

ISSUE EIGHTEEN, NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2014

PRAYERCONNECT

Connecting to the Heart of Christ through Prayer

faith and Prayer

Walking in Confidence
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PRAYERCONNECT

November/December 2014 | Vol. 4, No.5

Faith and Prayer

Walking in Confidence and Expectation, p. 11

Features

32 **May I Pray for You?**

The Power of Caring and Praying for Others

By Pierre M. Eade

38 **Possibilities and Perils**

What Happens When a Church Develops Authentic Prayer?

By Daniel Henderson

12 **No Doubt about It!**

When You Start to Waver in Faith

By Ron Auch

Plus: How Extraordinary Are You?

18 **Why Not Here, Lord?**

Faith-filled Prayer Breakthroughs

By John Robb

Plus: Applying Scripture to the Impossible

24 **Figuring Out Faith and Prayer**

In, With, Of, For—Those Pesky Prepositions

By Pat Heston

29 **A Bible Study**

Faith and Prayer

By Sandra Higley



Departments

5 **Publisher's Note**

Appreciate Our Prayer Differences

7 **News & Events**

- "Taking Our Nation for Jesus"
- Miracles in Israel: Diverted Missile, Mysterious Fog
- David's Tent on White House Ellipse
- America Bus Rally Tour Hits Hollywood
- Cry Out America 9/11 Prayer Events Unite the Nation
- New Bible Translation Introduced in Iran
- Call to Prayer for Repressive Regimes
- Prayer Calendar

31 **In One Accord**

Is This the Generation?

43 **Tips & Tools**

- Here's the Top Ten List
- How to Pick a Prayer Team
- Covering Large Events with Prayer

45 **Surf's Up**

PrayerPower Ministries Offers Practical Prayer Help

46 **Prayer Leader**

Personal Lessons in Prayer Ministry

47 **Classics**

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There are a number of gifted speakers associated with *Prayer Connect*. Jonathan Graf regularly ministers in churches of varying sizes. Carol Madison is also available to minister in the area of prayer for revival and community transformation. Our parent organizations, Harvest Prayer Ministries and the Church Prayer Leaders Network, have many speakers associated with their ministries. You can find their contact information at the respective emails or websites.

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1. To encourage and equip believers toward a deeper walk with Jesus Christ through prayer—our experiential connection to God.
2. To resource prayer leaders and pastors with tools to help them motivate, disciple, and mobilize believers in churches to be a part of an army that seeks to pray the purposes of God for churches, communities, and the nations.
3. To be a unifying force between prayer ministries, community transformation groups, and churches.

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Previously in Prayer Connect

Sin, pride, unforgiveness, doubt, broken relationships—they can all be roadblocks in our prayer lives. But God calls us to be

persistent in removing the hindrances that keep us from powerful answers to prayer. The September/October 2014 issue “Roadblock Ahead” and other back issues are available to order at prayershop.org.



PUBLISHER'S NOTE



Appreciate Our Prayer Differences

Gary Chapman's book *The Five Love Languages* has been on the Christian bestseller list for years. As a counselor, Chapman reveals various ways people express and receive love, particularly in marriage relationships: words of affirmation, spending quality time together, gift giving, acts of service, and physical touch.

Problems arise when a person doesn't understand that his or her spouse may speak a different “language” when expressing love, which can result in either person feeling unloved.

Similarly, Christians differ in the ways we express our love to God. How do these love languages relate to our prayer lives and our relationships with God and others in the Church? Some express love by service—by doing things. Others express love by spending time—with God and with fellow believers. I suspect people who express love through physical touch long to sense God's presence. They may seek experiential worship more than words of affirmation.

Our spiritual gifts and personality types influence how we pray, too. For example, a person with a gift of mercy probably gets excited about praying for people's needs. But a person with the gift of evangelism may become frustrated in a prayer meeting where the only requests lifted up are the needs of the Body. Why? He or she wants to pray for the lost.

In the same way, people with the gift of faith want to pray for the big things. They won't keep coming to a prayer meeting that consistently focuses on the common “make-my-life-better, fix-it” prayers. And the person with an administrative gifting is frustrated if we don't pray with lists presented in a logically ordered manner.

Given the same request, a pessimist prays differently from an optimist. In praying for the area around a church, the pessimist will remind God of the problems—the broken homes, the drugs, and the gangs. The optimist will pray God's blessing on that same neighborhood. We need both types of prayer.

If we don't understand these different styles, we may get annoyed with others in the Body. Or worse, we may feel inadequate in our ability to pray: “I am not as emotional or passionate as so-and-so when I pray. My prayer must not be as good as hers.”

No! Nothing could be further from the truth.

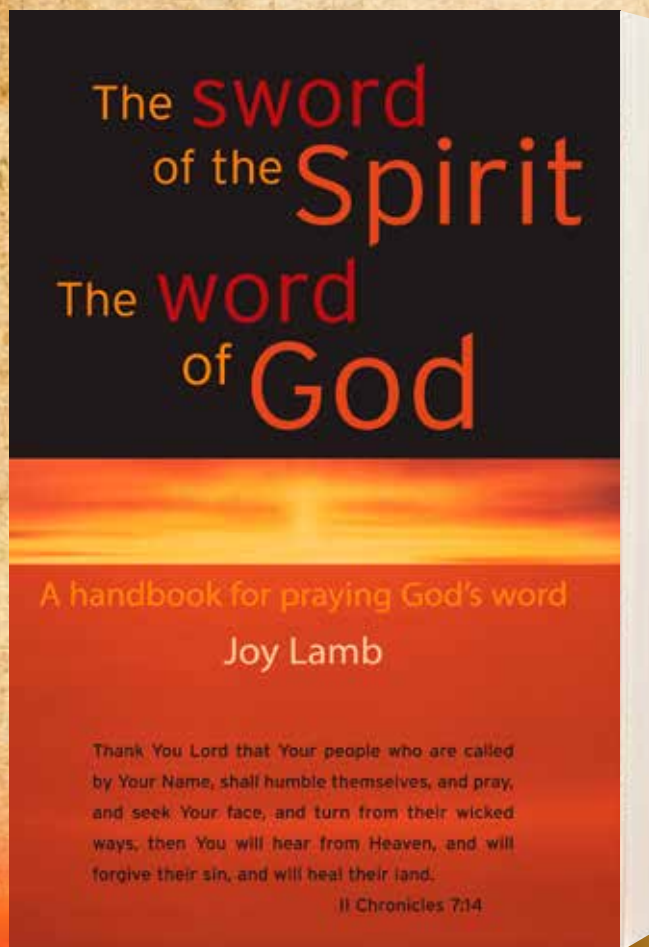
A verse in Hebrews describes Jesus' prayers: “During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death” (5:7). He was an emotional pray-er. But does that mean we all should pray like that? No. The verse goes on to say that “he was heard because of his reverent submission.” He wasn't heard because His passion came out in powerful emotion. He was heard because He determined to be obedient and submit to the Father's desires.

God created us all to be different from one another. And we should pray in different ways, too. We need to recognize this as we seek to pray together. No prayer is too simple. God does not judge any prayer's worthiness or effectiveness based on how it is delivered.

Be encouraged! God values your prayers.

—Jonathan Graf

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“Taking Our Nation for Jesus”

Liberia, torn apart by 14 years of civil war, is the fourth poorest country on earth. Now the Ebola epidemic threatens to wipe out thousands more lives. Yet some Christian leaders believe there is hope for Liberia.

James Cuffee of Christ Evangelical Fellowship Ministries (CEFM) told Christian Aid Mission that churches across the country have been “very busy fasting and praying” for God’s intervention in this health crisis.

“The Church in Liberia has agreed to stand together in faith and pray against this killer disease,” Cuffee said. “I strongly believe the Lord will surely work miracles as we pray in Jesus’ name.”

Since the March outbreak of the Ebola virus in Guinea, more than 1,552 infected individuals in four West African countries have died. Liberia has reported the most cases (1,378) and has seen the most deaths (694 as of Aug. 28). Those figures surpass the total number of deaths for all previous outbreaks of the disease combined.



Reports of 13 suspected Ebola deaths in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have heightened fears that the disease will spread further into Africa. The DRC is located in the central part of the continent, and, according to health officials, tests show that this strain of the virus is different from the one in West Africa.

If the outbreak worsens in Liberia, officials worry about its potential impact on the nation’s already tenuous food supply. The majority of rural Liberians practice subsistence agriculture. Farmers barely grow enough to feed their families, so if the family provider should fall victim to Ebola and could not tend to crops, his or her loved ones may go hungry.

“People are dying—physically and spiritually,” Cuffee said. “This is a wakeup call for the Church. We are taking our nation for Jesus.”

CEFM will step up its efforts to meet some of the food needs through a variety of agricultural projects. In addition, plans are underway to build a medical clinic in one rural area, so villagers will no longer need to travel three to five hours to seek basic treatment.

“All of these projects open the door to reach more unbelievers,” Cuffee said. “It’s proof that the Church loves, cares, and is concerned about people’s needs. Jesus saw and met needs, and because of that the multitudes followed Him. The early Church did the same when they followed the principles of Christ. So if we as the Church, and as a ministry, can follow Jesus and the apostles and do these things, we will gain more converts.”

AMIE COTTON is with Christian Aid Mission. Taken from Assist News Service (assistnews.net).

Miracles in Israel: Diverted Missile, Mysterious Fog

Despite a barrage of missiles fired at Israel by Hamas, there have been remarkably few Israeli civilian casualties, partly due to Israel’s Iron Dome defense system. But the small casualty numbers may also be due to an unseen Defender who controls the wind and the waves.

The Iron Dome system is effective 90 percent of the time. The 10 percent of missiles that get through might be expected to do some significant damage, but they haven’t so far.

In one remarkable case, an Israeli Iron Dome operator/commander says that during the week of July 27, he witnessed “the hand of God” divert an incoming Hamas rocket into the sea.

According to *Israel Today*, the commander said, “A missile was fired from Gaza. Iron Dome precisely calculated [its trajectory]. We know where these missiles are going to land, down to a radius of 200 meters. This particular missile was going to hit either the Azrieli Towers, the Kirya (Israel’s equivalent of the Pentagon) or [a central Tel Aviv railway station]. Hundreds could have died.”

The commander took the appropriate action to stop the missile. “We fired the first [interceptor]. It missed.”

Then a second interceptor was fired and it missed.



“This is very rare. I was in shock,” the commander reported.

“At this point we had just four seconds until the missile lands. We had already notified emergency services to converge on the target location and had warned of a mass-casualty incident,” the commander said.



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"Suddenly, Iron Dome (which calculates wind speeds, among other things) shows a major wind coming from the east, a strong wind that . . . sends the missile into the sea. We were all stunned."

With only four seconds to stop it, a mighty wind came from nowhere and diverted the missile. The commander stood up and shouted, "There is a God!"

"I witnessed this miracle with my own eyes," the commander said. "It was not told or reported to me. I saw the hand of God send that missile into the sea."

During the same week, according to *Israel Today*, Col. Ofer Winter, commander of the Givati Infantry Brigade, described a mysterious fog that enveloped him and his troops as they advanced on an enemy position in the early morning.

The Givati Infantry Brigade had planned a nighttime raid, but it was postponed. So Col. Winter was concerned about whether his troops would

be spotted without the cover of darkness. Instead, the thick fog provided the covering they needed to complete their operation successfully. Col. Winter labeled the covering as "clouds of glory."

Earlier in the Gaza war, Col. Winter sparked some debate when he told his troops to lead the charge against an enemy that "curses, defames, and abuses the God of Israel."

Col. Winter also told his troops he was praying that the "Lord your God go with you, to fight for you against your enemies and to save you."

Even the leaders of Hamas noticed the unusual help that Israel seemed to be receiving from above. "We do aim [our rockets], but their God changes their path in mid-air," an unnamed Hamas commander reportedly said.

MARK ELLIS is a senior correspondent for Assist News Service (assistnews.net).

David's Tent on White House Ellipse

Launched in 2012, just prior to the national elections, David's Tent DC is a 24/7 prayer and worship initiative in a large tent on the White House Ellipse (between the Washington Monument and the White House). For 40 days that year, 167 worship teams provided continuous worship.

In 2013, 194 worship teams participated in David's Tent for 1,000 hours during 42 days. Worship teams signed up for two-hour watches. "We had everything from hymn sings to gospel choirs to rock bands to Davidic-style harps," says Jason Hershey, founder of David's Tent. Various music styles and denominations were represented in an unbroken chain of worship.

In 2014, from September 15 to



November 4, David's Tent added two new features. In addition to the worship tent, another tent was provided for intercessors to gather in prayer, away from the music. Leaders also added "Ezra's Platform" (Neh. 8:4-8). People took turns reading the entire Bible and declaring its truths over the nation. They read through the Bible seven times during the course of 50 days.

"We need the nation to rally to the White House and help us keep the fire on the altar," says Hershey.

To learn more, go to davidstentdc.org.



America Bus Rally Tour Hits Hollywood

In September 2013, National Day of Prayer (NDP) hosted its first Pray for America Bus Rally Tour that traveled through 34 states. More than 101,000 people gathered to join them in prayer at multiple stops in cities throughout the nation. According to reports, they witnessed a stirring of the Holy Spirit among God's people, and a growing awareness in the Church that "fervent, strategic prayer is the first step in experiencing transformation and awakening in a culture that so desperately needs it."

The response to the 2013 tour convinced NDP leaders to launch another bus tour to create a wave of prayer from the East Coast to the West Coast. It began September 2, 2014, in Orlando,



FL, and ended October 5 in Hollywood, CA. Prayer leaders joined the tour that also went through New York City, Chicago, and other key media cities, traveling 4,000 miles, covering every mile in prayer.

The 2014 coast-to-coast tour focused on the spheres of media and entertainment. According to the website, "Like no other generation, we spend a huge portion of our time consuming information and ideas, allowing movies, television programming, news, and advertising—good and bad, positive and

negative—to influence what we think and how we feel. Because of the tremendous influence of these messages on our lives, the Pray for America bus is taking to the road once again . . . to focus our nation's attention and prayers on this culture-shaping industry."

