

# *"Women Love to Chat"*



*Praying Through the Phases of Womanhood*

**BUC WOMEN'S MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT**

# *Praying Through the Phases of Womanhood*

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## Introduction

Whenever I phoned my Grandma I knew she would say, "I have prayed for you today, every morning, noon and night you are in my prayers". My Mum was also a devout believer in the power of prayer, as was my Dad. So you could say that praying and believing in prayer was part of their spiritual heritage that they passed onto me.

But knowing and believing does not always mean that you experience to the full what others have so obviously enjoyed. 'Praying in snatches' could perhaps best describe most of my prayer life. I have never doubted God's ability to answer my prayers or not trusted Him to do it in His way and time. There has always been a longing in my heart to not just have a "here are my wants and other problems for you to fix". Every now and again my prayer life seemed to leap beyond that type of prayer. This made me long all the more for a better prayer relationship with God.

Different stages in my life moulded my prayers. As a child it was: "God bless my family, missionaries and school friends". As a student it was: "God help me to pass my exams and get my degree and to find that illusive 'Mr Right' ", after that I wanted love and patience as a mum and wisdom in my job.

A big turning point came at a time of personal stress when I knew only God could sustain me. It made me hunger and thirst for a more vibrant experience with God. God helped me especially through listening to speakers at Women's Retreats and Prayer conferences who unveiled a way to God that was within my grasp. *It was simply take time to share and be with God.*

Taking time with God has opened up to me a whole new aspect of Christian growth - "prayer ministry." God had timed my search for a more intimate relationship with Him just before I was asked to co-ordinate the prayer aspect of our churches evangelism. I compiled the manual "Prayer is more than talking. Prayer is ministry" to encourage a prayer ministry within our local churches. Also the prayer posters "Take it to the Lord in prayer" were an outgrowth of this ministry. Thanks to Victor Pilmoor, Abigail Murphy and Becky De Oliveira's inspired contributions.

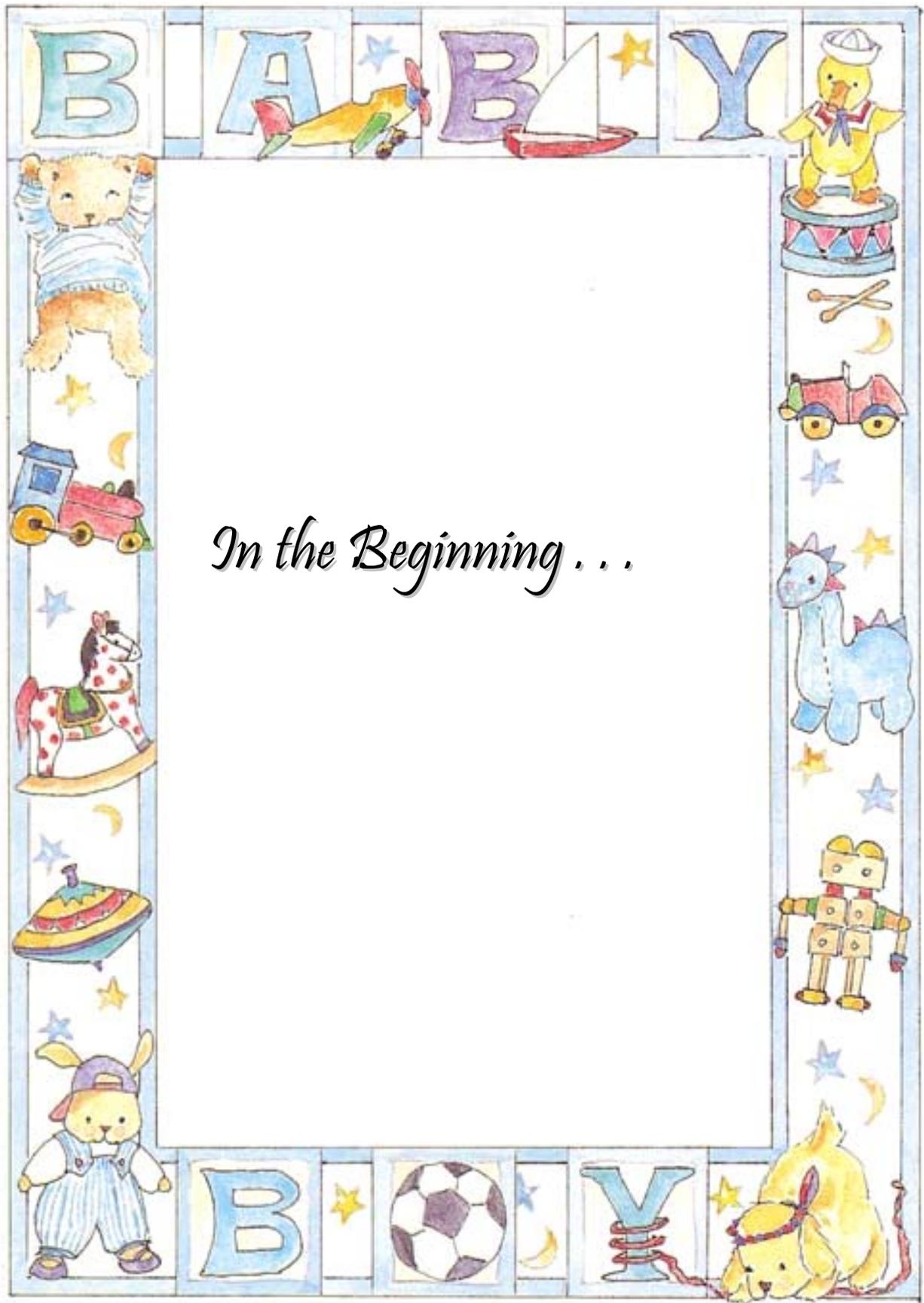
And now, here is "Praying through the phases of Womanhood." It is my gift to Women's Ministries. Within its pages you will observe how God has interacted with women at various stages in their lives. As you contemplate each cameo, pray that you will be enriched by their experiences. My thanks goes to all those instrumental in putting "Women love to chat" into your hands, especially Mary Barrett and Karen Holford who gave me permission to quote from their books. To Juliana and Judith for their typing and to Ellen Bryant, my patient secretary, I give a special word of thanks.

The source of my inspiration has been my own lovely daughter Leanne. Her enthusiasm for life, creativity and belief in God has been an answer to my prayers. It is to her and the young women she represents that I dedicate these pages.

May God be praised as you prayerfully read, learn and enjoy these pages.

God Bless

Heather Haworth,  
BUC Prayer Ministries Co-ordinator.



*In the Beginning...*

# *Expectant Prayers*

"Don't you see that children are God's best gift? The fruit of the womb his generous legacy? Like a warrior's fistful of arrows are the children of a vigorous youth. Oh, how blessed are you parents, with your quivers full of children!"

## **Psalms 127 v 4 & 5 (The Message)**

Prayer, pregnancy and parenting are intricately interwoven in who I am as a person. Prayer and parenting are as fundamental to me as eating and sleeping. During my pregnancies, prayer and faith in God were indispensable. This was especially true of my second pregnancy.

It was early summer 1969. I was sitting at a luncheon. My husband, Cliff, was already at the restaurant when I arrived after my doctor's appointment for my 12-week pregnancy check-up. I can still picture myself at the end of the table, hearing the buzzing of voices but taking in no words. People were all around me, but I saw no one. I was overwhelmed by emotion but could feel nothing. God seemed far away. I was totally numb.

My obstetrician had just informed me that my blood test results indicated that the slight fever and rash I had experience 2 weeks before had been German measles. As warmly as he could, he had told me that I had only a 10% chance of bringing home a normal baby. Severe deformities were a most likely consequence. As a believer himself, he had difficulty making the suggestion that Cliff and I consider abortion, but as a physician in an era without ultrasound technology he believed he needed to present that option.

The months that followed became a time of deepening prayer and faith, accompanied by a blur of emotions. My contractions started 6 weeks before my January 6<sup>th</sup> due date, and I was given medication to slow down the process until December 18<sup>th</sup>, when my physician determined that it would be best to induce me. A private room was set up for me and the baby, since the baby could not be taken into the nursery for fear of contaminating other new-borns with the virus it would be carrying. Paediatric neonatal specialists were on hand to await the birth.

Forty-five minutes after the medication to induce my labour, I delivered the most perfect, beautiful baby boy, Gregory Boyd Penner! I shook for an hour as Cliff and I, with tears of joy streaming down our faces, watched the nurses and doctors examine our baby. Every one of his bodily systems was normal. How grateful we were for the faith that had given us the courage not to abort, and the hope, despite fears, that had strengthened us throughout the pregnancy.

Little girls often play at being a mommy, whether pushing the doll in the pram or pretending to feed it. You could say then that it is inevitable that praying for or about a baby will be a part of a woman's life.

Another fact of life is that pregnancy will change your life forever. Whether a joyful event or a terrible shock, moms-to-be will be looking to God for help in a way they have never done so before in all their life. Those looking to adopt or foster a child will also find prayer as a source of strength.

The scriptures describe the formation of a baby in the mothers womb as an awesome mystery attributed to God, Psalms 139: 13 – 16, who entrusts to us the child to nurture physically, emotionally and spiritually. Praying for the development of our child prepares us emotionally for the transition into parent-hood.

During pregnancy the main focus of our prayers will be on the healthy development and safe delivery of the child. These prayers can be highlighting different aspects of growth each month.

### **1<sup>ST</sup> MONTH** – Miracle

Thank you God for:

- The miracle of conception
- Placing the complete cell, formed by the sperm and ovum, on the soft safe lining of the uterus.
- Forming all the internal organs
- Starting the heart to beat

Lord help me to cope with the changes happening in my body:

- Forming the “bag of waters” and the placenta
- The changes in my vagina and breasts
- The sensitivity and fatigue that comes with hormonal changes
- The nausea and vomiting activated by the hormone that keeps the pregnancy on course.

Lord help me when interacting with my family, and those whose lives I touch, as I come to terms with the possibility of being pregnant, fostering or adopting a baby.

### **2<sup>ND</sup> MONTH** – Dramatic

Thank you God for:

- The baby now looking like a miniature human being
- The brain growing at a phenomenal rate
- The heart and lungs being completely developed
- Taste and tooth buds forming and the eyes, ears and nose
- The limbs show distinctive divisions

Lord help me and my baby's father to acknowledge that you will be our source of strength as we become aware of the responsibilities of parenthood.

### **3<sup>RD</sup> MONTH** – Transition

Thank you God for the:

- Baby's gender and growth of the sexual organ
- Amniotic fluid that is being added to by the baby's sterile urine
- The sucking action and closing of the mouth
- The development of the iris and vocal chords
- The quick growing of the muscles and bones in the fingers, hands, arms, feet and legs
- The forming of distinctive characteristics and behaviours

Lord help me to have enough energy to cope with the excessive tiredness of this month, and to share with others the news of my pregnancy.

### **4<sup>TH</sup> MONTH** – Maturing

Thank you God for:

- The proportions of the head and body which now look more like a new-born
- The forming of the nails on the toes and fingers
- The muscles growing stronger so the head can be held erect
- The eyes that can see bright lights and the ears that hear me
- The first felt movements of this new life

God help me as I interact with the health professionals and come to understand how to look after myself and the baby.

### **5<sup>TH</sup> MONTH** – Activity

Thank you God:

- I am halfway through my pregnancy
- I can feel the touch of the hardening bones and strengthening muscles
- The lungs are developed enough to breath
- The sex of our baby can be seen through ultrasound and a little girls ovaries contain all her eggs
- The baby is responding to stimulating input, e.g. talking and music can enhance brain cell growth

Thank you Father for the joy of discovering the regular movements of this little person whose mind is so quickly developing.

### **6<sup>TH</sup> MONTH** – Growing and Growing

Thank you God that the baby has:

- Developed nearly perfect facial features
- Fast growing skin which is perfectly protected by the creamy vernix coating
- Eyelashes, for the blue eyes (which can eventually change colour) that now open and close
- Fingernails that are fully grown
- Ears that are fully developed and can hear sounds from the outside world and respond to them, e.g. move to music
- Brain waves which resemble those of a new-born and enable the retention of and memory of the parents and siblings voices
- A heart beat that can be heard by putting an ear to the mothers womb
- Muscles that practise breathing
- An immune system producing white blood cells

Please help me to take time to get into the habit of nourishing my marriage too as for many years, now, it will include more than just my husband and myself.

### **7<sup>TH</sup> MONTH** - Responding

Thank you Lord for my baby who is:

- Putting on the fat needed for warmth in the outside world
- Loosing the downy hair covering
- Positioning into the head-down position
- Using all five senses for registering information
- Responding to my voice immediately
- Actively moving especially at night but rocked to sleep by my day time movements

Please help me to choose an appropriate name that my loved one wants too and to patiently wait for the birth while giving you my worries about this traumatic event.

