknown sin. And thank You, Father, for being holy enough to be angry at my sin -- but loving enough to forgive me and to reconcile me to Yourself. 

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Oh, God, I realize that my "quickie," "I-admit-I-have-sinned" prayers are not enough. I now truly repent of my sins. I abhor them, Father. I'm so sorry. And, dear Lord, I realize that my real repenting includes my turning completely away from committing these sins again. Since I have done my part, thank You for doing Your part in forgiving me. 

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Dear Father, I know the plans You have for me are best. Forgive me for all the times I have stubbornly gone my own way. Teach me to listen to Your answers to my prayers, and then to obey exactly what You have told me to do -- or not to do. Thank You, Father, for all the wonderful rewards You have ready for me when I do obey You. 

In Jesus' name, Amen.

--Taken From WHAT HAPPENS WHEN GOD ANSWERS
Lord, make me a nail upon the wall,
   Fastened securely in its place.
Then from this thing so common and so small,
   Hang a bright picture of Thy face;
That travelers may pause to look
   Upon the loveliness depicted there,
And passing on their weary ways,
   Each radiant face may bear—
Stamped so that nothing can efface—
   The image of Thy glory and Thy grace.
Lord, let not one soul think of me.
Only let me be a nail upon the wall,
   Holding Thy picture in its place.

—Mildred Hill
—Taken from The ABC of Bible Prayer
—By Glenn Coon
"Praying the Word" begins in getting physically alone with God in the secret closet of prayer. It is in the quietest seclusion that we find the Master awaits His own. A comfortable place in which to kneel, a small light in a darkened room, and a translation of the Bible with which you are comfortable are all that is required. From Genesis to Revelation, you need not read far until the Spirit impresses on your heart an affinity to a particular verse or passage. Whatever arrests the attention of the soul is the touch of the Spirit's finger on your immediate need. When it grips you, stop and re-read. Read it three times in your heart, and three times aloud. Then, with eyes closed, pray those verses to the Father, inserting your own personality and need therein...

Consider, for example, the beautiful benediction of Paul in Ephesians 3:17-19:

May Christ through your faith (actually) dwell — settle down, abide, make His permanent home — in your hearts! May you be rooted deep in love and founded securely on love, that you may have the power and be strong to apprehend and grasp with all the saints (God's devoted people, the experience of that love) what is the breadth and length and height and depth (of it); (That you may really come) to know — practically, which far surpasses mere knowledge (without experience); that you may be filled (through all your being) unto all the fullness of God — (that is) may have the richest measure of the divine Presence, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself! (Amplified)

Memorizing, praying over, assimilating, and paraphrasing this passage, one might pray in this manner:

Father, I acknowledge that it is of the riches of your grace and glory that I have my strength. Reinforce me, empower me to the very depth of my personality with Thyself. Oh God, grow down deep into the depths of my soul. Let me know the height, breadth, and depth of your person. I open myself to Thee that Thou mayest fill my being with the fullest measure of the presence of thy divine self.

--The Secret of Positive Praying
--By John Bisagno
1 KINGS 3

Solomon Asks for Wisdom

At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you."

Solomon answered, "You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day.

"Now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?"

The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both riches and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. And if you walk in my ways and obey my statutes and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life."
Psalm 51

For the director of music. A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.

5 Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

6 Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.

7 Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

9 Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.

10 Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

11 Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you.

14 Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

15 O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

16 You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

18 In your good pleasure make Zion prosper;

build up the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then there will be righteous sacrifices, whole burnt offerings to delight you; then bulls will be offered on your altar.
APPENDIX 4

LETTER TO PRAYER PARTNERS
May 23, 1986

Mary Young          Virgil Carner
Ann Lowe            Ed Breashears
Valeree Krueger    Bill Lee
Larry Macomber     Dorothy Aikman
George Hornung     Donetta Utt
Fern and Charles Grabill

Dear Prayer Partner:

Thank you for being willing to serve as a prayer partner with me in behalf of the Piedmont Park congregation. As I mentioned to you last Sabbath, we will endeavor to meet on a weekly basis in the pastor's office at 10:30 a.m. Sabbath mornings. Our prayer time should be no more than 10 or 15 minutes so we can assume our other responsibilities.

This should be a valuable time for us personally and for the church as a whole. We will remember special needs of individuals and of the congregation before we assemble for joint worship.

Again I appreciate your willingness to meet with the prayer partners as often as possible.