The bus tour ended with "The Summons" in Hollywood, a five-day solemn assembly with 200 prayer leaders who united forces in the media-epicenter of the world. During the time of concentrated prayer, the prayer leaders and intercessors prayerwalked streets and studios, and spent time with media executives, actors, writers, musicians, producers, and production workers.

To learn more about the tour, go to commit2pray.com/bus-tour.

Cry Out America 9/11 Prayer Events Unite the Nation

Cry Out America events were held across the nation on Thursday, September 11, 2014, at county courthouses, churches, prisons, pregnancy care centers, university campuses, and homes. Marking the 13th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, this was not simply a day of remembrance and mourning, but a time for ecumenical, cross-generational prayer focused on the spiritual condition of communities and the nation. Setting aside racial, cultural, and denominational differences, hundreds of thousands of mainline Evangelical, Pentecostal/Charismatic, Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish believers from all backgrounds gathered at more than 3,000 prayer points across the nation to cry out for awakening in America.

A spirit of patriotism permeated the atmosphere as state patrol honor guards, led by Scottish

bag pipe players, presented the nation's colors. Voices of all ages were heard echoing the national anthem across courthouse squares. First responders and U.S. military personnel were honored for their sacrifices. Prison inmates offered prayers in their cells, marketplace leaders paused in their board meetings to pray for awakening in America, and parishioners gathered at their church altars to express a dependency upon God. Radio stations broadcast event programming live, reaching thousands, who were not able to join on-site events.

"Too often the devastating news of



tragedy, natural disasters, and violence fills the air waves and threatens to extinguish the spirit of hopeful Americans," comments Cry Out America national coordinator Kay Horner. "Yet on September 11, 2014, hundreds of thousands of voices were raised in prayer with great expectation that today's dreams will awaken tomorrow's destiny."

To learn more about the Awakening America Alliance, an organization purposed to "provide a broad umbrella under which the Body of Christ in America can unite together in seeking a contemporary spiritual awakening," visit awakeningamerica.us.





New Bible Translation Introduced in Iran

After an 18-year partnership with Wycliffe Bible Translators, Iranian Christian leaders are excited to provide the people of Iran with an accurate translation of the Bible.

In recent years the Iranian Church has experienced remarkable expansion. According to Operation World, it is the one of the fastest-growing Churches in the world today. Iranian Christians,

who have been eagerly awaiting this new Bible, are already seeing people coming to Christ through reading it.

Leaders request prayer for the Word of God to spread, and for Iran to be transformed. Specific requests:

- seamless printing of 100,000 copies of the new Bible
- new channels for getting Bibles into the country

- protection for those involved in the transportation and distribution of the Bibles
- the Holy Spirit's revelation of truth as people are reading God's Word
- spiritual transformation of Iran as the Word of God spreads.

Taken from *International Prayer Connections* (ipcprayer.org).

Call to Prayer for Repressive Regimes

More than 1.6 billion people—23 percent of the world's population—are victims of repressive regimes and have no say in how they are governed. They face severe consequences if they try to exercise their most basic rights, such as expressing their views, assembling peacefully, and organizing independently of the state.

Citizens who dare to assert their rights in these repressive countries typically suffer harassment and imprisonment, and they often are subjected to physical or psychological abuse. In almost all of the countries/regions where a repressive regime is in power, Christians are persecuted and often are treated worse than any of the other citizens. But as Dr. A.T. Pierson (1837–1911, Presbyterian pastor) said, “Wherever the Church has been aroused and the world's wickedness arrested, somebody, somewhere has been praying.”

Here are some guidelines to help you pray for the leaders of repressive regimes (including Belarus, Chechnya, China, Cuba, Central African Republic, Laos, Libya, Myanmar, North Korea, Somalia, Sudan, and Syria):

- Pray for the salvation of these corrupt and unsaved leaders so they can be reconciled to God. Pray especially that the Holy Spirit would convict




them of their sin and that these leaders would seek God's forgiveness.

- Pray that unfair and godless leaders will make “mistakes” that will become an advantage to the spread of the gospel.
- Pray that oppressors and godless leaders will lose their positions of power by means of wrong advice. “Lord, confuse the wicked, confound their words, for I see violence and strife in the city” (Ps. 55:9).
- Pray that the plans of those who are involved in plots and unholy conspiracies will be broken.
- Pray, in Jesus' name, against the influence of the evil powers on the lives of individuals. There are specific demons working in politics and at government levels.
- Pray that in countries where there is bloodshed, violence, chaos, and anarchy, the ruthless leaders will tire of these evils and seek peace and stability.

- Pray the leaders will act responsibly, and that they will realize that God not only appointed them but gave them authority—and they will have to give account to Him for everything they do.

Taken from the Global Prayer Resources Network (globalprn.com).



Prayer Calendar

National Prayer Assembly
Washington, D.C.
October 29-30
nationalprayercommittee.com

Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church
Sunday, November 2
onewiththem.com

Seek God for the City
February 18–March 29, 2015
waymakers.org

Collegiate Day of Prayer
Thursday, February 26
collegiatedayofprayer.org

faith and Prayer

Walking in Confidence and Expectation

I RECENTLY EDITED a book by a friend who has an amazing life story. Although I've known Mark for several years, I had no idea what a painful, destructive life he lived prior to becoming a follower of Christ.

I was especially intrigued with Mark's account of the moment he gave his life to Jesus. In 1996, as a very broken man, he walked into the Promise Keepers event at the Minneapolis Metrodome, and he and his friends found seats near the top of the Dome. But a horrible reverb in the sound system prevented him from understanding anything the men on the platform were saying. And the worship music was just a loud commotion to him.

But when a man stepped to the microphone and began sharing the gospel, suddenly Mark understood every word perfectly. He bowed his head, and with tears streaming down his face, he gave his life to Jesus. That turning point transformed his life.

As I edited this part of Mark's book, I was overwhelmed at God's sovereignty. I wrote a note to my friend in the margin: "Mark, I was in the intercessor prayer room in the locker room during this event. The leaders came and told us how terrible the sound system was. They asked us to pray especially fervently that the men would still understand the gospel message. Then they let us sneak up and peek at all the men streaming forward to give their lives to Christ!"

The moment I read that section of Mark's book, my faith soared. I realized—18 years later—that Mark was one of those men I was praying for! Unseen, in a locker room, we cried out to God on behalf of those who

needed to surrender to Him. That night I had faith to believe that God could override a sound system—and He did!

Walking in Confidence

Scripture teaches that faith is the confidence that what we hope for in prayer will actually happen. Faith also means walking in assurance that God is always at work (Heb. 11:1).

That seems easy enough—until we come to a bridge that appears unsteady and we see turbulent waters below. We start to waver. Will God answer this time? Am I praying with enough faith? Do I even know how to pray? We hesitate to ask God for the impossible. Confidence and expectation slip away.

In this issue, Ron Auch examines double-talk in prayer—praying one way while thinking something else. If we believe God is all-powerful, we need to live out our theology. Pat Heston tackles what it means to pray *in* faith, *with* faith, and *for* faith. Each preposition presents a unique perspective, connecting faith with prayer. And John Robb, who has seen miraculous answers to prayer in Third World countries, questions why we don't seem to see them in our Western world. He uses the faith of a child to help us understand the key to walking in faith when we pray.

As I experienced with Mark, sometimes God pulls back the veil and gives us a glimpse of the eternal impact of our prayers. Those moments remind us He is always inviting us to pray with confidence and expectation.

CAROL MADISON is editor of *Prayer Connect*.

A photograph of a rustic wooden bridge made of many parallel planks, crossing a river with white-water rapids. The bridge is surrounded by lush green trees and foliage. The water is a vibrant turquoise color with white foam from the rapids. The bridge appears to be made of weathered wood and is supported by simple wooden posts. The perspective is from the middle of the bridge, looking towards the far end where it disappears into the forest.

No

By Ron Auch

Doubt

I FELT LIKE THE PROPHET Habakkuk when he queried, “How long, LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen?” (Hab. 1:2). I was praying something similar to that one night after the church service was over. We had been called to prayer, and I was determined to stay at the altar, praying until I got an answer.

After some time I felt the Lord speak to me with the same kind of answer the prophet received: “Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay” (Hab. 2:3).

That was not the answer I was looking for.

Wait for it? I felt I had waited long enough already.

The next night I went back to prayer and asked, “Why must I wait? Couldn’t You quite easily bring this trial to an end?”

When I said that, the Lord spoke clearly to my heart and said, “I

about It

When You Start to Waver in Faith

could answer your prayer instantly, but if I do, you will never become the man you will if you learn to wait for Me.”

That is when I began to realize that prayer is not only about getting answers; it is also about character development.

Don't Be Tossed

The first eight verses of the Book of James speak to this issue. However, his advice is not much different from the way God spoke to the prophet Habakkuk.

James tells us we must go through trials to complete the process God has planned for us. James actually challenges us to rejoice in trials and to consider them pure joy. But as we read on, we find that it's not the trials we rejoice in but rather the potential spiritual maturity (faith) that comes from them. In verse 3 James tells us that the testing of our faith produces perseverance.

The word perseverance is the Greek word *hupomone*. It indicates an endurance and constancy that comes through waiting. But it's not just waiting in a generic sense. Rather, it is waiting on Christ. He is the One we pray to and He is the One we look to for the answer.

The context of these verses suggests that perseverance is a fortitude that comes from communion with Christ. We need fortitude so that we are not tossed like the waves of the sea, blown by the wind. We need to come to a place where after we have prayed, we have the ability to stand against all adversities and remain steadfast in our belief until we see the answer. James 1:4 begins with the little word *let*: “Let perseverance finish its work.” The word *let* simply means that it will happen if we don't prevent it. Let perseverance, endurance, patience, or steadfastness happen. Trials and tests will result in these qualities naturally unless we prevent them from developing within us.

Watch the Double-talk

So we must ask the question: *In what ways might we be preventing perseverance in our lives?* The answer: double-talk.

James 1:7 says there is a person who “should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.”

Who is that person? The person who prays one thing while thinking another thing. James 1:8 refers to him as a double-minded man, unstable in all he does. Double-mindedness (double-talk) is what keeps us from receiving anything from the Lord.

Take, for example, one's finances. Most people have prayed about finances at one time or another. And if we're double-minded, we might pray something like this: “God, I need Your direction in this matter. I don't want to make a decision without knowing what You would have me do.”

While praying those very words, in the back of our minds, we are figuring

out what we will do if God does not answer us. So as we are praying, “God, I need Your direction,” in the back of our minds we are saying, “But I could take out a loan. I could call my rich uncle. I have some options.”

That is being double-minded. James says that kind of person can't expect to receive anything from the Lord. To be double-minded is to be of two minds—not changing our mind but having two minds at the same time.

The Greek word for double-minded is *dipsuchos*, which means two-spirited, i.e. vacillating (in opinion or purpose). It is derived from two other words: *dis*, which means twice, and *psuche*, which means breath or spirit. “Two breaths” basically means the person praying is saying two different things at the same time. He is saying one thing to God, and simultaneously saying another thing to himself. Without a constant, consistent mindset a person is prone to be swayed, tossed to and fro by every wind.

If a person has prayed, “God, I need Your direction in this matter,” one example of perseverance would be to do nothing until God speaks. We cannot be of two minds and expect God to give us any direction. God might even say, “Go talk to a banker, or go to your rich uncle.” That's all up to Him. But the point is, God is the One who gives us direction because He is the One we turned to for help. We need to wait upon Him.

Where's Your Confidence?

The Apostle John tells us we need confidence in who God is in order to wait for Him.

“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him” (1 John 5:14–15).

I remember a time, shortly after I first started driving, when my car ran out



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of gas. I pulled off to the side of the road, called my dad, and asked for help. He was busy at the time, but he said, "Wait, and I'll be there."

I had confidence in my dad. I made the request, and I knew he heard me because I talked with him. My only option was to wait until he came. I knew he would come eventually. I was his son and I had a need. So I waited until he came.

People of faith, single-minded people, wait for God in the same way, and they know the answer will come. But double-minded people start looking for other ways to get out of their dilemma, not having enough confidence in the One they asked for help. They can't wait. James said that the double-minded person does not receive anything from God.

Lacking the confidence to wait for Him does not mean we can't handle some of our situations in other ways. It means that what we end up with is not

from God. I could have called another friend after asking my dad for help. Could he have helped me? Yes. Would I have received anything from my father? No!

This is part of the problem of living in a self-sufficient society. We don't have to wait for God for most of the things we need. We can simply take steps to solve our problem, and then call those steps *faith*. Many people pray about an issue for a few minutes—get up from prayer—and answer the request themselves. They call that taking a step of faith. Faith may have had nothing to do with their actions. In fact, sometimes our actions result from our inability to wait on God.

When God first started dealing with me about my prayer life, I found myself praying an hour or two each day without fail. My wife and I were still newly married, and I was a seminary student. We didn't have enough money to pay our

bills, but to prove my faith I wrote out checks for all our bills and mailed them. I really wanted to be a man of faith, so I considered this a true step of faith. After a few days I started receiving overdraft notices from the bank. Every one of those checks bounced.

Why didn't God honor my faith?

1. Because my actions *were not* faith. God didn't tell me to write all those checks—even though I really hoped He would. I tried to get Him to tell me to do it.

2. Because my actions did not *come from* faith. They came from fear. I was afraid of what might happen if we didn't pay the bills. When I had prayed and asked God to help us financially, I was double-minded, still tossed to and fro, carried about by every point of pressure. I didn't have the same faith in my heavenly Father that I had in my earthly father when I ran out of gas. When I

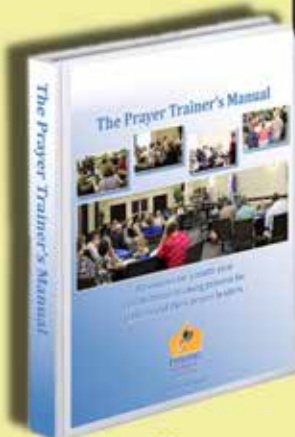
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How Extraordinary Are You?