### **8<sup>TH</sup> MONTH** – Co-ordination

Thank you God, my baby is developing quickly by:

- Almost doubling in weight this month
- Practising co-ordination in so many ways – thumb sucking, dreaming and the physical motions of crying
- The air sacs growing a lining of liquid to keep them from collapsing
- Antibodies passing through the placenta that build up protection from infections
- Settling into the “head-down” position

Help me Lord to cope with feeling tired and suffering with a backache by remembering to regularly do the appropriate exercises. May I not neglect a loving relationship with my husband nor spending time with You.

### **9<sup>TH</sup> MONTH** – Nearly Ready

Creator God, thanks be to you for maturing my baby so that it can during this last month:

- Gain half an ounce each day during the last ten days
- Develop the brain in an awesome way
- Keep the bones soft and supple to make the birth easier

Help me to cope with feeling like an elephant and strengthen my husband with patience as my needs demand more help from him. May my family be an extra support at this time too.

### **IT'S DUE!**

- Thank you Lord that it is time for my baby to be born – please be with me on this day as I patiently wait, as only one baby out of twenty is born on the due date.
- Lord help me
  - it's frightening and exciting to be in labour and on my way to hospital
  - keep my husband calm and supportive as he stays by my side
  - be with the midwife and doctors as they tend to my baby's birth
  - be with those looking after the baby's siblings
- Hear my prayer, constant prayer, as my cervix dilates and I feel the pain of the contractions.
- Keep my baby safe as it pushes down the birth canal and breaks the water bag. Do not let the chord go around its neck.
- Keep me safe too. Do not let my body haemorrhage.

Praise you Lord for the miracle of this new life lying in my arms. May the special time of prayer that we have enjoyed over the last nine months continue. May your Holy Spirit develop my skills as a wife, as well as a parent, so that as a family unit we will spend eternity with you.

Adapted from: "What to pray for when you are expecting" by Joyce Penner.  
Published by Vine Books

# Baby Talk

"The people brought children to Jesus, hoping he might touch them. The disciples shooed them off. But Jesus was irate and let them know it: 'Don't push these children away. Don't ever get between them and me. These children are at the very centre of life in the kingdom.' . . . Then, gathering the children up in his arms, he laid his hands of blessing on them."

## Mark 10:13 – 16 (The Message)

When should I begin to pray with my baby? This is a question new parents ask as they may be wondering if it is something you do only with an older child. Really the answer is "before your child is born."

- Mum and dad, place your hands on the tummy and say a prayer of blessing for physical, mental and emotional growth, and that your baby will know God as their creator
- At birth give a prayer of thanks and dedication as you give them their first cuddle
- At home pray while walking, breastfeeding changing, rocking or patting the baby to bring up a burp and while you look at your little one sleeping
- Model a caring and loving God by praying with a caress, hug and holding of hands
- Model trust and belief in a God who answers prayer
- Pray with your baby as 'one to one' and as a family. As you worship do so with a smile on your face
- Use colourful pictures or a walk outside to make your prayer topics visually stimulating
- At an early age fold their hands in prayer at formal settings, e.g. grace, bedtime
- Always gear your prayer to the youngest ones in the family worship. Use words that are simple and age adjusted ideas
- Take your little one to church regularly, especially for their Sabbath school
- Keep a visual record of their Dedication day to show them when they are older
- Remember to keep your prayers short, to the point, and use wording they can easily assimilate. Use their name in the prayer
- When they are able, teach them to say the 'Dear Jesus' and 'Amen'. Later they will be able to repeat the whole prayer after you, sentence by sentence
- A child's future prayer life will be modelled on yours so get into the habit of giving:
  - Praise and Thanksgiving  
"Thank you for the lovely flowers you made"
  - Confession and Repentance  
"I am sorry I was shouting today, help me to be more patient"
  - Petition and Supplication  
"Today as we go in the car please keep us safe as we travel to Grandpa's"
  - Intercession  
"Please be with Grandma who is sick in hospital"

- Guidance  
"As my baby is learning to walk please guide them as they keep on trying"
- Adoration  
"Only you God could make a baby as lovely as (your baby's name)."
- David wrote his prayers as songs so you can also sing prayers, play CD's, with words that have meaning to your little one
- You can write prayers too. On a regular basis write a prayer for your baby in a journal and keep it as a keepsake to give your grown-up child or when they have their own baby
- When you have more than one child plan to have a separate prayer with each one so that they receive individual attention
- Pray spontaneously during the day "Thank you for this growing two year old who is so special to me, who you love so much"
- Start or join a "Mums in Touch" group to pray for one another's children; to enjoy fellowship and learn from one another's Christian experience
- Pray for a prayer partner and keep in touch by phone
- Remember as you live what you believe your children will learn to embrace your love for God and fall in love with Him too because you have shown them:
  1. God is love and God is good
  2. God called us into being, loves us very much and knows what is best for us
  3. God has many characteristics: Creator, Comforter, Loving Parent and Friend
  4. God is active in our world
  5. God will always listen and understand
  6. God has given us freedom to make decisions and helps us in our choices
  7. God may not like some of the things we do but still loves us
  8. God is everlasting
  9. God is a spirit (understanding of this concept will come with time)
  10. God will guide us throughout our life

Recommended books on praying for your child:

- ❖ And all the Children say Amen  
By: Ian Knox. Publisher: Scripture Union
- ❖ Every Child needs a praying Mum  
By: Fern Nichols. Publisher: Zondervan
- ❖ Children and Prayer  
By: Betty Shannon Lloyd. Publisher: Alpha
- ❖ Dear God, Can you wink?  
By: Gillian Raymond. Publisher: Scripture Raymond
- ❖ Teach your children to pray  
By: Denise George. Publisher: Christian Focus
- ❖ The power of a Praying Parent  
By: Stormie Omartian. Publisher: Kingsway
- ❖ Loving Words every child needs to hear  
By: Ed Anderson and John E Peterson. Publisher: Countryman

# *Spiritual Growth*

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF BEGINNERS (AGES 0 – 3)**

- Prayer is associated with love and closeness
- Senses attitudes of respect, joy and anticipation in connection with church, the Bible and Jesus
- Can identify pictures of Jesus and lisp His name
- Will fold hands (briefly) for the blessing before meals and kneel (again briefly) for prayer
- Pray one word prayer, repeating after an adult

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF KINDERGARTEN (AGES 4 – 6)**

- God loves and cares for them
- How to show respect to God
- How to respect themselves; this comes from knowing that God made them, knows them and values them
- The difference between right and wrong
- How to choose the right with God's help
- They pray about anything that comes to mind – e.g. people and pets
- Have faith in God answering prayer

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF PRIMARY (AGES 6 – 8)**

- Can sense that God is great and good but do not understand how prayers reach God
- Enjoy Bible stories at own level of understanding
- Are sensitive, affected by attitudes of parents and teachers
- Develop many fears, including that they must say their prayers in a certain way or God will not respond
- Have questions about our world, the causes of things and their purposes
- Enjoys participation in worship, e.g. singing involves being part of the church community; they need a sense of belonging
- Need to experience love and trust so that later they have a capacity to expand their faith

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF MIDDLE (AGES 8 – 11)**

- Doubts begin around 8 years old
- Respond to God in personal ways and pray for specific things and people's needs
- Unanswered prayer is due to their 'badness'
- Enjoy worship if within own comprehension
- Thrive on participation in church like; being part of dramas, music & special programmes
- Have concrete conception of religion – it must deal with real things
- Can understand Jesus and His teachings as applicable to life on earth
- Can begin to understand sin and forgiveness
- Need affirmation of gifts and acceptance of personhood
- Grow in faith through unconditional love and acceptance by adults

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF JUNIOR YOUTH (AGES 11 – 13)**

- Prayer is a private conversation with God and intensely personal
- Are forming life philosophy
- May be troubled with questioning; need to feel welcomed and accepted with that questioning
- Are troubled by personal, social and global fears (war and disease)
- Can grasp principles of Christian living to use in solving own problems
- Are able to develop more personal relationships with God

- Faith styles are conforming; are influenced by peers and adults
- Have an image of God as a friend, guide and counsellor
- Still need to feel loved and accepted and valued

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUTH (AGES 14+)**

- Puberty is changing them into restless adolescents
- Prayer changes their attitudes
- Recognises prayer is valuable
- Is specific and mundane in their style of praying
- Enjoys working in a group
- Wants facts to help discern alternative solutions
- They begin to question their belief in prayer but continue praying because they realise its value

Recommended Books:

- ❖ Teaching the Faith  
By: D. J. Habenicht & L. Burton. Publisher: Review & Herald
- ❖ Children's Ministries  
Editor: N. J. Johnsson. Publisher: Advent Source
- ❖ Learning Styles  
By: M. LeFever. Publisher: Kingsway

Did you know each year the first Saturday of June is World-wide Day of Prayer for Children at Risk?  
For more information, contact:

Viva Network  
P.O. Box 633  
Oxford, UK  
OX2 0XZ

Website: [www.viva.org](http://www.viva.org)

Where to go for more help on teaching your kids to pray:

- ❖ [www.praykids.com](http://www.praykids.com)
- ❖ [www.familiesprayusa.org](http://www.familiesprayusa.org)
- ❖ [www.harvestprayer.com](http://www.harvestprayer.com)
- ❖ [www.childrensprayernet.org](http://www.childrensprayernet.org)



*Growing Girls Chat Too*

# Praying with a Mother's Heart

"Her children will rise up and call her blessed" Proverbs 31:28

## Ten Important Steps

As we Christian mothers know, we are in a spiritual war with the enemy of God for our children. Sometimes it seems like an ongoing battle. Here are some things I've learned in my journey as a praying mum.

### 1. Begin your prayers with praise.

Begin your prayer time by choosing a specific attribute of God, such as compassion or omnipotence, and meditating on it, using the Bible as your guide. This helps you focus on the One you're talking to, and assures you He is able to do mighty things because of who He is.

### 2. More than a shopping list.

Prayer that truly blesses includes praise, confession, meditation, listening, and getting to know God personally. I like Dorothy Eaton Watts's description of two types of praying people in her book *Prayer Country*: "Shoppers come . . . looking for miracles. . . . Hunters, on the other hand, go into Prayer Country with an entirely different motive. Their purpose is to meet the King."

### 3. Claim Scripture promises.

Literally place your children's names in Bible texts, believing and claiming God's promises to intervene in their lives. If you're concerned about your daughter's actions or safety, you might pray, "For he will command his angels concerning *Tricia* to guard her in all her ways" (Psalm 91:11). Prayer for a son's salvation might be: "Open *Mike's* eyes and turn him from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that he may receive forgiveness of sins" (Acts 26:18).

### 4. Have faith that God will respond.

"According to your faith will it be done to you," Jesus said (Matt. 9:29). Searching for and writing out Bible verses that describe power and blessings of faith will help build *your* own faith.

### 5. Be patient.

For me, being patient is one of the hardest things to do. It helps me to remember that even Jesus prayed, "Thy will be done." In *The Power of a Praying Parent*, author and mum Stormie Omartian notes that "when we pray for our children, we are asking God to make His presence a part of their lives and work powerfully in their behalf. That doesn't mean there will always be an immediate response. Sometimes it can take days, weeks, months, or even years. But our prayers are never lost or meaningless. If we are praying, something is happening, whether we can see it or not!"<sup>1</sup>

### 6. Prayer is a two-way conversation.

God tells us, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). Don't be so busy talking that you don't open your heart to hear God's answers.

### 7. Be diligent.

Author and mother Ellen White says, "Build a fortification of prayer and faith about your children. . . . You have no time to rest from watchful, earnest labour."<sup>2</sup>

### 8. It's a battle.

Sometimes you literally must wrestle with God. Prayer warrior Roger Morneau specifically speaks to parents about the necessity of interceding on behalf of their children.<sup>3</sup>

### 9. God will hear.

Again, Ellen White urges parents, "Commit your children to the Lord in prayer. Work earnestly and untiringly for them. God will hear your prayers and will draw them to Himself."<sup>4</sup>

### 10. Don't tell God what to do.

Resist the temptation to micro-manage. Don't say, "Lord, please let Margie marry Tim. They'd make

such a nice couple." Instead, ask God to show you how to pray for your children. And then, always and only, pray that God's will be done in their lives. Remember that God loves them even more than you do!

### **Prayer *does* work**

Do these principles work? They certainly do. And you will be changed in the process.