Your Friend in Christ,

Frank Tochterman

FT:sr
November 17, 1986

John and Mary Hubbard
6318 N 8th
Lincoln, NE 68516

Dear John and Mary:

For the last several months we at Piedmont have been studying the benefits of prayer. I am reminded that Ellen White wrote,

"Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence? Without unceasing prayer and diligent watching we are in danger of growing careless and of deviating from the right path. The adversary seeks continually to obstruct the way to the mercy seat, that we may not by earnest supplication and faith obtain grace and power to resist temptation."

Steps to Christ p. 94, 95

You are a valuable member of our church congregation and I would like to do all that I can to encourage you in your Christian life. Wednesday, November 19, Shirley (our church secretary) and I will remember you in a special way as we pray for our church congregation. May I solicit a part in your prayers on that day as well as throughout the year?

As the day of the Lord approaches, let us continually grow closer to Him and to one another.

May God bless you and yours.

Frank Tochterman, Pastor

FT:ar
APPENDIX 6

PRAYER SURVEY RESULTS - 2
**Piedmont Park 2 PRAYER SURVEY December 13, 1986**

**Importance of Prayer (circle a number on scale of 1 to 10)**

1. Daily personal prayer is __________ important to me.
   - NR: not at all
   - 1: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   - 2: 4 6 8 5 9 92

2. If you have a need, it is __________ important that someone else is praying for you.
   - NR: not at all
   - 1: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   - 2: 4 1 2 1 16 6 10 13 13 63

3. If you have a next door neighbor who is dying of cancer, it is __________ important that you pray for your neighbor.
   - NR: not at all
   - 1: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   - 2: 1 2 3 3 9 16 9 83

4. I believe that personal prayer is __________ important to personal spiritual growth.
   - NR: not at all
   - 1: 1 4 7 9 10

**Potential of Prayer (circle a number on scale of 1 to 10)**

1. Lack of personal prayer results in the loss of many blessings.
   - NR: disagree
   - 1: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Prayer is the key to finishing God's work on earth.
   - NR: disagree
   - 1: 1 1 1 3 2 8 11 14 87

3. Prayer can effect the saving of souls.
   - NR: disagree
   - 1: 1 4 2 8 12 98

4. Miracles and healings are wrought through personal prayer.
   - NR: disagree
   - 1: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

**Meaning of Prayer (circle a number on scale of 1 to 10)**

1. Prayer changes God.
   - NR: disagree
   - 1: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Prayer changes me.
   - NR: disagree
   - 1: 1 4 3 5 7 109

3. Prayer changes others.
   - NR: disagree
   - 1: 2 1 7 8 8 15 10 77

4. Prayer changes circumstances (situations, happenings, events).
   - NR: disagree
   - 1: 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

NR = No Response
Practice of Prayer

1. Do you have a specific time for personal prayer?

NR YES NO (circle one)

2. I pray the following times each day (circle YES or NO)

NR YES NO
21 Mealtimes 10 57 Evenings
38 Mornings 81 29 Bed time
70 Mid-day 34 27 Other times

3. My prayers tend to be made up of the following (circle YES or NO)

NR YES NO
6 Thanksgiving 123
20 Requests (petitions) 102
6 Intercession (praying for others) 123
10 Confession
11
22 Talking about every day things

4. I need to spend more time in prayer (circle a number on scale of 1 to 10)

NR disagree 1 2 3 4 9 4 10 agree

5. The following keeps me from praying more (circle YES or NO)

NR = No Response
Northside 2  PRAYER SURVEY  December 6, 1986

**Importance of Prayer** (circle a number on scale of 1 to 10)

1. Daily personal prayer is _______ important to me.
   - not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 very important
   - very important 4 1 6 3 5

2. If you have a need, it is _______ important that someone else is praying for you.
   - not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 very important
   - 1 3 3 6 3 3 4 6 15

3. If you have a next door neighbor who is dying of cancer, it is _______ important that you pray for your neighbor.
   - not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 very important
   - 1 1 3 5 7 26

4. I believe that personal prayer is _______ important to personal spiritual growth.
   - not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 very important
   - 1 3 2 38

**Potential of Prayer** (circle a number on scale of 1 to 10)

1. Lack of personal prayer results in the loss of many blessings.
   - disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 agree
   - 1 2 3 2 4 4 28

