A HOUSE OF PRAYER

Strategic Prayer: Applying the Power of Targeted Prayer

“My house shall be a House of Prayer for all nations”

ABSTRACT

God is about to transform prayer in the church. There is a positioning needed for a spirit of prayer to fall upon the people of God today. This manual equips the saints to actively engage in an emerging prayer movement in the church by taking them from the foundational principles of prayer to the strategic levels of corporate warfare.

Dr. Michael D. Gross
www.5foldglobal.org
What Every Disciple Ought to Know!

A House of Prayer

General Editor: Dr. Michael D. Gross
Contributors:
Rev. Billy Skinner
Dr. Heidi C. Daniels
This work is dedicated to the memory of Rev Bob Swanger who graduated to glory in 1995. As my spiritual father and a true apostle to the nations, he wrote a discipleship series under the same title several decades ago. It is my prayer that the present work will meet with the same anointing around the world.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the New King James Version (NKJV) of the Bible.

Copyright © 2014, 2016 Michael D. Gross

This material may not be reproduced or copied without the express written consent of the editor. Special circumstances apply to international partners of 5-Fold Global Ministries
The 21st Century presents us with the greatest opportunities to advance Christianity around the world. The calling and responsibility Jesus has placed upon the church is enormous. Much is riding upon the maturity of every believer. Spiritual leaders agree that we must do a far better job of properly laying the foundation of the Christian faith within believers than was done in the previous century - particularly in the past four decades. This foundation must be laid in an environment of grace, love, and spiritual freedom.

“What Every Disciple Ought to Know” has been developed to help “thoroughly furnish” the next generation of leaders with a resource for making disciples. The units of study that follow are word-centered and will provide the ongoing training necessary for each disciple to mature and move forward in faith and effective participation within the body of Christ. They also comprise a comprehensive teaching strategy that will heighten the unity and spiritual health of the local church. The modern world has yet to see the true church in operation; full of spiritual life and vibrancy. They have seen the old legalistic righteousness of long-established religious traditions and for the most part, they have rejected it. But it’s a new hour for the church. It’s time for a new wineskin. Jesus is coming soon! We must make disciples while it is still day. We must teach others all that Jesus has commanded. This is the task of every Ephesian 4 leader around the world. Our prayer is that this resource will cause you to run with the vision to make disciples of all nations.

Michael D. Gross, General Editor

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. Matthew 28:19, 20

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15 KJV

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 KJV
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 10</strong></td>
<td><strong>A House of Prayer</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Objective:** Equip believers to actively and effectively engage in all aspects of prayer both as individuals and as the corporate body of Christ.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 1</th>
<th>The Call to Prayer</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Beginning of Prayer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God’s Phone Number</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling upon the Lord in Truth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Greatest Prayers of Jesus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 2</th>
<th>The Spirit of Prayer</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watch and Pray</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Spirit is Willing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Approach to Prayer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Proper Balance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 3</th>
<th>The Discipline of Prayer</th>
<th>15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Jesus Walked in Prayer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven Ingredients</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Model Prayer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 4</th>
<th>The Prayer of Faith</th>
<th>21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Role of Faith</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Faith Balance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Effective and Fervent Prayer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 5</th>
<th>Prayer and Fasting</th>
<th>24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The God Connection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus Teaches on Fasting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God’s Kind of Fast</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fasting Situations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 6</th>
<th>Prayer Strata</th>
<th>29</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Strategic Nature of Prayer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul’s Prayers for Spiritual Wisdom and Understanding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive Layers of Prayer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer Training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 7  Corporate Prayer and Intercession  33

The Silent Prayer Phenomenon
One Accord Praying
Types and Characteristics of Corporate Prayer and Intercession
Flaky Prayer and Intercession and the Red Light Zone
Ten Conclusions

Chapter 8  Prayer Warfare  38

Advancing the Kingdom
The Weapons of Warfare
Put on the Armor of God
Use the Authority of Jesus Name
Pray in the Spirit
Declare God’s Word
Pray Through to Victory
A Final Word

Appendix 1  Seven Ingredients Necessary for a Successful Devotional Life by Rev. Billy Skinner  48

Appendix 2  Tips for Fasting  59
By Thomas Hare

Appendix 3  Discussion Questions  61
Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den of thieves.'" (Mark 11:17)

The Beginning of Prayer

The Scriptures are full of references and examples of prayer. Like praise and worship, prayer is indispensable for those who follow Christ. It is essential, therefore, that all disciples be taught to pray and there is no better teacher than Jesus. In every generation, God’s people need to learn how to pray. This unit of study is designed to do just that. It will ignite a fresh call and fervency for all aspects of prayer because every disciple needs to be a praying disciple.