By John Edmiston

Christians can do extraordinary miracles through faith-filled prayer! As a missionary among tribal peoples in Papua New Guinea in the 1980s, I saw great answers to the prayers of tribes who at that time had little or no access to deeper biblical knowledge. Yet they loved the Lord with their whole heart. Faith was all they had, and faith was all that was required of them.

James gives us assurance that godly faith is all we need in order to experience the miraculous:

And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit (James 5:15–18, NKJV).

“Elijah was a man with a nature like ours.” Prayer warriors are normal men and women who pray with faith. Let’s look at seven aspects of this

kind of faith that moves mountains and heals the sick, most of them in Hebrews 11:

1. *Faith believes in the creative power of God.* Faith realizes that God exists as the One who is far more powerful than nature. He controls time and space, and He answers the prayers of those who pray in faith (v. 13).

2. *Faith believes in the invisible attributes of God.* The person of faith sees the invisible God of mercy, justice, truth, and holiness. The person of faith is deeply loyal to the loving Covenant-Maker who speaks within our conscience but cannot be seen with the naked eye (vv. 1, 3).

3. *Faith believes that God rewards those who seek Him.* When life becomes uncomfortable, many grumblers cry out, “What good is God?” And they end up in the wilderness. The person of faith endures for the reward, knowing that God is faithful to His beloved (v. 6).

4. *Faith believes what God says—particularly His promises.* At its most basic level, faith means simply believing what God says. Unbelief is refusing to believe what God has plainly stated. Rebellion is doing the exact opposite of what God has said. Those who pray in faith latch onto God’s words, believe them, and let those words dwell richly within them (vv. 8–12).

5. *Faith believes that God is holy; therefore faith refuses to sin.* True

faith is spiritually sensitive and full of integrity. It is alert to God’s disfavor and to personal defilement. True faith flees from sin (vv. 24–25).

6. *Faith waits patiently for the fulfillment.* As a farmer waits patiently for the harvest, and as Abraham waited 25 years for Isaac to be born, so faith endures patiently, waiting for the reward (Heb. 6:12–15; Luke 18:1).

7. *Faith is sensitive to God’s agenda.* When God called, Abraham obeyed, even to the extreme of packing up his family and going to unknown places. In Hebrews 11 we find a list of people who trusted the plans of the Invisible God and followed them. Those with a living faith totally trust God’s plans and long to participate in them (vv. 17–19).

Effective faith flows out of a heart connection with the Almighty. But purely mental faith will never take a large risk. By contrast, those who walk in godly faith—true faith—are absolutely sure that God is good and that He will never lead them out to die in the desert.

Faith is a deep reaction of the human spirit to the profound, absolute love of God. Only when God’s love “clicks into place” in the prayerful soul can effective miracle-working faith arise.

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called my earthly father and told him I needed help, I knew he would come to my aid. It was just a matter of waiting.

God Always Proves Faithful

Why is it important for us to be single-minded rather than double-minded? Look at how the writer of Hebrews puts it: “Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him” (Heb. 11:6–9).

Those who come to God must believe that He is. Believe He is what? Believe He is God. Why is this important? Because without being able to believe God, without having confidence in who God is, our lives will never please God.

During our financially challenging seminary days, God was calling my wife and me to a life of faith—a traveling ministry in which we didn’t charge for our conferences and had no health insurance. We lived that way for 20 years, never knowing what was going to come in financially each month.

In the beginning, I think I put my confidence more in money than in God. We once drove our VW from Wisconsin to Utah—with two nights on the road to get there. When we got to our destination for the scheduled meetings, I contacted the pastor and made sure everything was set up for the all-day Saturday seminar. Saturday came, but only five people showed up for the seminar. Two of them were my wife and me. I taught a six-hour conference to three people.

As I walked to my car after the seminar, I looked at the small amount of the check the church gave me (they had taken a love offering for us). “Lord,” I said, “I was so depending on a large check.”

As soon as I said that, the Lord spoke to me and said, “I was so hoping that you were depending on *Me!*”

God taught me much about trusting

Him and waiting on Him in those first few years. This was difficult for me because I don’t like to wait. I want to be doing something. But I learned to quit being anxious about my finances. God brought me to a place where I knew I never had to pray about money. In fact, for me to pray about money would have been a lack of faith. Praying about money would have proven that I didn’t believe God is the rewarder of those who seek Him.

This transition didn’t happen overnight. It was the result of many hours in the presence of God, many miles on the road, many instances of God proving Himself faithful to us one conference after another.

Single-mindedness indicates faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God. And pleasing God is the secret to this whole issue of faith.

Many people make faith an object

of prayer. They pray about their level of faith. But I believe faith is something that happens naturally as a result of being with God, whether that’s in prayer or His Word. Being with Him results in a constancy in our lives. And steadfastness develops automatically because of who God is.

If we only have God in theory but not in practice, then we might not have God at all. We might only have theology. Living out our theology proves that we believe who God is and that He rewards those who seek Him.

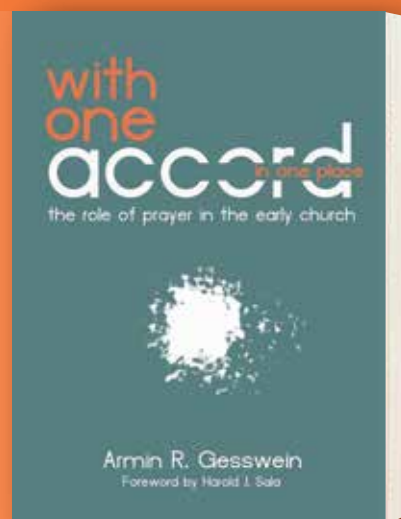
And we can wait. **PC**



RON AUCH is president and founder of Pray-Tell Ministries (pray-tell.org). He teaches conferences in churches in a variety of denominations. He has published books and articles on prayer and marriage, and is a member of America’s National Prayer Committee.

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A person is seen from behind, looking out over a landscape at sunset or sunrise. The person has short, dark hair and is wearing a dark jacket with a light-colored hood. The background is a bright, hazy sky with a large, glowing sun or moon. To the right, there are trees with autumn-colored leaves, and the overall scene is bathed in warm, golden light.

Why Not

By John Robb

MY CELL PHONE SPURS me on each time it powers up with AT&T's motto, "Rethink Possible!" Marketers, in this case, are good theologians—and Christians in the Western world would do well to take this exhortation seriously.

When it comes to praying for God's miraculous intervention, why is it so easy for us in the West to default to the position of unbelief? Why do people in the Third World seem to experience more of the miracle-working power of God?

How can we grow in faith and pray history-shaping prayers for our community and nation and world—and rethink possible?

A few weeks ago, while I was pondering a new development that could result in a new ministry opportunity, some friends from Southeast Asia came to visit my family. I had pretty much concluded that this "possible opportunity" was a long shot. But in that moment of wondering, my visiting friends presented my wife and

Here, Lord.

Faith-filled Prayer Breakthroughs

me with a beautiful pewter wall piece etched with the words, “Nothing is impossible.” I had jumped to an unbelieving conclusion. And their gift was a loving rebuke.

Assume the Possible

Why do we so readily assume that things will not go our way or that they’re impossible to attain? I can hear the Lord saying to me as He did to His slow, unperceptive disciples, “Where is your faith?”

Our same visiting friends had been in Myanmar in 2010 to help launch the Children in Prayer movement in that much oppressed nation. And in January 2011, I had the privilege of joining hundreds of ministry leaders for a second, similar effort. Out of those two events, an estimated 40,000 children mobilized to pray for their nation.

Nothing seemed to budge in Myanmar—spiritually or politically—until the children began to intercede. Then, in short order, the whole nation seemed to shift. The military junta, which had dominated the land with an iron grip, released political dissidents from prison, including the Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi. Greater economic freedom was granted. Reconciliation efforts suddenly began between some of the ethnic groups that the government had been fighting for many years.

Political news commentators did not know how to explain such a precipitous turn-around in a nation so long accustomed to tyrannical oppression. But the prayer ministry leaders believed that “God’s secret weapon,” the prayers of children, were a major factor.

When I was with World Vision, an international humanitarian and childcare organization, we witnessed the same phenomenon. As director of prayer ministries, I asked field staff in five countries to have the children in the program pray for their very poor communities for one year. All of us were astonished by the

miracles that occurred in those communities where the kids were praying for specific needs: the infrastructural changes, such as digging wells and establishing new clinics, resolving community splits, the healing of people with terminal illnesses, and the prevention of terrorist invasions in the places where the prayer was happening!

Staff people asked if we could renew the children’s prayer effort for another year. After a second consultation, people recited an even longer litany of miracles to the wonderment of all. The Children in Prayer (CiP) effort spread by word of mouth to 20 national offices, and later about 50 of our World Vision national offices continued developing CiP efforts. Even after I left World Vision, the prayer movement spread beyond that organization with an estimated 75–80 countries supporting CiP efforts. This is all to the glory of the Lord who loves the prayers of children!

Learn the Children’s Secret

Why are children’s prayers so powerful? How can they serve as a model to us more skeptical, slow-to-believe adults?

Jesus taught that He has delegated authority to believers so we can even bring Satan down in our communities and nations. Jesus said He saw Satan “fall like lightning from heaven” and that the authority of Jesus will enable us to “trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy” (Luke 10:18–19).

Moments later, Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, was rejoicing as His people overcame the devil and brought deliverance. He joyously praised the Father for revealing these things to “little children” (v. 21). Apparently children have a greater openness to receiving such a revelation from God. The implication is that His adult disciples will be slower to grasp such a reality unless they cultivate the same childlike hearts.

In other places, Jesus said that the Kingdom of God belongs to people who are like children, and that we adults should seek to be like them (Matt. 18:2–4, 19:14). Why? Because adults tend to be encumbered by the baggage of doubt, fear, and wrong belief systems that keep us from simply trusting God to do what He promises to do.

We have become captive to a materialistic and non-supernatural worldview. We may not realize how deeply we have become affected by this corrosive influence. But if we ignore God’s promises to do the impossible (if we will simply ask, trusting Him like small children depending on their parents), it is as if we, in effect, have taken scissors to Scripture.

I believe this is a major reason why serious and persistent prayer is not on the agenda of most Christians and ministry leaders in the West. We live in a material world seemingly controlled only by laws of nature, so we have imbibed the idea that prayer makes little or no difference.

Humanism’s teaching that “man is the measure of all things” has also crept into our thinking. Both are false philosophical teachings that cut off the realization that God is the One in whom “we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28).

Let Science Increase Your Faith

In one sense, believers in today’s world have a greater reason to pray with faith than earlier generations did. Science has revealed that the material universe—and therefore its Creator—are far more awesome than past observers could imagine. Astrophysicists now tell us that our sun and its place in the universe is comparable to one grain of sand on all the beaches of the entire earth—one of 300 billion trillion stars. The psalmist confirms that, because the Creator is so much greater than His creation, He “stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth” (Ps. 113:6).

On the other end of the creation spectrum, the cell—the building block

of all life—is far more complex than anything a human being could create. No wonder Jesus could say that the Lord, in His love and concern for each human being, even keeps a running total of all the hairs on our heads (Matt. 10:30)—in spite of our losing some in the shower each day!

Realizing how incomprehensibly awesome and great God is should turn us all into 24/7 intercessors! If we, in our generation, could internalize what modern science has uncovered about the greatness of the Creator and begin to apply His staggering promises regarding faith-filled prayer, our own lives, cities, and nations would be transformed.

Christian astrophysicist Hugh Ross writes, “Prayer is the most powerful capacity God has made available to us.” And author E.M. Bounds says that “prayer can do anything that God can do.” Wow, what an astounding resource we have at our disposal every time we pray—if we will only lay hold of the Lord in faith!

Believe We Can Change History

It has been my great privilege to be part of numerous national and international prayer initiatives throughout the world for more than two decades. Over and over again, my colleagues and I have witnessed the stupendous works of God when His people have prayed in unity, together releasing their faith. To His glory, history has literally been reshaped through these efforts!

Many of these prayer initiatives have happened in war zones where insoluble ethnic conflicts, full of atrocities, ground on for years—where all hope had been lost. Here are a few examples:

Bosnia, August 1995: More than 250,000 people had been killed and millions left homeless. But then believers from all three warring ethnic groups chose to come together in two cities. After a deep time of reconciliation in

which representatives confessed atrocities their own people group had carried out against those from the opposing groups, they all prayed with unity of heart. In their combined faith in the Lord, they trusted Him for His intervention. They trusted His promise of Matthew 18:19—that anything we ask in agreement will be granted.

Richard Holbrooke, the main peace negotiator, was amazed when the hardened dictator and war criminal Slobodan Milošević pushed a peace proposal across the table at him four days later. It led to the Dayton Peace Accords that brought an end to the civil war.

Cambodia, 1994–1995: The Khmer Rouge, a Maoist terrorist group that had

*“Build up, build up, prepare the road!
Remove the obstacles out of the way of My people.”*
Isaiah 57: 14



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Applying Scripture to the Impossible

Throughout 20-plus years of ministry, and in many diverse situations in 58 national prayer initiatives, my colleagues and I have found certain Scripture passages and principles to be especially helpful in releasing our faith—and the faith of the local people who have participated in prayer with us. It is the release of our faith together in unity, through the enabling and guidance of the Holy Spirit, that “moves mountains” and accomplishes astounding breakthroughs in prayer.

Here are some of those Scriptures:

John 14:13–14: “I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.”

The sky is the limit. We can ask the Lord for *anything*. We can accept the invitation He has extended to us, releasing our faith in His enormous capacity to do the impossible.

Matthew 18:18–20: “Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

Praying with others in corporate unity, even in twos and threes, can change the atmosphere of what is possible in communities and nations. More

than 30 times in the Book of Acts, and in all the great spiritual revivals and positive social transformations of modern history, we see that these movements have been preceded by united prayer. Theologian Walter Wink said, “History belongs to the intercessors, who believe the future into being.”

