

ISSUE NINE, MARCH/APRIL 2013

# PRAYERCONNECT

Connecting to the Heart of Christ through Prayer

An Untapped  
Spiritual  
Powerhouse

## Releasing Children to Pray

When Pastors and Intercessors Struggle  
*Rising Above the Din of Earth*  
A PRECISE 30.5-SECOND REQUEST






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## Article Submissions

We are looking for general articles, ideas, and news stories on what God is doing as a result of prayer. As a start-up magazine, we are primarily looking for newly written pieces that have not appeared in other publications. Writer's guidelines are available by emailing Carol Madison at [editor@prayerconnect.net](mailto:editor@prayerconnect.net). For news stories, we recommend emailing first to see if we have an interest in reporting on the event or item you wish to write about. Send your submissions to:

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## Subscriptions

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## Need a Speaker for Your Prayer Conference or Event?

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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The mission of **PRAYERCONNECT** is

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

Are we nearing the return of Christ?

Prophetic Scriptures and current events might indicate the time is close. In

light of this, how should we pray “in

the end of days”? The January/

February 2013 issue, *The Lord Is Near*,

provides insightful ways to pray with urgency. Bob Bakke writes about

prayers of preparation. David Kubal shows readers how to pray according

to news headlines, and Jacquie Tyre encourages readers to be effective

“watchmen.” Order at [prayershop.org](http://prayershop.org).



# PUBLISHER'S NOTE



## Prayer Makes for Good Parishioners

One important question on the hearts of most church leadership is, Why do some believers grow deeper in their faith and others do not? In the life of any given church many people—probably believers—come year after year, yet they do not display much spiritual growth. In that same church other people—usually a smaller number—will clearly be growing in their walks with God. We would hope these are the ones who hold the elder and leadership positions—although non-growing people often receive those roles because of faithful attendance.



Leaders in discipleship roles (pastors and teachers) often agonize over how to get believers to grow deeper in their spiritual lives. So what makes the difference? I think the answer is simple: *prayer*.

People who are growing usually have a prayer life of some kind. Those who are not growing, do not. It is as simple as that.

**A prayer connection to God takes a believer from an act of faith (praying a sinner's prayer, being baptized) to a relationship with God.** Prayer takes faith from a concept in one's head to a reality in that person's heart and soul.

That is the primary reason wise churches and leaders value discipling in prayer above all other spiritual disciplines. When individual believers pray, they grow in every area of their spiritual walks.

**Praying believers are usually good parishioners.** Why? Because God has their ears! People who have active prayer lives on any level are open to God speaking into their lives to shape, mold, correct, encourage, and challenge them. He does not do that often in the lives of those who are not praying. Their lack of prayer says they have determined to live independently from God's direction.

**Praying believers usually support leadership better**—though sometimes you get quirky and arrogant intercessors who “hear from God” and believe they are closer to God than anyone else. As believers grow in prayer, unity becomes more important than being right.

**Praying believers more quickly recognize when change or new direction is of God**, and they support it more quickly than non-praying believers do.

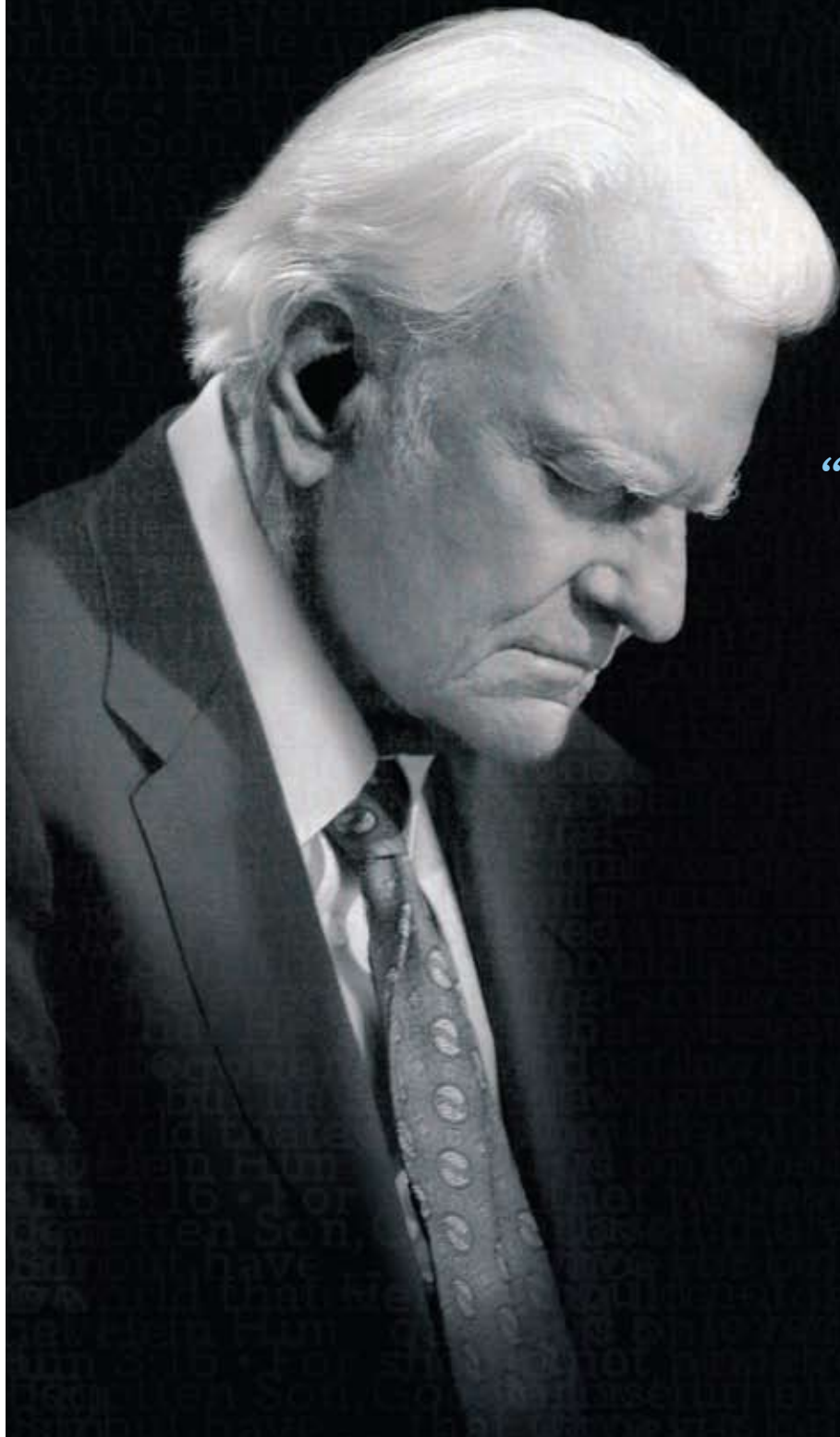
**Praying believers will be more outreach-minded than the average parishioner.** Why? Because when we pray, we begin to get God's heart—His heart for the lost, His heart for raising up worshipers (missions), and His heart of compassion for hurting people.

Why should your church care about discipling people into deeper levels of prayer? If you make this a priority, you will grow a group of believers who are Kingdom changers! Your church will grow spiritually and likely numerically as well.

“Lord, teach us to pray.”

—Jonathan Graf





**“In my spirit I know God has called us to do this, and I pray He will stir your heart to join us.”**

**—BILLY GRAHAM**

Our neighbors—and our nation—need Jesus Christ. Working and praying together with local churches and Christians like you, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association is preparing for a grass-roots nationwide outreach. Called *My Hope with Billy Graham*, it will culminate with a powerful message from him in November 2013. Join us as together we proclaim the only hope that can transform our communities and our country. Find out how to get involved and how to pray at [MyHopeWithBillyGraham.org](http://MyHopeWithBillyGraham.org).

**BILLY  
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**MYHOPE**  
*with*  
**BILLY GRAHAM**



## High Places Prayer Initiative Launched

Missions specialists acknowledge the mountainous “high places,” connecting Tibet and the northern side of India’s Hindu Kush region, as well as Pakistan and Afghanistan, as an area that hosts a full range of practiced religions—including Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, and tribal spirit worship.

The High Places Prayer Patrol, a prayer initiative launched in 2012, invites

an unprecedented visitation of God’s Spirit across the Hindu Kush, from Tibet over to Pakistan and Afghanistan. The strategy includes on-site prayer teams as well as an invitation to the Body of Christ around the world to join the prayer effort.

The website for the High Places Prayer Patrol equips Christians with powerful prayer tools. It also helps



connect believers around the world in prayer for spiritual breakthroughs in these rugged mountaintops. An interactive map on the website features 400-plus red dots representing unreached people groups in the region.

To sign up or explore other website features, go to [highplaces.prayerpatrol.net](http://highplaces.prayerpatrol.net).



## World Prayer Assembly Reunion Tracks Progress

Adult and youth leaders from the international prayer movement gathered in Hong Kong in late 2012 for a reunion to report on the prayer movement’s progress since the May 2012 World Prayer Assembly (WPA) and to consider the way forward. A team of younger people helped to draft the program, led all the worship segments, and co-facilitated the event with the older generation.

Some of the encouraging highlights and reports presented at the WPA reunion include the following:

1. **The Chinese delegation** (more than 300 came to WPA from China) hope to one day have a large prayer assembly at the enormous Tiananmen Square in central Beijing. They testified that the WPA ignited a burning vision in the hearts of the Chinese to build 24/7 prayer efforts in various areas. These

Chinese believers also carried out a 40-day fast for China, are developing a strategic prayer movement, and are sending prayer concerns to one another around the country. God has put the nations on their hearts, especially the Arab nations and Israel.

2. **The Indonesian delegation** reported several results from the WPA in their country:

- A number of leaders in the majority religion received the same dream about Jesus at the same time and were baptized.
- Many are coming to Christ, and 4,000 new believers were added in one month to a church near Jakarta.
- In almost every one of the 378 cities that took part in the WPA, an overwhelming number of churches continue to pray together in many parts of the nation.

- Youth leaders were given a five-room apartment for a prayer tower and mission center that they can use for five years.
- After the WPA a number of Christians were elected to political offices.
- Leaders launched the “My Home” effort to pray, love, and care for unsaved friends and neighbors.
- The Indonesian team is sending out 1,000 “global prayer ambassadors” to various parts of the world.

3. **The Brazilian delegation** also related the impact of the transformational prayer efforts in their nation:

- Authorities arrested and convicted 38 corrupt politicians.
- In a city known as the “capital of witchcraft,” a church full of converted witches and wizards grew



- from 100 to 1,200 attenders.
- Many Christians have become mayors (18 districts) or members of the city councils.
- Two million people took part in a large unified worship gathering in São Paulo.
- The country has seen a new wave of salvation and economic growth.

- Several youth and prayer movements have sprung up in universities.
- Prayer movements also have begun within the police force.

4. **The Indian delegation** related the growth of the Children in Prayer efforts there. The Royal Kids now count 32,000 praying kids among their ranks,

and this organization aims to raise up 100,000 children to be used of God to bring revival to churches and nations. Youth leaders are mobilizing churches and colleges to begin 24/7 prayer efforts.

To follow more of the World Prayer Assembly results, go to [wpa2012.org](http://wpa2012.org).

—Taken from *International Prayer Connections*

## Ugandan President Dedicates His Nation to God

As God demonstrated in the life of Saul of Tarsus, anyone can become a great spokesperson for Christ. Such has been the case with President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda. Behind the scenes many have been praying for him—especially his wife (a devout and dedicated believer), his children, fellow Ugandans, and many others around the world. In a nationally televised prayer gathering in October 2012, God answered those prayers as President Museveni dedicated to God the country of Uganda—this country that has endured decades of government mismanagement, rebel activity, and civil war.

Museveni was involved in the war that deposed Idi Amin Dada, ending that despot's rule in 1979. Museveni also participated in the rebellion that subsequently led to the demise of the Milton Obote regime in 1985. Now as president, Museveni has brought relative stability and economic growth throughout his country—with the notable exception of northern areas. His tenure has also witnessed one of the most effective national responses to HIV/AIDS in Africa.

In October 2012, the Uganda Jubilee Network—an association of Anglican, evangelical, and Pentecostal churches—organized a “Jubilee Prayer Night.” This network, coordinated by Dr. James Magara of Intercessors for Uganda, has been guiding Christians to fast and pray for Uganda to be a God-fearing nation in the next 50 years.

And in that historic televised prayer gathering, President Museveni repented for his sins and the sins of Uganda as a nation. He dedicated Uganda to God to be His nation anchored in His principles and values. The president, indicating that the next 50 years belong to the young generation, advised the young people to be God-fearing people, and he referred to Proverbs 9:10: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”

Museveni began his prayer with thanks, then declared his intention to make a firm break with the past: “Father God in heaven, today we stand here as Ugandans, to thank you for Uganda. We are proud that we are Ugandans and Africans. We thank You for all Your goodness to us.

“I stand here today to close the evil past, and especially in the last 50 years of our national leadership history, and at the threshold of a new dispensation in the life of this nation. I stand here on my own behalf and on behalf of my predecessors to repent. We ask for Your forgiveness,” Museveni said. “We confess these sins, which have greatly hampered our national cohesion and delayed our political, social, and economic transformation.”