It's also good to unite your prayers with those of others. Juanita, a member of a Moms in Touch International prayer group in Texas, asked the group to pray that her estranged daughter would contact her. What Juanita didn't know was that sometime earlier a friend had been impressed to send money anonymously to Juanita's daughter. When the girl received the money, she assumed it was from her mother and called to thank her the very week Juanita had enlisted her group's support in prayer.

For years Linda and her mothers' prayer group asked God for the conversion of her son. How they rejoiced when he committed his life to God and was baptised! The group then decided to pray that according to His will God would send a special person into his life. Three weeks later he met a lovely Christian girl.

Moms (and dads), daily place your children in God's loving arms. He will never, ever give up on them. He will draw them home.

1. Stormie Omartian, *The Power of a Praying Parent* p. 19.
2. Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 185.
3. Roger Morneau, *When You Need Incredible Answers to Prayer*, p. 124.
4. White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 536.

#### Recommended Books:

- ❖ Reaching and Keeping Tweenagers  
By: Peter Brierley. Publisher: Christian Research, Crusaders and Youth for Christ
- ❖ We can keep them in the church  
By: M. Tety and G. L. Hopkins. Publisher: Pacific Press

## *Girls like to Talk*

"Give to your children; don't expect them to give to you. Little children don't pay for their parents food. It's the other way around; parents supply food for their children. I will gladly spend myself and all I have for your spiritual good."

**2 Corinthians 12:14 – 15 NLT**

Prayer is a natural thing for your girl to do, after all it is talking, chatting with her Heavenly Father. Talking is a form of communication, other types are painting, drawing pictures, body movement like dancing or jumping for joy, craftwork, singing, making music etc. and silence too. God created 5 senses and all of them can be a part of the prayer life.

In communicating she is role-modelling God the creator. As a child of God prayer teaches her to worship the creator God, to frequently talk with Him, read His written words, form moral values, be active in presenting others people's needs to Him, to be confident in sharing her thoughts with others during times of joint worship.

Answered prayers encourage faith to develop. God will progress from a Father Christmas figure to the only "someone" with whom they can share their deepest thoughts. As the girl matures her prayer life enables her to become a partner with God and see Him do the impossible by changing events and people.

### How can we help her to pray?

Teach her to be honest with God. Just as we teach her to say "Thank you," "sorry" and "please" we can teach her to say these to God. She will experience it is sometimes hard to say these to God too. We want the child to have an honest relationship with God, which includes saying exactly how they feel when they pray. This way they will recognise their need for forgiveness from God and exhibit the spirit of forgiveness to others. The teaspoon prayer is a good format t = thanks, s = sorry and p = please.

### **BECOME A CHILD AGAIN**

We need to see the world through her eyes. Remembering how it was with us is a start but we need to realise that her world is very different today. The focus of the up-to-date prayer books for children is activity based. Schools stimulate her through educational play and so creativity in prayer is vital. As she grows up so will her relationship to God and others. Her style of praying will also change. Encourage her to try a stimulating variety of two-way conversations with God as well as praying in a family or church group.

### **PRAYING WITH THE FAMILY**

Find the most unstressed time of the day to have a delightful time of prayerful interaction. Adjust the activities according to her ability and interest (see section on spiritual growth). Never allow this time to become boring and longwinded or dominated by adult needs.

This family prayer time can be a way too of bonding your family, as it becomes a place where inner thoughts can be shared, respected and taken to God in prayer.

### **MUMS AND DADS "ONE TO ONE"**

Girls need special bonding times separately with mum and other times with Dad. Each parent can offer a different quality of prayer and support. Keep confidences; follow through with offers of aid. Also share you own special prayer needs so they can learn how to prayerfully cope as an adult.

## **PRAYER MINISTRY**

Designate one day, possibly Friday night, as a time of praying for others. Make it a prayer ministry time. (Prayer meetings at church are too late and foreign to children and teens needs).

Keep a prayer journal of how God has answered prayers.

When family or friends come for a visit think of ways to make them feel at home with prayer. This may mean preparing something completely different, be sensitive to their lack of prayer experience. When her friends come for meals make saying the grace a fun activity, e.g. find out the favourite food on their plate and thank God for it.

## **ALONE WITH GOD**

Encourage a personal prayer time. It is a habit to develop at an early stage of life. As you tuck her into bed suggest she share her thoughts with God. When she can write give her a book she can use as a personal prayer journal.

Take time to let her know when, where and how you enjoy a personal time with God. She will role play your model.

## **CHURCH PRAYER GROUPS**

Each year our church has a junior week of prayer in March at the same time as the youth week of prayer. A toddler's is with the adults in November. If no one organises these then ask the Lord to show you prayer leaders who will help you run a lively prayer week for these younger members of God's family.

Recommended Books:

- ❖ New Ideas for Creative Prayer  
By: Judith Merrell. Publisher: Scripture Union
- ❖ What shall we pray about  
By: Andy Robb. Publisher: Candle Books
- ❖ You can change the world  
Plus activity books 1 & 2  
By: Daphne Spraggett with Jill Johnson. Publisher: WEC International
- ❖ Window on the World.  
By: Daphne Spraggett with Jill Johnson. Publisher: WEC International
- ❖ Training up Prayer Warriors  
Training pack  
Publisher: WEC International
- ❖ Putting their hands in His  
By: R. Jacobson. Publisher: Review & Herald

## Young Prayer Evangelists

*And endurance develops strength of character in us, and character strengthens our confident expectation of salvation. And this expectation will not disappoint. . . . God . . . has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts his love.*

*Romans 5:4, 5, NLT.*

SOCIAL BUTTERFLY. These words kept resurfacing in my thoughts. This is how Sonny's special-needs teacher recently described him in his communication booklet. My heart is bursting with pride for Sonny, because what was written is true. It's Sonny's time to shine! The road Sonny travels (severe mental retardation with autism) can be so ugly, scary, and cruel.

Sonny has attended the same public school for 12 years. Since day one Jesus was - and still is - uplifted at Sonny's school for His glory, not mine. This mission has been accomplished via inspirational sharing letters. I celebrate life in harmony with those "special days" acknowledged by society as indicated on our calendars. I write and/or find inspirational material to share in the hope of encouraging others to develop a personal relationship to Jesus while there is yet time. Sonny then personally hand-delivers these letters at school. Blessings flow; our sharing territory has increased to include many others who have somehow touched our lives. In hindsight I can see that Jesus has given Sonny and me "the ministry of presence."

Choose to love the Lord your God and to obey Him and commit yourself to Him, for He is your life. I have no regrets, nor am I ashamed for the way I share, for I'm also a social butterfly.

**DEBORAH SANDERS**

Taken from: 2004 Colours of Grace – Women's devotional  
Published by Review & Herald

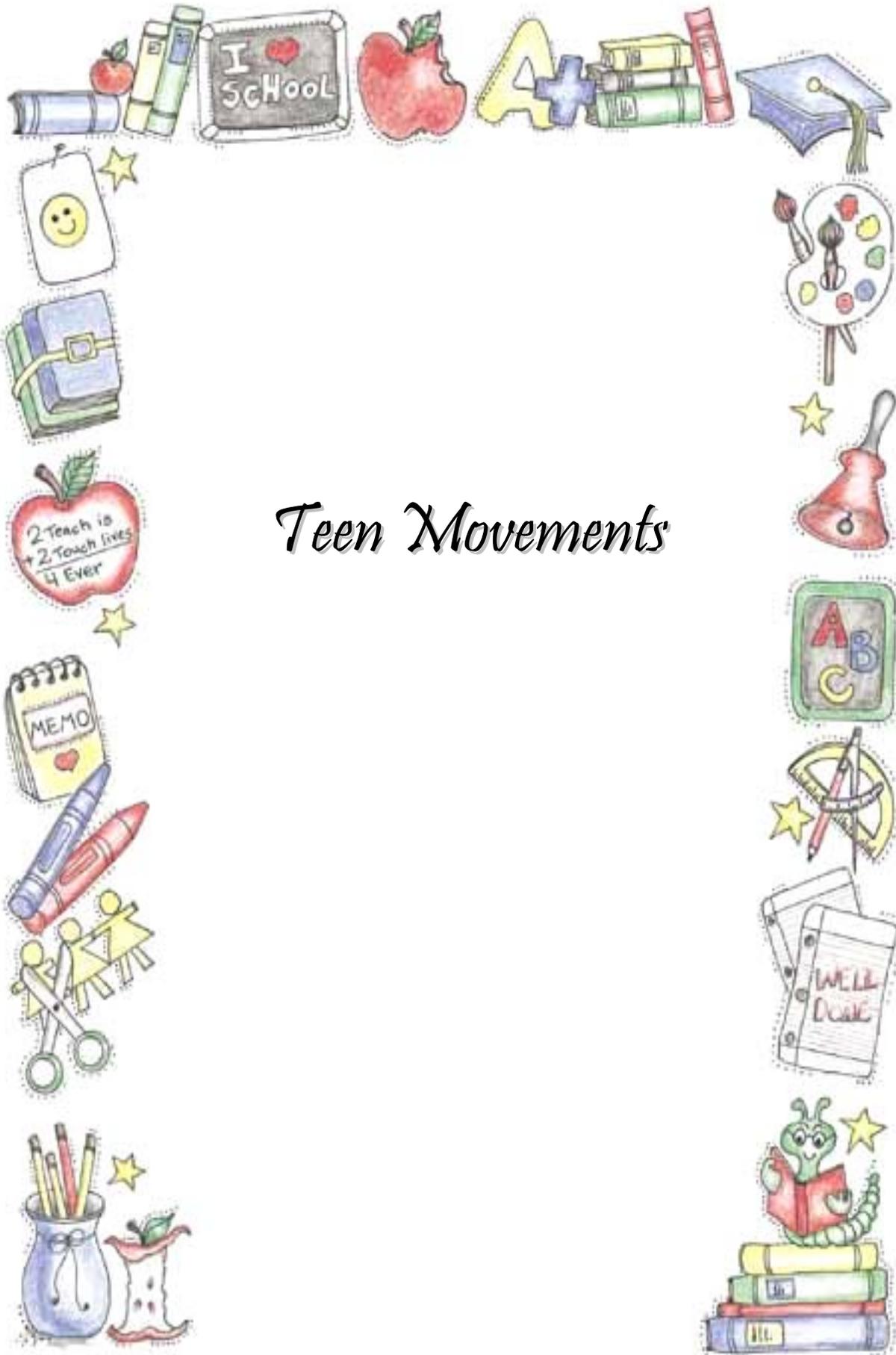
Children love Jesus and can share their faith too. The revival of 1859-1862 in Britain included children and teenagers as preachers and prayer warriors, e.g. In Edinburgh several hundred children attended a prayer meeting. Today we must encourage our younger Christians to pray, as they are a part of the church of today as well as the leaders of tomorrow.

*What the world needs are children to know how to:*

- Pray for each other, their school, their town, nation and other nations of the world (Psalm 2:8)
- Live in faith and see miracles happen (Luke 10:21)
- Stand with clean hands and clean hearts, and experience the fullness of the Glory of God (Psalm 24:4, 7-10; Psalm 51; Psalm 101)
- Praise God, silence the enemy and push back the avenger (Psalm 8:2)

*What the children need are adults who:*

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to fall upon their children and young people
- Include children in worship at home and in church
- Teach children the importance of prayer by word and example
- Remember to plan *prayer* and not the reading, as the vital part of the children's, juniors and youth Weeks of Prayer
- Plan a day where each church district can practise imaginative and creative prayer



# *Teen Movements*

# *The Birth of a Prayer Movement*

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving present your requests to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:6 & 7

Fern Nichols shares in her book, "Every Child Needs a Praying Mom":

Growing up, all I wanted was to be a mom, I remember praying as a young girl that marriage and motherhood would be part of God's plan for me. And I was delighted when He answered my prayer. But then imagine my amazement when God asked me to help "birth" a worldwide ministry with 20,000 groups meeting weekly, with approximately 150,000 women involved, and with a presence in ninety-one countries - a ministry that prays for children and their schools.

Moms In Touch International (M I T I) began with a small prayer in my kitchen, when I faced a crisis. The year was 1984, the place was British Columbia, Canada. My husband, Rle (pronounced Ar-lee), and I had four children, The first three were boys, and since Rle coached the Athletes in Action basketball team for Campus Crusade for Christ, we kidded each other that we could end up giving birth to our own five-man team. But God in His perfect plan gave us one more child, and this time it was a girl.

The day of my crisis was in September, at the beginning of the school year. I had just hugged and kissed my two eldest sons as I sent them off to the public Junior high school not too far from our home. As I walked back to the kitchen, fearful thoughts formed when I considered what they would be facing. I knew the school would be a battlefield for their hearts and minds. The temptations loomed in my imagination: immorality, drugs, alcohol, pornography, vulgar language and philosophies that would undermine their faith.