1 John 5:14–15: “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.”

Praying according to God’s will involves both hearing His Word and following the leading of His Spirit. Faith will gradually build within us as we listen to the Lord, follow His direction, and then see His wonderful answers. In this manner we also avoid the presumption and flakiness that sometimes characterizes overly subjective praying that goes its own way.

Matthew 17:20: “Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

God has enrolled all of us in the educational process of learning to trust Him with more and more of our lives. The Lord is always looking for faith, and He tries to draw it out from those who are with Him. Jesus did this with the Syro-Phoenician woman whose daughter was ill, the father of the demon-possessed boy, blind Bartimaeus,

and Jesus’ own obtuse disciples (me included).

I often take a bag of mustard seeds with me to hand out before we pray for breakthroughs in difficult situations. They come from a seed specialist in my church. The seeds are very tiny black objects, not the partially germinated yellow ones from the grocery store. As brothers and sisters in Christ hold these in their hands together, they realize it does not take a lot of faith. It takes only the willingness to exercise what we have. As we do, that faith unleashes God’s hand to do His wonders.

Ephesians 2:6: “God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.”

Notice this is past tense. It has already been accomplished. We have been raised with Christ to sit in heavenly places with Him. Though we are still very much rooted in this material world, we are already joined through the Spirit to the One who sits on the throne of the universe. Through intimacy with the risen Lord, we share in His authority exercised by faith through prayer.

What an awesome position He has accorded us to rule and reign with Him! When we understand that and live in the presence of the supernatural, all-powerful Lord of eternity, trusting Him for miracles on earth becomes routine, normal behavior.

Let’s begin to live and pray from that position so we can see breakthroughs for our world we have not yet dreamed of!

—JOHN ROBB

killed two million Cambodians, were hiding in jungle camps. They continued to reappear and murder whole villages of people. Thousands joined in prayer with a specific request that “the Khmer Rouge would dissolve.” Three months later, on February 7, 1995, the *New York Times* proclaimed on the front page: “The Khmer Rouge are dissolving!”

Afterwards an international team of prayer facilitators led Cambodian Christian leaders through a process of repentance and reconciliation. Faith-filled, united prayer resulted in a noticeable change in the spiritual atmosphere of the nation. In just a few years, the Church experienced meteoric growth to more than 40 times its original size.

Sierra Leone, May 2000: An ongoing civil war (made more famous, after the fact, by the movie *Blood Diamond*), resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of people. In an orgy of blood lust, a force of 50,000 rebels hacked off the limbs of even small children as they ransacked and terrorized the whole nation. But then, 1,200 Christian leaders (more than 90 percent of the national church leadership) came together in desperation to cry out to the Lord for His deliverance.

The rebel leader was arrested after the first day of prayer. However, things did not improve immediately as hoped. Instead, rebel forces moved toward the capital city to attack. But they were repelled by a new alliance of militias and a British expeditionary force.

Participants in the initiative across the nation continued praying. In the succeeding months, the rebels voluntarily handed over their weapons to the UN peacekeepers, who broke them up and made them into farm implements!

Peace, security, and development returned to Sierra Leone. The current president, a Christian, helps lead the national prayer efforts along with one of our African colleagues.

These are a few of many stories from 58 national prayer initiatives around

the world. We do not always see the same dramatic impact. But we always see God’s gracious hand bringing about positive, tangible changes during and after such initiatives. They have resoundingly demonstrated that the Lord can use His people and their united, Spirit-led prayers of faith to transform any difficult situation a community or nation faces.

Get Desperate

In every case I can remember, such history-changing prayer initiatives have been characterized by the participants’ sense of true desperation. Circumstances of war, suffering, or corruption seemed overpowering and impossible to change—by human means. Christ’s people were driven to seek the Lord with all their hearts, realizing there was no other hope.

Of course, this is exactly what our God is waiting for us to do as well. He

said, “If . . . you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deut. 4:29). I believe this is the kind of desperation God wants us to cultivate in the West. Because everything here is usually predictable, comfortable, and convenient, we are often blind to dangers that threaten us internally and externally, spiritually and physically.

It is time to wake up, becoming both vigilant and desperate in praying for the Lord’s transforming breakthroughs. Let’s “rethink possible” and trust Him to do as He promises—far beyond all we can ask or think—in our lives, communities, and the entire world! **PC**



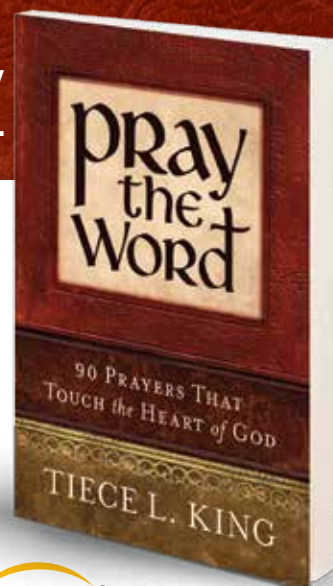
JOHN ROBB is chairman of the International Prayer Council (ipcprayer.org). He is also a member of America’s National Prayer Committee.

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Figuring

in

with

of

for

By Pat Heston

PETER MARSHALL, THE GREAT PREACHER of the early 20th century, spoke of “faith . . . as real as fire . . . and prayer as real as potatoes.” That phrase not only appeals to our senses but also reveals the intimate biblical connection between faith and prayer.

Christians know almost instinctively that faith and prayer belong together. But Scripture joins the two words in the same sentence only in rare examples:

- James’s insistence that the prayer of faith will make sick people well (James 5:15)
- Jesus’ instruction that whatever we ask for in prayer we will receive if we have faith (Matt. 21:22; Mark 11:24)
- Jesus’ promise to Peter: “I have prayed for you . . . that your faith may not fail” (Luke 22:32).

Out Faith & Prayer

In, With, Of, For—Those Pesky Prepositions

Though rare grammatically, the link between prayer and faith, however, is a common assumption of nearly every teaching and story about prayer in the Bible. From entreaties of Abram in Genesis to those of saints in Revelation, the words, phrases, cries, and petitions are flooded with faith. From Jesus' example of prayer to His teachings on the subject,

faith is obvious, though seldom named.

Modern Christian jargon has developed a fondness for prepositions that Scripture seems not to share. We speak and write of praying *in* faith and *with* faith and *for* faith, even of offering a prayer *of* faith, which is the one prepositional phrase the Bible does use.¹ The fact that the first three are foreign to

Scripture does not render them invalid, however. The concepts are present even if the precise expressions are not.

So what can we learn by considering the nuances of each of these phrases?

Praying in Faith

Today the phrase, *praying in faith*, is used so freely and loosely that, in practice, it means little more than praying *with* faith. But that tiny, two-letter preposition, *in*, deserves to stand on its own. And when it does, it reveals a truly vital element of prayer.

In means exactly what it sounds like: *inside, within, contained or enclosed by*, e.g., "I put money in your birthday card" or "the cake is in the oven." To be *in* is to exist within a specific realm.

My daughter, an actress, lives *in* Hollywood. It is the realm of her existence. It is where she lives and works, eats and sleeps, auditions and acts. It is that place from which all her goings and comings, and all her social and business contacts originate. She is *in* Hollywood. She lives there.

To pray *in* faith is not so much to pray believing as it is to pray from the realm of faith, to pray from where one lives, to pray from a life of faith. It is the example of Elijah. Within the context of a life of faith, he prayed for God to answer and fire fell. He prayed for drought to end and rain fell.

To pray *in* faith is the essence of James 5:16: "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." Not the prayer of *any* person, but of a *righteous* person—of one whose prayer flows from where and how he or she lives: *in* faith.

When our prayers do not issue from a life of faith-in-practice, we are like persons attempting to run a marathon from a life of sloth and gluttony. Or, worse yet, like sons of the Jewish priest Sceva, who wrongly thought that success in casting out demons lay in the act and words themselves, rather than in the life behind them (Acts 19:13–16).

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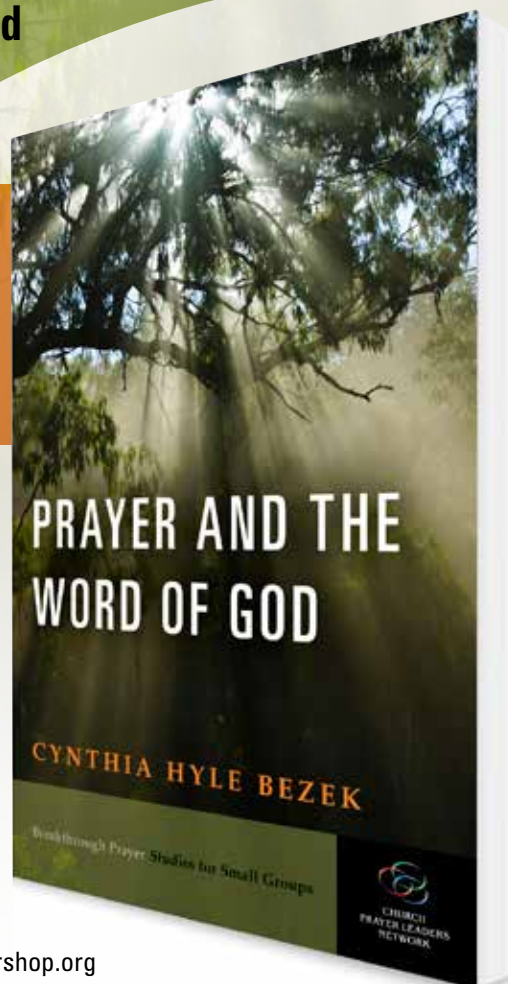
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The life behind prayer creates the core of praying *in* faith.

Praying *with* Faith

With implies closeness or proximity, being near, alongside, or in the company of, e.g., “I enjoy walks *with* my wife” or “I like spending time *with* friends.” It shows faith operating alongside prayer, one incomplete without the other.

But *with* can also mean “into,” as in “to get just the right color and shade, the artist mixed blue paint *with* yellow.” That describes an even closer closeness, a comingling where two actually become one. Prayer and faith are that intimately joined.

The Book of James is a microcosm of the Bible’s teaching on praying *with* faith. The author cannot conceive of prayer operating apart from faith (1:5–8). James’s assertion that prayer is not prayer without faith derives from Jesus’ teachings on the subject (Matt. 21:18–22; Mark 11:22–26). And most great prayers of Scripture² are phenomenal affirmations of faith.

Without faith, not only are works dead (James 2:17), but so is prayer.

Praying *for* Faith

The Bible tells of Jacob working 14 years *for* his wife Rachel (Gen. 29:1–30). In the literal sense of that preposition, he worked “in order to get, to have, or to keep.” Praying *for* faith is pleading for what we need from an awareness of lack.

- It is the prayer of the father of a demon-possessed son in his petition to Jesus: “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24).

- It is the prayer of the disciples who were so unnerved by Jesus’ words that they cried to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” (Luke 17:5).

- It is Jesus’ prayer for Peter, the fisherman-turned-disciple, when he entered the fiercest test of his life. Jesus told him, “I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail” (Luke 22:32).

- It is the early believers’ prayer for boldness in the face of increasing persecution (Acts 4:29–30). In that prayer *for* faith, they were asking, as Paul did for the Corinthians, that they might stand firm in the faith (1 Cor. 16:13).

When trials reveal chinks in our spiritual armor, gaps in our confidence, or flaws in our courage, a prayer *for* faith

is an urgent—even desperate—plea that we might not fail but stand firm.

Prayer of Faith

The term *of faith* occurs only in James 5:15, and it comes with a promise: “The prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up” (ESV).

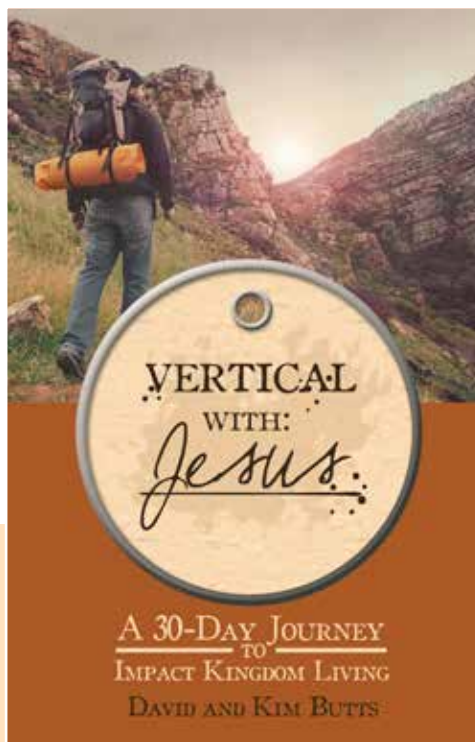
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A prayer *of* faith is one of assurance based on a definite promise from God.

Elijah's prayer for rain, mentioned by James (5:17–18), was a prayer *of* faith. Elijah offered that prayer with full assurance because he had a definite promise from God (1 Kings 18:1).

But other prayers—such as those of Jesus in the agony of Gethsemane³—were spoken into the face of uncertainty: “If it is possible” and “if it is not possible.” Here there is no definite promise from God. But it is nonetheless an utterance *of* faith, for Jesus prayed,

“Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

A prayer *of* faith is one of acceptance, fully surrendered to the will of God.

Where there is a definite promise from God, we pray with expectation. As Andrew Murray says, “Faith in the promises is the fruit of faith in the Promiser.” Where there is no definite promise from God, however, we pray with expectancy, confident that His will is for our good and His glory.

Either way, the prayer is one *of* faith.

Living Out the Prepositions

At first glance, these prepositions may seem insignificant. But each one unpacks a unique perspective of relating faith to prayer.

- Praying *in* faith assumes lifestyle—which gives prayer its power.
- Praying *with* faith assumes partnership—which allows prayer and faith to operate in sync.
- Praying *for* faith assumes necessity—which means that sometimes we will lack faith, so we pray that our faith may not fail but stand firm.
- A prayer *of* faith assumes trust—which is grounded in the promise of God and the God of the promise.

In the end, prayer and faith are not so much meant to be figured out as they are meant to be *lived out*. **PC**

¹James 5:15: “the prayer of faith will make the sick person well.”