2. Prayer is the key to finishing God's work on earth.
   - disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 agree
   - 1 2 2 1 4 6 4 24

3. Prayer can effect the saving of souls.
   - disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 agree
   - 1 1 1 1 2 2 6 30

4. Miracles and healings are wrought through personal prayer.
   - disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 agree
   - 1 3 1 2 6 3 28

**Meaning of Prayer** (circle a number on scale of 1 to 10)

1. Prayer changes God.
   - NR disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 agree
   - 33 2 1 1 2 1 2

2. Prayer changes me.
   - disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 agree
   - 7 1 36

3. Prayer changes others.
   - disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 agree
   - 1 1 4 3 5 9 3 18

4. Prayer changes circumstances (situations, happenings, events).
   - disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 agree
   - NR = No Response

   1 1 1 5 3 3 9 3 17
Practice of Prayer

1. Do you have a specific time for personal prayer?
   YES 28  NO 16 (circle one)

2. I pray the following times each day (circle YES or NO)
   3 NR  YES 40  NO 1  Mealtimes
   7 NR  YES 33  NO 4  Mornings
   19 NR  YES 15  NO 10  Mid-day
   8 NR  YES 28  NO 8  Bed time
   8 NR  YES 35  NO 1 Other times

3. My prayers tend to be made up of the following (circle YES or NO)
   YES 44  NO 0  Thanksgiving
   9 NR  YES 26  NO 9  Praise
   2 NR  YES 40  NO 2  Requests (petitions)
   3 NR  YES 38  NO 3  Intercession (praying for others)
   4 NR  YES 37  NO 3  Confession
   5 NR  YES 32  NO 7  Talking about every day things

4. I need to spend more time in prayer (circle a number on scale of 1 to 10)
   disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 agree

5. The following keeps me from praying more (circle YES or NO)
   7 NR  YES 12  NO 25  I do not have time
   3 NR  YES 26  NO 15  I forget to pray
   10 NR  YES 2  NO 32  I do not see the benefits
   9 NR  YES 3  NO 32  Praying is hard work
   9 NR  YES 9  NO 26  I'm just too tired
   10 NR  YES 7  NO 27  I'm too discouraged

NR = No Response
Percentage of total responses indicating importance 6-10 on scale.

1. Daily personal prayer is ______ 2. If you have a need, it is important that someone else is praying for you.

Piedmont May: 96%, Piedmont Dec.: 96%, Northside May: 96%, Northside Dec.: 96%

3. If you have a next door neighbor dying of cancer, it is important to me that you pray for your neighbor.

Piedmont May: 59%, Piedmont Dec.: 59%, Northside May: 59%, Northside Dec.: 59%

4. I believe that personal prayer is important to personal growth.

Piedmont May: 90%, Piedmont Dec.: 90%, Northside May: 90%, Northside Dec.: 90%
Percentage of total responses indicating agreement 6-10 on scale.

3. Prayer can effect the saving of souls.

4. Miracles and healings are wrought through personal prayer.

Lack of personal prayer results in the loss of many blessings. God's work on earth.

1. Lack of personal prayer results in the loss of many blessings.

2. Prayer is the key to finishing God's work on earth.
Prayer changes others.

4. Prayer changes circumstances (situations, happenings, events).

Piedmont-May
Piedmont-Dec.
Northside-May
Northside-Dec.

Prayer changes God.

2. Prayer changes me.

Piedmont-May
Piedmont-Dec.
Northside-May
Northside-Dec.

Prayer changes others.

3. Prayer changes others.

Northside-Dec.
Northside-May
Piedmont-Dec.
Piedmont-May
5. The following keeps me from praying more:

- I'm just too tired (15%)
- Praying is hard work (18%)
- I do not see the benefits (72%)
- I forget to pray (42%)
- I do not have time (95%)
- I'm too discouraged (32%)
- I do not see the benefits (72%)
- Praying is hard work (18%)
- I forget to pray (42%)
- I do not have time (95%)
- I'm too discouraged (32%)
- I do not see the benefits (72%)
- Praying is hard work (18%)
- I forget to pray (42%)
- I do not have time (95%)
- I'm too discouraged (32%)
- I do not see the benefits (72%)
- Praying is hard work (18%)
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- I do not have time (95%)
- I'm too discouraged (32%)
- I do not see the benefits (72%)
- Praying is hard work (18%)
- I forget to pray (42%)
- I do not have time (95%)
- I'm too discouraged (32%)
- I do not see the benefits (72%)
- Praying is hard work (18%)
- I forget to pray (42%)
- I do not have time (95%)
- I'm too discouraged (32%)
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- I'm too discouraged (32%)
- I do not see the benefits (72%)
- Praying is hard work (18%)
- I forget to pray (42%)
- I do not have time (95%)
- I'm too discouraged (32%)
- I do not see the benefits (72%)
- Praying is hard work (18%)
- I forget to pray (42%)
- I do not have time (95%)
- I'm too discouraged (32%)
- I do not see the benefits (72%)
- Praying is hard work (18%)
- I forget to pray (42%)
- I do not have time (95%)
- I'm too discouraged (32%)
- I do not see the benefits (72%)
- Praying is hard work (18%)
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- I'm too discouraged (32%)
- I do not see the benefits (72%)
- Praying is hard work (18%)
- I forget to pray (42%)
- I do not have time (95%)
- I'm too discouraged (32%)
- I do not see the benefits (72%)
- Praying is hard work (18%)
- I forget to pray (42%)
- I do not have time (95%)
- I'm too discouraged (32%)
- I do not see the benefits (72%)
- Praying is hard work (18%)
- I forget to pray (42%)
- I do not have time (95%)
- I'm too discouraged (32%)
- I do not see the benefits (72%)
- Praying is hard work (18%)
- I forget to pray (42%)
- I do not have time (95%)
- I'm too discouraged (32%)
- I do not see the benefits (72%)
- Praying is hard work (18%)
- I forget to pray (42%)
- I do not have time (95%)
- I'm too discouraged (32%)
- I do not see the benefits (72%)
- Praying is hard work (18%)
- I forget to pray (42%)
- I do not have time (95%)
- I'm too discouraged (32%)
- I do not see the benefits (72%)
- Praying is hard work (18%)
- I forget to pray (42%)
- I do not have time (95%)
- I'm too discouraged (32%)
Northside Practice of Prayer

1. Do you have a specific time for personal prayer?
   - No: 64%
   - Yes: 36%

2. I pray the following times each day:
   - Mornings: 98%
   - Mid-day: 89%
   - Evenings: 60%
   - Bed time: 58%
   - Other times: 28%

3. My prayers tend to be made up of the following:
   - Thanksgiving: 100%
   - Praise: 97%
   - Requests (petitions): 95%
   - Intercession: 93%
   - Confession: 93%
   - Talking about every day things: 82%

4. I need to spend more time in prayer:
   - I do not have time: 98%
   - I forget to pray: 32%
   - I do not see the benefits: 63%
   - Praying is hard work: 6%
   - I'm just too tired: 9%
   - I'm too discouraged: 26%

5. The following keeps me from praying more:
   - Percentage of total responses indicating "Yes" to the questions.
1. Do you have a specific time for personal prayer?

2. I pray the following times each day:

3. My prayers tend to be made up of the following:

4. I need to spend more time in prayer.

5. The following keeps me from praying more:

Percentage of total responses indicating "Yes" to the questions.
BIBLIOGRAPHY
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VITA

Frank Tochterman was born May 23, 1944 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, son of Fred Palmer and Alice Tochterman. He was raised in Cornwells Heights, a suburb of Philadelphia, the middle of three children. In 1962 he graduated from Bensalem High School and continued his education at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

It was during his second year at college that Frank became convinced that God was calling him to the gospel ministry. During the summer of 1964 he and a friend ventured to Hawaii to be student literature evangelists for three months. It was there, in Kapaa, Kauai, that he preached his first sermon. The topic: prayer.

After having spent one year at Pacific Union College (1965-1966), Frank graduated from Columbia Union College in August, 1967. Two weeks later he married Sally Ann nee Bruntz in Greeley, Colorado. Today they have three children: Jerry, Janell, and Jody. He then enrolled at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, and completed a bachelor of divinity degree in August, 1969.
Frank spent his first seven years of ministry in the Ohio Conference, the next two in the Southern New England Conference, and the last nine in the Kansas-Nebraska Conference. A large portion of his ministry has been spent in multi-church districts, varying in size from nineteen to one-hundred fifty. He presently is the pastor of the Piedmont Park Seventh-day Adventist Church, Lincoln, Nebraska. His greatest interest in the ministry are preaching, pastoral care, and spiritual life.