Next, President Museveni acknowledged sinful activity: “We confess sins of



idolatry and witchcraft which are rampant in our land. We confess sins of shedding innocent blood, sins of political hypocrisy, dishonesty, intrigue and betrayal.

“Forgive us of sins of pride, tribalism, and sectarianism; sins of laziness, indifference, and irresponsibility; sins of

corruption and bribery that have eroded our national resources; sins of sexual immorality, drunkenness, and debauchery; sins of unforgiveness, bitterness, hatred, and revenge; sins of injustice, oppression, and exploitation; sins of rebellion, insubordination, strife, and conflict.”

The president then asked God for a new beginning: “These sins and many others have characterized our past leadership, especially the last 50 years of our history. Lord, forgive us and give us a new beginning. Give us a heart to love You, to fear You, and to seek You. Take away from us all the above sins.”

In closing, Museveni dedicated Uganda to God: “We want to dedicate this nation to You so that You will be our God and guide. We want Uganda to be known as a nation that fears God and as a nation whose foundations are firmly rooted in righteousness and justice to fulfill what the Bible says in Psalm 33:12: ‘Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; a people you have chosen as your own.’”

—Taken from *International Prayer Connections*





## Students Commit to Missions in Record Numbers

Some 4,224 students from U.S. and Canadian colleges pledged themselves to long-term missionary service at the close of Urbana 12 in St. Louis, MO, on New Year's Eve. That is twice as many as the last student missionary conference in 2009. All the other measured outcomes of the conference broke records, making this the most responsive student conference for foreign missions since the end of World War II.

"This generation is soft-hearted and tender toward the Lord," said Tom Lin, Urbana director for InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. "They are ready to make commitments and respond to global challenges."

Besides the participants who made long-term commits, 8,815 also checked boxes saying they will go on short- or mid-term missions. In addition, 3,700 students made personal recommitments of their faith and 96 made first-time decisions to follow Christ.

Urbana 2012 will be remembered for many innovations. More than half the music was in languages other than English—mostly Chinese, Hindi, Korean, and Spanish. For the first time, there was only one Anglo male presenter, David Platt. All the other preachers were African, Chinese, Native American, or female. More than 44 percent of the 16,000 participants were internationals or multi-ethnic Americans.

Social media and technology were utilized in new ways. Parts of the program were streamed on the Internet. Tweets from the audience ran live on five giant screens during sessions. There was also a live exchange with the International House of Prayer's "One Thing" prayer conference being held simultaneously in Kansas City, MO.

Urbana prayer rooms were open 24 hours around the clock in 20 hotels. Students could also spend time in prayer



rooms at the conference center. The missional prayer room was designed to foster ongoing listening to the Holy Spirit and intercession for campuses, cities, countries, and the world. The prayer ministry room was led by prayer ministers available to guide students in prayers of blessing, affirmation, confession, restoration, healing, and freedom. Students could also spend time in the worship room, proclaiming Jesus as the center of Urbana and Lord of the nations.

**BILL BRAY** is a special correspondent who frequently contributes to ASSIST News Service ([assistnews.net](http://assistnews.net)).

## OneCry Prayer Summit Radio Program Honored

Moody Radio received the 2013 NRB Radio Program of the Year Award at the National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) Convention in March in Nashville, TN. The award is presented each year to a radio program that impacts the listener by being compelling, relevant, informative, personable, and entertaining, while demonstrating an authentic Christian faith. This year, the judges named Moody Radio the winner of the award for *The OneCry Prayer Summit*.

On four consecutive Thursday evenings in May 2012, Moody Radio, in partnership with OneCry, produced a series of live concert of prayer specials from the studios of Moody Radio. Co-hosts of the program were Wayne Shepherd and



Bob Bakke. They were joined on-air by Byron Paulus and other national ministry leaders. Moody Radio Network, together with Ambassador Advertising Agency and American Family Radio, brought together an unprecedented 461 broadcast outlets that carried this broadcast event, which was focused on seeking God for revival and spiritual awakening.

"Moody Radio did a superb job in

producing *The OneCry Prayer Summit*," noted NRB President and CEO Dr. Frank Wright. "Their efforts certainly paid off as thousands throughout the nation came together to pray for spiritual awakening and revival within the church and to seek the Lord for reconciliation and unity in the Body of Christ."

Since airing the prayer summit, OneCry has registered thousands of people who signed the "OneCry Declaration." There have also been many OneCry events since May, including a prayer event in Charlotte, NC, representing 100 churches and attracting 9,000 to pray before the opening of the Democratic National Convention.

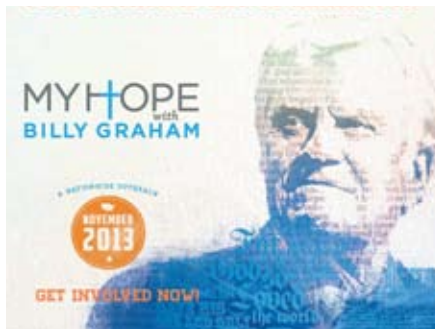
For more information about this revival movement, go to [onecry.com](http://onecry.com).



## Prayer Precedes November Outreach

In 2002, My Hope began as a ministry of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) to take the gospel into areas of the world where Billy Graham could not physically travel. Ten years and 57 countries later, My Hope with Billy Graham has become a grass-roots evangelistic movement spreading across the United States and Canada that will culminate the week of Mr. Graham's 95th birthday—Nov. 7, 2013.

*My Hope with Billy Graham* is built on "Matthew and Friends," which draws its inspiration from the biblical account of Matthew (Matt. 9:9–13, Luke 5:27–31). When Jesus called Matthew to follow Him, Matthew threw a party and invited people to his home to meet Jesus. Likewise, "Matthew" hosts participating in *My Hope* will invite people



to their homes to meet Jesus as they watch a unique 30-minute presentation from Billy Graham, featuring culturally relevant music, testimonies, and a gospel message.

"*My Hope* has been used in many countries and hundreds of thousands of people have received Christ as Savior," says Billy Graham. "I've been praying that we might have a spiritual awakening.

But I think that becomes possible as individuals surrender their lives fresh and anew to Christ. And that's the hope that we have."

As with previous Billy Graham crusades, this project is built on prayer. This spring, church leaders across the nation have been attending meetings, praying and preparing to engage their churches in the project. Christians across the U.S. and Canada will begin creating a list of their friends, family, and neighbors who need to know Jesus. They will begin praying by name for these individuals and seeking opportunities to build their relationships with them before inviting them into their homes for the presentation in November.

Christian ministries are joining forces with the BGEA to undergird this effort in prayer. The hope is for revival in the churches and a great harvest of souls this fall. For more information or to register, visit [myhopewithbillygraham.org](http://myhopewithbillygraham.org).

**ELAINE HELMS** is the national prayer coordinator for *My Hope with Billy Graham*.

### CAPITOL HILL PRAYER PARTNERS

#### Praying with Knowledge for Our Government



Capitol Hill Prayer Partners (CHPP) is a ministry positioned on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. We provide inside news and prayer points to help Christians pray for those governing the United States and the Nation of Israel. We also offer intercession on-site for members of Congress and their staff. Our chief prayer focus is that "God's will be done on earth, as it is in heaven" [Matthew 6:10].

You can sign up to receive our alerts by sending an email to us at [chpp@patriot.net](mailto:chpp@patriot.net), requesting that your name be added to our list of subscribers, or you can visit our blog and enter your address in the blue box on the right side: <http://chpponline.blogspot.com>. Capitol Hill Prayer Partners is a 501(c)(3), tax-exempt, faith-based, ministry.

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### Prayer Calendar

Seek God for the City  
**February 13–March 24**  
[waymakers.org](http://waymakers.org)

Transform World Prayer Summit  
**March 24–27**  
[transformworld2020.com](http://transformworld2020.com)

National Day of Prayer  
**Thursday, May 2**  
[nationaldayofprayer.org](http://nationaldayofprayer.org)

Global Day of Prayer  
**Sunday, May 19**  
[globaldayofprayer.com](http://globaldayofprayer.com)

An Untapped  
Spiritual  
Powerhouse

# Releasing Children to Pray

A few years ago God spoke something so clearly to my heart that I wrote it down. I sensed Him directing me to help raise up a children's prayer movement in my city. So I gathered a group of children's ministry pastors to meet and pray together about encouraging greater prayer among children. As a result, we sponsored multiple opportunities for hundreds of children to come together across denominational lines to pray. One of the more profound moments I remember involved a group of kids who gathered on a Saturday morning for prayer. Quite shy, they hesitated to pray out loud. No coaxing or coaching seemed to work—until I placed a microphone in the center of the room. I told them they could take turns praying into the microphone.

Suddenly a line formed. Children began stepping up, delighted to hear their voices broadcast loudly throughout the room. Even the youngest, a little red-headed boy about four years old, was brave enough to pray. Then he quickly ran to get back in line for another turn. All his prayers were precious expressions of how much he loved Jesus.

## Helping Them Find Their Voices

That day I witnessed reluctant children finding their voices in prayer. Suddenly they could hear their amplified expressions of worship and petition—and they were thrilled to pray without hesitation. The Holy Spirit lit a fire in them that morning. I believe those prayers were a sweet fragrance to the Lord, and I trust God is continuing to answer their heartfelt cries.

Eventually the movement fizzled because the pastors found themselves overwhelmed by the demands of their jobs and the expectations to keep creating bigger and better children's programs. Our prayer efforts began to fade. That's the way it is so often in the Western Church.

I am thankful that God is still raising up children in powerful prayer movements around the world. Many children in other countries are becoming experienced intercessors who pray passionately and watch God answer miraculously. Although there are pockets of praying children in the United States, we need to be more intentional about helping children find their voices. They represent a spiritual powerhouse waiting to be ignited.

In this issue, Kim Butts uses the example of Samuel as a young boy—and how he was mentored to hear God's voice. Samuel became an anointed prophetic leader of Israel. As adults, we can help children step into their God-appointed destinies.

Becky Fischer believes God desires to work supernaturally through children, but we need to invite them into our prayer closets so they can learn and grow into intercessors.

Cheri Fuller shows ways childlike faith is key to the amazing spiritual capacity of children.

As you read this issue, perhaps the Lord will stir your heart to begin mentoring children in prayer. Whether it is your own child in your personal prayer time, a grandchild who adores you, or a classroom of children who need to find their voices—you can pray for and mentor young Samuels into great prayer warriors of our day.

**CAROL MADISON** is editor of *Prayer Connect*.





The Prayer  
Potential of the  
Next Generation

# Gather the Children

Several years ago, my husband led a concert of prayer in a small church in our city. Children and youth participated with the adults that evening. During one segment, Dave asked attendees to think of someone close to them who didn't yet know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. He encouraged them to hold the faces of these friends and family members in their minds and hearts and ask God to draw them to Himself (John 6:44).

A quiet murmur filled the room as lost people were lifted up before the throne of grace. Dave walked around the room, quietly praying over those gathered. As he approached the back pew, he heard weeping—and discovered a young girl, maybe eight years old, lying face down on the pew, crying out to God on behalf of a classmate. Her heart was overcome by the burden that her friend could die without Jesus. In the midst of an intergenerational prayer meeting, this

By Kim Butts





young one was given an opportunity to learn how to pray for lost people.

The Prophet Joel once challenged the Israelites to “Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children, those nursing at the breast” (Joel 2:16). As in Joel’s day, today there is a sense of urgency for God’s people to return their hearts to Him and be set apart in prayer and fasting for this crucial moment in history. The nations are raging, and we face grave crises in every corner of the earth. It is time to unleash the power of the Body of Christ—from the oldest saint to youngest believer.

## Messy Powerhouse

The Church has a “spiritual powerhouse” within it that has been lying dormant for decades. Unfortunately, corporate expressions of prayer have become the

domain of adults. We have failed to recognize and affirm the spiritual capacities of children. Children can be considered “messy,” which may be why we don’t often invite them into partnership for the sake of God’s Kingdom purposes.

Kids need to be trained how to hear and respond to the voice of God. If we do not equip and train our children to pray—trusting the power of God’s Spirit to work in and through them—we are seriously hindering the activity of God.

Satan knows prayer defeats him. Therefore, he has lulled us into thinking that children must be entertained while they are young. Satan knows that grabbing children early and involving them in less spiritually relevant activities are keys to sidelining their prayer potential. How can they know the power of Christ in their lives unless they are taught to pray?

Becky Fischer, founder of Kids in Ministry International, gives a power-

ful admonition to the Church: “Passion in life begins early. I’m continuously amazed at the unbelievable talent and skills of kids these days. Just do a simple search on YouTube and it’s filled with videos of kids who are supreme singers, dancers, athletes, and so much more. . . . Why is it in the Church we can’t picture them as spiritually gifted and talented?”

She adds, “Let’s pass our faith on to the next generation, and seriously coach them for a supernatural walk with God while grounding them deeply in God’s Word.”