²From Hezekiah's prayer in the face of Sennacherib's threat (2 Kings 18:17–19:19) to Jonah's cry from the belly of a great fish (Jonah 2:1–9) to the early Christians' prayer for boldness (Acts 4:29–30), as only three examples.

³Matthew 26:36–46; Mark 14:32–42; Luke 22:39–46.



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By Sandra Higley

faith and Prayer

Note: This Bible study is formatted for small group open discussion. If you use this study by yourself, we suggest that you journal your answers to the discussion questions. Also, please use suggested translations where indicated. Biblegateway.com is an excellent source for translations you may not have on hand.

A Bible Study

A DEAR FRIEND'S DESPERATE call brought my daughter and me to our knees in prayerful sorrow. Our friend had just experienced a tragic loss—one of many—and was almost inconsolable. As we went to the Lord on her behalf, we clearly and unitedly felt the Lord impress on our hearts that we were to pray for something that was beyond the scope of our imagination—something we could not conceive was possible. But as we continued to dialogue with Him, the Lord was very specific about the lengths He wanted us to go to, asking for this thing that required much faith.

We rose early the next morning, fasting and praying and worshipping. We both travailed in prayer with an anointing we knew came from the Holy Spirit. Minutes of prayer turned into hours. At last the phone call came. Our faith-filled prayers had been answered: *No*.

To say we were shocked is an understatement. The instructions had been so clear, the agreement so complete. The Holy Spirit's leading had been so strong. I cried out to God, "Lord, why did You ask us to pray that way if You were only going to answer no? It never would have crossed our minds to ask this except that You impressed it on us!"

The Lord's response was immediate: "Do you have faith to pray it again?"

In that moment, I came to understand that the initiation, participation, and execution of prayer is all about faith. Faith is the thing that pleases Him. However He chooses to answer, however He uses our feeble contribution, none of that should be our concern. Prayer is His idea, not ours.

Faith says, "HE. IS. FAITHFUL." That is the beginning, the end, and the middle.

Discussion Questions

Has there ever been a time when you were asked to pray for something that was out of your comfort zone? What was the outcome and how did it affect the way you pray now?

Using Hebrews 11:1 as a guide, write out a definition of faith in your own words:

Divide the verses in Hebrews 11:3–38 equally among the members of your group. Take a few minutes to explore the verse(s) you've been given, identifying the faith-filled believer in each, what they believed God for, and any opposition that came their way in the process. Come together as a larger group and discuss your findings.

Read Hebrews 11:6, 13, 39–40; now read 2 Samuel 22:31 and Job 13:15. Why do you think God sometimes uses unseen fulfillment of promises to perfect us?

How do you think this relates to Ron Auch's statement regarding James 1:4: "[It] begins with the little word *let*: 'Let perseverance finish its work.' The word *let* simply means that it will happen if we don't prevent it."

Auch goes on to describe the chief way we prevent perseverance from finishing its work: double-mindedness. He explains being double-minded in this way: "While praying [for something], in the back of our minds we are figuring out what we will do if God does not answer us." He adds, "This is part of the problem of living in a self-sufficient society." Can you identify with his assessment? If so, how does this mindset describe how you may sometimes approach prayer? Can you say you are letting perseverance finish its work? Why or why not?

Read James 1:2–8 and discuss the results of double-minded prayer.

"If we ignore God's promises to do the impossible . . ." John Robb tells us, "it is as if we have, in effect, taken scissors to Scripture." Take a moment to reflect. Are there any verses you have "cut out" or decided don't apply to you? What brought you to that conclusion?

Robb exhorts us to "rethink possible." If you took that encouragement to heart, how would you "rethink possible" in the way you are praying about a situation you face right now?

The following Scriptures list a few things faith does. Match each

Scripture reference (right column) with the truth it teaches (left). How does this apply to a faith-filled prayer life? Faith . . .

Brings righteousness	Luke 7:50
Heals	Galatians 5:22
Saves	1 Corinthians 12:8–9
Sanctifies	Romans 5:1
Is the fruit of the Spirit	James 2:17
Encourages	1 John 5:4
Overcomes	Acts 3:16
Is a gift	Romans 1:12
Justifies	Acts 26:18
By itself is dead	Romans 1:17

John Edmiston encourages us to remember that the great intercessor Elijah was a "man with a nature like ours" (James 5:17–18, NKJV). He goes on to say, "Effective faith flows out of a heart connection with the Almighty. But purely mental faith will never take a large risk." Share your thoughts about how these truths can impact your faith as you pray.

Action Steps

Pat Heston describes the "prepositions of faith"—praying *in*, *with*, and *for* faith, as well as prayers *of* faith.

He writes, "At first glance, these prepositions may seem insignificant. But each one unpacks a unique perspective, relating faith to prayer."

- Praying *in* faith assumes lifestyle—which gives prayer its power.
- Praying *with* faith assumes partnership—which allows prayer and faith to operate in sync.
- Praying *for* faith assumes necessity—which means that sometimes we will lack faith, so we pray that our faith may not fail but stand firm.
- A prayer *of* faith assumes trust—which is grounded in the promise of God and the God of the promise.

What steps will you take to live out the prepositions of faith in your prayer life?

SANDRA HIGLEY is an intercessor, author, and editor whose journey in prayer began in 1993. She lives in Colorado Springs, CO.



Is This the Generation? | By Ron Boehme

More than 100 years ago a praying Student Volunteer Movement thrust 100,000 young people into the forefront of missions. Will God do it again?

Today's students receive many messages about life. They are told to be themselves, have fun, and care about the planet. But do we really connect today's kids with the reason they are here?

Today's students were born for a purpose. That purpose and mission is Christ's Great Commission—as yet uncompleted. This generation is uniquely poised to do it for several reasons:

- Others have set the stage.
- Technology has made the world reachable.
- The final global strongholds are falling.
- Just possibly they were born for “such a time as this” (Esther 4:14).

Others have set the stage. For the past 2,000 years the Church has been progressively expanding. According to the U.S. Center for World Missions, in AD 100 the ratio of nonbelievers to professing Christians was 360:1. In 2000 the ratio of non-Christians to professing Christians stood at 6:1.

Here's a glimpse of the playing field in 2014: More than 2.2 billion people call themselves Christians, 2.7 billion have heard of Jesus, and another 2.3 billion have not. God wants to reach them all—and it's happening.

In China, the greatest ingathering of souls in the history of a nation has taken place in the past 60 years when the Church grew from three million to possibly 100 million. The largest Muslim nation in the world—Indonesia—is approaching 20 percent Christian. Korea

is poised to become the first Protestant Christian nation in Asia.

The advance of the Great Commission is no less dramatic elsewhere. In Latin America there were 50,000 Protestants in 1900. Today there are 60 million. More evangelicals are serving Jesus today in Brazil than in all of Europe. One hundred years ago, Christians comprised only four percent of Africa. Today, they number a staggering 300 million. It is an amazing time to be alive as the good news sweeps across the global arena.

Others paved the way. Now it's this generation's turn.

Technology has made the world reachable. I flew a few months ago from central Asia to Seattle. It took less than a day. It's difficult to grasp that people have been flying commercially for only 100 years. Add to that the ease of communication—telephone, email, video conferencing, radio, television, and the Internet—and you have a unique time in history when the earth has become truly reachable for Christ.

As Roman roads were a blessing to missionaries in the early centuries, imagine what a technically savvy generation can do in this era to communicate God's love. They can jet to every nation on earth in a matter of hours or days. They can take short-term missions trips or live in a foreign nation for a lifetime. It doesn't take a year to sail around the Horn to reach a distant country. There are vaccinations to prevent disease. Languages can be translated more quickly and shared with oral-based tribes.

Even without travel, this generation can beam the gospel by radio and television into 237 nations or set up websites and chat with their counterparts in most countries. There has never been a better

time or generation to communicate God's love.

Satan's final strongholds are falling. The WWII generation brought the defeat of Fascism. The baby boomers saw the fall of Communism. The final satanic “Alamo” is the Islamic world. Even as the Islamic State (ISIS) rears its ugly head in the Middle East, many Muslims are turning to Christ. Is the crumbling of the Islamic veil the final major hurdle in the evangelization of the world?

For such a time as this. In all of history God's deliverances were preceded by Satan's attacks on youth. As mentioned previously, the largest missions movement of all was the Student Volunteer Movement (1880s to 1930s), which sent 100,000 young missionaries into many nations.

Today's Christian youth are a generation that has been rescued from the abortion chambers. As Pharaoh tried to kill off the Exodus generation and Herod moved to destroy the children in Bethlehem at the birth of Jesus, Satan has always tried to kill off the younger generation because another great event is coming—perhaps in our day—the return of Christ.

But the devil won't succeed because this generation has been “chosen” for a great and awesome purpose. God wants to raise up a 21st century Student Volunteer Movement to send millions of young people *from* every nation *to* every nation. Let's pray this generation will accept their calling to complete their destiny. **PC**



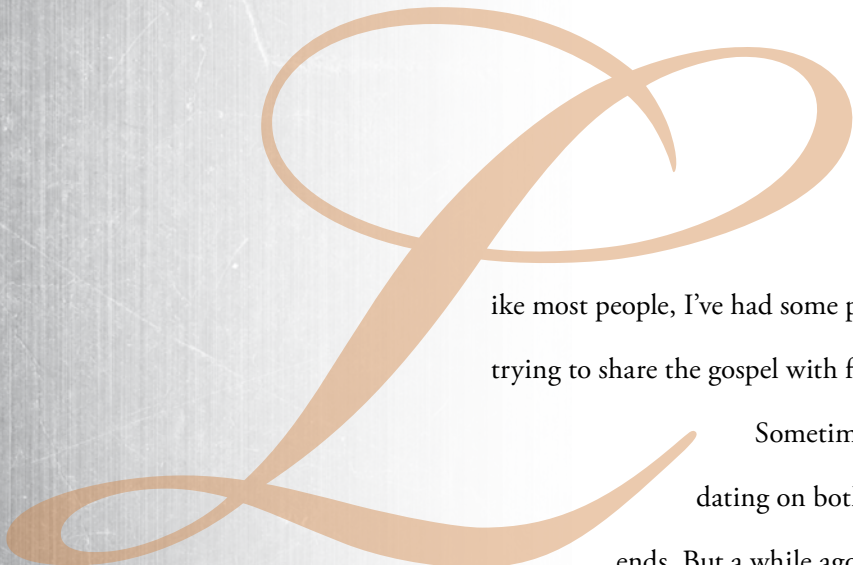
RON BOEHME is the Northwest USA director of Youth With A Mission (YWAM) and author of five books. He is a frequent speaker on missions, leadership, spiritual revival, and current events (usrenewal.org).



The Power of
Caring and Praying
for Others

By Pierre M. Eade

May I Pray for You?



Like most people, I've had some pretty awkward conversations trying to share the gospel with friends and acquaintances.

Sometimes evangelism seems intimidating on both the giving and receiving ends. But a while ago I learned ways that prayer can ease the process for both parties.

Many people who are not open to an evangelistic presentation are very receptive to prayer for their personal needs. So now I not only pray privately *for* people to be saved, but I also offer to pray *with* them as well.

Let me share some of my experiences—the good, bad, and ugly—so you can avoid some of my mistakes while capitalizing on some of the lessons I learned.

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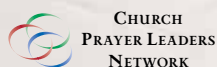
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**Pray out loud, on the spot,
if the person is willing.**

People are generally open to our praying
for their needs. They view a statement
such as, "I will pray for you about that,"
or a question, "May I pray for you about
these things?" as an act of kindness. I
often follow up by asking, "Do you mind
if I pray with you *now*?"

I try to keep my prayers short, faith-
filled and devoid of Christian jargon.
At the same time, I don't shy away from
praying "in Jesus' name."

**Praying for felt needs
can produce an open door
to share the gospel.**

Kevin was the short-order cook at my
company's cafeteria. Almost every morn-
ing I would greet him and place my
order. We occasionally shared trivial
pleasantries but rarely engaged in deep
conversation.

One morning as I approached Kevin's
station, I noticed his head painfully tilted
at a 45-degree angle. I offered to pray for
him. He quickly accepted my offer and
met me at the front of the grill. I asked
if he minded my placing my hand on his
sore neck. (I have learned never to touch
the prayer recipient before asking permis-
sion.) Kevin agreed, so I laid my hand on
his neck and prayed for healing in Jesus'
name. Kevin thanked me and returned
to his station with his head in the same
position as when I had prayed.

It can be intimidating to pray for
someone to be healed, not knowing
whether God will instantly, gradually, or
ever answer that prayer. But I've learned
that whether people are healed or not,
they appreciate genuine care for their
need. I simply pray in faith and trust
God with the rest.

The next day Kevin greeted me
warmly. "My neck is healed!" he ex-
claimed loud enough for the whole caf-
eteria to hear. I rejoiced with Kevin and
gave thanks to God.

Praying for a person's felt needs can

be a great testament to the power and
validity of the gospel message. In Kevin's
case it initiated a relationship between
Kevin and me that soon led to his ac-
cepting Christ.

**Don't assume a person
who receives prayer is ready
to hear the gospel.**

Generally speaking, people who receive
sincere prayer, whether it's answered or
not, *do* become more receptive to the
gospel. However, we can never assume
that praying for someone also gives us
the right to share the gospel. We must
see prayer as an opportunity to touch a
person's life, not a platform-building ex-
ercise to preach.

Krishna, a Hindu man who worked
as a consultant on a project I managed,
asked if I could meet with him pri-
vately to discuss a personal matter. He
explained that he would need to leave
the project and move on to another
job. Krishna was a crucial player in our
project, and we both knew his untimely
departure would negatively affect our
project's outcome.

In place of distress or worry, God
gave me the grace to listen to what led to
his leaving at such an inopportune time.
He explained some things that were
jeopardizing his family's well being. Feel-
ing Krishna's dilemma, I asked if I could
pray for him. He was more than happy
to receive prayer.