Jesus taught them from the Scriptures, “Is it not written...?” He led them back to the prophetic words of Isaiah after He cleansed the temple of the merchandizing that was going on:

"Also the sons of the foreigner Who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, And to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants-- Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And holds fast My covenant-- Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices Will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." (Isaiah 56:6-7)

We learn from the above prophetic word that God’s design for His house is first and foremost a place of prayer (tehillah). The word here means prayer, supplication, and intercession. It occurs more than 75 times in the Old Testament; 32 of these in the Psalms alone. It’s fascinating that this call to prayer also includes an evangelistic thrust to the Gentiles of “all nations.” The Great Commission is always at the forefront of everything God calls us to be and to do. This should be reflected in the prayers of the church. This is the case in the cleansing of the temple and the prophetic words spoken throughout biblical history, but when did it all begin?

The Bible records the first time mankind began to call upon the Lord. It was after the Fall and after Cain killed his brother Abel. Eve bore a son named Seth whose name means “appointed” because God had appointed another “seed” to replace Abel. Seth then had a son named Enosh and it was then that mankind began to call upon the Lord.

And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him Enosh. Then men began to call on the name of the LORD. (Gen. 4:26)

Often prayer is oversimplified as merely communication with God, but in the beginning man called out to the Lord with a much deeper and more dependent quality, crying out and declaring trust in the name of the Lord. In fact, calling on the name of the Lord became a frequent and indispensable part of their relationship with the living God. This is evident with Abraham and King David during their lifetimes.
Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. (Gen. 12:7-8)

And he went on his journey from the South as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, to the place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Abram called on the name of the LORD. (Gen. 13:3-4)

Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God. (Gen. 21:33)

I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised; So shall I be saved from my enemies. (2Sam. 22:4)

God's Phone Number

God desires His people to call upon His name, but why do so many Christians fail or seldom do this? Everyone knows about calling 911. There is no hesitation in dialing that number for emergency situations. God also has a phone number. You can easily remember it as 333 for Jeremiah 33:3.

Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.' (Jer. 33:3)

Put that verse in your speed dial for ready and easy access. The Lord is glorified when His followers trust Him with every care.

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. (1Pet. 5:6-7)

You must move beyond table prayers and call upon the Lord. His name is like a strong tower and you can run to it when you call upon Him.

The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe. (Prov. 18:10)

Calling Upon the Lord in Truth

There is too much hypocrisy in our spiritual lives and this shows up time and time again in our individual and collective prayer lives. If this wasn’t the case, Jesus would not have cleansed the temple, called His people back to a house of prayer, or taught His disciples about prayer. David, a man after God’s own heart, declared the importance of calling upon God in “truth.”

The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth. (Psalm 145:18)

The Hebrew word for truth refers to firmness and faithfulness. Our reliance upon the Lord must be unwavering in our prayers and our loyalty to Him without question. God will not be close to those who play games with the truth. They will call upon His name, but He will not answer. The plight of hypocrisy is complete nonsense. We act foolishly when we do not call upon the Lord in truth.

For what is the hope of the hypocrite, Though he may gain much, If God takes away his life? Will God hear his cry When trouble comes upon him? Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call on God? "I will
teach you about the hand of God; What is the Almighty I will not conceal. Surely all of you have seen it; Why then do you behave with complete nonsense? (Job 27:8-12)

Jesus’ premiere teaching on prayer forthrightly warns His followers: “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites.” (Matt. 6:5). Who was Jesus referring to? The New Spirit Filled Life Bible gives the following explanation of the hypocrite.