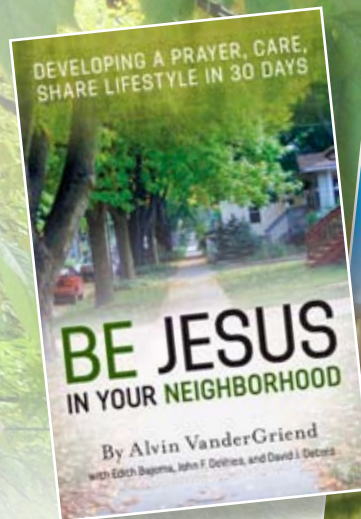
## Unreached Opportunity

Fifty-two percent of the world’s population is now under the age of 15. Because of this, children have been identified as the largest unreached people group in the world. Studies show that the majority of people who make decisions for Jesus

# Inspire Your People to Pray for the Lost

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and then stay connected to their faith commitment, do so between the ages of 4 and 14. (Check out [4to14window.com](http://4to14window.com).)

Yet studies also show that, on average, much of the Church gives a higher percentage of its spiritual attention, funding, and planning to adults. Imagine what would happen if we were intentionally focused upon mentoring and releasing young prayer warriors into their Kingdom purposes.

Cheri Fuller, in her book *When Children Pray*, writes, “Before we can teach children to pray, we have to change our minds about the children we intend to teach. We must . . . 1) cultivate their relationship with God, 2) partner with them in prayer, and 3) cultivate a world vision in them . . . and in ourselves.”

The story of Samuel provides a good backdrop for insights into the privilege of training and partnering with children in prayer.

## Samuel: Preschooler to Prophet

“Samuel was ministering before the Lord—a boy wearing a linen ephod” (1 Sam. 2:18).

One night, when Samuel was just a young boy, the Lord called to him. Samuel had been ministering to the Lord under the tutelage of Eli the priest, but, as 1 Samuel 3:7 says, “Samuel did not yet know the Lord: The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.” When Samuel heard a voice three times in the night, he thought Eli was calling him. And three times Samuel went to Eli in obedience.

Finally, *Eli* recognized that God Himself was calling the young boy (v. 8). The prophet instructed Samuel with these words: “Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening’” (v. 9). When God called

again, Samuel was prepared and ready to respond with obedience—even though he probably didn’t know what to expect or where it would lead.

Several important teachings come through in the story of Samuel as a young child:

**1. Children—even very young children—can learn how to minister to and for the Lord, even if they do not yet fully know Him.** Samuel was likely only two or three years old when his mother took him to Eli. She had dedicated him to the Lord before he was born and fulfilled her promise as soon as she weaned him. Samuel was ministering before the Lord, even as a toddler (1 Sam. 2:18).

Similarly, Esther Ilnisky’s first memory of prayer is of crawling on maps of nations whose names she could not yet pronounce. Her parents’ prayer legacy resulted in the establishment of one of the first global children’s prayer networks:

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# Seeing Children as God Sees Them



When you look at children, what do you see? Do you see them as secret weapons in God's heavenly arsenal? Do you believe God can use them to impact our world?

Here's how God sees the role of children in praise and spiritual warfare: "From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger" (Ps. 8:2).

At the World Prayer Assembly in Indonesia in May 2012, 15-year-old Daisey told her story. Daisey is from Surabaya, the second largest city in Indonesia, and she grew up in a part of the city filled with prostitution, gangs, and drugs.

But local Christians saw the children as part of the answer to the plight of the city. These believers began to train the children in prayer. They taught them how God could give them power to pray and to see their community transformed. What began with ten children meeting once a week to pray for two hours, grew to 20 children meeting two times a week. They prayer walked their community and invited God to come. They prayed over neighborhood maps, praying the Scriptures and agreeing with God's plan.

One by one the brothels began to close. A national newspaper wrote about the transformation of the community. Today it is a safe place for children to play.

Do you believe God can use children? In Indonesia tens of thousands of children have been trained as intercessors. In neighboring Singapore a movement called Arise is raising up children in worship and prayer.

In Chennai, India, God called Anton Cruz to see destitute children with new eyes. Today, as part of the Royal Kids Ministry, more than 8,000 children are a spiritual force in their community. They even have their own television program watched by two million children each week.

In Bihar, India's, poorest state, God is using orphan girls as world-changers, full of joy and love for God.

Praying with them has changed the way I see children today. Whole villages have come to Christ through their witness.

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matt. 19:14).

## The 4 to 14 Window of Opportunity

Researchers tell us that 80 percent of those who come to Christ do so by age 18. It is a time of great openness and responsiveness. So what would happen if we taught children to pray and encounter God? What would happen if we gave them opportunities to serve with us? What would happen if they discovered God could speak to them and use them while they are children, much like Samuel in the Bible? Would it mark them for life?

Some people are investing billions of dollars to target our children through media. They want to brand them, capture them, and exploit them for their agendas. The average child spends several hours a day connecting with this dangerous, digital world.

But we have a mandate from God. He is calling His Church to see children with His eyes. The 4 to 14 Window Movement (targeting children 4 to 14 years of age) is responding to this call. Their goal is to maximize the transformational impact of children while they are young and to equip them for continuing impact for the rest of their lives.

Want to know more about raising up children to be Christ-followers who operate in the power of God? Check out the videos at [4to14window.com](http://4to14window.com).

**TOM VICTOR** is the facilitator for the 4/14 Movement for North America.





The Esther Network International. Because her own spiritual potential had been nurtured from a very young age, she now gives her life to raising up children as prayer warriors and full participants in the Kingdom of God.

**2. Children can hear the voice of God.** We don't know if the voice Samuel heard was in his spirit or if it was the audible voice of God, but Samuel "heard" God calling him. He may have been closer to 12 or 13 years of age at this time.

Angie Clark, author of the book *7 Essentials of Kids Prayer 2.0: Reflecting God's Glory*, relates a story about some young children in Singapore. Angie gave them these instructions: "Get quiet. Then, when I say, 'Go!' draw or write the first thing you see."

The children were separated from one another so they could have their own experiences with God. During sharing time, the children began to notice (with Angie's help) that their papers had some similar themes. As they listened more closely to God, they collectively discerned that they had all drawn something related to a particular preacher who lived "over the seas." Together they prayed for this unknown pastor and asked God if He wanted them to know his name. Soon one boy volunteered a name he had been hearing over and over in his spirit: *Pastor Leaman*. They gathered once again and prayed for Pastor Leaman's health and protection.

The following day, a missionary friend of Angie's stopped by and heard the story. She knew this pastor, who lived halfway around the world. He had been having serious health problems and needed earnest prayer. These children were excited that God had chosen to speak to them!

**3. Children need godly examples and mentors to develop their prayer lives.** Eli helped Samuel discern the voice of the Lord. He instructed the child well, showing him how to make himself available to hear the Lord and how to be obedient to Him. Because of Eli's mentoring,

"The Lord was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of Samuel's words fall to the ground" (1 Sam. 3:19).

When my youngest son David was two, I began to lay hands on him and pray the blessing from Numbers 6:24–26 over him each night before he went to sleep. The combination of the prayer of blessing and the laying on of hands is

especially powerful. When David was about four, one night he placed his hand on my head and blessed me back, using the same Scripture. It melted my heart and gave me such joy. We continued this mother-son prayer of blessing all through his growing-up years.

The night before his wedding, he came into our room, knelt by the bed

## DISCIPLE YOUR PEOPLE TO PRAY GOD'S WORD

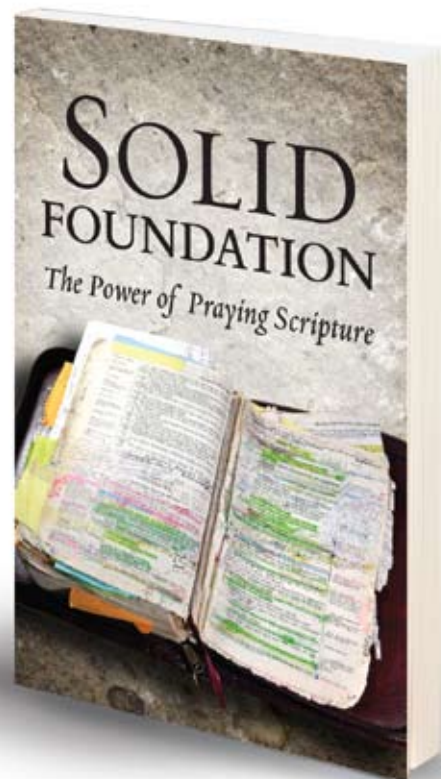
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and asked me for his blessing. I was, needless to say, undone. He now has a new baby of his own, and I believe this prayer of blessing will become part of that little daughter's experience with God very soon.

**4. Very young children can talk to God.** Samuel leaned into this experience with God willingly and obediently. He handled the words he heard from God with great integrity even at his young age (see 1 Samuel 3:11–18).

Once, when my husband and I finished teaching kindergartners how to pray for lost people, we asked if one of them would like to pray. Most of the children were very shy. However, one little five-year-old stood on a chair and began to belt out one of the most God-honoring, Kingdom-advancing prayers we have ever heard! It was evident that her parents had been training her little heart to love the lost from early on.

**5. Children can only pray what is in their experience, so our job is to stretch them.** Eli's training helped Samuel to step into the presence of God. His experience was stretched more as he learned how to minister and become obedient to God's call upon his life. Very young children can only pray about what they have experienced through their senses until they learn how to experience more of the spiritual realm.

Michaela was three, and her bedtime prayer one night was, "God, thank You for my books and My Little Pony and my carpet and my bed and my lamp and my toys and. . . ." On and on it went. In her three-year-old experience, all she could pray about was what she could see and touch.

When the *amen* finally came, her mother did two wise things. First, she acknowledged the importance of her daughter's prayer. "Oh Michaela, I *know*

God was so pleased with that prayer! He knows what a thankful little girl you are for all He has provided for you!"

Then she did the second wise thing. She stretched her daughter's prayer experience to a new level. Taking Michaela's hand, she said, "Let's add one more prayer tonight before you go to sleep. Let's pray for the neighbors down the street who don't know Jesus!"

The next night, this was Michaela's first prayer!

It is up to us to stretch the boundaries of young spirituality so that it matures and grows. God will begin to speak to children in greater depth, knowing that they already have a huge capacity to pray for His Kingdom purposes.

## Stepping into Destiny

What might have happened if Eli had not taught Samuel to hear the voice of God and step into his destiny—the role he was created to fulfill? One has only to read Scripture to see the tremendous influence of this one life upon the nation of Israel. We need to take children seriously and encourage them to take their places alongside adults as co-laborers with Christ.

How many young "Samuels" are languishing in your church, just waiting to be trained, encouraged, and stretched in prayer? Begin seeing these children as God sees them. Include them from time to time in intergenerational prayer experiences that are family friendly (lots of creativity). Children want to hear from God with you! Perhaps you will help one another stretch and grow in prayer as you learn how to trust the movement of God in one another. Who knows what God will do when His power is unleashed through your prayers? ☞

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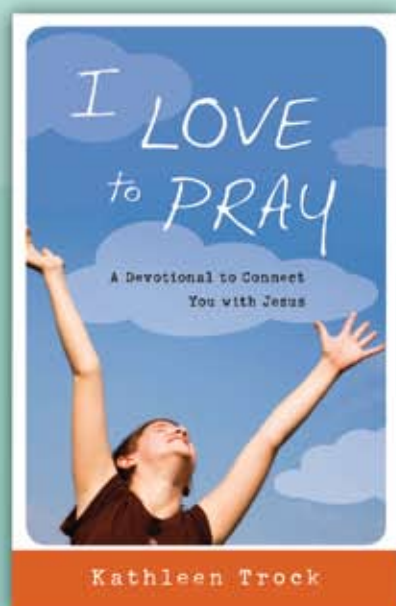
**KIM BUTTS** is vice president of prayer networking for Harvest Prayer Ministries and the author of *The Praying Family: Creative Ways to Pray Together*, available at [prayershop.org](http://prayershop.org).

# Teach your children

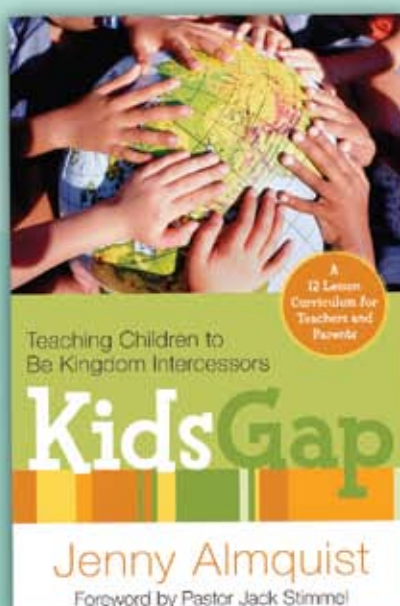
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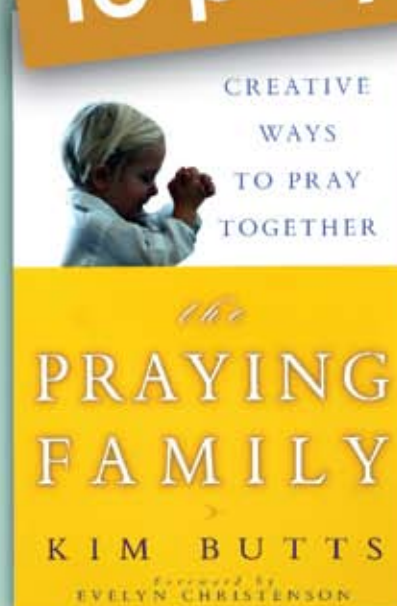
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# The Power of a Praying Child

While Linette was driving home one night from church with her four-year-old daughter Ivy, an ambulance passed by.