After I prayed, he thanked me pro-
fusely for my kindness. I felt a natural
opening to share the gospel with him, yet
as I talked, he crossed his arms and his
countenance changed. He was no longer
receptive. I took his cue and allowed him
to steer our conversation.

At times our prayers provide a natu-
ral bridge to share the gospel. Other
times, people respond positively to prayer
but negatively to the gospel message.
Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit gives us
the wisdom to know the next step in our
conversation.

Respect people and follow the Holy Spirit. Don't force opportunities.

In times past, I would have argued that our greatest need as Christians is to share the gospel. Now I'm learning that our greatest responsibility is to love God, love others, and allow the Spirit to use us in whatever way He pleases.

My neighbor was dying of a terminal illness. This man knew of my faith in Christ but lacked interest in—even disdained—my beliefs. At the time, it seemed right to pray for him to receive healing. When I offered to pray for him, he kindly declined. I persisted, trying to persuade him of God's power to heal and do wonders. Finally, he allowed me to pray for him.

Almost instantly after I prayed, he curtly thanked me for my visit (and the dessert I had brought) then hurried me out. He obviously felt offended and uncomfortable. Two days later my neighbor

went into a coma. Soon afterward he died.

Looking back, I am confident God sent me to my neighbor's house in his time of need. But if I could go back in time, I would respect his request and not pray for him on the spot.

If people decline your offer of prayer, respect their wishes and don't be discouraged. By all means, don't forget to pray for them after you leave their presence. At times, people want prayer but aren't comfortable receiving it publicly. The people who deny their need for prayer are often the ones who need your prayers most.

Show God's love for the person and trust God's ability to answer.

Craig was a consultant who worked on my team in the office. Although he wasn't a Christian, Craig knew I was, and he had shown some interest in my faith.

One day as I visited Craig at his desk, he told me about his morning—being pulled over for speeding and almost getting arrested. He also told me that his unborn child faced considerable odds of serious birth defects.

Obviously distraught, he detailed his feelings and concerns, so I asked him, "May I pray for you right now?"

He agreed, and I simply asked God to grant him peace, rest, and guidance in decisions he and his wife faced about the baby's future. When I finished praying, Craig thanked me and then continued to share his heart about his wife's pregnancy. I listened.

The following workday Craig sent me this email: "I enjoyed our talk the other day and although I've never been religious I found your prayer very comforting."

Craig's response both encouraged and surprised me because he showed no visible changes when I prayed. This experience taught me never to underestimate

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the power of our prayers regardless of the lack of immediate, visible evidence.

When God answers prayer immediately, direct praise to Him.

Sometimes people I have prayed for will come back to me later and let me know the significance of my prayers. Other times, I never hear back. Then there have been those special moments when God answers my prayer immediately.

One day in the hallway at work a woman was walking slowly in my direction, hand on head, scowling in obvious pain. I stopped and asked, "Are you OK?"

"I've got a terrible headache," she replied.

"Do you mind if I pray for you?"

She gave me permission. After my prayer, she looked up with a bright face and told me she felt much better. So I explained to her that I was a Christian

and that God was all-powerful.

When God responds instantly to our prayers, He expects us to redirect the person's attention from us to Christ. In the Book of Acts after Paul healed a crippled man in Lystra, the people tried to worship him and Barnabas, confusing them for the Greek gods Hermes and Zeus. Paul quickly redirected their focus by saying, "Friends, why are you doing this? We too are only human, like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them" (Acts 14:15).

Prayers for blessing build great rapport.

At times, God's power to answer prayer can do more to draw an unbeliever to Christ than the most winsome and biblically sound apologetics. I've found this

particularly true with people of religious beliefs that differ from my own.

Several months ago, I met a Muslim man named Syed who opened a gas station near my home. After introducing myself, I told him I was a Christian and would like to pray for the prosperity of his business. He warmly welcomed my prayers. While shaking his hand, I prayed a prayer of blessing over him, his new gas station, and his other family businesses. He thanked me for my prayers.

The next time I visited his store, he warmly greeted me with the words, "My brother, welcome back!"

I was amazed by his warmth and enthusiasm. After I prayed with him a second time, he said, "The world needs more kind men like you."

This proved a great segue to talk about Jesus. Syed and I stood at his counter and spoke about the Lord. He asked me some very heartfelt, sincere questions. My prayers with Syed had opened his heart to the gospel in a beautiful way.

Ready, Set, Pray!

Knowing that the world is filled with hurting people God loves, I can confidently ask Him to provide opportunities to pray. I not only pray for people's receptiveness to prayer, but also that I will be sensitive to their needs. As with any other type of outreach, I ask God to give me the courage and love to pray.

Praying with people who do not know Christ is by no means the only way to share the gospel, but it can open hearts to hearing the good news. If asking a person where he or she will spend eternity seems intimidating, try asking a much easier question: "May I pray for you?" **PC**



PIERRE M. EADE worked as a project manager in corporate America before becoming pastor of outreach at Washington Crossing, PA, United Methodist Church. His new book *Born to Grow* and other writings can be found at christiangrowthnetwork.com.

DISCIPLE YOUR PEOPLE

TO PRAY GOD'S WORD

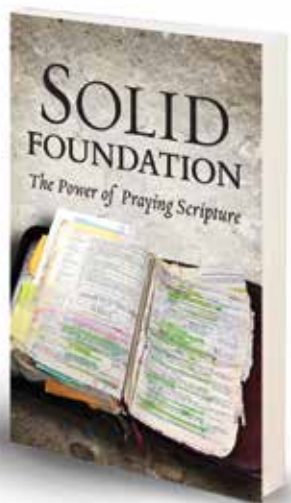
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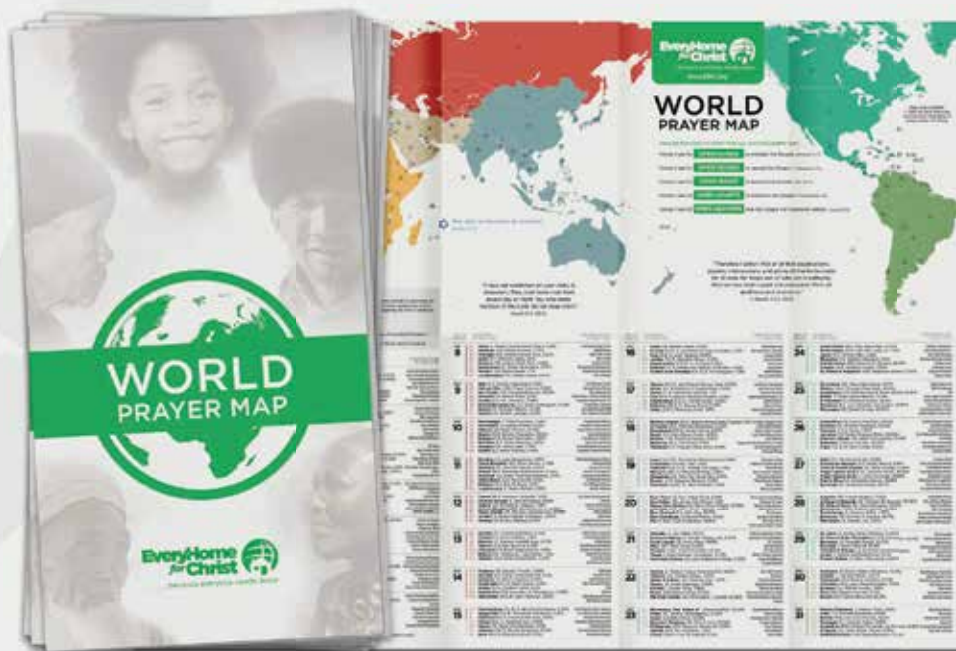


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POSSIBILITIES

WHAT HAPPENS



BY DANIEL HENDERSON

Every parent knows the incredible anticipation and joy of the birth of a child. Filled with hope, we can think nothing but the best as we anticipate the journey of parenting.

However, the demands and dilemmas involved in raising a child can quickly overwhelm even the most optimistic of parents. Children are an amazing blessing from God, but the pathway of parenthood can also be fraught with many dangers, toils, and snares.

Similarly, most Christians have a positive perspective about prayer—and most speak enthusiastically about “talking with God.” We eagerly embrace prayer as a tool for both personal enrichment and coping with difficulties. Many church leaders aspire to see prayer become more evident within their congregations.

However, when we move beyond romantic notions about prayer to real commitment, unexpected opposition always follows. Concerted efforts to make prayer an authentic and all-encompassing reality in the life of the church can evoke perplexing responses.

AND PERILS

WHEN A CHURCH DEVELOPS AUTHENTIC PRAYER?

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MINISTRIES

After 30-plus years of pastoral leadership in prayer (and working with hundreds of pastors across the nation to develop greater levels of prayer) I have come to some new clarity about realistic expectations.

THE POSSIBILITIES

First, let's look at the exciting possibilities of making an enduring commitment to a dynamic culture of prayer in the local church. From the promises of God's Word, church history, and my own journey over the decades, I have a passion to help believers understand what they can expect the Lord to do as they resolutely seek Him together in the context of life and ministry.

1. Expect Spirit-provided direction. Many ministries seem to lack clear direction. The account of the early Church in the Book of Acts, and its members' commitment to obediently wait on the Lord, inspires us. The early believers sought to receive direction from the Holy Spirit for all His blessings in, among, and through them. Today God expects us to seek the leadership and direction of the Spirit for His work (Gal. 5:25; Rev. 2:7). And He gladly provides it.

2. Expect authentic unity. The Spirit is the source and preserver of unity among God's people (Eph. 4:3–6). As we seek the Lord in one accord, receiving grace and wisdom from the Spirit, we are united at the deepest level. We experience and express our oneness in Christ while surrendering other loyalties and agendas to His will (1 Cor. 3:3, 16, 12:13).

3. Expect individual transformation. Prayer is primarily designed to transform our lives and empower us as agents of transformation in the world. Paul described it this way: "And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18).

4. Expect personal encouragement and comfort. Our Lord is the "God of all comfort" (2 Cor. 1:3). The early Church faced many trials but continued to come to the Lord in prayer to receive divine enabling and encouragement in many situations (Acts 4:23–31; 16:25–34). We can do the same.

5. Expect Spirit-empowered outreach. The Holy Spirit is a witness-bearing Spirit (Acts 1:8). The story of Acts is the account of the Spirit of God filling His people as they sought the Lord—and then empowering them with a burden and divine capability to share the gospel locally, regionally, and beyond. In the same way, our lost and troubled world desperately needs His Spirit-empowered gospel lived out through us.

6. Expect growing trust. Nothing allows us to know the hearts of other believers like praying together. Twice in my pastoral ministry, I have been called to large churches following the trust-destroying event of a moral failure by my predecessor. I learned that when God's people seek Him together, they get to know one another at a deep level. The love of the Spirit restores trust and health, even in broken situations (Rom. 15:30; 1 Cor. 13:6–7).

7. Expect the grace of humility. It has been said that the key to humility is a high view of God. Worship-based prayer cultivates a deep reverence and love for the Lord, according to His Word. This diminishes pride and invites divine grace and wisdom. God blesses humble people and grants them favor in their relationships (James 3:13–18, 4:16; 1 Peter 5:5).

8. Expect "glorious" church services. The New Testament reminds us that our goal in worship services is that participants (saved and unsaved) are compelled to declare, "God is really among you!" (1 Cor. 14:25). His "glory" (His honor and His manifest presence) is our aim (Eph. 3:21). United hearts, seeking His blessing, invite this kind of work.

9. Expect a spirit of thanksgiving. Paul noted that praying together accelerates believers' recognition of His work because they are actively participating in it. This multiplies the expressions of thanksgiving to Him (2 Cor. 1:11, 4:15). Nothing compares to the joy of a thankful church.

10. Expect joyful generosity. When the Spirit grips the hearts of people and invites them into His purposes, He also empowers a new level of giving. People drink deeply of the grace that empowers supernatural generosity by giving themselves first to the Lord. He naturally unleashes grace in their finances (2 Cor. 8:5–8).

11. Expect spontaneous ministry mobilization. Like generosity, Spirit-empowered service flows from hearts that are calling on the Lord. When we seek Him, we are motivated to serve Him in the supernatural enabling of His divinely granted gifts.

12. Expect God-ordained growth. Christ wants to build His Church with a growth that comes from God (Matt. 16:18; Col. 2:19). When we declare our dependence on Him as the source of growth, He delights in advancing His work through us by His power.

13. Expect the potential of revival. Revival is a sovereign bestowal of the supernatural power of Christ upon His people. We do not manipulate it by our prayers, but when we pray, we are in a posture to catch the “wind” of revival when it blows. Even our extraordinary praying is often an indicator of the Lord’s prompting and His desire to prepare us for a special endowment of His power.

14. Expect eternal reward. When we stand before the Lord, He will not ask us about the “size” of our ministry but the “substance” (1 Cor. 3:11–15). Ministry accomplished merely in the energy of human effort will be burned like wood, hay, and straw. Christ-reliant, Spirit-empowered, prayer-

energized ministry will endure for His glory—and for our reward, like gold, silver, and precious stones.

BE MINDFUL OF THE PERILS

But perils are also inevitable. When a church makes strides toward creating a culture of prayer, opposition will come from a variety of sources. The reality of prayer perils should not deter you from moving forward. Instead, awareness of them will help you navigate rough waters when momentum stalls.

1. Expect satanic counterattack. When we make the commitment to accelerate our praying, we pick a fight with the devil at a whole new level. Our spiritual enemy is not particularly threatened by a busy church, a big church, an educated church, a high-tech church, a talent-rich church, or even a conservative, evangelical church. He is

threatened by a praying church. When a congregation declares their dependence on the power of the Spirit and the Word, through prayer, Satan amasses all varieties of counterattack.

Yet, we are called to be “praying menaces” to the devil. We have powerful spiritual weapons in prayer to wage a winning battle (2 Cor. 6:7, 10:4; Eph. 6:18). We must persist and prevail.

2. Expect superficial resistance. Many people are very content with a nominal request-based approach to prayer. When they hear that prayer can be something more, but that it will require more time and effort, superficial excuses abound. “I already know how to pray” is a common rebuttal.