“In Bible days actors wore masks, which included mechanisms for amplifying the voice. Since the dramas were questions and answers, the word describing the dialogue was hupokrinomai, to reply or to answer. Hupokrites is one who is playacting, reading a script, or one who puts on an act. The hypocrite conceals his true motives under a cloak of make-believe.” (Page 1299)

The first issue Jesus dealt with in His discourse on prayer was the issue of hypocrisy. The following chart will help disciples to see the seriousness of this problem; one that remains with us today.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Those God Answers</th>
<th>Those God Does Not Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Godly (Psalm 4:3)</td>
<td>Workers of iniquity (Psalm 14:4; 53:4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The revived (Psalm 80:18)</td>
<td>Nations that do not know God (Psalm 79:6; Jer. 10:25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those who love Him (Psalm 91:14-15)</td>
<td>Those who refuse the correction, knowledge, and counsel of God (Prov. 1:20-33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those who fear Him (Psalm 145:18-19)</td>
<td>Those who pray to be seen by others (Matt. 6:5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those who draw from the wells of salvation (Isaiah 12:3-5)</td>
<td>Those who render long prayers without meaning confusing them with faith (Matt. 6:7-8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those who seek God with all their heart (Jer. 29:8-14)</td>
<td>Those who doubt God &amp; are double-minded or unstable in all their ways (James 1:6-8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those refined by God (Zech. 13:9)</td>
<td>Those who ask amiss (James 4:1-4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

God invites and is pleased when His disciples call upon His name. He is quick to answer when we pray in truth without hypocrisy. Every disciple has the privilege of calling upon the name of the Lord. We need to exercise that privilege often.

“For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? (Deut. 4:7)

The Greatest Prayers of Jesus

There are a number of prayers by Jesus that can be classified as the greatest prayers. Upon closer examination of these selected prayers, it is evident that Jesus is calling upon His heavenly Father.

- *The All-night prayer to God* – This prayer was important in the selection the following morning of 12 apostles from all His disciples.

Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles: (Luke 6:12-13)
• **The Lord’s Prayer** – This prayer was a great prayer because it taught His disciples how to pray.

Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.” So He said to them, “When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one.” (Luke 11:1-4)

• **The Prayer that fed 5,000+** – This prayer was important because it led to the multiplication of provision to meet human needs.

Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children. (Matt. 14:19-21)

• **The Prayer of Gethsemane** – This prayer is great because it is one of deepest humility and complete surrender to His Father’s will.

And He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. (Luke 22:41-44)

• **The Resurrection Prayer** – This was the prayer that raised Lazarus from the dead as a preview of Jesus being the resurrection and the life.

Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. “And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.” Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!” And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Loose him, and let him go.” (John 11:41-44)

• **The Prayer for His Disciples** – This is the longest prayer recorded of Jesus. Jesus prays for His Father to be glorified in Him; for the unity and mission of His disciples; and for future believers that they may be one.

Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, 2 as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. 4 "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. 5 "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. 6 "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. 7 "Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. 8 "For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have
received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. 9 "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. 10 "And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. 11 "Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. 12 "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. 13 "But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. 14 "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18 "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. 20 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 "that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23 "I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. 24 "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. 25 "O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. 26 "And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them." (John 17:1-26)

- The Prayer from the Cross – Perhaps the greatest of all. This prayer releases forgiveness and the way of redemption upon all mankind.

Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." (Luke 23:34)

The above represent seven of the greatest prayers of Jesus. You can learn much about calling upon His name from these prayers. Jesus earnestly, persistently, and passionately called upon His Father. He was humble before God and His praying revealed an intimacy with His Father that every disciple should yearn for today.
CHAPTER 2
THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER

"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."
(Matt. 26:41)

Watch and Pray

Why do so many have difficulty with praying? In Jesus’ most agonizing time when He was in the Garden sweating drops of blood in prayer over His impending death on the cross, He found the disciples sleeping. Yes, sleeping! Not once, but three times. With each verse we see Jesus in the spirit of prayer and His disciples overtaken by the weakness of the flesh.

40 Then He came to the disciples and found them asleep, and said to Peter, "What? Could you not watch with Me one hour? 41 Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."
42 Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done."
43 And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.
44 So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.
45 Then He came to His disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.
46 Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand." (Matthew 26:40-46)

“Watch” in the above passage means “give strict attention to, to be active.” The implication is to be on the alert. Jesus tells them to watch and pray or they will enter into temptation. There is a spiritual alertness that comes with praying. Many who name the name of Christ are not alert or awake in the Spirit. The Church, the body of Christ, will not awaken without watching and praying. According to Jesus, the reason many find praying so difficult is because of the flesh. The flesh resists an alert and active prayer life. Every disciple must overcome his/her flesh to activate an effective prayer life. Much is riding on the outcome of this battle.