“Let’s pray for whoever is in that ambulance,” Linette suggested.

So they did. It seemed a rather uneventful prayer, followed by silence.

Then, all of a sudden, little Ivy began praying again. She prayed that the man in the ambulance would be made whole and that “he would come to know You, Lord, and that the sickness wouldn’t take him.”

Ivy’s mother, not wanting to break in on the moment, began praying in the Spirit with her daughter. Then Ivy burst forth with even more requests: “Yes, and that the Chinese family would come to know You, Lord, the whole family, and that they would be free!” The preschooler then began rebuking the devil and calling him names—something the mom found surprising and humorous.

By Becky Fischer

# Train Up a Child

By Zoe Puerner, age 16

**P**raying over your children, even when they are in the womb, can impact their lives. My parents prayed over me constantly once they learned I was on the way. I have begun to see the results of those prayers. I don't know where I would be or what my walk with the Lord would look like without them.

I have learned that my prayers matter to God. It is hard to talk to a God we can't see, but be assured, He hears every word that comes from our mouths, and He delights in our prayers. Psalm 66:19–20 says, “God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer. Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me!”

God loves us! He smiles down on us, and He loves to talk with us. Prayer isn't just requests. Prayer is a two-way conversation with our Maker, who sits on His throne in heaven. Prayer is a big deal to God because He wants to hear us and speak with us.

Prayer is a way of communicating our trust in God. When we live a life of prayer, it shows that we lean not upon our own understanding but on God's.

When we step out of that heart attitude, we trust in our own strength. It often leads to wrong choices and hurt, for us and for others. God is a Father who does what is right for His children. He will lead us perfectly. He wants us to pray so that He can come in and take His place on the throne of our hearts. God is a gentleman, and He never forces us to surrender to Him. So when we pray and put our trust in Him, He is happy to guide us on the right path. These are some of the reasons why prayer is important to God.

Why should you, as a parent, teach your children to pray? I have been taught that when someone takes me before the throne of God, He won't “let me in” based on the salvation of my parents. Luke 21:36 reads, “Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man” (NKJV). I have to have my own prayer life.

Children should be strong in the Lord, praying with an unshakable faith. But parents, it is up to you to train a generation to follow after Jesus. You have been charged with teaching them what it means to pray. Proverbs 22:6 says, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it” (NKJV). It is key in your children's spiritual growth.

Place the tool of prayer in their hands and they will go far, with the Lord as their guide.

“You big stinky thing!” Ivy hollered. “And yes, you're a god, but you're not my God! You're the god of this world, but I don't serve you like some people do!”

Mom wasn't laughing anymore. They pulled into the family driveway, and the peace of God visibly settled upon little Ivy as her intercession ceased.

## Historical Accounts of Praying Children

Praying children have changed the course of history over the centuries. According to reports from the Scottish revivals of the 1800s, children would weep loudly during church meetings, not wanting to leave. Eventually they would go home, straight to their closets, and pray through most of the night.<sup>1</sup>

Some estimates are that half of Dwight L. Moody's one million converts were children. He started his ministry as a Sunday school teacher, soon taking over an old brick building and packing it with street kids. After Moody's revival meetings in England, reportedly, thousands of children would walk for miles to attend all-night prayer meetings that they initiated and led themselves.

Children become passionate pray-ers when they are taken seriously and taught how to pray. In our kids and family conferences, it is common for boys and girls, ages four and older, to spend an hour or more in deep prayer at the end of our services. Children quickly commit to praying over very adult issues like abortion, various types of abuse, the salvation of the lost, government, the nations, and more. Their natural compassion and sensitivity makes them the perfect candidates to learn to pray.

## In the Prayer Closet with Ken and Barbie

I asked Linette, an intercessor herself, how little Ivy started her prayer life. Linette told me that when Ivy was a baby,

instead of finding a babysitter, Linette simply took her daughter into the “prayer closet” with her. As Ivy got older and began to talk, Linette would pull the child into her prayers with questions like, “What is God saying to you, Ivy? What do you want to pray about?”

Linette also described playing with Ivy and her Ken and Barbie dolls. After they played for a little while, Linette would say, “OK, it’s time for them to pray now.” And mother and daughter would have a little Ken and Barbie prayer meeting.

Compare this training experience to the ways some adults prioritize their prayer-closet times. Parents may take to heart this biblical teaching: “When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you” (Matt. 6:6). Based on this verse, they shut out the noise and distraction of their children so they can get some quiet time. But if we take our children into our prayer closets with us, we can mentor them in prayer.

## It's the Prayers

I once interviewed a young Christian man who was born and raised a Muslim. When Hazem was a teenager, he and his family lived in Palestine, where he met some Christians and converted to Christ. He lost everything and everyone in his family because of his commitment to Jesus.

“What is there about the way Muslim children are raised,” I asked him, “that makes them so passionate about Islam?”

“The prayers,” he replied.

That stunned me. We see images of Muslim men bowing with faces to the ground in their mosques, but I never considered there might be little boys with them.

My friend Hazem told me that when you pray five times a day from the time you are old enough to walk and talk, it becomes a part of you. Even when he lived in the U.S. he would take his prayer mat

to school with him, and at the appropriate times he would go somewhere private and say his prayers. It was expected. All the Muslim kids did it. In fact, if you didn’t do it, he said, you would be punished.

It seems their culture takes prayer very seriously.

What a comparison between that and our Christian families. I don’t know what the Muslim children are taught to pray, but I’m certain it’s not something as seemingly trite as “Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take.” If we’re going to teach our children to memorize prayers, why not teach them something more scriptural?

## Why Teach Children to Pray?

First, prayer is our primary connection

with God. It’s the tool by which we build our relationship with Him. When children are not taught to pray serious prayers, they have no way of learning how to build upon that relationship. Then we are surprised when they become older and have not developed hearts for prayer. In fact, how often have you heard older children complain that prayer times are boring?

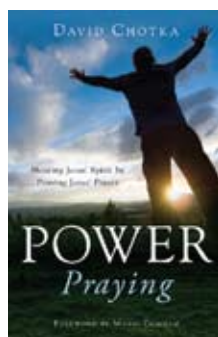
Often, after teaching about prayer in churches, I invite children and teens to come forward and pray. In a couple of instances, teenagers of Christian parents literally had to be told what to say in prayer. It stunned me! They had no language for prayer at all, no comfort level with it. Yet they obviously were eager to be involved in that moment of prayer.

Second, it’s in prayer that we experience God’s presence. We learn to hear His voice and learn to obey and follow

*continued on page 25*

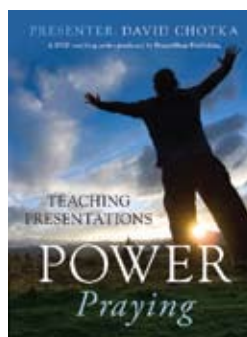
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# When God Shows Up

By Nancy Sutton

**D**isneyland and an outdoor cultural park in Kiev, Ukraine, may seem unlikely pivotal prayer places. But they're places where God heard my children's prayers and showed up powerfully.

Prayer became a frequent topic of discussion around our household after I agreed to be editor of *PrayKids!* magazine in 2000. About the time the magazine prepared to launch, my family took a vacation to Disneyland. The blazing sun drew us to the refreshing Splash Mountain water ride. Knowing the height requirements for the ride, I told my four-year-old daughter Joy that she was not quite tall enough, and she burst into tears.

My seven-year-old son David grabbed her arm and said, "Joy, pray!"

She prayed a simple but heartfelt prayer. "Dear God, please make me tall enough to go on the ride."

David implored her to keep praying until we reached the ride.

I grew concerned that an unanswered prayer at Disneyland would scar Joy's memories of the "happiest place on the earth" and, worse, scar her view of God and prayer. So I silently rehearsed various speeches I could give Joy about God's love for her even though He did not answer her prayer the way she wanted it answered.

As we reached Splash Mountain's height marker, Joy ran to stand beside it. Instantly David began cheering. Joy was *exactly* the height required! She immediately thanked God for making her grow—and I confessed to God my lack of faith.

I have no idea whether her shoes were taller, the sign was leaning, or if she literally grew in stature as she grew in faith that day. Her simple trust that God *could* make her grow has given her confidence as she has grown to take any request, no matter how big or small, to her heavenly Father.

## A Precise Request and Miracle

Fast-forward to 2006 when David accompanied me on

a trip to teach missionary children at a conference in Kiev. A few of us from the conference spent the afternoon walking around a cultural park quite a ways from the city. As evening approached our small group was tired, hungry, and cold. One of the adults remarked that we could be stranded for quite some time waiting for a bus back to the city.

Instantly David began praying. "God," he said loudly, "please send a bus in 30.5 seconds."

While we trudged through the forest toward the bus stop, glances from the other adults revealed their skepticism about such a request. But after years of being told God could do anything, David boldly asked God for a real miracle.

As we reached the bus shelter, he said, "Mom, turn the video camera on because I want to record this miracle."

I did, and David loudly counted the seconds on his watch so they would be recorded.

At exactly 30.5 seconds a bus appeared on the horizon. It took a couple of minutes for the bus to be close enough so we could see the bus number—*exactly* the bus we needed!

David cheered, the other group members shook their heads in amused disbelief, and I thanked God that He chose to bless my son's faith in such an amazing way. I witnessed both of my children experience the benefit of praying with a pure heart. They saw God show up—in two unlikely places!

As a parent, I pray that my children will stay close to God and not reject their faith when life shakes their beliefs. Through the years, I have also watched my children deal with difficult issues that did not receive dramatic or quick answers to their prayers. But our family focused on the myriad of times God answered our prayers. Even when the answers were not what we hoped, my children strengthened their prayer muscles. They know God is real and that He is involved in their lives.

As they venture into adulthood, I trust they will continue to pray—and that God will continue to show up in unique places!

**NANCY SUTTON** is a Bible textbook editor and writer for the Association of Christian Schools International. She was the editor of *PrayKids!* magazine for three years.

Him. Some surveys report that many children raised in Christian churches say that, as far as they know, they have never felt God's presence or heard His voice. Could this be, in part, because we have never taught our children to pray in ways that can impact their lives?

## Pray for Me, Too!

By contrast, the most amazing thing to me is how God uses and responds to children's imperfect, stumbling prayers when they are properly taught.

One of our Kids in Ministry leaders, who lives in Burundi, East Africa, was training leaders how to teach children to pray for healing of the sick. This was a concept they had never considered. Very few had even been trained to do it themselves. The training took place in an open-sided hut, and highly curious village children surrounded the hut, watching everything the Wazungu (white person) did.

Through an interpreter, the trainer called these children inside and taught them how to lay their hands on the adults with illnesses, leading them, phrase by phrase, in a healing prayer.

Everyone was surprised when healing began to take place.

Then they heard the loud voice of an old African man sitting next to the building on a tree stump. He had been watching and listening to everything the Wazungu did. The old man himself could not walk. He had to be helped from one spot to another and could not leave until someone came to get him. He was known as the town drunk, a womanizer, and a wife beater in his younger years. My coworker took the children with her to see what he wanted.

Having heard what went on inside the hut, the old man asked her to have the children pray for him. So once again the leader went through the steps of healing prayer with the children.

She sent us a picture of them laying hands on the old man's head. Apparently

they began pushing so hard on him that he nearly fell off the stump.

But as the boys and girls repeated, word for word, what my coworker told them to pray, the man's thigh began to quiver a bit. Then his lower leg began to shake.

"Do something you have not been able to do," she told him.

Slowly the old man stood to his feet. Then he began to walk. He walked until he was out of sight. They didn't think he would come back. But after a while he returned, grinning. He was totally healed because of the prayers of children. The following Sunday he brought his whole family to the local church, and he gave his heart to the Lord.

## Where Do We Begin?

Many times adults don't know where to start in teaching children to pray. First, don't treat them like babies. Take them seriously as little disciples of Christ. We make a mistake if we think they won't understand what we are talking about. Simply explain big words such as *intercession* by using smaller ones, such as *praying for someone else's needs*. Keep your teaching simple and reasonably short (less than 15 minutes). Whether at home or at church, don't preach at the children. Just talk to them.

Second, remember that children learn through their five physical senses. So engage them accordingly. If you want to pray for the world, show them a large globe and print out pictures of children in other nations. Tell them in age-appropriate ways about the problems children face or the conditions they live in, and then invite the children to pray.

For instance, one time we taught children to pray for the street kids in Brazil. We asked one child to lay on the floor on her side on top of a map of Brazil. We covered her with newspapers and explained that this is all most street kids have for blankets on cold nights. The


other children gathered around her, laid their hands on her, and began to pray for the homeless children of Brazil. This powerful sensory illustration brought tears and mature supplication.

On another occasion, we were teaching children to love and pray for Israel. We filled the room with symbolic objects from that nation—prayer shawls, shofars, maps, even inexpensive kippah head coverings for them to wear. We printed several pages of Scriptures about Israel, and taught the children how to adapt those Scriptures into prayers.