"Oh. Lord," I prayed aloud, "please protect them, enable them to see clearly the difference between right and wrong, and help them to make godly decisions."

But even after calling out to the Lord, the burden for my sons remained. The urgency to protect them from evil was intense. I cried and begged the Lord that none of my children would live a moment in Satan's kingdom, that Satan would not gleefully get one speck of their lives, and that he would have no satisfaction over any of them believing his lies. With passion comes a vision, a dream, an idea. I knew united prayer was the answer.

"Dear Father," I prayed, "there must be one other mom who would take time out of her busy schedule to pray with me"

One simple prayer and one desperate heart equalled one answer from God. He laid on my heart another mom, Linda. I immediately called her and shared my fears and concerns for our children and the school. "Linda," I said, "I feel as though I'm sending them into darkness every day. We need to protect their hearts through prayer, would you pray with me for one hour starting next week?"

Her response was a quick 'yes.' Then we thought of other moms who would also want to pray, and the following week we had five women in my home.

I established a format for our time called "The Four Steps of Prayer": praise, confession, thanksgiving and intercession. We started and ended on time. We prayed rather than talked about praying. And everything was held in confidence. That time became our 'hour of hope' as we lifted our concerns and our children's needs to the Lord through united prayer. And when the answers to prayer came we experienced the joy of rejoicing with each other.

## *Teens do things differently*

"Fix your thoughts on what is true and honourable and right. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all you learned from me and heard from me and saw me doing, and the God of peace will be with you."

Philippians 4:8 – 9 NLT

If you have encouraged your baby girl to grow in prayer, then as she gets older you do not have too much to worry about. Your role will still be one of an encourager but you will need to stand back and allow her to make choices as to how she will develop her prayer life.

- Provide choices by providing materials – books and videos – for her to get ideas of creative prayer
- Guide her to choose prayer partners
- Give a gift of an adult style prayer journal
- Invite the young people to have the week of prayer meetings in your home
- Entrust a spiritual friend or grandparent to be her mentor (let her choose who it is)
- Give a youth Bible that includes Bible study prayer guides
- Affirm regularly her commitment to Jesus
- Give her the vision of praying evangelistically which could include her mentoring a younger girl and, or, praying for her school friends.
- Give her the responsibility of leading out in family and church prayer times
- Pray that a prayer ministry for the teens can take in place in her church
- Provide opportunities for answered prayers to be shared
- As a teen she will be more easily embarrassed and "go off" praying in public, be sensitive to this stage of her life by not forcing her to do what you want
- With puberty she will go through days of depression and irritability. Explain this to her adding that sharing how she feels with God can help her to cope with these natural mood swings
- During times of stress, e.g. exams, give her an extra hug and a one sentence blessing "Dear God be with my daughter at this time in her life, she is so special to me and to you too. Amen"
- Pray with her that she will discover her areas of giftedness and dedicate them to God
- Share with her how quiet times of meditation can bring a "stillness" into her soul
- Explain that she will constantly need refilling with the Holy Spirit and that prayer is a channel of receiving His power to live a Christian life
- Point out role models of women of prayer, how they lived for God and joyfully impacted those they came into contact with, e.g. Ellen G. White, Serepta Henry, Amy Carmichael, Mary Slessor and Mother Theresa
- Be prepared to support a youth prayer ministry but do not dictate to her what she should do – let her allow God to guide her

- Set money to one side so you can contribute to her attending a prayer conference
- Advise her to pray for a praying boyfriend

Recommended Books:

- ❖ 100 Prayer Ideas  
By: Jan Dyer. Publisher: Kingsway
- ❖ 100 Creative Prayer Ideas for Kids  
By: Karen Holford. Publisher: Pacific Press
- ❖ Changing Lives  
By: S. Kelnhofer. Publisher: Review & Herald
- ❖ Prayerworks, The manual  
Publisher: Spring Harvest/Authentic Media
- ❖ The 24-7 Prayer Manual (with CD)  
Publisher: Kingsway
- ❖ The Prayer Principle  
By: Jim Graham. Publisher: Scripture Union
- ❖ Pray  
By: Tony Jones. Publisher: Navigation Press
- ❖ Read, Think, Pray, Live  
By: Tony Jones. Publisher: Navigation Press

## Praying Teens Can Start Things too

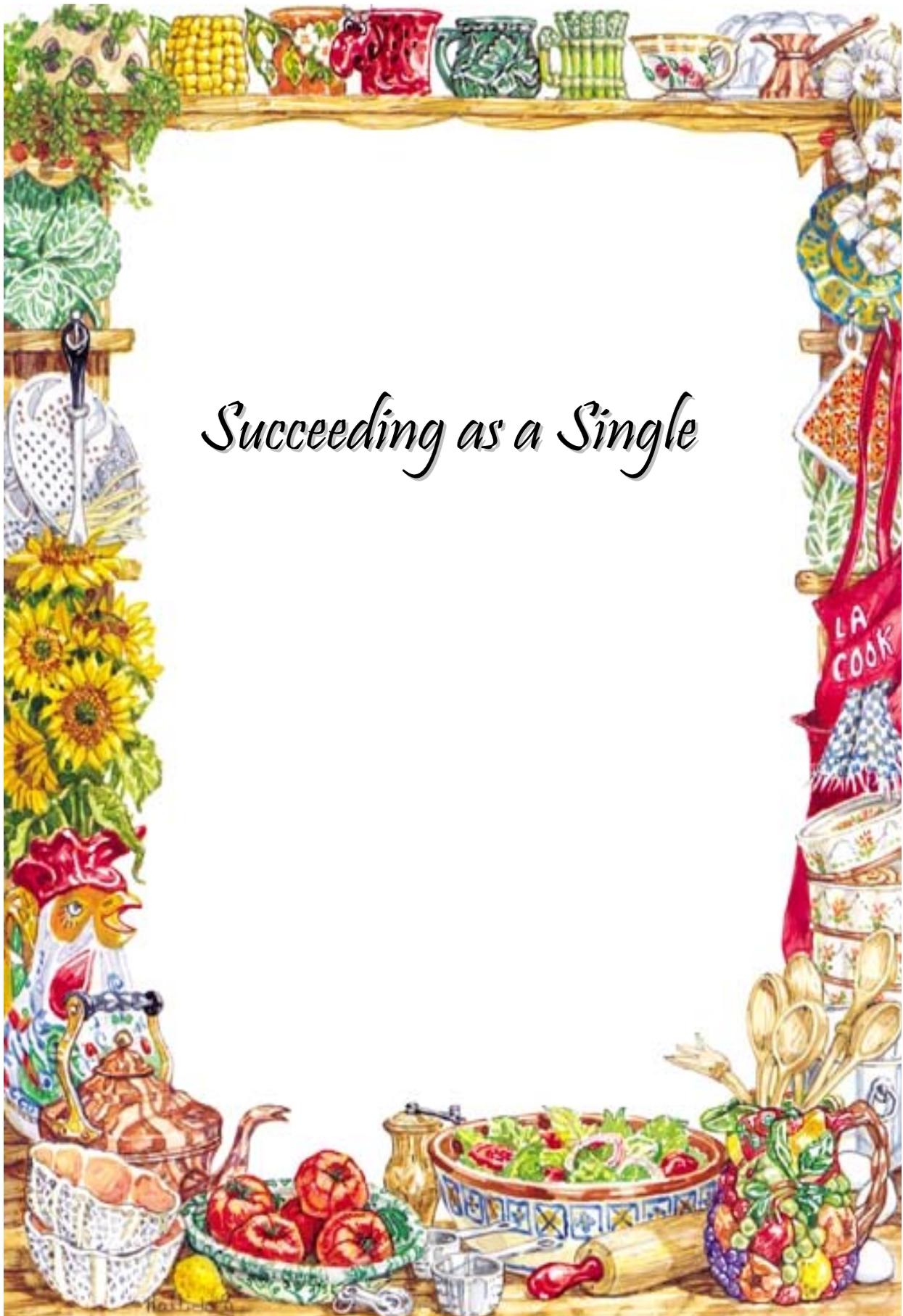
"Remember your Creator in the days of your youth." "Do all for the glory of God."

Ecclesiastes 12:1 & 1 Corinthians 10:31

- *The Advent Youth Society* began in 1879 in Michigan, USA, by two young men, Luther Warren and Harry Fenner as they knelt in the snow to pray about forming a Christian club. Young people may be bored by church if they never find out how to be prayer warriors. An ordinary teen who is challenged to pray becomes an extraordinary active Christian.
- *24-7 Movement.* In September 1999 a world wide prayer movement began in Chichester, England, by some students who were challenged to pray non-stop for a month in one-hour shifts. Instead of one month it lasted until Christmas and gave birth to the 24-7 prayer movement. Participating groups pledge to pray twenty-four hours a day, for a week or more, in a dedicated room. There is now a link on the internet [[www.24-7prayer.com](http://www.24-7prayer.com)]. This prayer movement was inspired by the 18<sup>th</sup> century Count Zinzendorf who mobilised a non stop prayer meeting which continued for 100 years, mobilising 3000 missionaries and converting John Wesley.
- *Small Groups.* Without prayer, small groups would not grow let alone begin. Youth are planting small groups in their universities, YWCA's and neighbourhoods.
- *Café Churches.* Today's young people are not brought up to attend church. A café church, which includes music, food and informal worship, attract this non-church generation.
- *Church Plants.* Many young people, not only pray for the birth of new churches, but are also active in leading out.
- *Volunteer Missionaries.* The church youth department sponsors and helps young people to go as short-term overseas missionaries or to be part of the "Go UK" team.
- *Underground.* This recent Australian youth evangelism outreach is using satellite links to broadcast thought provoking discussions for Christians to involve the unchurched. The young people prayed for a year before the outreach programme.
- *Prayer Conference.* Over a weekend, prayer ministry is focused teaching how to effectively pray and plan prayer ventures.

### EMAIL ADDRESSES:

- [www.dcfi.org](http://www.dcfi.org) – Dove Christian Fellowship International provides resources, conference information, prayer lines and leadership training.
- [www.tagnet.org](http://www.tagnet.org) – online SDA information and contact site. You can find just about anything you want here.
- [www.youth-online.org](http://www.youth-online.org) – Adventist youth resource page for concerts, chatting and everything else under the sun.
- [www.net98.org/youth/mpac.htm](http://www.net98.org/youth/mpac.htm) - the Centre for Youth Evangelism.
- [www.salvation.com](http://www.salvation.com)
- [www.castyournet.com/EGAD!](http://www.castyournet.com/EGAD!) - tons of great youth ideas!
- [www.lifesource.net](http://www.lifesource.net) – resources on just about anything you'll ever want
- [www.wwwe.org](http://www.wwwe.org) – World Wide Web Evangelism



*Succeeding as a Single*

## *Home Alone With God*

"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

Becky Tirabassi shares about her time alone with God in her book "Let God change your life."

Eleven years ago I was at a convention workshop where many speakers were talking about prayer. Had I known the convention would even be threaded with the word prayer, I probably wouldn't have gone. Prayer was never a big interest to me as a Christian, yet when someone said, "Prayerlessness is sin in a believer's heart", I had to take that statement to heart. I had to say, "Either I believe this as truth, or I don't believe it."

At that juncture, I made the decision to pray for an hour a day for the rest of my life. That may sound pious. That may sound spiritual. It was neither. I felt a great need to know God and love God like I had when I first met Him. I was exuberant when I met Christ. I was changed! I was excited! I was renewed! I dropped unsavoury habits left and right. Why as an older Christian did I consider spending time with God a discipline?

My decision to pray an hour a day took me knee deep into discipline. How do you get a sanguine, type A woman to sit down for one hour and pray?

There were immediate differences within my life that kept me going. My priorities changed. I couldn't help but meet with God every day and let Him filter through my "to do" list, which at the time included a few hours of watching soap operas and at least an hour of chatting on the phone. I could probably add twenty minutes if I added up all the time that I stood in front of the refrigerator wondering what was in there! My time became very important to me because, all of a sudden, I felt it was important to God.

I turned off the radio and TV, took the phone off the hook, set the alarm on the stove to ring in one hour, and had my first "appointment" with God. Afraid I'd run out of things to say before my hour was up, I talked to God about all I could think of then opened my Bible to read His words and hear His response. He spoke, and as I listened to His gentle, yet firm voice in Scripture, I recorded in writing what He said to me. I sensed that this was a long overdue appointment, and I was so grateful to be there. When the stove alarm buzzed, I was astonished at how quickly the time had passed and how my spirit was completely refreshed and satisfied.