The Spirit is Willing

The contrast between a willing spirit and a weak spirit is huge when it comes to the subject of prayer. The following slide accentuates the point. Notice the emphasis of the words used by Jesus. Although a discipline of prayer is an important part of spiritual life, it’s reduced to a mere routine without a willing spirit. Prayer is forced or cumbersome without the heartfelt need to engage in prayer.
A willing spirit ready and predisposed in the direction of prayer leads to an open heaven. Jesus Himself began His mission and ministry with prayer and the heaven was opened.

When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased." (Luke 3:21-22)

Likewise, you need to be a man or woman of prayer to hear from God. A disciple begins His walk with Christ in prayer; he continues his walk in prayer; he finishes the work on earth God has called him to in prayer. There cannot be any spiritual progress without a willing spirit to pray.

Our Approach to Prayer

Airplanes approach a runway with great care. In fact, the approach is everything. A disciple’s approach to prayer is no less significant. These excerpts from Psalm 119, the longest prayer in the Bible, reveal the spirit of prayer; the approach that gets God’s attention and response.

My soul clings to the dust; Revive me according to Your word. (119:25)

My soul melts from heaviness; Strengthen me according to Your word. (119:28)

Your word is a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path (119:105)

My eyes fail from seeking Your salvation
And Your righteous word. (119:123)
Let my cry come before You, O Lord;
Give me understanding accord to Your word. (119:169)

I have gone astray like a lost sheep;
Seek Your servant, (119:176)

I cry out with my whole heart; Hear me, O LORD! I will keep Your statutes. I cry out to You; Save me, and I will keep Your testimonies. I rise before the dawning of the morning, And cry for help; I hope in Your word. My eyes are awake through the night watches, That I may meditate on Your word. (119:145-148)

We learn at least three things about our approach to prayer from the above passages.

1. The spirit or attitude of the heart and mind makes all the difference
2. Prayer is first and foremost a deep seeking of God
3. True seeking of God leads to finding Him and hearing His voice

Prayer is first and foremost seeking God and true seeking of God leads to finding God. This is the true spirit of prayer we learn from Jesus. Jesus has a unique relationship with the Father. Jesus' praying is so much an attitude of His heart that the individual acts that follow appear secondary to His relationship with His Father. This is the case with one of His greatest miracles; the raising of Lazarus from the dead.

Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. "And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me." (John 11:41-42)

A willing spirit is not just one who recognizes their need to pray and the importance of prayer, but one who desires with all their heart to know Him and to fellowship with Him even if it means suffering for the cause. The heartfelt desire to know God demonstrates this fundamental aspect of the spirit of prayer:

I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, (Phil. 3:10 NIV)

This also needs to be the primary purpose and attitude of heart in every disciple’s approach to prayer.

The Proper Balance

Christians today have a tendency to display their needs and requests before God more than anything else. In fact, this one aspect of prayer often dominates their prayer lives, but it is not that way with a true spirit of prayer. Two New Testament words used for prayer transform our understanding and bring things back into proper balance.
Notice there is around an 8 to 2 ratio between offering prayers with an attitude or spirit of worship and making our requests known to God. Is your prayer life in proper balance? The usage of these prayer words in the Scriptures should restore a true spirit of prayer in Christ’s disciples. Every generation needs disciples who have a balanced approach to prayer that reflects the true spirit of prayer. Remember, do not be like the hypocrites in this:

"Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. (Matt. 6:8)
How Jesus Walked in Prayer

The aged disciple and apostle, John, exhorted present and future followers of Christ to walk as Jesus walked:

He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. (1John 2:6)

John is actually saying that we owe it to Him. This again brings the point home that the approach, the spirit by which we willingly engage in prayer is the driving force for what follows. Jesus walked in faith, in the word, in the power of the Holy Spirit, in love, and He also walked in prayer. In fact, a walk with Jesus in the Gospel of Luke reveals a discipline of prayer that disciples should strive to follow.