The children prayed boldly, with passion and power, for the "apple of God's eye" (Zech. 2:8). It was one of the most powerful prayer meetings—for adults or children—I have ever been in.

## Start Today

If you start them young, stay consistent, and make it interesting, you can raise amazing little intercessors in your homes and churches. Then find ways to give children a role in your adult prayer meetings. Children don't need to bring their computer games or coloring books and wait quietly in a corner. In small-group situations, when you're praying for one another, invite the children to join you and lay hands on those being prayed for. Remember the power of visuals.

If we mentor the young ones, we may have the privilege of watching many, like little Ivy, shake the kingdom of darkness and see the light of God's Kingdom flood in. 

<sup>1</sup>Harry Sprange, *Children in Revival, 300 Years of God's Work in Scotland*, (Scotland, Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 2002).



**BECKY FISCHER** is founder and director of Kids in Ministry International ([kidsinministry.org](http://kidsinministry.org)). She is an author of books and curriculum and has trained thousands of children, teens, parents, and children's workers in prayer and the power of God.





Amazing Spiritual  
Capacity that Children  
Bring to Prayer

# The Miracle of Childlike Faith

Faith comes naturally to children—and it's a quality that particularly fits kids for prayer.

During delivery of her first baby, Chia, a children's pastor in Tulsa, OK, suffered an embryonic embolism, which means the fluid in the baby's sac entered her blood stream and clots were carried to both of her lungs, which collapsed. This resulted in a series of three heart attacks and additional clots to Chia's brain. As she lay in the Intensive Care Unit in a coma, many people prayed for her. The situation looked tragic and impossible.

But thousands of miles away in England—and knowing nothing of his former pastor's condition—five-year-old Joshua told his mom, "Chia will live and not die!" He refused to eat breakfast, saying he was going to fast and pray for Chia. His mother remained puzzled about his behavior until a few days later when they received word that Chia was in ICU. Continuing his prayer vigil, Joshua asked his mom to help him record his prayer and send it to her in the hospital.

By Cheri Fuller



Joshua started his message with Psalm 27 and then shared about his baby sister Jennifer, his mom and dad, and his new bicycle. He concluded by saying, "I'm going to end this by praying for you. In the name of Jesus, I speak to those blood clots in Chia's head and I speak life to Chia and I know she will live and not die and I want her to go back to her house soon and take care of

her baby girl and enjoy her . . . by His stripes you are healed, Chia. In the name of Jesus, I ask that the Spirit of the Lord would heal you, Chia, and help you get well. And I'll keep praying for you until I hear that you're totally, totally, fully well, and I love you, and I just want to end this by saying, Love from Joshua! Three kisses, three big hugs, and three big prayers until you are well."

The prayers of this five-year-old reached heaven. Chia's physician later reported in her medical records: "This is the most amazing case I've ever seen in my medical practice. For the first three or four days of this horrendous episode, the patient was considered to be essentially brain dead. . . . Then she showed an apparent miraculous recovery. The medical aspects of this case are detailed

## From A Kid's Viewpoint:

# What's So Great about Prayer?

### Holly, age 9

It is important for parents to invest time in teaching me how to pray because when you're in trouble you want to know how to pray. And prayer is very important—without prayer you cannot go to heaven.

If we didn't pray to God, God would probably feel kind of lonely even though He has Jesus and the angels. Just remember God loves your prayers when you pray to Him. And He really loves you, and God loves when you talk to Him, it just lifts His spirit. When you talk to Him, He probably feels like He just saw a double rainbow.

When I pray for people they usually get healed or their problems go away. And my mom says I'm a prayer warrior, probably because I've prayed for many, many, many people. But then one Sunday morning at church she said to me, "If you're really a prayer warrior then why don't you go up to the mic and pray during prayer?" I mean I have done it like once or twice but I get a little shy. But guess what God did for me? Well, this Sunday me and my friends started praying for people. Then I thought of a group called the prayer girls and everyone agreed. So now we're the prayer girls and I'm going to ask everyone to pray every Sunday morning during prayer with me.

### Nick, age 11

If no one teaches you how to pray then the new generation won't pray to God. Also, everyone should pray, it is just talking to God, just like talking to your best friend. If you love God and pray to God, He will reward you. You are God's precious gift and He wants to talk to you.

Whenever I am sick, or a friend or relative is sick, and I pray for healing, the healing comes. Whenever I ask for something He gives it to me. Sometimes it takes a while, but

it always comes. If two or more agree about it, it will come.

Don't just pray once or twice either, be consistent, keep praying every day multiple times a day and also read your Bible.

For example, my family and I have been praying for a new house and a couple weeks later someone that used to go to our church texted my mom and said someone told her we were looking for a house and said she had a good size house ready for rent. Long story short—me, my three sisters, and my parents are living in that house right now and living in a great home, thanks to God. It was amazing just having that pop up at the perfect time and everything.

### Erin, age 3

God has done many things for me after I prayed. He has protected me from bad dreams. He has healed me when I did not feel good. When I have trouble going to sleep, He helps me rest.

A lot of exciting things have happened when God answered my prayers. A friend got the Holy Spirit when we prayed for her. Another friend had the pain in her fingers go away. God is a good God!

### Brianna, age 12

God can work in your life through prayer at any time. I know He's worked in mine. Once I obtained a small, painful infection and He didn't heal me when I prayed, but others prayed for me and it didn't bother me anymore. He is constantly working on freeing me from some very bad anger issues of mine. I also have some eczema, and He keeps smoothing out my skin time and time again. He is always healing my body. With as much as He has done for me, I know I am not grateful enough. Prayer has done much for me and it can do much for you!

in the progress notes. What is not in the notes, however, is the extreme and continued support and prayer of family and friends. This is the most amazing thing I've ever seen and must be considered a miracle."

## Hearts of Compassion

Children may be small, but they have enormous hearts. They feel deeply about problems and suffering in the world and can pray with compassion, a key ingredient of effective prayer. They talk to God from the heart about the pain they see and experience in the world.

A compassionate prayer from a little one can bring healing. Ken had prayed with and for his daughter Kerry since her birth, and she grew up feeling comfortable talking with God from an early age. When she was three years old, this prayer power rescued her dad.

One weekend when Kerry visited her single dad's home, he suffered excruciating pain from a kidney infection. The doctor's office was closed, and Ken dreaded spending money for the emergency room. At his wit's end with pain, he asked Kerry, "Daddy really hurts—would you pray for me?"

Kerry put her hand on his stomach and asked God to heal him, closing her simple prayer "in Jesus' name." Not long after her prayer, Ken tucked his daughter in bed for the night, retired to his own bed, and slept through the night for the first time in days. When he woke up, the pain was gone.

Maybe children's prayers are so effective because tenderhearted kids like Kerry connect to and represent the heart of Jesus. When Christ saw the multitudes, He was "moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd" (Matt. 9:36, KJV).

## Trust in God's Provision

We adults tend to see obstacles and

analyze complications until our problems begin to look like a mountain. We ask, *How can God do anything?* Kids, on the other hand, have a wonderfully simple trust. They believe God is bigger than the mountain, that He can move anything and provide anything—even a horse.

When a California family moved from a small lot in a big city to seven country acres in Oklahoma, six-year-old Dallas really wanted a horse. With an old farmhouse that really needed fixing up and many other expenses, there was absolutely no money for a horse. Her parents told her to put the request in God's hands by praying about it.

At every meal and every night before she lay down to sleep, Dallas earnestly prayed for a horse. After a week of fervent prayer, she confidently announced at the breakfast table, "Dad needs to go ahead and fix the fences!"

"Why fix the fences now? We've got

lots of other things we have to do first," her mom answered.

"The horses are coming. They'll be here soon. So Dad needs to fix the fences! God told me He's sending horses!" Dallas said.

Only two days later, a young woman who taught at the nearby Pony Club unexpectedly appeared at their door with two older but fine Arabian mares. If the family would take care of the horses and let them graze on their seven acres, Dallas and her siblings could ride them whenever they wanted.

James tells us, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights" (James 1:17) and He delights to give good gifts to His children. God, our Father, who feeds the sparrows and dresses the lilies, can provide for the needy, whether big or small, as we approach Him with simple, childlike faith.



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## Straightforward Simplicity

Children also tend to be simple, straightforward, and honest with God in their prayers. While adults may long-windedly hash over the problems they're praying about (as if God isn't aware of it), kids pray short, to-the-point requests. Jesus must have appreciated brevity because He warned people not to imitate those who utter long, wordy prayers. He advised, "Do not use meaningless repetition, as the Gentiles do, for they suppose they will be heard for their many words. Therefore, do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need, before you ask Him" (Matt. 6:7-8, NASB).

And lest you worry about children carrying the burdens they pray for around with them, let me encourage you: I've observed that children seem to "let go and let God" easier than adults. They tend to drop the need at Jesus' feet when they pray. Fully expecting God to handle the difficulty, they run off to play only a few minutes after saying "amen." I found this out as a young mother when, after prayer, I'd continue to fret about a problem. My kids would remind me, "Mom, I thought we already prayed about that. You don't have to worry about it now."

## Keep Short Accounts

Kids also keep shorter accounts with God more easily than adults do. I spent time with three young boys, ages four, five, and eight, and as we prepared to pray we talked about confession and forgiveness. "Have you done anything lately that you think made God sad?" I asked them. "Why don't we ask God to show us and then talk to Him about it?"

All three little guys nodded their heads and before long, four-year-old Daniel spoke up. "I remember I was so angry at lunchtime today because I wanted to say grace by myself but everyone else got to say it, too. I was so mad."

"Do you want to tell God you're sorry?" I asked.

He prayed, "Dear Jesus, I was angry today that I wanted to say grace but everyone joined in. Please wash my sin away and change my heart. In Jesus' name, amen."

Then it was Josh's turn. "Jesus, I am sorry that I got angry today when my friend stole my eraser, please forgive me. Cleanse me and change my heart."

Jeremy chimed in, not only asking God to forgive him for a bad attitude toward two girls in his class who'd been unkind to him, but to help him love them more.

God loves it when we quickly repent and turn to Him as children do because if we harbor sin and unforgiveness in our hearts, the Lord won't hear our prayers (Isa. 59:2). Like children, our hearts can stay tender as we keep short accounts with God and others.

## What Can We Do?

"Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" the disciples asked Jesus. He didn't point to the top Pharisees or high-ranking army officers. Instead, He placed a small child in their midst and replied, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:1, NASB). The Master wanted adults to recapture the childlike faith and trust of children.

If children have the capability to be powerful pray-ers like Joshua and Daniel, and to pray with great faith like Dallas and Kerry did, then we need to change our minds about kids! We need to understand God's mindset about children and explore the amazing spiritual capacity they bring to prayer. **PC**



**CHERI FULLER** is a speaker and author of more than 40 books, as well as the executive director of Redeeming the Family ([cherifuller.com](http://cherifuller.com)). Her latest book, *The One Year Praying the Promises of God* (co-authored with Jennifer Kennedy Dean), is published by Tyndale Publishers. This article is excerpted from her book *When Children Pray*.

# A Bible Study

An Untapped Spiritual Powerhouse

*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.*

**W**hen my grandsons were preschoolers, my daughter employed several tactics to encourage them to grow in prayer. One was a prayer-request poster that they used nightly, marking answered prayers with colorful stickers. The boys really got into it. They eagerly looked forward to taking turns praying through the requests.

Once, when a visitor to their home gave her life to Christ, my then three-year-old grandson ran into the other room for a moment. He returned with a colorful heart-shaped sticker that he joyously stuck on her arm to celebrate a visible answer to their earnest prayers.

Kids get it. They connect. Their tender spirits can relate with compassion. In Cheri Fuller's article she describes their capacity for prayer: "Children may be small, but they have enormous hearts. They feel deeply about problems and suffering in the world and can pray with compassion, a key ingredient of effective prayer."

By Sandra Higley

## Discussion Questions

Read the following passages and discuss how and why children are inclined to represent the heart of Jesus when they pray (Ps. 131:1–2; Prov. 4:3–4; 20:11–12; Matt. 6:7–8, NASB; 9:36, KJV; 18:1–4, NASB; 21:15–16).

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Kim Butts, speaking of the prayer potential

of the next generation, says this: "Satan knows prayer defeats him. Therefore, he has lulled us into thinking that children must be entertained while they are young. Satan knows that grabbing children early and involving them in less spiritually relevant activities are keys to sidelining their prayer potential." How does Psalm 8:2 bear witness to the fact that Satan has ulterior motives for derailing this prayer resource?

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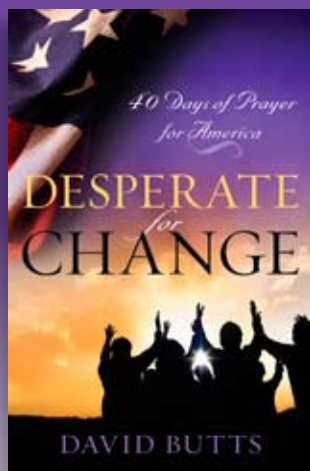
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Discuss as a group some ways Satan uses adults to unknowingly discourage children when it comes to prayer. Are there times he has used you in this way?