His presence through the Word and times in prayer goaded me to change a negative attitude when I was stubborn or to release an unmet expectation or disappointment, this motivated me when I was procrastinating to complete a promise or confront a difficult situation, and guided me with ideas, creativity, and direction in short- and long-term projects.

My appointments with God were definitely changing my priorities,  
pushing away the clutter,  
and revealing the difference between the urgent and the important.

I changed from failing to plan and not seeing any results to being an organised planner of my time and accomplishing goals. Planning, goal setting, and time management suddenly became subjects of great interest to me. Why? Because time in conversation with God produced ideas that seemed reachable and exciting. I also found these times of being alone with God not a time of loneliness but a time of fulfilling my potential as a complete person in God.

# *How to Pray for an Hour*

An hour each day – for one year. That's more than forty five 8 hour days! Imagine arranging your schedule to allow for 6 weeks each year to pray. And what a difference it makes. More prayer, more power. Little prayer, little power.

*"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 favour of men. They are victories that are gained in the audience chamber with God, when earnest, agonizing faith lays hold upon the mighty arm of power."* Patriarchs & Prophets, p. 203

By E. G. White

Here's a wonderful way to help you stay on course. If you take only five minutes for each of these prayer methods, you will have spent one hour. You'll come away refreshed, steadied, encouraged, empowered, because He has promised, and He is faithful.

1. Praise – Recognize God's nature. – Psalm 63:2
2. Waiting – Silent soul surrender. He will quiet your heart. – Psalm 46:10
3. Confession – Temple cleansing time. He brings peace. – Psalm 139:23
4. Scripture praying – Word-enriched prayer. – Jeremiah 23:29
5. Watching – Developing holy alertness. – Colossians 4:2
6. Intercession – Remember those around you, and the world. – 1 Timothy 2:1,2
7. Petition – Share your specific personal needs with God. – Matthew 7:7
8. Thanksgiving – Confess specific blessings of all kinds. – 1 Thessalonians. 5:18
9. Singing – Worship in song. Use prayer songs. – Psalm 100:2
10. Meditation – Ponder words of Scripture and Spirit of Prophecy. – Joshua 1:8
11. Listening – Receive spiritual instruction from God. – Ecclesiastes 5:2
12. Praise – Begin and end prayer with the focus on God. – Psalm 52:9

The Hour That Changes The World – by Dick Eastman, used with permission.

# Praying Together

"And He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a lonely place and rest a while."

Mark 6:31, NASB

We are made for social interaction so it is natural to want to pray with others too. Here are some ideas of how to make this prayer time creative.

## PRAYER WALKING

**Outline:** A couple of individuals or small groups go 'walkabout' or in a car when it rains, and prays for their community. Topics include – preparation for outreach/church planting; information gathering; confronting problems on the spot.

**Guideline:** You need commitment from one or more people, plus a route. Pray for people you see on the way, or for those invited to a mission. Handy hints – keep eyes open; use different types of prayer; don't shout; don't linger at garden gates. Talk afterwards and jot down your prayer topics for future reference.

## PRAYER MISSION

**Outline:** Three people meet regularly for four weeks and pray for not-yet Christians – culminating in a special event.

**Guideline:** week 1 – pray for a chance to tell three friends about God; week 2 – report back, give thanks for answered prayer, discuss problems and solutions, pray for another chance to talk; week 3 – pray about inviting friends to an event; week 4 – hold your outreach event.

## PRAYER CRAWL

**Outline:** To pinpoint needs and pray on the spot.

**Guideline:** You need one leader to eight young people. The smaller the group, the better. Choose five places of significance to your church or community. Pray at as many of those places as possible in a predetermined time. Finish with chips or pizza.

## PRAYER TRIPLETS

**Outline:** Groups of three to pray regularly together. Why three? Because that's small enough to be a real team and big enough to encourage trust and maturity in prayer.

**Guideline:** Main prayer issues – spiritual renewal, decisions about work, salvation for friends, society and community. Important points – meet weekly if possible; give each issue a minimum of five minutes prayer and give another five minutes to focusing on God; choose a time and venue to suit prayer.

## PRAYER JOURNAL

**Outline:** Follows the principle of remembering the good things God has done for you as a group and as individuals.

**Guideline:** Keep a journal of issues that you have prayed for. Remember to record when you started praying and when you received answers or updates from God. You could use a large hardback notebook, a home-made 'scroll' or computer.

## **FORTY DAYS**

**Outline:** Forty days is a significant period – it was the duration of the flood and Jesus' testing. It always gave way to deliverance and a new start.

**Guideline:** Pray for 40 days for specific people or topics – perhaps for some family members or a church mission. It demands commitment and openness to the Holy Spirit – without whose help you won't last out!

## **SUFFERING CHURCH**

**Outline:** An opportunity to focus your group's attention on a section of the world-wide church that's under severe restriction and persecution.

**Guideline:** Millions of Christians around the world are suffering for Christ. Hebrews 13:3 tells us to "remember those who are suffering." Make sure your group is as informed as possible. Focus on a single country, or on a few people.

## **TV PRAYER**

Watch the TV news with the volume low. As issues arise, members of the group pray for those concerns. Video the news and remind yourselves later of your prayers.

## **PRAYER TIMETABLES**

Encourage members of your youth group to pray at particular hours of the day. That way you can make sure your prayer issues are covered at least once an hour during the day.

## **FAX AND PRAY**

Fax a prayer to someone who could do with some support.

## **PRAYER RETREAT**

Take your group away for a prayer retreat. Let them organise how and what you pray about.

## **PRAYER POSTCARDS**

Prayers are written on postcards for someone in a difficult situation – either at home or abroad – and are sent to them as a form of encouragement.

## **24-7 PRAYER ROOM**

In 1999, a group of young people in Chichester opened up a prayer room inspired by the story of the Moravian Christians whose prayer meeting lasted 100 years. This movement is interdenominational and happening in 56 nations. Web page for details: [www.24-7prayer.com](http://www.24-7prayer.com)

## **PRAYER FRIENDSHIPS**

**Outline:** Confidential prayers about finding your life's partner.

**Guideline:** With your closest friends ask God to supply your need for a marriage partner or someone with whom you can share a special friendship.

Adapted from Practical Ideas for Creative Prayer

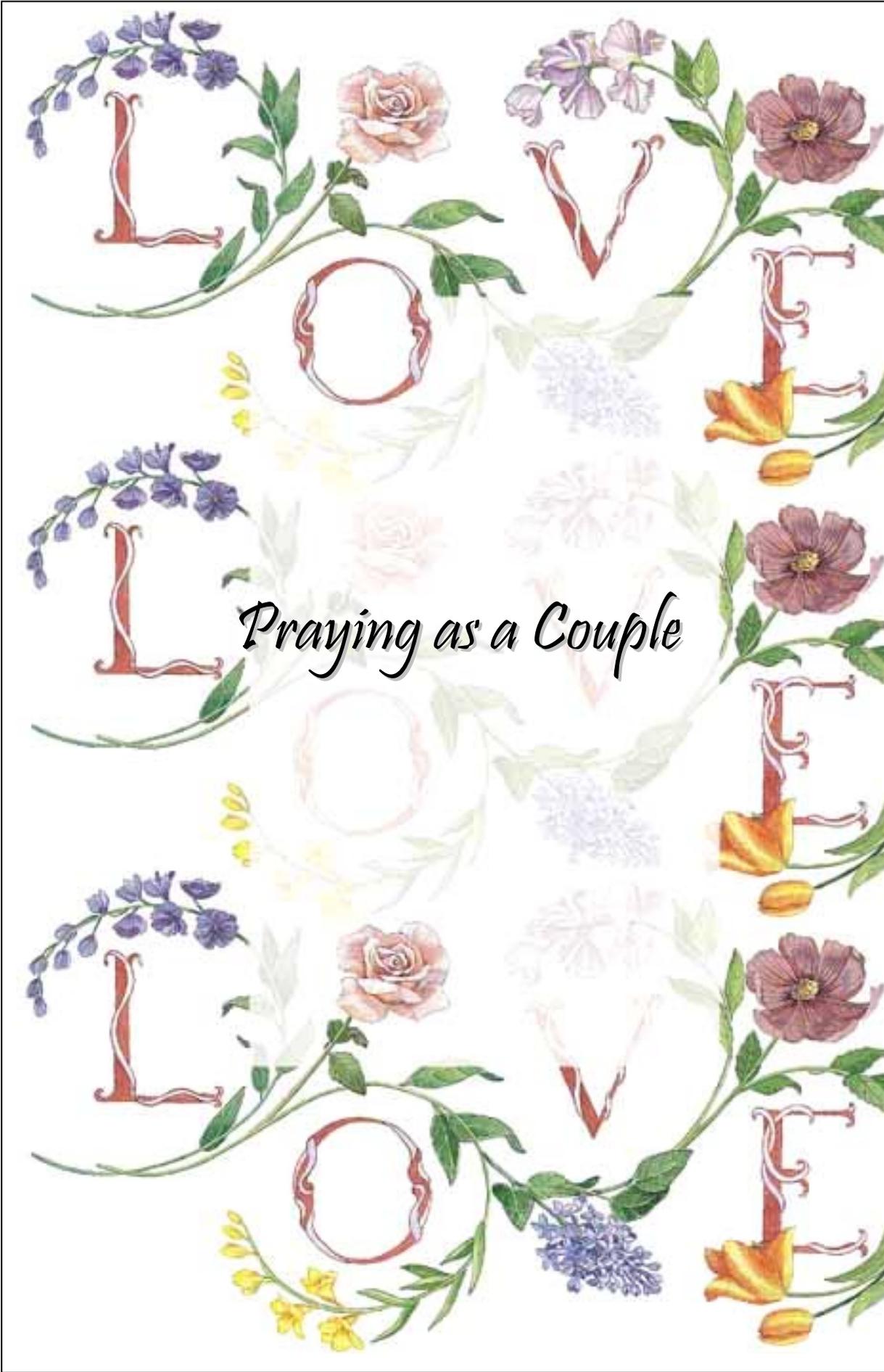
N.Y.P.D. 1996 Highfield Oval

Harpenden

Herts. AL5 4BX

Recommended Reading:

- ❖ Enjoying Praying  
By: Michael & Terri Quinn. Publishers: Family Caring Trust
  
- ❖ Learning to Pray  
Publisher: CPAS
  
- ❖ Community Prayer Cells  
By Jane Holloway. Publisher: CPAS
  
- ❖ Multi-Sensory Prayers Book 1 & 2  
By: Sue Wallace. Publisher: Scripture Union
  
- ❖ The Power of a Praying Woman  
By: Stormie Omartian. Publisher: Harvest House
  
- ❖ Daughters of God  
By: E. G. White. Publisher: Review & Herald
  
- ❖ Prayer  
By: E. G. White. Publisher: Pacific Press
  
- ❖ What Happens when Women Pray  
By: Evelyn Christenson. Publisher: Scripture Press



*Praying as a Couple*

# *Intimacy through Praying Together*

“Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our maker.”

Psalm 95:6

Praying together can be very challenging. Prayer has often been a very private and personal experience. Working out a way to share praying together as a couple can feel strange to begin with. But it is worth working at, as prayer can truly bind us together in God's love and it will invite us into a special place of intimacy with each other as well as with Him.

## **The Importance of the Holy Spirit**

God's Holy Spirit helps us to know what to pray for and how to pray together. Be open to listening to how the Spirit wants to work with you, both to grow your own intimacy with each other and with God.

## **The Importance of Praise**

Praise is so central to our relationship with God. It changes our perspective on God, and on the perspective we have about our lives and experiences. Praising God together is one of the easiest places to start to strengthen our spiritual connection with each other.

## **If your spouse doesn't feel ready to pray with you yet**

- ♥ Show them gentle kindness, it is the Holy Spirit's job to prompt, not ours to push.
- ♥ Prayer is a way of showing concern for others. Ask your spouse what they would most like you to pray for them and then only pray out loud what they have requested.
- ♥ Do all you can humbly so that your behaviour cannot be interpreted as spiritual superiority. Avoid behaviour which can then leave your spouse feeling discouraged, as this can distance you from each other. Remember that the aim is for spiritual intimacy.

## **Confession**

- ♥ Prayers of confession may be best made privately until you feel ready to share together.
- ♥ If your offence has been against your spouse, then praying for forgiveness from God in their presence may be quite healing.
- ♥ Be careful that your prayers are not used to hurt each other, and be aware of the importance of praying humbly, so as not to spiritually 'intimidate' the other person.
- ♥ There may also be a place for confessing with each other about the wrongs we have done to others, and being accountable to each other for working with God to find new ways to relate to others.