Additionally, seeking the Lord through intimate worship with fellow believers can feel threatening to some who just want to get together to pray about “things,” usually pertaining to superficial

START THE DISCUSSION

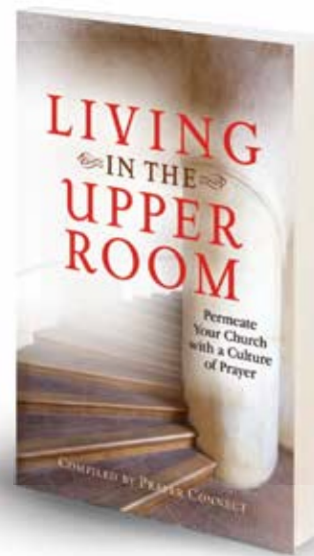
DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF PRAYER IN YOUR CHURCH

Engage your elders and staff in making prayer part of your church's DNA.

Living in the Upper Room is a 48-page, 4 x 6 booklet that includes the theme articles of *Prayer Connect* issue 10. It offers both a picture of how dynamic a praying church can be and practical steps on how to get there. This content can inspire your leadership team to desire becoming a praying church right out of the Book of Acts.

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concerns in the lives of other people. Expect pushback.

3. Expect traditional suspicion. Traditions die hard, especially when they have provided a safe and predictable path and a sense of belonging. For decades, churchgoers have been in a rut of attending “prayer meetings” that feature Bible study, discussion, and extended periods of talking about prayer requests—but minimal prayer. To seek to change that tradition through a Scripture-fed, Spirit-led, worship-based approach upsets the established apple cart. Expect misunderstanding and questioning.

4. Expect methodological dissonance. Prayer is a bold declaration that the Holy Spirit is still “the how-to” of faith and ministry. Sadly, we live in a method- and program-dependent church culture. We love to emulate the strategies of other successful

megachurches. Some leaders find security in this predictable and “proven” path of ministry agendas. The call to extraordinary prayer will often be met with subtle disagreement by those who find it more compelling to serve the Lord than to seek the Lord.

5. Expect leadership transition. Many volunteer and staff leaders in a church are content to “support” the prayer efforts as long as there are no specific expectations for their personal involvement. During my decades as a senior pastor, staff members would often ask, “Do I have to come to the prayer gatherings?” My answer was standard and clear: “I don’t want to *make you* come to prayer, but if you don’t *want to* then we need to have a conversation.”

If the priority of prayer is clear in the Bible, and if it is the obvious direction of the church, then those called

by God should have a desire to journey forward in obedience to the Lord. If this is not in their heart, they eventually transition to succeed in another role or ministry with different expectations. Difficult as that is, unity prevails and blessing follows.

6. Expect slow advancement. I often remind myself and others that a prayer culture is more a “crock pot” than a “microwave.” Experts on cultural change all agree that it only happens through constant, relentless pressure over a long period of time. By grace and the supply of the Spirit, we need to resolve that we will pursue the Lord and His blessing through prayer until the day we die. This is our calling. It is not easy, but it is definitely worth it.

7. Expect personal discouragement. I define discouragement as a “temporary loss of perspective.” In the midst of focusing on the “trees” of weekly prayer ministry, it is easy to lose sight of the “forest” of transformed lives and powerful gospel advancement.

OUR GREATEST NEED

In spite of the perils, be encouraged. Yes, the world, the flesh, and the devil oppose all attempts to embrace extraordinary prayer. John Piper says, “Until you know that life is war you cannot know what prayer is for.”

We must continue to fight the winning fight in the power of the Spirit, through passionate, persevering prayer. He is worthy. We are needy. The single greatest need of the world today is Jesus Christ living through a *revived* church.

May God give us conviction, perseverance, and great hope as we expect and experience His reward for a faithful, praying people. **PC**



DANIEL HENDERSON, president of Strategic Renewal (strategicrenewal.com), is also pastor of prayer at Mission Hills Church, Littleton, CO.

The graphic features the word "ONECRY" in large, bold, blue letters. The "1" is stylized with a city skyline silhouette inside it. Below the logo, the text "A Nationwide Call for Spiritual Awakening" is written in a smaller, black font. Further down, the words "TURN // PRAY // UNITE" are displayed in large, blue, sans-serif capital letters, separated by double slashes. Under "TURN" is the text "in humble repentance from every sin God reveals to us". Under "PRAY" is "with urgency for spiritual recovery and awakening". Under "UNITE" is "with other believers in spreading the hope of revival". At the bottom, there is a silhouette of a city skyline. Below the skyline, the text "To learn more about OneCry and to join the movement, visit" is written in white, followed by the website "www.onecry.com" in large, bold, white letters.

ONECRY
A Nationwide Call for Spiritual Awakening

TURN // PRAY // UNITE

in humble repentance from every sin God reveals to us

with urgency for spiritual recovery and awakening

with other believers in spreading the hope of revival

To learn more about OneCry and to join the movement, visit
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Here's the Top Ten List

Bringing people together in corporate prayer takes work. And at times it can be discouraging when prayer doesn't seem to be a priority. But here are my top ten reasons for encouraging and working toward getting more people involved in praying together in your church:

1 It helps more people become passionate about their involvement in God's Kingdom work.

It's not about the numbers. It is about equipping people to be Kingdom-minded. (And you'll find that the more "boat rowers" you have, the fewer "boat rockers" you'll have.)

2 It helps me as a pastor—and a prayer leader—to stress the importance of being a praying people. That's what God wants.

Prayer isn't only for the 80-year-old, silver-haired, 50-year-veteran Sunday school teacher. God directs all of His disciples to pray.

3 It helps us keep short accounts in the Body. If I am praying with and for others, it is tough to harbor anger, ill

feelings, or a desire to get even. Prayer tends to unite more than divide.

4 It helps keep the church family on the same page of mission and vision. If more of us are corporately involved in praying for matters, we move in the same direction. Corporate decisions are no longer a tug of war. People who pray with others are generally more loyal to the church.

5 It helps engender a greater variety of prayers. People may pray over matters in different ways, which brings a richness and broader perspective to prayer. Also, more pray-ers make 24-hour prayer vigils and chains a lot easier to do. (The pastor or prayer team leader doesn't have to stay up all night to cover the hours!)

6 It helps promote a Body/team concept. This isn't tennis or golf (a one-on-one activity). Praying together as one Body promotes a team spirit.

7 It helps people recognize they are in a battle. I like the word picture of an *army* of intercessors—prayer wrestlers storming the gates and throne.

8 It helps develop community. As in Acts, when people pray together, they naturally come around and support each other.

9 It helps provide a "pool" of prospective prayer leaders. As your church expands into future prayer ventures, you will need to identify and train more leaders. The best way to do that is by praying together first.

10 It helps a church make an impact in the community. A praying church is a driving force in any city!

TIM MCGARVEY is the senior pastor of First Alliance Church in Altoona, PA.

How to Pick a Prayer Team

Prayer grows faster if there is a clear plan and committed people in place to facilitate the plan. A pastor will find that once a prayer leader is in place, he or she will function best if a prayer team is developed to come around and support that person.

But the question is, *Once I have my prayer leader, how do I pick a team?*

Some churches simply leave the selection up to "whoever volunteers." This can work, but it is also risky. Prayer ministries need to have some of the best volunteers, so it is more beneficial to be proactive in considering who should be on the team and in asking people to join.

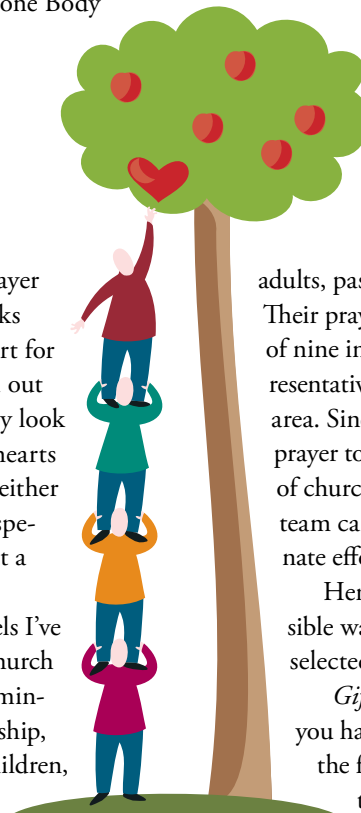
When a pastor selects a prayer leader, he or she obviously looks for someone with a strong heart for prayer. In the same way, to fill out the team some churches simply look for five people who also have hearts to pray. But a better way is to either look for the persons with the specific skills needed, or to recruit a cross section of the church.

One of the best team models I've observed is at Mission Hills Church in Denver, CO. This church's ministries focus on nine areas: worship, missions/evangelism, elders, children, youth, women, men, young

adults, pastoral/shepherding. Their prayer team is made up of nine individuals—one representative from each ministry area. Since Mission Hills wants prayer to permeate every area of church ministry, its prayer team can effectively coordinate efforts across ministries.

Here are two other possible ways a team can be selected and developed:

Gifting Mixes. Make sure you have a cross section of the following character types on your team: a





visionary, a problem solver, a people person, and an administrator.

Job Titles. Pick people who can lead specific prayer areas. Put them in charge of ministries such as corporate prayer meetings, pastor's prayer team, prayer

chain, discipleship/training, prayer room, and so on. This grouping is more practical if you select a team based on an understanding of people's hearts for prayer.

However you choose to select your team, make sure you are enlisting the

help of people who are both strong in their prayer lives and gifted to lead. A strong prayer team is crucial to the ministry of your church.

JONATHAN GRAF is publisher of *Prayer Connect*.

Covering Large Events with Prayer

Is your church planning to host a large event that you'd like to surround in prayer? Recently, our church served as a satellite location for Willow Creek's Global Leadership Summit. We designated a prayer team to support the event and to pray for guests. And we also set aside a prayer room where people could seek out prayer. But we tried something we haven't done before—a prayer focus based on Acts 1.

After Jesus' ascension (40 days after His resurrection, Acts 1:3–9), the disciples joined together—constantly in prayer—in the upper room (Acts 1:14) until the day of Pentecost. This would have been about ten days because Pentecost was 50 days after Passover. In response to the disciples' concerted prayer, God poured out His Holy Spirit in an unprecedented display of His power, leading to 3,000 conversions in one day (Acts 2:41).

In the spirit of the upper room, we set aside a ten-day period of focused prayer leading up to the Global Leadership Summit. On the evening of Day 1, a prayer meeting at the church launched our prayer campaign. We couldn't coordinate schedules to meet at the church daily, so on Days 2–9, we simply sent out emails to the prayer team, highlighting requests participants could pray about.

Since this event has global impact, we followed the pattern of Acts 1:8 in our prayers, starting with our church and widening to the community, to other churches hosting the Summit in North America, and finally to the world. Each day we offered a brief encouragement to

pray—either from Scripture or from a classic book on prayer. We included 5–6 specific prayer items. We reminded our team that, while we prayed about the details, God's glory was the ultimate aim of our prayers.

On Day 10 (the day before the Summit), we prayerwalked the church, stopping in each room to be used for the Summit. For those who couldn't attend the prayerwalk, we emailed our room-by-room prayer items. Finally, we wrote and emailed a prayer (patterned after the

Lord's Prayer) for the team to use during the event.

The Summit volunteer team and our pastor told us they found this prayer effort very encouraging. We won't have a definite record of its impact as Luke did on Pentecost, but we know God heard and answered our prayers. And we're looking forward to reprising the experience next year.

ANDREW WHEELER co-directs the prayer ministry of Willow Creek's regional campus in Crystal Lake, IL.

Will You Pray with Us?

Prayer Connect magazine needs you! We are grateful for readers who will come alongside us and uphold us in prayer:

- We are still looking for more subscribers to keep the magazine financially viable. You can help by praying and looking for ways to introduce *Prayer Connect* to leaders and intercessors in your church.
- Our next issue is about the movement of prayer across college campuses. Begin praying now that God will use that issue to encourage a younger readership to take up the mantle of fervent prayer on behalf of our nation. Pray with us that God will also use the issue to call older generations of intercessors to pray for college students and young adults—this next generation.
- Pray for a refreshing of our editorial staff, including our editorial assistants and contributing writers. They have a tedious job of looking for typos and other grammatical issues. Pray that God will give them the ability to craft a quality publication every issue.
- Pray for financial support for *Prayer Connect* and Harvest Prayer Ministries from other sources beyond subscriptions and advertising. Pray that contributors and foundations will come alongside this prayer movement and keep it fully funded.

Thank you for keeping us in your prayers. Send us an email to let us know how you are praying—and if the Lord is speaking anything to you that we need to hear (editor@prayerconnect.net).



PrayerPower Ministries Offers Practical Prayer Help

Jim and Kaye Johns have traveled extensively throughout the United States and on four continents, conducting prayer conferences, seminars, and retreats. Their goal is to help people discover the power of prayer with the God who made us, who loves us, and who wants us to know Him. They have a well-organized, clearly referenced, and helpful prayer site (prayerpowerministries.com) with a wealth of resources—many free, others for purchase.

Home Page Helps

Each day the home page offers a new 90-second audio prayer devotional to help you know and follow God's will and purposes. Blog postings also cover various prayer topics. From this page, you may also "Like" their Facebook page and follow them on Twitter. The Free Download dropdown includes resources such as these:

- **Radio Messages.** More than 500 audio message topics fit into 26 categories. You may also download the transcripts from each message.
- **Prayer Articles.** The 75 available articles fall under these topic headings: Jesus' Teaching on Prayer, Practical Help for a Daily Quiet Time, Love Relationship with God, Strengthening Your Prayer Life, Names of God, Praying God's Word, Praying with Others, Praying for Others, Hindrances to Prayers Being Heard, and Questions and Concerns about Prayer.
- **Prayer Helps and Handouts.** This index is a good area to explore first because it will give you an overview of what is available to download.