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Read 1 Samuel 2:18, 3:7–9; Psalm 78:3–7; Joel 2:16, and Matthew 19:14. Based on these passages, what should be our role in training up children in prayer?

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According to Becky Fischer, incorporating prayer into everyday events with your children is crucial to making prayer a way of life for them. She admonishes us to bring our children into our prayer closets—even including prayer in play time with “Ken and Barbie” as teaching tools. Becky once asked a Christian who was raised a Muslim what makes Muslim children so passionate about Islam. He explained that when you pray five times a day from the time you are old enough to walk and talk, it becomes part of you.

Since prayer is communion with God and a means of knowing Him intimately, do you think the principles in Deuteronomy 11:18–21 relate to prayer as well as Bible study? Why or why not?

---

According to Tom Victor, “Researchers tell us that 80 percent of those who come to Christ do so by age 18. It is a time of great openness and responsiveness. So what would happen if we taught children to pray and encounter God? What would happen if we gave them opportunities to serve with us? What would happen if they discovered God could speak to them and use them while they are children . . . would it mark them for life?” Share your thoughts to his questions, and discuss how this might have had an impact in your own life:

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## Action Steps

Becky Fischer gives some tips on where to begin when teaching children to pray:

1. Don't treat them like babies. Take them seriously as little disciples of Christ. Keep your teaching simple and short; don't preach, just talk to them.
2. Remember that children learn through their five physical senses. Include pictures, maps, and powerful visuals. Give them Scriptures they can turn into prayers.
3. Start them young, be consistent, make it interesting, and then find ways to give children a role in your adult prayer times.

Spend some time individually asking God to show you creative ways to follow these steps as you engage children in prayer. Come together as a group to share what you've discovered. As you implement these plans at home or church, encourage each other with frequent updates. **PC**

**SANDRA HIGLEY** served as a contributing author and editor for *PrayKids!* and *Growing Up Prayerful: A Leader's Kit to Get Kids Started*.

# Resources

## Children and Prayer

Here are just a few of the many resources designed to train children to pray:



### **Prayer-Saturated Kids**

by Cheryl Sacks and Arlyn Lawrence

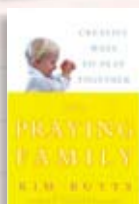
A prayer-saturated kid is one who is prayed for, prayed with, and taught to pray. Prayer-saturated kids change the world and the people around them.



### **Kids Gap: Teaching Children to be Kingdom Intercissors**

by Jenny Almquist

These 12 action-packed lessons on prayer will help your children to become powerful Kingdom intercessors.



### **The Praying Family (Creative Ways to Pray Together)**, by Kim Butts

Each chapter teaches a concept of prayer in multiple interactive and creative ways that parents and children of all ages can explore and practice together.

### **Kids Love to Pray, Too!**

by Kathleen Trock

An eight-week curriculum that teaches powerful prayer concepts, based on the book by Alvin VanderGriend.



### **Kids Praying for Kids**

This DVD features children teaching other children how to prayer walk, fast, and pray for children in the 10/40 Window. Each segment is a stand-alone and approximately four minutes long.



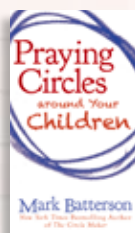
### **PrayKids! Magazines and Teacher's Guide**

NavPress offers 26 colorful, eight-page, individually themed *PrayKids!* magazines with an accompanying teacher's guide. Includes discussion questions, games, crafts, object lessons, and prayer activities.



### **I Love to Pray**, by Kathleen Trock

A 40-day devotional for kids will help children soar in prayer.



### **Praying Circles around Your Children**

by Mark Batterson

Learn how to turn your family circle into a prayer circle by claiming God-inspired promises for your children, creating prayer lists unique to your family, and praying together through the Bible.



### **7 Essentials of Kids Prayer 2.0**

by Angie Clark

Find out how to train children to hear God's voice, pray the Word, put Kingdom priorities first, respond to the needs of others, and stay protected.

### **Scripture-based Prayer Cards for Kids**

Resource from NavPress teaches children to pray scripturally for brothers and sisters, government leaders, parents, pastors, themselves, neighborhood, schools, etc.



### **The Power of a Praying Kid**

by Stormie O'Martian

Teach your children to talk to Jesus as a friend.



### **Helping Kids Pray**, by Katie Barbee

This unique, hands-on book of ideas shows elementary-age children that prayer is powerful, effective, and exciting!



All of these resources and many more are available at [prayershop.org](http://prayershop.org).



*You turned my mourning into dancing.  
You are awesome  
in working wonders.*

*Great is the Lord.  
You are majestic in holiness.*

*You are my strength  
and salvation.*

*Your love endures  
forever.*

**ALL**

*Your loving kindness  
is everlasting.*

ncing.

ness

## Every Prayer Is Precious to God

It was a routine choir warm-up. The classic praise songs flowed together as we expressed our love for Jesus and our desire for His name to be glorified.

I stopped singing as other words intruded into my spirit, dark and chilling words: *"My creed for life is one hundred percent devoid of supernatural inventions and delusions, like God or heaven or hell."* These words came from a humanist friend who regularly preached his dogma with an unnerving vehemence.

I closed my eyes and listened to the choir around me. The worship continued softly and sweetly as the praise choruses acknowledged our love for our heavenly Father. We sang of our longing for His name to be lifted up throughout the earth.

More of my friend's words pushed their way into my mind: *"Regarding my former praying, I now know that 'that which does not exist' cannot be expected to answer prayers, all of which end in the air they uselessly agitate."*

# the Unholy Din

By Sandy Mayle



## What God Hears

As I listened, I realized I was hearing a micro-mixture of what God hears from planet earth, virtually pole to pole, around the clock. In my mind, I imagined God sorting out the intermingled curses and blessings from infidels and worshipers, savages and saints, murderers and martyrs.

Small wonder, I realized, that every praise is precious to Him. Every prayer of faith, however halting or imperfect, delights His heart. Even the briefest expression of rejoicing and trust is music to His ears.

Does it sound fanciful, like just pretty, poetic imagery to envision our prayers ascending to God along with cries from Calcutta, plottings in the Middle East, chants from pagan jungles, boasts from North America, and curses from other continents? Should we believe that out of the unholy din riding the airwaves and

the profane cyberbabel boomeranging from satellites, our praises rise to bring joy to a listening God?

## God's Children Have His Ear

We know that while God is Spirit, He is also a Person, with all the aspects of personality. He shares, in some way, our senses of touch, taste, sight, smell, and hearing:

- “Does he who implanted the ear not hear?” (Ps. 94:9).
- “The eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him” (2 Chron. 16:9).
- “Because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth” (Rev. 3:16).

Through those divine senses the Lord experiences our person-to-Person prayers.

He's not just mechanically processing our requests. “The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry” (Ps. 34:15). “The prayer of the upright is [not His duty, but] His delight” (Prov. 15:8, NKJV, brackets added). God welcomes our voices—aloud or unspoken—as they rise through the discord from earth. He responds with emotional reaction and empathy:

- “The Israelites groaned in their slavery . . . and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning . . . and was concerned about them” (Ex. 2:23–25).
- David called to God for help when Saul pursued him, and his cry came to God's ears. The earth quaked and the mountains' foundations shook, because God heard David's voice and “he [God] was angry” (Ps. 18:7).
- As the divine Lover, God urged His beloved, “Let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet” (Song 2:14).
- Disappointed by the silence of nine lepers He had healed, Jesus commended the effusive thanks of the tenth man (Luke 17:11–19).
- Amid the clamor of a fickle Palm Sunday crowd and the complaining of Pharisees, He welcomed and defended the joyful praises of His exuberant disciples (Luke 19:37–40).

## Our Wonderful Privilege

The staggering news is this: God is always attuned to your voice and mine. Our cries come up before Him, and He is concerned about us. Our voices are sweet to Him. He cherishes our prayers. Our Lord is ministered to by our adoration, moved by our petitions, blessed by talking to us!

I still sometimes forget or neglect this wonderful privilege that is ours, shown to me during that memorable choir warm-up. When that happens, my time with God becomes a little more mechanical, a little less heart to heart. But when I remember that God welcomes my voice and is blessed

## RESOURCES FROM PRAYER LEADER

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by my prayers, here's what happens:

*I pray more.* We're naturally drawn to someone whose eyes don't glaze over as we talk (even if we're not witty or silver tongued), who is focused on what we are saying. We want to tell more; we want to tell all. Convinced of God's interest and concern, I pray more often and more honestly, from the heart—or more readily relax and enjoy moments of silent communion with Him.

*I pray less.* My prayers are less wordy, for there's no need to mindlessly expand requests when every word of mine is significant to the Lord.

*I express less condescension in prayer,* for I consider how my side of the conversation must sound to God. If He were bodily present, would I still feel the need to educate Him regarding the problem, re-remind Him of the urgency, and suggest various solutions? What would I really say?

*I pay more attention.* I am more aware of what I am saying. Unfortunately, everything God's children say isn't a delight to Him. Jesus recoiled from the words of complacent Laodicean believers: "I am rich . . . and do not need a thing" (Rev. 3:17). So now I pause at times to consider, *How does what I'm praying make Him feel? Welcomed into my heart? Trusted? Or do my words betray suspicion that He really isn't near, or doesn't want the best for me and those for whom I intercede?*

*I pray with less fear,* for if I ask the wrong thing or offer a theologically imperfect prayer, the Spirit is already graciously representing my need with His perfect plea (Rom. 8:27).

*I praise more.* I express my confidence in Him with more openness and my admiration for Him with less restraint. For I know that while much of what He hears from earth ignores or ridicules Him, the world's godless static can't overpower my

expressions of adoration for Him. My little voice comes through loud and clear, and it gladdens Him! So I more frequently offer simple declarations: "I love You." "I trust You." "I adore You."

Praying with the conviction that we have God's ear adds new dimensions to communion with Him. Since that memorable night at choir practice, I better understand that our words are significant and that they are blessing God's heart, which is constantly grieved by the sounds of earth.

Someday we will see more clearly how our prayers and praises have delighted Him, how deeply He has cherished them, and how faithfully He has answered each one. **PC**



**SANDY MAYLE** is a freelance writer who has written for the former *Pray!* magazine, *Discipleship Journal*, and other publications. Sandy and her husband Dave live in Erie, PA.

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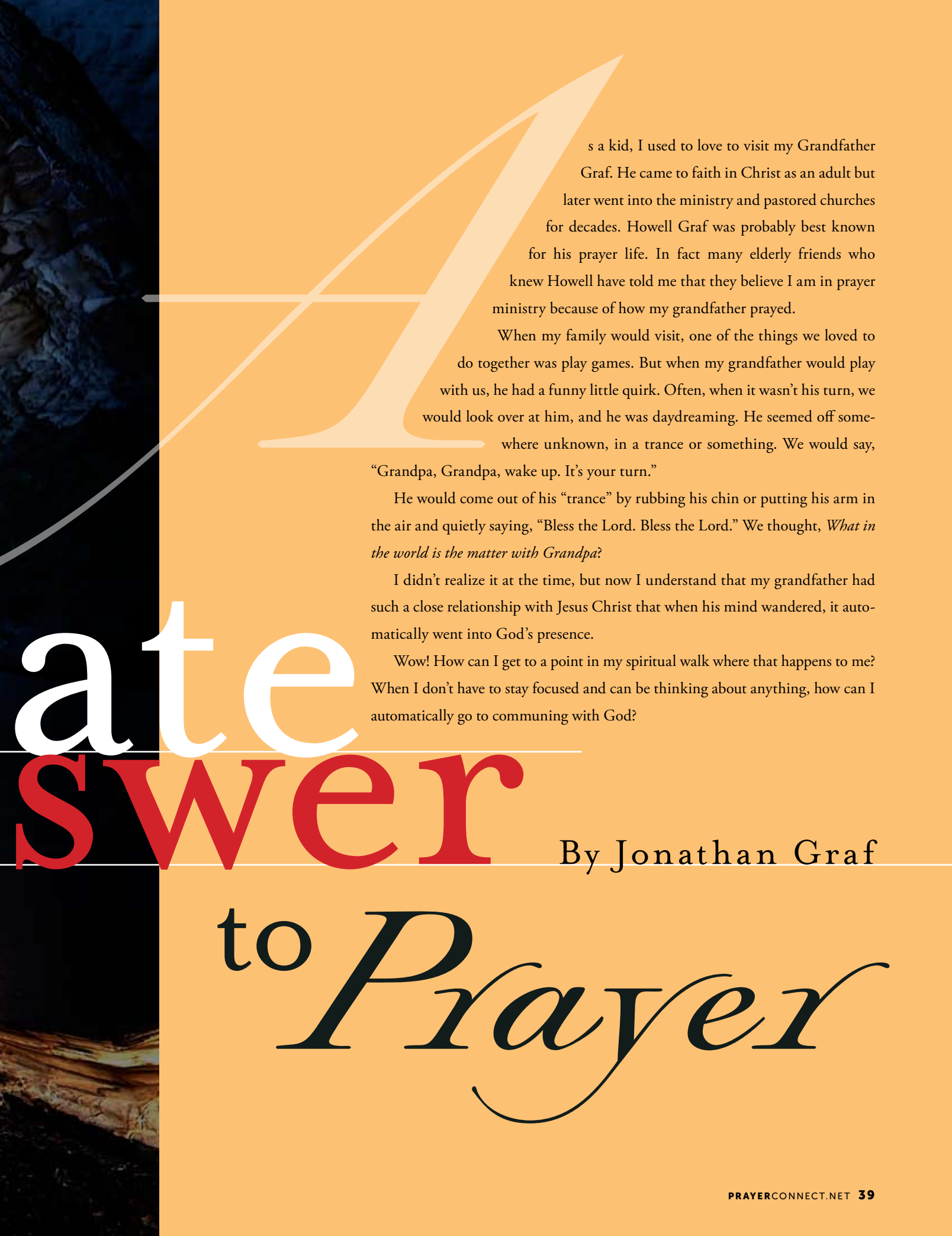






# The Ultimate An

Sensing  
God's  
Presence



s a kid, I used to love to visit my Grandfather Graf. He came to faith in Christ as an adult but later went into the ministry and pastored churches for decades. Howell Graf was probably best known for his prayer life. In fact many elderly friends who knew Howell have told me that they believe I am in prayer ministry because of how my grandfather prayed.