## **Questions to think about and perhaps talk about together:**

- ♥ What are my concerns about praying together?
- ♥ What might be my spouse's concerns about praying together?
- ♥ What might help make it easier for me to pray with my spouse?
- ♥ What might make it easier for my spouse to pray with me?
- ♥ How might God use prayer to help us grow closer to Him and to each other?

## **Silent hands prayer**

This is one of the simplest of all prayers. Talk for a few minutes about each of your prayer concerns, praises and thanks. Then hold hands and silently pray for the other person. Squeeze hands after a few moments and say 'amen' together. It can feel so good to know that someone else is praying for us.

## **Sentence prayers**

Prayer only needs to be simple. We can feel guilty if our minds drift during other people's long prayers! Just try praying one sentence at a time, and then let the other person pray once sentence. You could be guided by the ACTS (Adoration, Confession, Thankfulness and Supplication) model of prayer and pray one or two sentences each, for each section of your prayer together. As you get used to the idea, you can pray one sentence at a time, but increase the amount of sentences you pray under each section.

### **Prayer book**

Keep a journal of thankfulness to God. At the end of each day think of everything you want to thank God for and write it in a small diary.

In the morning, write down together the concerns you each have for the day that you would like the other person to consider in their prayers for you.

### **Prayer notice-board**

Use a pin board or magnet board (even a fridge door will do!) and create a prayer notice-board, with a collage of prayer requests, praising thoughts, thanks, cards, photos, texts, answers to prayer, and any other clippings. If you like being creative – make a beautiful scrapbook of prayer together.

### **Conversational prayer**

These are like sentence prayers in that you pray a few sentences at a time and then stop and let the other person pray. Try to follow each other's ideas and link your prayers together as if you were having a conversation with each other and with God.

### **Blessings on each other**

Try praying a simple blessing on each other when you part and meet and get up and go to bed. Create your own words and traditions for doing this – such as kissing each other on the forehead or hand before you say the words. Or creating a special blessing gesture or signal so that you can secretly bless each other, or show that you are praying for each other. Try Numbers 6:25, 2 Corinthians 13:14, or 1 Thessalonians 5:23 for starters.

### **Pray for specific things for each other, and other people**

Try and be as specific as possible when you pray for each other, and rejoice together when prayers are answered, even if the answers were not what you were expecting or hoping for. It can be helpful to take a broad and eternal perspective on answers to prayer at times, and to keep in mind that God works all kinds of things that look messy to us into His beautiful plans.

### **Prayer reminders**

Carry a small thing with you that reminds you to pray for each other when you are apart, such as a button, piece of ribbon, or small significant and symbolic item.

### **Prayer times**

Pray for each other at a certain time of the day every day, by setting an alarm on your watch, mobile phone, or electronic diary. Perhaps you could text or email each other your prayers, or even try praying together as an online MSN conversation.

### **Prayer 'consequences'**

Write out your prayers on pieces of paper and pass them back and forth, adding a sentence at a time and folding over the top of the page. Follow the same sequence of themes and prayer requests and then read each prayer out as you pray together. Each prayer has then been created by both of you.

### **Daily prayer menus**

Instead of praying for your entire prayer request list every day, it might be helpful to group your prayer request lists in some way, and pray for one category at a time. So you may pray for your family members one day, colleagues and work issues the next day, overseas issues and workers the next day, then local church and community issues, etc

The Family Book  
Stanborough Press  
Karen Holford

### **Recommended Reading:**

- ❖ The Power of Praying Together – book and separate study guide by Stormie Omartian.  
Publishers: Harvest House

# *Yes! God Does Want to Save Your Man*

"For the unbelieving spouse has been sanctified through his wife. . ."

1 Corinthians 7:14

One of the hardest things to cope with when praying for an unsaved husband is the nagging question 'Does God want to save him? Is it God's will?' That question can go round and round in our minds, undermining our confidence in prayer.

When Jesus died on the cross, he died for the whole of mankind. He died for your husband too, to bring him into restored relationship with the Father and to know forgiveness of his sins. The problem is, and always has been, not with God's will but with man's! The offer of salvation is held out, but will he take it? That is the real question!

I have pondered a lot over the years about why more women than men respond to the offer of God's salvation through Jesus Christ. I believe it's because most women are more sensitive and intuitive and they are natural responders, whereas men are more mind orientated; they need concrete facts and they prefer to initiate.

But let me encourage you – the Lord sees a husband and wife as one. When the Holy Spirit sends forth the light and revelation of the gospel to a wife, he is not just seeking to save her, but he is seeking to save both partners. Men tend to avoid the light and revelation of the gospel. They often won't put themselves under the spotlight by attending church or Christian meetings. They don't give much opportunity for Jesus to knock on the door of their lives. But by saving the wife, I believe Jesus goes around to the back door, so to speak, in order to shine that light more fully. He gives the husband the opportunity to see the truth in his wife and to respond to Jesus' knocking.

The desire of the Lord is that the light will grow brighter and brighter, so that a man cannot deny the truth any more and will respond to the offer of salvation.

We are usually unaware of the brightness of the light coming from our spirits, but our husbands aren't. Some men adopt the stance of tightening their blindfold and declaring, 'What light? I can't see any light!' While others, like my husband, yell at the tops of their voices, 'Turn that light off!'

But be in no doubt – the light from your spirit is exposing the darkness, and the closer you get to the Lord, the brighter it will shine!

"The lamp of the Lord searches the spirit of a man; it searches out his inmost being."

**Proverbs 20:27**

Taken from: How to Pray when he does not believe – by Mo Tizzard  
Publisher: Kingsway

Recommended Reading:

- ❖ If two shall agree  
By: Carey & Pamela Moore. Publishers: Hodder Stoughton
- ❖ How to pray when he does not believe  
By: Mo Tizzard. Publishers: Kingsway
- ❖ How to be the happy wife of an unsaved husband  
By: Linda Davis.
- ❖ Praying God's will for my husband  
By: Lee Roberts. Publishers: Thomas Nelson publications.

## *Praying through scripture for those who do not believe*

- **Give the one you are praying for to God so that He can work in their life.** “I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better.” Ephesians 1:17. “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4: 6 & 7.
- **Remember God is like the loving Father, in the parable of the Prodigal, He will patiently wait and we must do so too.** “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” Galatians 6:9.
- **Connect with God’s ache for your spouse.** “I have not come to call the righteous but the sinners to repentance.” Luke 5:32. “For He bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.” Isaiah 53:12.
- **Is your proud spirit stopping them from seeing the Saviour who humbled Himself even to the death on the cross?** “But He gives us more grace. That is why scripture says God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. . .Humble yourselves before the Lord and He will lift you up.” James 4:6, 7 & 10.
- **Give respect to the unbelieving spouse through the power of the Spirit.** “Wives submit [respect] to your husbands as to the Lord . . . However, each one of you must love his wife as he loves himself and the wife must respect her husband.” Ephesians 5:25 & 33.
- **Implore God for His spiritual gifts to be evident in your life.** “Wives in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behaviour of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence in your lives.” 1 Peter 3:1 & 2.
- **Pray you will know when to talk of God’s love for them**  
“. . .the spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. . .ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.” John 16:11, 24.
- **When failing to act like Christ remember the God who will forgive them, will forgive you too.** “Who is a God like you who pardons sin and forgives the transgression . . . you will again have compassion on us. . .” Micah 7:18 & 19.
- **Look to the Lord when you receive the brunt of wicked words and deeds.** “Commit your way to the Lord, trust in Him and He will do this. He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun. Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways. . . For the Lord loves the just and will not forsake His faithful ones.” Psalm 37: 5 – 7, 28. “Bless those who curse you, pray for those who ill treat you.” Luke 6:28.
- **Be ready to answer the negative and positive questions by your words and actions:**  
“Therefore, prepare your minds for action, be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.” 1 Peter 1:13. “Be made new in the attitude of your minds, and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building up others according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.” Ephesians 4:23, 24 & 29.

- **Ask God to fill your mind with positive thoughts.** "You are looking only on the surface of things. If anyone is confident that they belong to Christ, they should consider again that we belong to Christ. . ." 2 Corinthians 10:7.
- **Recognise it is God's spirit who convicts of truth.** "By faith we eagerly await through the spirit the righteousness for which we hope." Galatians 5:5.
- **When tempted not to go to church:** "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well" Matthew 6:33.
- **Ask God to give you a friend/friends who will pray for you and your unbelieving loved one.** "Let us hold unwavering to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – all the more as you see the Day approaching." Hebrews 10:23 – 25.
- **In witnessing do not feel dejected when they seem to reject God's word.** "We are hard pressed on every side but not crushed, perplexed but not in despair." 2 Corinthians 4:8. "I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." Matthew 16:18.
- **Never give up praying for their salvation.** "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." Hebrews 11:1. To the thief on the cross, who accepted Jesus as His saviour just before he died, these words were said: "I tell you the truth today, you will be with me in paradise." Luke 23:43.
- **Do not force your faith on a loved one; wait for the Lord to guide you.** "This is what the Lord says – your Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go. If only you had paid attention to my commands your peace would have been like a river and your righteousness like the waves of the sea." Isaiah 48: 17 & 18,
- **Read 1 Corinthians 13 praying that the greatest witness might be God's love in your life.** "A new command I give you, love one another as I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." John 13:34, 35
- **Rejoice when the "sinner" comes to Jesus.** "Rejoice with me. . . I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than the ninety nine righteous persons who do not need to repent." "In the time of favour I heard you and in the day of salvation I helped you." "Rejoice in the Lord and again I say rejoice." Luke 15:6, 7. 2 Corinthians 6:2. Philippians 4:4.

Our spiritual ambition for the extension of God's Kingdom will be manifest by the way in which we pray for the lost. We can be satisfied with praying just for their conversions, or we can pray that they will be converted and become deeply committed disciples of the Lord Jesus. We can pray that they will have a burning desire to know God and make him known, and impact their generation in the power of the Holy Spirit. We can pray that from their steps of obedience to revealed truth, they will be among the over-comers as described in the book of Revelation, and be a part of the Bride of Christ.

*Prime Time*



# Praying God's Promises



"Power will come from God in answer to the prayer of faith."  
(*Gospel Workers* p. 255)

"Prayer moves the arm of omnipotence." (*Christ Object Lessons* p. 172)

Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest.... The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son (*Steps to Christ*, p. 62,63).

"One sentence of Scripture is of more value than ten thousand of man's ideas or arguments." (*Testimonies Vol. 7* p. 71)

"If we receive the promise, we have the gift."  
(*Education* p. 253)

"The gift is in the promise."  
(*Education* p. 258)

"Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait; I say on the Lord."  
(*Psalms* 27:14)

"He is well pleased when (His people) make the very highest demands upon Him, that they may glorify His name. They may expect large things if they have faith in His promises." (*Desire of Ages* p. 668)

"Therefore, I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them." (Mark 11:24)

## *Praying through His word*

"For I know the one in whom I trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until the day of his return. Hold on to the pattern of right teaching you learned from me. And remember to live in the faith and love that you have in Christ Jesus. With the help of the Holy Spirit who lives within us, carefully guard what has been entrusted to you."

2 Timothy 1:12-14 NLT

We are all unique in the way we interact with God through reading His Word. Here are three women's ways of making their time with God's Word a time for prayer too.

1. "Several years ago I was diagnosed as suffering from an arthritic illness for which there is no cure. To learn that the physical pain – which I found intolerable – was to be my life-long companion and that my physical abilities would diminish, as I grew older, terrified me. I felt cocooned with fear when I focused on the life I was now forced to live, rather than the carefree, spontaneous life I loved living.

"I knew that the only way I could face my 'straight-jacket' type of life was to know God better. I needed to understand a God who promised to make 'all things work together for good' when they seemed so wrong. I needed to know more fully this God who could give courage and strength to face my situation when all I truly wanted to do was run away. So I very simply asked God to make the Bible really speak to me, to my deepest needs. I asked Him to show me the best way that I could listen to Him (see the Share and Prayer page).

"I found the Bible primarily invites us to get to know God, His character, His values and His aims. Through the Bible we are invited by the power of the Holy Spirit to let His character, ambitions and values grow within us. Reading the Bible isn't meant to solve our problems, to make us feel good or to stroke our egos. But in those pages, we find the character of God in all its fairness, justice, mercy, love, kindness and strength. Praying through the Bible very simply invites us in the corner of our hearts to discover more and more about God's character and to let Him become a vital, integral part of our lives. For many of us, Bible reading never takes off because we are stuck in our primary need of getting God to do what we want. We lose interest in the Bible because God does not fix our needs.

"Fortunately, no one knows you as well as God does. He knows what makes you tick, what excites you and captures your interest; so ask Him to guide you to the method that suits you best. Ask God to play an active role in your communication with Him. Ask Him to open your thoughts, mind, ears, to hear Him speak to you. God will show you. He promises, 'You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.'