PrayerPower Ministries focuses on individuals (personal prayer), churches, and ministries and they offer user-friendly assistance in each of those three areas. Simply click on one of those areas from the home page. Once the page opens, you can watch Kaye Johns in a short video introduction and then choose from multiple options to click on to get valuable tools. Here is an overview of what is available:

Developing a Relationship with God in Prayer. This page has several menu options that direct the reader to a variety of prayer tools. You can learn how to know God more intimately by developing a consistent and purposeful prayer life. Each tool has a short introductory video to explain their value and purpose, such as prayer journals, prayer guides, video studies, PrayerLines (Scripture prayer cards) and a special section, called Crossroads, for men. Multiple choices in each category point individuals to specific areas of need or interest.

Practical Prayer Help for Churches. Jim and Kaye Johns contend that a church becomes a house of prayer one person at a time. Most people need help learning how to pray effectively, have a meaningful quiet time, and develop a deep, personal relationship with God. Leaders can move beyond traditional church prayer ministry, and encourage true spiritual growth throughout the whole church family.

The introductory video to this section features a resource guide called "Developing a Culture of Prayer for Your Church." The same menu offerings are available here, as with individual and ministry areas. Jim and Kaye desire to help pastors, staff members, and lay leaders assist their

congregations to grow toward becoming houses of prayer. Their resources can strengthen church prayer ministry, help churches equip prayer rooms, and foster deeper spiritual growth.

Deepening the Prayer Life of Your Ministry. For 20 years, PrayerPower has assisted ministries focusing on local and world missions, marriage and family relationships, prison evangelism and discipleship, employment counseling, and more. They believe strongly that many leaders serving in ministry neglect to deepen their own prayer lives as they focus intently and intensely upon their "work" for God. Jim and Kaye seek to assist those in leadership within organizations to strengthen their lives of prayer and the corporate prayer life of their ministry staff. The introductory video focuses upon a resource entitled "Developing a Culture of Prayer for Your Ministry."

Because PrayerPower is committed to helping the church grow in prayer, they emphasize that if you don't see what you're looking for, or would like consultation on the growth of your church prayer ministry and the personal prayer development of your people, you can contact them for help (info@prayerpowerministries.com). PC

What's Not to Like?



Here are some prayer pages on Facebook we encourage you to "Like." (Add www.facebook.com before the / on each address.)

Prayer Connect

[/prayerconnect](https://www.facebook.com/prayerconnect)

Harvest Prayer Ministries

[/harvestprayer](https://www.facebook.com/harvestprayer)

Pray the Word

[/praytheword](https://www.facebook.com/praytheword)

Personal Lessons in Prayer Ministry | By Austen C. Ukachi

I recently mused within me—what have I learned from the prayer ministry these 37 years? My involvement in the prayer ministry as an intercessor, teacher of prayer, and mobilizer of others in prayer has been a very rewarding and a very humbling experience. I have learned some lessons, and I have continued to learn. Very briefly, let me share some of these lessons:

We are still in kindergarten in God's school of prayer. From the human perspective, years of experience count in any endeavor. But the more you develop intimacy with God, the more you realize that there is still so much you have to learn from Him, about His ways, and the way to relate with Him. Your past experience may not count when new challenges arise.

What counts is the Holy Spirit's leading. This makes one absolutely depend on Him. We are constantly learning new things about prayer in God's school. God is so deep that we cannot fathom everything about Him and about His ways. The Apostle Paul wrote: "How great are God's riches! How deep are his wisdom and knowledge! Who can explain his decisions? Who can understand his ways?" (Rom. 11:33, GNT).

The more I pray, the more I realize I need God's help. I am constantly mindful of my weaknesses in prayer and of God's omnipotence. Prayer reminds me that I need Him daily. I depend on Him for strength to survive. Prayer teaches me that it is not all about me—and my plans and desires. It is all about Him, His purpose, and His glory and Kingdom.

It is not about my ability or about my experience and wisdom. It is all about His strength working in me and through my weaknesses and inability.

I have grown to know that God is sovereign in prayer. The burning desire of every intercessor is to see instant results and immediate answers and changes through prayer. But God has taught me to know that He exercises His discretion in all things—in the *way* He answers our prayer and *when* He answers them.

He is in perfect control of all things, and makes everything "beautiful in his time" (Eccl. 3:11, KJV). Our responsibility is to pray and trust Him to grant the answers in His own time.

Humility and patience in God's presence are needful to obtain results to our petitions. God's ways are not our ways, and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts (Is. 55:9). Patience is necessary to walk with God.

One common question asked by many who have walked with God is, "Lord, how long?" David asked God, "How long?" (Ps. 13:1). Habakkuk asked the Lord the same question (Hab. 1:2), so did Jeremiah (Jer. 12:4), and many others. In some cases, God did not answer them. At other times He answered them immediately.

I find God's ways of doing things very humbling. Daily, my triumphalist zeal is being chipped away. In its place, I have come to learn to walk with Him patiently and faithfully.

Prayer changes things. Prayer, no

matter what we think, changes things. I have come to know convincingly that God answers prayer and that prayer changes situations. Be it on personal issues or national and global levels, I have seen God do amazing things in answer to prayers.

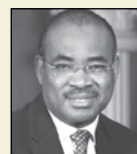
Perseverance is necessary to actualize the goals of prayer. Intercession is not for the "lily-livered" or those who chicken out easily. One lesson Jesus taught in the parable of the unjust judge and the widow (Luke 18) is that we must never relent in the place of prayer. Perseverance is indispensable for realizing our goals in prayer.

If we desire to see changes in the nations, and in the global scene, then we must keep on mounting pressure in prayer: "Take no rest, all you who pray to the LORD. Give the LORD no rest until he completes his work, until he makes Jerusalem the pride of the earth" (Isa. 62:6-7, NLT).

There is a saying, "Press on! God has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race." This also applies to prayer.

God is faithful! Without any shadow of doubt, I have learned that God is faithful in answering prayers and in fulfilling His promises. He is faithful to all His words and promises. He is faithful in executing all His purposes. He is faithful in answering our petitions.

God is faithful in all His ways. **PC**



AUSTEN C. UKACHI is an International Prayer Council leadership team member from Nigeria. He is a pioneer in the contemporary prayer movement in Nigeria and is the author of several books. Adapted from *International Prayer Connections*, July 2014.



A Time of Refreshing | By Robert Murray McCheyne

“I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses” (Isa. 44:3–4, KJV).

The above words describe a time of refreshing. There are no words in the whole Bible that have been oftener in my heart and oftener on my tongue than these. And yet, although God has never left us without some tokens of His presence, He has never fulfilled this promise. I have taken it up today in order that we may consider it more fully and plead it more anxiously with God.

God Alone

Who is the author of a work of grace? It is God: He says, *“I will pour.”* It is God who begins a work of anxiety in dead souls. If any of you have been awakened, and made to beat upon the breast, it is God, and God alone, who has done it.

It is God who carries on the work—leading awakened persons to Christ. “I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh . . . and whosoever shall call upon the name of the LORD shall be delivered” (Joel 2:28, 32) and again in John 16:8: “He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”

Ah! If ever we are to see you who are children of God greatly enlarged, your hearts filled with joy, your lips filled with praises—if ever we are to see you growing like willows beside the water courses, filled with all the fullness of God—God must pour down His Spirit. He must fulfill His Word; for He is the Alpha and Omega, the Author and Finisher of a work of grace: *“I will pour.”*

Learn to look beyond ministers for a

work of grace. God has given much honor to His ministers, but not the pouring out of the Spirit. Alas! We would have little hope if it depended upon ministers. God is as able to do it today as He was at the day of Pentecost, but men are taken up with ministers, and not with God. As long as you look to ministers, God cannot pour, for you would say it came from man.

Wrestling with God

Learn that we should pray for it. We are often for preaching to awaken others; but we should be more upon praying for it. Prayer is more powerful than preaching. It is prayer that gives preaching all its power.

I observe that some Christians are very ready to censure ministers, and to complain of their preaching—of their coldness, their unfaithfulness. But I do say, where lies the blame of unfaithfulness but in the want of faithful praying? Why, the very hands of Moses would have fallen down, had they not been held up by his faithful people.

Come, then, you wrestlers with God—you who climb Jacob’s ladder, you who wrestle Jacob’s wrestling—strive you with God, that He may fulfill His Word: *“I will pour.”*

Weary sinner! This is Jesus; this is what He wants to do for you: *“I will pour water upon him that is thirsty.”* Only believe that He is willing and able and it shall be done.

Learn that it must come from His hand. In vain you go to other physicians; you will be nothing better, but rather worse. Wait on Him; kneel and worship Him, saying: “Lord, help me!”

Oh, long for a time of refreshing, that weary souls may be brought into peace. If we go on in this everyday way, these burdened souls may perish—may sink uncomfirmed into the grave. Arise, and plead with God that He may arise and fulfill His word: *“I will pour water upon him that is thirsty.”*

May It Flood

Learn, Christians, to pray for floods. It is God’s Word—He puts it into your mouth. Oh, do not ask for drops when God offers floods! “Open thy mouth and I will fill it” (Ps. 81:10).

Oh, pray for an outpoured Spirit, ye men of prayer, that there may be many raised up in our day to call Him blessed!

Ah, so would you be, dear Christians, if there were a flood time of the Spirit—a day of Pentecost. Then there would be less care about your business and your workshop—more of prayer and of sweet praises. There would be more changes in your heart—victory over the world, the devil, and the flesh. You would come out, and be separate. In affliction, you would grow in sweet submission, humility, and meekness.

Oh, would that you knew the joy of giving yourself away! You cannot keep yourself. Oh, this day try and give all to Him! **PC**

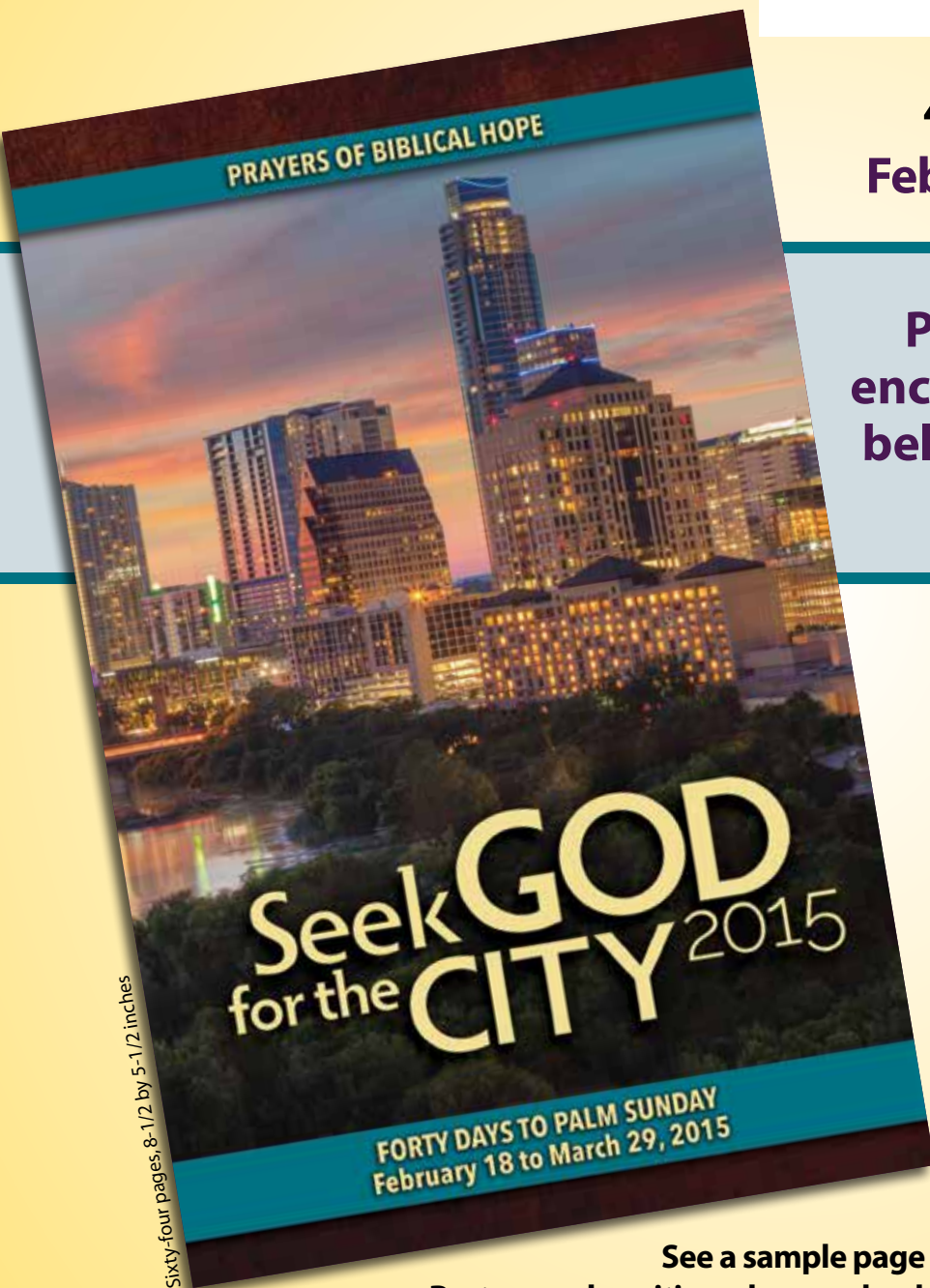
ROBERT MURRAY MCCHEYNE (1813–1843) was a pastor in the Church of Scotland, as well as a poet and a man of prayer. He also designed a system for reading through the Bible in a year. He died at age 29 during an epidemic of typhus.



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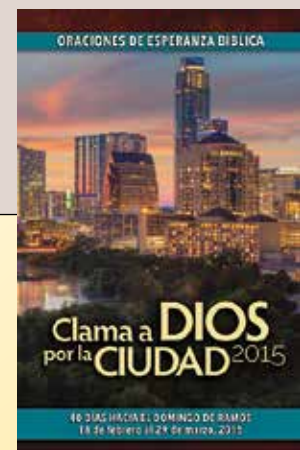


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