When my family would visit, one of the things we loved to do together was play games. But when my grandfather would play with us, he had a funny little quirk. Often, when it wasn't his turn, we would look over at him, and he was daydreaming. He seemed off some-

where unknown, in a trance or something. We would say, "Grandpa, Grandpa, wake up. It's your turn."

He would come out of his "trance" by rubbing his chin or putting his arm in the air and quietly saying, "Bless the Lord. Bless the Lord." We thought, *What in the world is the matter with Grandpa?*

I didn't realize it at the time, but now I understand that my grandfather had such a close relationship with Jesus Christ that when his mind wandered, it automatically went into God's presence.

Wow! How can I get to a point in my spiritual walk where that happens to me? When I don't have to stay focused and can be thinking about anything, how can I automatically go to communing with God?

# ate swer

By Jonathan Graf

# to *Prayer*



## Near the Presence

One of my favorite characters in the Old Testament is an obscure guy named Obed-Edom, the Gittite. In 1 Chronicles 13:9–14 Obed appears in the story of King David bringing the ark of the covenant to the tabernacle in Jerusalem.

When they came to the threshing floor of Kidon, Uzzah reached out his hand to steady the ark because the oxen stumbled. The LORD's anger burned against Uzzah, and he struck him down because he had put his hand on the ark. So he died there before God.

Then David was angry because the LORD's wrath had broken out against Uzzah, and to this day that place is called Perez Uzzah.

David was afraid of God that day and asked, "How can I ever

bring the ark of God to me?" He did not take the ark to be with him in the City of David. Instead, he took it aside to the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. The ark of God remained with the family of Obed-Edom in his house for three months, and the LORD blessed his household and everything he had.

I try to imagine what this experience was like for Obed. Maybe it went something like this:

Obed hears that the ark of the covenant, the most holy item in a human being's worship of Almighty God, is coming through his town on a given day. In fact, the route passes right by his house. He figures people are going to come into town from miles away to view this.

I wonder if early that morning Obed got out the lawn chairs and put them by the road in front of his house to reserve a

good viewing spot for his family. Maybe they had a tailgate party. "Get out the barbecue grill and throw on some lamb chops."

After a while a murmur ripples through the crowd: "It's coming; it's coming." Everyone rushes to the side of the road to view it.

Just when the procession is in front of Obed's house, the oxen stumble over some stones in the road. The ox cart starts to wobble. The ark starts to teeter. And a man named Uzzah reaches up to do a good thing, to steady the ark. But the instant he touches it, he dies on the spot.

The king is so frightened to go any further that he looks for the closest place to store the ark. He sees Obed's house, and plops that thing down in his living room.

Obed's got a problem. What if, in a spat, one of his kids pushes the other one against it? Will the baby crawl in there and touch it? I can picture him going into that room at night and shimmying along the wall to stay as far away from it as possible.

Yet Scripture says for the three months the ark remained at Obed's house, God blessed his life—and everything he had—so much so that it made a lasting impression.

## Close to the Presence

This passage is not the last we see of Obed. Three months later, David again gets the ark and finally takes it to the tabernacle. Over the next several chapters of 1 Chronicles we see Obed mentioned four times. Somehow he has gotten a job at the tabernacle, first as a gatekeeper at the outside of the tabernacle (15:17–18). Next he is a musician inside the tabernacle (15:21). Finally he is a doorkeeper at the very tent the ark is in (15:24). He is just feet away from the presence of God.

We see him one more time in chapter 16:

David left Asaph and his associates before the ark of the covenant of the

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The graphic features a silhouette of a city skyline at the bottom. The text is arranged in a clean, modern layout with a mix of bold and regular fonts. The background is a light, textured grey.

# The **greatest factor** in my desiring to develop my prayer life is *hunger.*

Lord to minister there regularly, according to each day's requirements. He also left Obed-Edom and his sixty-eight associates [often translated kin] to minister with them. Obed-Edom son of Jeduthun, and also Hosah, were gatekeepers (vv. 37–38, brackets added).

Obed's hunger to be near the presence of the Lord was palpable. His passion about it seemed so infectious that it led to many tabernacle jobs for his kinship as well—brothers, sons, cousins, and nephews. His hunger changed his life and that of his family.

His hunger and passion for being near the presence of God was somewhat like my grandfather's hunger and passion. But for present-day followers of Jesus Christ, the presence that used to be in the ark is now in us! The Spirit of

Christ—the Holy Spirit—indwells us. So we are not talking about doing physical, tangible things to be near the presence of God. We are talking about internal things that cause us to be in the presence of God—communing spirit to Spirit. How do we do that?

## **The Gift of the Spirit**

Luke's gospel provides a clue. In Luke 11, Jesus tells a story about a late-arriving friend who needs to be fed. The homeowner has no food, so he goes to his neighbor and wakes him up. His persistence, Jesus said, will get the bread. That passage is about intercession and persisting in prayer. But there is some-

thing in this passage that most teachers seem to miss:

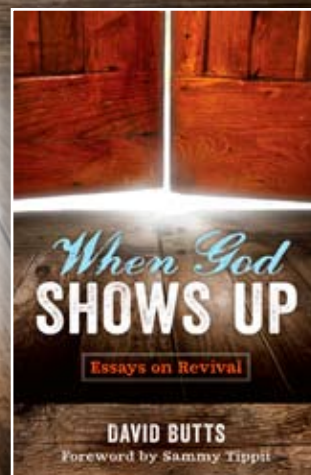
"So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

"Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (vv. 9–13).

## **Revival...** **What is it?** **Do we need it?**

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Wait a minute. What is asking for the Holy Spirit doing there? We weren't talking about that in the passage. I believe Luke saw a connection between prayer and the activity of the Holy Spirit that no other gospel writer saw.

Consider two familiar stories in Jesus' life, contained in multiple gospels—Jesus' baptism and the Mount of Transfiguration. Luke, in his version, mentions something amazing, something no other gospel writer chooses to point out—the supernatural activity in both: Heaven opening and the Holy Spirit coming in the form of a dove, Jesus' countenance and clothes glowing, and the glorified bodies of Moses and Elijah appearing. This all happened while Jesus was praying!

## The Need for Hunger

You see, we tend to use prayer to get stuff—fix this, make this better. But in

reality, when we pray we get the Holy Spirit. We get God's presence welling up within us, blessing us, and making us a blessing to others.

That's why we need to work on our prayer lives and encourage weaker believers not to neglect prayer. Prayer will cause us to experience God. It moves our connection with God from something in our heads to a reality in our souls.

To me, the greatest factor in my desiring to develop my prayer life is hunger. Obed uprooted his life to be near the presence of God. Do I have that kind of palpable passion or hunger to be in God's presence?

I have been a Christian since I was six years old, but it was not until age 30 that I began to hunger for the presence of God. The key for me was learning to ask for hunger.

I started praying a simple prayer: "God, give me a greater hunger to know

You. Give me a longing, a greater desire." As I started regularly praying that prayer, something started to happen within me. I began to experience and long for His presence in greater ways. As a result, the last 25 years of my walk with God have been vastly different from the first 25 years!

Am I where my grandfather was, where his mind would automatically go to communing with the Father? Not yet. But I have my moments. And I am learning that the ultimate answer to prayer is not the stuff I get or the miracle God might provide, but the presence of God Himself! **PC**



**JONATHAN GRAF** is the publisher of *Prayer Connect* and the author of *The Power of Personal Prayer* and *Praying Like Paul*. He is available to do prayer weekends in your church. Contact him at [jong@harvestprayer.com](mailto:jong@harvestprayer.com).

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## Trucks, Billboards, and Road-trip Prayers

**A**s I drove down the highway, coming home from two family funerals, my pastor husband was asleep beside me, tired from his stint at the wheel. Looking for a way to stay alert, I invented a new way to pray. I began to read words on trucks. Whatever the name or slogan said, I used it as a springboard for prayer. At first the names were geographical and easy—Western, Heartland, Great Plains, Northern. I took time to pray for the people in each of those regions of the country.

For the more abstract names I allowed my mind to tune into whatever the word reminded me of:

- FedEx—the first time I saw it, I prayed for the federal government; the next time, for our ex-president and vice president.
- M.S. Carrier—I saw several of these, so I prayed for those who are carriers of AIDS and other communicable diseases. I prayed for those in public transportation who are

carriers of people. I prayed by name for friends suffering with MS.

- Rollings—Names of a brother and sister from my high school youth group years ago came to mind. I prayed for God's blessing on their lives.
- Ryder—I asked God to care for my "rider," my already exhausted husband headed back into a whirlwind pastor's schedule.
- Budweiser—Those caught in the grip of alcoholism became the focus of my prayer.

I enjoyed that hour and a half with God in prayer. It seemed to fly by. It was almost as if we were having a running conversation about a wide variety of people. I wondered if He put trucks along my way so I could pray for particular individuals or situations. I am certain He put thoughts into my head so that my prayers flowed in certain directions.

I continue to use this free association



prayer as I travel. Rarely does my mind draw a blank as I read the sides of trucks. But when it does, I pray for the truck driver.

I make a fast-paced game of it, the pace of the prayer matching how quickly the next truck approaches. Sometimes I go at a more leisurely pace, allowing trucks to pass unread while finishing a prayer and then picking out a new truck.

On our next long trip I think I'll try free-association praying with billboards. They should stretch my imagination with lots of additional ideas for prayer.

**CAROL R. COOL** is a speaker, writer, and editor from Ephrata, PA.

## Fill a Journal with Loving Prayers for Your Prodigal

**C**hildren need to find their own way in the world. Unfortunately, sometimes they believe that means they need to reject our values or even us. Things can get tense at home or on the phone when wayward children call or we call them. Because our kids know that we are hurt and disappointed by their disobedience, they may begin to believe we really don't love them. They may also choose to deny our love as a way to rationalize their rebellion.

How can we let prodigal children know they are loved? One way is to keep a separate journal of our prayers for each

of our children. If we share with prodigals these prayers written during their growing years (before they hit the rebellious stage), we can communicate the depth and longevity of our love.

But what if you never kept special prayer journals for your children? Start now, in the midst of their rebellion. Don't focus your written prayers on their sins. Instead, choose to focus on the character qualities you want to see God develop in their lives. Bring before God the unique traits and gifts your child possesses, and ask Him to use those in your child's life right now to bless others

and to draw the prodigal to Himself.

You may find that a journal with inspirational quotes or verses already printed on the pages can help you focus your prayers in various areas, avoiding repetition of the same requests over and over. Be sure your prayers aren't thinly disguised sermons or rantings at your child. Those will only drive the wayward one further from you and the Lord.

As the journal begins to fill, pray for a teachable time to present your child with the completed journal. It may be a special day—a birthday, Thanksgiving, or Christmas—that normally turns hearts



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## TIPS&TOOLS

toward home. When you feel the time is right, decide what you're going to say. Depending on how strained the relationship is, it may be best to write your thoughts in a note. Don't communicate any expectations of change or repentance. Kids will sense right away when the ulterior motive of a "gift" is to make them feel guilty. Your only goal should be to let your child see your love and that you believe his or

her life has value, now and in the future.

Our prodigals may choose to reject us and even destroy the journals. That's a personal choice. Don't worry. Our prayers are never wasted, and our children will still know that we cared enough to bring their lives before God. Someday that thought may draw them back to both their earthly parents and their heavenly Father.

—Carol R. Cool

## Of Bedtimes and iPods

For several years my husband and I have spent about one day a week helping our daughter, mother of four, who lives about 45 minutes from us. Early on, I asked if we could have the privilege of putting our grandchildren to bed at night and praying with them. Our daughter and son-in-law agreed, welcoming a respite.

When our granddaughters were small, I prayed a prayer of protection and peace over them and asked the Lord to give them a desire to walk with Him always. The girls prayed their own simple prayers.

As they grew older, I started asking them what I could pray about *for* them and *with* them. Then we would take turns, praying for each other because they'd begun praying for their grandfather and me. I also began stretching their vision by praying for their friends who didn't yet know Christ. Grandpa prayed with our precocious grandson in his room—coupled with deep theological discussions.