"Just as God led Philip to the desert to make the Word meaningful to the Ethiopian, God will do the same for you. In fact, He has assigned you a special companion to help you absorb the parts of the Bible that are difficult to comprehend. He has given you the Holy Spirit. By nature the Holy Spirit is not pushy but extremely polite. He waits for you to invite Him to help you understand the Bible. With Him as your teaching companion you will be captivated, charmed, changed and challenged when you pray through the Bible." Extract from *When God Comes to Visit*, p 60, 61 by Mary Barrett, published by Autumn House.

Recommended Books:

- ❖ Never Thirst Again  
Publishers: Prayer Country
- ❖ Prayer Treasures  
By: D. E. Watts. Publisher: Pacific Press
- ❖ Open to God  
By: Joyce Huggett. Publisher: Eagle

**Share & Prayer**

**Date**

.....

Bible text (write it in full)

Meditate on the text – think or write about any thoughts that come to your mind.

Tell God how this text has enhanced your relationship with Him.

Ask Him how this text can enhance your relationship with others.

Allow the Holy Spirit to show you how to put into practice what you have learned.

Pray about how it will impact you:-

- current spiritual goals
  
- ministry goals
  
- current prayer concerns

End by thanking Him for the way the Holy Spirit has talked to you today through meditating on His Word.

2. "Since a sense of the presence of God has a direct relationship to our faith, and faith comes by hearing God's Word, the more involved we become in Scripture, the greater will be our sense of His presence and our ability to hear His voice.

"Each of us has a part to play in making God's Word real to us. We must choose to make Scripture an important part of our lives and then act upon that choice.

"Ways I deliberately involve myself with Scripture:

1. Memorising scripture.
2. Topical study of the Bible, comparing text with text.
3. *Active* Bible reading, remembering that God's Word is just as creative today as it was when He created the world:
  - (a) I ask God to show me how this verse or passage applies to me.
  - (b) I pray the prayers I find in the Bible – or put appropriate scriptures into a personal prayer.
  - (c) I look for opportunities to praise God – for His miracles and for His love.
  - (d) I accept the admonitions and warnings the Bible presents. Often God uses them to show me my own weaknesses and sins. I ask God for forgiveness and healing.
  - (e) Whenever I find an opportunity to rededicate my life to God during my Bible reading, *I do so!*
4. I read the Bible in different versions.
5. I read the Bible with a specific question in mind, such as, "What is the picture of God I find in this passage?"
6. I memorise the lists that I find in the Bible or writings of others like Ellen White and meditate on them.

"These methods of familiarizing my mind with Scripture give God opportunities to speak with me continually." – *Sensing His Presence, Hearing His Voice* by Carol Shewmake, published by Review and Herald.

3. Dorothy Eaton Watts:-

1. Choose one text that summarises your current needs and desires. More than anything else at this stage of your life, what is it that you need from the Lord?
2. Write your chosen text on a card. Put it in a place where you will be able to see it often.
3. Memorize the text.
4. You may want to visit Christian bookstores to find plaques, bookmarks, wallet cards, and other items on which the text is printed.
5. If you are into crafts or needlework, you may want to design a wall hanging centred around the words of your chosen text.
6. On a piece of paper write down the main words of your text. For Isaiah 40:31, I wrote the words: *wait, Lord, renew, strength, eagle, wings, run, weary, walk, faint.*
7. Using a concordance, write down those texts that seem appropriate under each word.
8. Each day choose one text for your meditation. Read it from several different versions. Which one best speaks to you? Copy it.
9. If you have a commentary available, read what it says about your text. What new insights do you gain?
10. Write out what you feel God is trying to tell you through that particular text; then write out a prayer of response.
11. You may want to exchange texts with family members or close friends, using your chosen texts to pray for each other for a period of time.

Extract from *Prayer Country* by Dorothy Eaton Watts, published by Pacific Press.

# *Spiritual Reflective Writing*

"As the deer pants for the streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" Psalm 42:1, 2.

Journaling is usually defined as reflective writing. For different people it is their own individual way of spiritually connecting with God through writing.

- For Anne it is "when I practice remembering the events and meaning of the day. It is a simple way of helping me pay attention and discern what is happening".
- For Jemma "my journal is a record of landmarks in my spiritual life. It is full of my psalms to God. Some are full of discouragement, where I plead with God to help me cope, others are purely for praise and thanks".
- For June "a journal means a way of confirming a decision or keeping a record of how God has guided me. It is a means of listening to God, a tool for growth".

In other words journaling can mean whatever you want it to mean. Bryan Hughes in his book *Discipling, Coaching & Mentoring* lists a number of benefits from spiritual reflective writing. Some people find writing helps them

- Concentrate better whilst praying
- Enhance personal devotions by keeping a record of one's spiritual life
- List reasons for and against decisions, presenting them to God in prayer, they more clearly recognise God's guidance
- Focus on the meaning of living for God one day at a time. By praying about that day's activity there is no time to worry about tomorrow
- Work through issues such as relationships, breakdowns, loss or pain such as bereavement
- Increase learning about themselves. In presenting their strengths and weakness to the Lord he is able to help them grow more like Him
- Have a positive disciplined way of finding a way to manage their time
- Express the deeper thoughts of the heart

Whether you write daily or weekly Becky Tirobassi's prayer notebook outlines may be a basis to develop your own individual style of journaling. She finds a variety of ways to use the following acrostic but always keeps to a set time in her cosy corner for

- **P**raising God for who He is
- **A**dmitting my sins to Him on a daily basis
- **R**equesting of Him and believing that He hears and answers
- **T**hanking God daily for everything

Then she spends time

- **L**istening to Him and not talking, but recording

- **M**essages from Him through my pastor's sermons, etc.
- **N**ew Testament readings for understanding God through Jesus' life
- **O**ld Testament messages
- **L**ooking at the book of Proverbs for its reflections on life

Another format to follow is that of Chuck Swindoll who has these questions in mind while he journals,

- What am I trusting God for today?
- What are the joys and stresses in my key relationships now?
- In what ways am I experiencing inner peace? How am I lacking?
- What are my three most significant prayer requests?
- Am I entertaining any fears at the moment? What are they?
- Is there any measure of discontent? Describe it.
- What has made me laugh recently?

Whatever way you enjoy your spiritual reflective writing one thing you can be assured of, it will bring you into a deeper personal relationship with your Lord.

Recommended Books:

- ❖ **H**ow to Hear and Recognise the Voice of God  
By: Carol Johnson Shewmake. Publisher: Review & Herald
- ❖ **P**raying with Women in the Bible  
By: Nancy Kennedy. Publisher: Zondervan
- ❖ **P**rayer through the Eyes of Women in the Bible  
By: Ann Spangler & Jean E. Syswerda. Publisher: Zondervan - Inspirio
- ❖ **B**reakthrough Prayers for Women  
By: Clift & Kathleen Richards. Publisher: Victor House



*Going through Puberty Backwards*

## *Jesus Prayed on My Behalf*

"While they were still stoning him, Stephen prayed . . . Lord, do not hold their sin against them. . ."

Acts 7: 59 & 60

The menopause is like going through puberty backwards. The sensitivity to life that comes with the hormones "kicking-in" is also equally sensitive when the hormones are once again changing due to the menopause.

One effect of this is to look back and be hurt again by events that were, seemingly, buried for years. For some women it means once again confronting issues and asking Jesus to pray a prayer of forgiveness on their behalf.

As He was being killed Jesus prayed "father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing" Luke 23:34. Already He had suffered emotional and spiritual abuse and now as the physical abuse took its toll He lived up to what He had preached – forgive one another and pray for your enemies (Matthew 5:44).

I do not find it very easy to live up to Jesus' example. I expect it is not easy for you either, but the one thing that made the difference for me was prayer. I had been spitefully used; it hurt all the more because it was by a loved one. Lying in bed, not sleeping due to the pain, I was sharing the experience with my Lord. He confronted me with His words in the Lord's Prayer "forgive, as we also have been forgiven" Matthew 6:12. "But I cannot," I responded. Then the words of Jesus on the cross, "Father, forgive them," came to my mind. It was as if God was saying to me "Do you want the words of Jesus to be said on your behalf?" "Yes," I responded, "I cannot say these words but I do want Jesus to say them for me." A wonderful peace then filled me and I fell asleep.

Prayer does make a difference to how we deal with life's problems. It is not surprising to read in Matthew 26:36-45 on the night Jesus was arrested, tried and killed that He spent His last hours in the garden of Gethsemane praying. As He was our creator He knew only too well how an unforgiving spirit impacts upon a life, causing pain and anger.

In 1989 the University of Tennessee studied the impact of anger in women. Its findings showed suppressed anger resulted in women having pessimistic thoughts about themselves. They lacked social support, were overweight, slept poorly and led inactive lives. It is not surprising then that women who are usually at the receiving end of abuse suffer with depression and other illnesses caused by this suppressed anger.

What Jesus offers is a release from the negative effects. Never once does He ask for the sinful act to be forgiven. In Matthew 5:23, 24 He asks that we deal with the person causing the problem. In the book *The Desire of Ages* by E G White, p.462 we read Jesus loved the sinner, but hated the sin. This attitude of God is seen also in the sanctuary service where the first goat which represents Jesus dies to forgive sinners, whilst the second goat (scapegoat) represents Satan who being the instigator of sinful acts, receives the blame he so rightfully deserves – death in the wilderness. Leviticus 16:15, 21.

The forgiveness God asks of us is embodied in the meaning of the Greek verb to "forgive". It means "to leave", "to dismiss", and "to send away". What Jesus wants is for us to find healing . . ., instead of anger, by "letting go" of the unjust events in the past that have so hurt our ability to live a joyful Christian life.

# *Praying the Steps of Forgiveness*

Lord help me understand forgiveness is a process that:

- May take a long time during which I express the hurt and pain I have suffered
- Will never erase the past but will enable me to state what wrong has been done and that others are to take responsibility for what they have done
- May not mean reconciliation will take place and that I can ever trust again the offender
- Helps me to set boundaries against future abusive actions
- Enables me to receive healing so I can move on to experience the forgiveness offered to me by Jesus
- Puts the past events where they belong – in the past – they can never be changed but through those experiences I can become a more caring individual.

Recommended reading: - Forty Plus by Mary Batchelor. Publisher: Lion

## **6 Steps to Answered Prayer**

God always answers our prayers. It is either yes, no or wait. There are some steps we need to take to make sure we are not preventing God from answering how He sees it would be best for us.

➤ Realise my Need

"The one who comes to me I will by no means cast out." John 6:37. "Ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you." Matthew 7:7

➤ Ask for Faith

"Everything is possible for the person who has faith. The father at once cried out: 'I do have faith but not enough, help me to have more.'" Mark 9:23, 24

➤ Confess my Sins

"If I ignored my sins, the Lord would not have listened to me." Psalm 66: 18. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9.

➤ Unforgiving Attitude

"Forgive us our sins as we forgive others." Matthew 6:12. "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." Matthew 5:23.

➤ Persevere in Prayer

"Be anxious in nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, make your wants be made known to God." Philippians 4:6.

➤ Pray in Jesus' name for God's will to be done

"The Father will give you what ever you ask in my name . . . that your joy will be full." John 15:16, 16:24. "Father . . . your will be done." Matthew 26:42.

# Prayer & Fasting

"... I humbled myself with fasting..." Psalm 35:13

The word for fasting literally means 'cover the mouth'. In a spiritual sense when we fast we cover the entrances to our innermost being so that we can

- Open up totally to God;
- Provide more time to pray;
- Humbly repent, yielding ourselves to God;
- Have greater clarity of mind;
- Focus our thoughts on the topic or reason for praying;
- Gain an enriched view of what it means to have faith, hope and greater trust in God;
- Renew our spiritual vision of God's plan for our life.

There may be a number of reasons why fasting with prayer is considered; a loved one is terminally ill, like the Old Testament Hannah you are having difficulty in conceiving, there is a final exam or written paper coming up, your loved one is having major difficulties at work, your child has stopped coming to church, you are going for an interview or you are deeply earnest in your desire to now serve God in a far greater way etc.

## How to plan your fast

There are different kinds of fasts: -

Many people fast one day every week. During this time, they only drink water.

Others fast from one meal a day, or each week.

Some fast from heavy rich foods, and eat simple foods or lighter meals.

Another component of fasting is to eliminate secular influences such as reading, radio and television.

If you are interested or impressed by the thought of fasting, you may want to pray for guidance and direction – *should* you fast? If so, *what kind* of fast should you undertake? If you are a diabetic or have health problems you must seek medical guidance about how to fast.