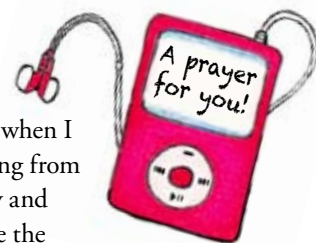
When Sarah, the youngest, was about two, she clamored to come downstairs and pray with her sisters and me in the girls' bedroom. Naomi (then eight) snuggled into her bottom bunk, and Hannah (13) and I sat next to her. As I pulled our toddler granddaughter onto my lap, Hannah said, "Sarah, welcome to your first prayer time with Grandma."

How that touched my heart! I realized how important those prayer times had become to our grandchildren as well as

to me. Even when I was recovering from knee surgery and couldn't take the stairs, the girls huddled with me upstairs to pray before they headed to bed.

Now prayer sharing is taking on electronic dimensions. Since our two older grandchildren now have iPods, I've told them they can text me anytime with a prayer request.

Grandparents who live far from their grandchildren might take advantage of bedtime prayer times during family get-togethers. But they may also enjoy scheduling regular prayer times with Grandma and Grandpa via phone—or, better yet, Skype (on computer or smart phones) so you can see each other as you share requests. Who knows what the Lord can do through our keeping in touch with what's on our grandchildren's hearts?



**JOYCE K. ELLIS** is a freelance writer and editorial assistant for *Prayer Connect*.

**Editor's Note:** We regret that Esther M. Bailey's name was inadvertently dropped from the article, "Written Prayers Become Lifelines," in our January/February 2013 issue. Esther's "tip" is a great reminder about praying for those in crisis. She lives in Scottsdale, AZ, and attends McDowell Mountain Community Church.



## Sites to Help Train Kids as Prayer Warriors

**T**his month we are featuring some children's prayer sites packed with information, resources, and activities to help train kids as prayer warriors—connected to Jesus, empowered by the Holy Spirit, able to listen to the voice of the Father, and focused upon God's agenda for His Kingdom!

### Window Kids ([windowkids.com](http://windowkids.com))

This highly interactive, incredibly inventive website will engage children in learning about and praying for the nations and children of the 10/40 Window. One of the most creative children's prayer sites on the web, it will stretch children to pray globally. On the home page you will find the latest edition of *Window Kids™ Magazine* that focuses on a particular nation's culture.

Headings allow children to Connect, Explore, Create, and Play:

- **Connect:** Kids can read the magazine, take a quiz on the 10/40 Window, or click on an interactive map of the world that offers prayer points for the nations in the 10/40 Window.
- **Explore:** Clicking on the Explore button will take children to three doors—options for exploring countries in the 10/40 window. Behind one door kids can learn about Africa. Behind another, the Middle East. And behind the third, Asia. Children can also listen to traditional music, such as African drums, or click on recipes for things such as Moroccan Pancakes or Arabic Cookies. The website is filled with pictures of children, animals, and sights one might see in these nations.
- **Create:** This portion of the website provides two choices for creative expression. Kids can choose the 10/40

Window Wardrobe, where they can select various faces and clothing to create a wide variety of looks on "virtual paper dolls." Or, in the Paint Studio, children may choose one of four pictures: giraffe, alligator, elephant, or Thai women. Then they can click on various colors to "paint" these pictures, which can be saved or printed.

- **Play:** Children have three choices on this screen: 10/40 Arcade (which allows them to ride on a scooter and avoid obstacles), a matching game, or 10/40 Puzzles (which allows them to put together puzzles of a variety of children's faces from other nations). There are easy, medium, or hard levels.



**My Kids** is for those who join Window Kids (a free sign-up). Each time a child signs in, he or she can "unlock" another picture of a child from a 10/40 Window country.

Don't miss this one-of-a-kind website! Children will enjoy this site for hours and learn how to pray for children in the 10/40 Window at the same time.

### Kids Prayer ([kidsprayer.com](http://kidsprayer.com))

Part of the *World Network of Prayer*, this site provides ideas and resources for both kids and grown-ups. The kids' side is full of pictures, ideas, and prayer requests. The adults' side, growing monthly, offers fresh articles and mentor-friendly information and helps. Check back often to see what's new.

### Children's Prayer Network

([surf.to/kidspray](http://surf.to/kidspray))

The vision of the Children's Prayer Network is to mobilize and network praying Christian children, to support and encourage the training and equipping of these children, and to enable them to take their place in God's family as part of the army He is raising up to reach this generation.



Founder Jane Mackie has a deep desire for children to know God through prayer and then to become world changers. Founded in Australia in 1995, The Children's Prayer Network (birthed from the Australian AD2000 Movement) has become an international ministry with children trained to teach other children in prayer.

The site features testimonies, videos, photos, and other information about this very unique ministry that desires to offer training wherever they are invited and able to travel. **PC**

### What's Not to Like?



Here are some prayer pages on Facebook we encourage you to "Like." (Add [www.facebook.com](http://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)

**OneCry**

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## When Pastors and Intercessors Struggle

By Phil Miglioratti

I've lost count of how many times an intercessor has spoken to me about the lack of interest or cooperation from his or her pastor in building a prayer culture throughout their congregation. And I have had too many conversations with pastors regarding the unpredictability of a prayer leader in a church.

These situations, no doubt, explain why "Let the Healing Begin" is the opening chapter of Eddie and Alice Smith's groundbreaking book, *Intercessors and Pastors: The Emerging Partnership of Watchmen and Gatekeepers*. They recognize that "the relationship of respect, effective communication, and meaningful partnership of the watchmen and the gatekeepers must be restored if the church is to regain her spiritual integrity, glorify Christ, and demolish the gates of hell" (p. 8).

More than a decade later, sadly, the work of restoring this crucial ministry relationship is far from complete. The following four realities continue to compromise upward-reaching, life-giving, forward-moving prayer in the Church.

### **Reality #1. Satan hates unity.**

God's enemy knows that the unity of the Church powerfully demonstrates to lost people that God loves them and sent Jesus to show His love (John 17:23). So Satan is eager to steal our attention from prayer, kill the voice of the Spirit heard only in intercession, and destroy hope-filled praying (John 10:10). We play into the enemy's hands when we wrestle with our flesh-and-blood brothers and sisters in Christ (Eph. 6:12).

**Reality #2. Some pastors are insecure.** Not every pastor is eager to break tradition or try new approaches to ministry. Some assume the ritual or routine they learned is the only theologically

correct way to speak with God. Others have a need to be in control. So delegating a ministry or relinquishing responsibility is disconcerting, especially when it allows the Holy Spirit greater freedom in shaping the direction and style of praying across the congregation. And, sadly, some pastors have ineffective prayer lives and are therefore weak when it comes to leading church members into "upward-outward-forward" prayer.

**Reality #3. Some intercessors are peculiar.** *Peculiar* is not a derogatory term; I use it to assert that many individuals—gifted or called into a ministry of intercession—have a personality very different from that of an organizational leader. They are attuned to times of quiet and introspection, with high sensitivity to hearing from the Lord. This can intimidate a pastoral leader. Sadly, intercessors can confuse hearing from the Lord with having authority from the Lord to issue "prophecies" without submitting them to pastoral protocol.

**Reality #4. Trust is a delicate thing.** Relationships require TLC (truthful, loving communication, Eph. 4:15). Making the pastor-intercessor relationship even more challenging is the reality that many intercessors are female and most pastors are male. Protecting the partnership with appropriate and safe boundaries can also create distance and hinder personal or intimate communication.

### **Working Toward Partnership**

The Apostle Paul, in Philippians 4:2, provides a good start for working together effectively: "I entreat *and* advise Euodia and I entreat *and* advise Syntyche to agree *and* to work in harmony in the Lord" (AMP). Both names appear to be feminine but the first half of each name

is instructive: *euo* means "good"; *syn* means "together." Applying this principle also to pastors and intercessors, they are exhorted to agree, urged to work together because, as one translation says, "you belong to the Lord" (NLT).

*Pastors need to remember* their responsibility: "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Eph. 4:12). Teaching people to pray and training those who are most gifted to lead meetings or ministries of prayer are direct applications of that instruction.

*Intercessors need to remember* that in many situations, their role is to be nearly invisible because humility is the primary component of a life God blesses. God opposes the prayers of the proud but responds graciously to humble pray-ers who seek only to lift up Christ and not themselves (1 Peter 5:5).

*We all need to remember* a key role of the designated prayer leader. He or she has the opportunity to interpret the style and substance of the intercessor's messages to the pastor and to help intercessors see that their pastor not only believes in prayer but values it in all phases of the congregation's ministry.

The Apostle Paul speaks to a pastor, Timothy, with an urgency to make prayer a priority (1 Tim. 2:1). It is incumbent upon every pastor, all intercessors, and each prayer leader to make sure nothing stands in the way—so that every person, every program, and every plan is birthed and bathed in prayer. ☞



**PHIL MIGLIORATTI** is COO of the Mission America Coalition and national coordinator of Loving Our Communities to Christ ([missionamerica.org](http://missionamerica.org)).



## Private Prayer, Radiant Life | By J. C. Ryle

**W**ithout controversy there is a vast difference among true Christians. There is an immense interval between the foremost and the hindermost in the army of God.

They are all fighting the same good fight, but how much more valiantly some fight than others. They are all doing the Lord's work, but how much more some do than others. They are all light in the Lord, but how much more brightly some shine than others.

There are some of the Lord's people who seem never able to get on from the time of their conversion. They are born again, but they remain babies all their lives. You hear from them the same old experience. They are pilgrims indeed, but pilgrims like the Gibeonites of old; their bread is always dry and moldy, their shoes always old, and their garments always rent and torn (Josh. 9:4–5). I say this with sorrow and grief; but I ask, *Is it not true?*

### Those Who Advance

There are others of the Lord's people who seem to be always advancing. They grow like grass after rain; they increase like Israel in Egypt; they press on like Gideon, though sometimes faint, yet always pursuing. They are ever adding grace to grace, and faith to faith, and strength to strength. Every time you meet them their hearts seem larger, and their spiritual stature taller and stronger. Every year they appear to see more, and know more, and believe more, and feel more in their religion.

They not only have good works to prove the reality of their faith, but they are zealous of them. They not only do well, but they are unwearied in well doing. They attempt great things, and they do great things. When they fail they try

again, and when they fall they are soon up again.

And all this time they think themselves poor, unprofitable servants, and fancy that they do nothing at all. These are those who make religion lovely and beautiful in the eyes of all. They wrest praise even from the unconverted and win golden opinions even from the selfish people of the world. It does one good to see them, to be with them, and to hear them. When you meet them, you could believe that like Moses, they had just come out from the presence of God. When you part with them you feel warmed by their company, as if your soul had been near a fire. I know such people are rare.

### Why the Difference?


Now how can you account for the difference which I have just described? What is the reason that some believers are so much brighter and holier than others? I believe the difference, in 19 cases out of 20, arises from different habits about private prayer. I believe that those who are not eminently holy pray little, and those who are eminently holy pray much.

I believe that spiritual, as well as natural, greatness depends in a high degree on the faithful use of means within everybody's reach. And I assert

confidently that the principal means by which most believers have become great in the church of Christ is the habit of diligent private prayer. Look through the lives of the brightest and best of God's servants, whether in the Bible or not. See what is written of Moses and David and Daniel and Paul. Mark what is recorded of Luther, the Reformer. Observe what is related of the private devotions of Whitefield and McCheyne. Tell me of one of the goodly fellowship of saints and martyrs who has not had this mark most prominently—they were men of prayer. Depend on it, prayer is power.

Prayer obtains fresh and continued outpourings of the Spirit. He alone begins the work of grace in a person's heart. He alone can carry it forward and make it prosper. But the good Spirit loves to be entreated. And those who ask most will have most of His influence.

Prayer is the surest remedy against the devil and besetting sins. That sin will never stand firm which is heartily prayed against. The devil will never long keep dominion over [that] which we beseech the Lord to cast forth. But then we must spread out all our case before our heavenly Physician, if He is to give us daily relief.

Do you wish to grow in grace and be a devoted Christian? Be very sure, if you wish it, you could not have a more important question than this: *Do you pray?* 

**JOHN CHARLES RYLE** (1816–1900) was the first Anglican bishop of Liverpool. He was a writer, a pastor, and an evangelical preacher. He was the author of more than 200 tracts, with millions in circulation and translated into several languages. Ryle was credited with having success in evangelizing the blue collar community.





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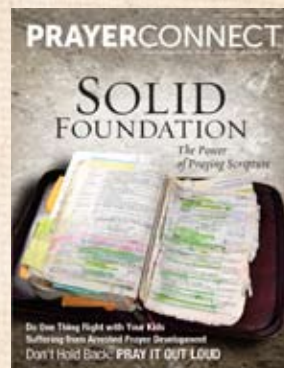
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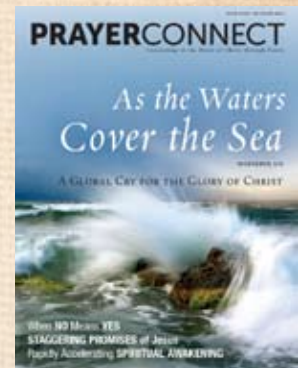
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