A vital element in fasting is that extra time is devoted to prayer. During the usual mealtime you could try prayerwalking with a friend, or alone, but by devoting the time to Bible study and prayer, you'll be building spiritual muscles – *expect results*.



*Grandma Knows Best*

## *Passing on my Spiritual Heritage*

"And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children." Deuteronomy 6:5-7, NLT

My dear grandchild,

From the moment I knew you would be born I praised God. As you were growing in your mother's womb I daily asked God to give you health but most of all I prayed for you to know and love Jesus as your friend and Saviour.

On the day of your birth I jumped for joy and then phoned everyone I could think of to tell them about my wonderful grandchild. That evening as I prayed I thanked Him for you and dedicated myself to always being there for you.

Here is my gift to you, a journal. You will find within its pages 'keepsakes' of your life that only a proud grandma would collect. With them are prayers I said for you and wrote down, reminders of how God was there for you in times of hardship and joy. Here are also stories from my own faith journey, how I came to know and love my Lord. Here are testimonies of how He has led me, even through the rough times in life.

My beloved grandchild, you are so special to me. Like me, you are not perfect but you are so loved. Not just by me but by the one who loves you so much He willingly gave His life to give you the gift of eternal life, Jesus.

When my time on earth is over, just remember I will be looking forward to seeing you in heaven. Just stay close to Jesus and you will fulfil my greatest prayer for you.

God bless,

Lots of love,  
Your Gran.

### **Questions for Reflection:**

As you prepare to share with your grandchildren about God, here are questions they may ask you, so pray about these and have an answer ready.

- Do you believe God hears and answers your prayers? Why?
- When did you become a Christian? How old were you? What were the circumstances surrounding your conversion?
- How do you know that God loves you?
- Who is Jesus?
- Why do you read the Bible?
- What images of Christ do you see revealed in Scripture?
- How do you know Jesus is real?
- If God is good, why do bad things happen?
- Why do you attend church?
- What reminders of God do you see in His creation?
- Where are your favourite places to go when you want to be alone with your heavenly Father?
- When do you feel closest to Jesus?
- Why do you believe God created the earth and everything in it?
- What does it mean to worship the Lord? Why do people worship Him?

Extract from, Ready or not you are a grandparent by Debra Evans, Published by Chariot Victor  
Another good book: The Heritage by J. Ledbetter & K Bruner. Publisher: Chariot Victor.

## *Prayer a gift of love to your Grandchildren*

"And now, may it please you to bless me and my family so that our dynasty may continue forever before you. For when you grant a blessing to your servant, O Sovereign Lord, it is an eternal blessing!"

2 Samuel 7:28, 29 NLT.

Praying for your grandchild will most likely start with the announcement of their impending birth. It may be a time of joy or shock. Whatever the circumstances, it is this new life that can benefit from your prayer support.

Here are some prayer thoughts:

- Lord, be with my child as she and her husband want to start a family.
- Help them to be special parents to those they adopt, foster or be a favourite auntie and uncle if they cannot conceive.
- May the medical staff be guided to respond to the baby's needs during the pregnancy and birth
- Let there be calm in the labour room
- If there is a bereavement rather than rejoicing let there be loving support available
- Thank God daily for His gift of grandchildren
- Their home will be a place filled with love for one another and for God
- You will have the opportunity to talk about your love of God
- Express your pleasure of being God's child
- Give an example of a loving praying Christian
- Ask God for the health and stamina to interact with these lively offspring
- Talk about the wonders of nature created by a marvellous God
- Take time to let them see you enjoy a time of personal worship
- Make it a habit to praise and petition the Lord during their visit, not just at meal and bedtime, but never pressure them to participate
- When leading out in the daily worship use material suitable for their age and understanding
- Pass on your belief that God helps you cope in times of difficulties
- Ask God for wisdom to deal with difficult family relationships
- Remember to let them know you daily pray for their physical health, emotional strength and spiritual growth

### **Praying for the Prodigal**

God, the perfect parent, had Adam and Eve leave His side and hide from Him so it will not be unexpected that, like God, you will experience the hurt of seeing grandchildren running away from your Lord. Pray that

- A "HeartCall" initiative be set up in your church to reach out to the one taking a break from church – (material available from the Women's Ministries department)
- You will not nag and criticise such grandchildren, rather say words of encouragement
- Your heart will be filled with love for them so they will know you will always be there for them
- You can say words of encouragement to their parents, as they may feel guilty and a spiritual failure
- Forgiveness will be on your lips even when your heart is breaking
- Their church will exhibit such love when they return that they will never want to stop attending
- If they never set foot in church again they will still be prayed for until you die because they are so special to you and your God

Recommended Reading:

- ❖ *When you Child Turns from God*  
By: D. E. Watts. Publisher: Review & Herald
- ❖ *Bringing Home the Prodigals*  
By: Rob Parsons. Publisher: Hodder & Stoughton



# The Ultimate Prayer

*The thief on the cross said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. Jesus answered him, 'I tell you the truth today, you will be with me in paradise'" Luke 23:42, 43*

My grandfather lived with death for most of his life. A bomb blast knocked him over during the Second World War and left him with a head injury. My grandma was told to move out of London, so my grandfather could die at peace in the countryside. He lived another thirty years, but often collapsed into an unconscious state. When this happened we never knew if he would regain consciousness.

Then the inevitable happened at the age of seventy-two. The phone call I received gave him days to live, but my praying grandma asked me to pray he would only die when he was 'one with the Lord'. All my life I had prayed for my grandfather to be baptised but even more earnestly now I prayed for him to be at peace with His Saviour.

Amazingly he rallied. With prayerful determination my grandma requested one night, as she was preparing for bed, "will you kneel with me as I say my prayers?" To her joy my grandfather did so until he died three months later. The doctor declared those three months of extra life were a miracle but for us the greater miracle was the commitment prayer when he acknowledged Jesus as his own dear personal Saviour.

Like the thief on the cross, my grandfather prayed the ultimate prayer on the day he died. God gives everyone the opportunity to receive Him into their life and receive His gift of eternal life. If you have not done The Four Steps to Praying the Ultimate Prayer, or know someone dear to you who has not prayed a prayer of commitment, then take the words of the prayer below to heart. God will be waiting to hear from you. He says, "Here I am, I stand at the door and knock, if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in . . ." Revelation 3:20.

## The Four Steps to Praying the Ultimate Prayer

1. Recognise God's Plan – Peace and Life  
This message from the Bible stresses that God loves you and wants you to experience His peace and life.  
"For God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not die but have eternal life." John 3:16.
2. Realise our Problem – Separation  
People choose to disobey God and go their own way: This results in separation from God. The Bible says "Everyone has sinned and is far away from God's saving presence." Romans 3:23.
3. Respond to God's Remedy – Cross of Christ  
God sent His Son to bridge the gap. Christ did this by paying the penalty of our sins when He died on the cross and rose from the grave. The Bible says "But God has shown us how much He loves us – it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us!" Romans 5:8.
4. Receive God's Son – Lord and Saviour  
You cross the bridge into God's family when you ask Christ to come into your life. The Bible says "Some, however, did receive Him and believed in Him, so He gave them the right to become God's Children." John 1:12

**Heavenly Father, I am sorry for the things I have done wrong in my life.** (Take a few moments to ask his forgiveness for anything particular that is on your conscience). **Please forgive me. I now turn from everything, which I know is wrong.**

**Thank you that you sent your Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for me so that I could be forgiven and set free. From now on I will follow and obey him as my Lord. Thank you that you now offer me this gift of forgiveness and your Spirit. I now receive that gift. Please come into my life by your Holy Spirit and be with me forever. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## *Looking Back with Pleasure*

"Oh Lord Almighty, God of Israel, I have been bold enough to pray this prayer because you have revealed that you will build a house for me – an eternal dynasty! For you are God, O Sovereign Lord. Your words are truth and you have promised these good things to me, your servant."

2 Samuel 7: 27 & 28 NLT

The best decision I ever made was to give my life to God. My prayer and commitment to Him was the first stage in a spiritual journey that has taken me through many phases of life.

It took me a while before I recognised that I could only cope with the twists and turns on the road of life by having an intimate time with God each day. The way I have spent interacting with Him has varied but for me making time with God means:

- I keep a Bible just for reading at 'our' private worship time. A Bible just read for pleasure. I might not read it everyday but when I do it speaks to me. I need to hear God through reading his word but I need to make the time to do so.
- Keeping a study journal. Over the last 6 years I have read the Bible to rediscover what God wants me to know and then I write down where the text is found and rewrite the sentence to explain what God is saying to me. So often it is exactly what I need that day to help me cope.
- Asking God to reveal more about His interaction with us His loved ones. I do this by looking for certain themes, e.g. the book of Acts for the working of the power of the Holy Spirit, and the Gospels to see when and where Jesus prayed.
- Praying with a purpose by using different prayer lists that go topically, i.e. my family, local church, work, friends, my own needs. Sometimes one list keeps me going a couple of days while other ones can be shared briefly with God.
- Responding immediately to God's voice. Often during this prayer sharing time God impresses me to phone, write or do something for the person or activity we have discussed. I have long learnt that by procrastinating, my response is too late and also I have missed the blessing of being God's helper.
- I rejoice over God's mighty acts as I see Him in action and tell others what He has done. He is indeed a Mighty God, it's a joy to glorify His name.
- Telling others they are being prayed for. There is no better gift to give than praying on someone's behalf.
- Varying the pattern and style of "prayer." This morning I lay on the floor and listened to 4 pieces of a new gospel record and tried to sing along. Singing out loud is not my spiritual gift but I was alone with God and He just loves my voice! Another day I go outside and just look at a couple of beautiful plants and thank Him for their intricate design.
- I don't just buy books on prayer, I read them too and try to put into practice their suggestions but most of all I make the time to spend with God. He loves to hear from us. As Becky Tirabassi put it, since she started praying an hour a day:

"My perspective on God changed.

He was no longer too small.

Too strict.

Or too far away.

He is near.

He is here.

He is always with me.  
He is powerful.  
He is the Creator of the world.  
He is the Creator of me”.

- I learned that prayer is not a monologue to a deaf God, but a conversation with a God who hears prayer.
- Prayer is not helping God with an answer; it is asking God to help. It is not telling God what to do; it is telling Him my needs. It isn't so much for the disciplined as for the undisciplined!
- Prayer is not necessarily meant to be an easy joy ride, but it definitely is a spiritual discipline that produces joy!
- Prayer is not just coming to Jesus; it is letting Jesus come into me!
- Prayer is not only for the educated, seminary scholar; it is for anyone who will practice, persevere, and plan to pray!
- Prayer is not a substitute for time in the Word; it will lead to the Word.
- Prayer is not for the impatient, but for the one who waits!
- Prayer is not a place to boast, but a place to confess. Prayer is not my motivating God, but God's motivating me.
- Prayer is not a waste of time; it is an appointment with the King of kings!
- My perspective of prayer and God changed!

Prayer allows God's presence into all areas and aspects of one's life, beginning with simple, daily decisions and culminating with one's life's purpose. The combination of prayer and the Word takes conjecture out of life and replaces it with certainties. And in the practice of prayer one is escorted farther and deeper into knowing and loving God.

Therefore, imagine one's surprise in stopping after years of a long journey to look back over the mountains and valleys, to assess progress and be in awe of the unexpected benefits of prayer. The results of diligent prayer appear as illustrious jewels of immeasurable wealth, and just to read a list of them is appealing, but to experience them as personal possessions is life-changing!

On that journey of daily prayer and Bible reading I have experienced and benefited in six areas of personal, spiritual growth, not because I am a woman in ministry, but because I am a person intent on spending time alone daily with God.

I discovered that

- Prayer fuels faith to dream and hope and risk.
- Prayer “woos” us to the Word by our need to hear God's response to our requests.
- Prayer teaches trust in God through waiting upon His timing.
- Prayer reveals God's plan and our purpose in opening up to us detailed directions for both the present and the future.
- Prayer releases God's power to live and walk in the supernatural realm of the Holy Spirit.
- Prayer unleashes love for God – emotional, real, and all-consuming.

***O Lord, I believe that You have a personal plan for my life that will affect the world around me, for You, if I will daily spend time with You in prayer and diligently look for You and listen to You through Your Word and Spirit. Cause me to meet with You every day in a regular appointment for the rest of my life. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit, woo me to Your Word, increase my faith, and develop within me an incredible love for You. I ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.***

From Let Prayer change your life by B. Tirabbassi. Publisher Thomas Nelson

Recommended Books:

- ❖ Do people Have to Die?  
By: L. R. Winn. Publishers: Review & Herald
- ❖ Never too Old to Grow  
By: A Crawford. Publishers: Bible Reading Fellowship
- ❖ I Miss Grandpa  
By Karen Holford. Publisher: Pacific Press