When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. (3:21)

So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed. (5:16)

Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. (6:12)

Bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. (6:28)

And it happened, as He was alone praying, that His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" (9:18)

Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. (9:28)

As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. (9:29)

Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray (deomai) the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. (10:2)

Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." (11:1)

So He said to them, "When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. (11:2)

Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, (18:1)

"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. (18:10)

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners,
unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. (18:11)

Watch therefore, and pray (deomai) 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." (21:36)

But I have prayed (deomai) for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." (22:32)

When He came to the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." (22:40)

And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, (22:41)

And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. (22:44)

Then He said to them, "Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation." (22:46)

Jesus demonstrated for His disciples the proper spirit of prayer as well as an intentional discipline of prayer. Prayer is something He did often. He found a particular place suitable to offer prayer and He often withdrew Himself to pray. The late Dr. Robert Swanger, an apostle to the nations, once said there were four things every disciple needed to do: Number one: Pray! Number two: Pray! Number three: Pray! Number four: Pray! This may appear a bit overstated, but it accurately portrays the heart of Christ on the matter. You need to also establish a discipline in your prayer life.

Seven Ingredients

Rev. Billy Skinner, a pastor of pastors and one of God’s Prayer Generals, says there are seven ingredients for an ongoing devotional life. He points out that disciples must first have a desire to pray like David.

One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple. For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock. (Psalm 27:4)

David’s emphasis in the above passage is to seek this one thing with a deep longing desire. We must have this desire to inquire of the Lord in prayer and this requires a discipline to go with the heart or spirit of prayer. Here is a brief summary of Billy Skinner’s encouraging words to guide disciples in the discipline of prayer. The complete and practical teaching is provided in Appendix 1.

1. **Time** - A specific time must be daily set aside. Make this a holy habit. A habit that helps you spend time with the Lord each day is a good habit.

   So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed. (Luke 5:16)

2. **Success** – You need to make a “commitment to succeed in prayer.” A lack of confidence in Christ and a defeatist attitude will derail your prayer life. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you become successful and faithful in your devotional life. Seek Him and His will first.
"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (Matt. 6:33)

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. (1John 5:14-15)

3. **Place** – Establish a special place of prayer. This is the place where you meet with God and He meets with you. The more you pray there, the more sacred that place becomes. This can also be a place where Jesus teaches you to pray.

Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." (Luke 11:1)

4. **Tools** – Use the tools and resources provided by the Holy Spirit. "Always take the Word of God with you into your prayer chamber." Praise and worship music and a prayer journal are also helpful tools. "Learn to sing to the Lord and bow down before Him."

What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding. (1Cor. 14:15)

5. **Read Through the Bible** – You cannot afford to be ignorant of the full counsel of God’s word. Develop a plan to regularly read through the entire Bible. Scripture is like an energy drink in your prayer life. God is pleased when you pray the Scriptures back to Him.

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Heb. 4:12)

6. **Variety** – Practice variety in your prayer life. Singing unto the Lord, kneeling in quietness before the Lord, praying scripture back to the Lord, dancing unto the Lord, walking and praying will keep your prayer life from becoming "routine, mundane, trite, or boring." "Allow variety in prayer to be the norm, not the exception."

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints--and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. (Eph. 6:17-20)

7. **Record Your Prayer Life** – You are on a spiritual journey with the Lord. God will speak when you pray and it’s important that you record and date those times. This keeps your prayer life focused and guided on the right track.

Then the LORD answered me and said: "Write the vision And make it plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it. (Hab. 2:2)

"Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. (Rev. 1:19)
Like poetry, there is a rhyme and rhythm associated with the discipline of prayer. This prevents it from becoming a mere mechanical and human engineered exercise. Instead, your prayer life can be a powerful flow of spontaneity that renders your set time with God teaming with life and meaning.

**The Model Prayer**

Prayer is a learned behavior that requires a particular heart and an intentional discipline. The disciples observed the prayer life of Jesus and clearly recognized the spirit by which He prayed and the discipline He exercised in prayer. No wonder they came to Him desiring to learn how to pray:

*Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." (Luke 11:1)*

What followed is referred to as “The Lord’s Prayer.” Many Christians have learned the Lord’s Prayer and it is still recited each Sunday in mainline churches. However, on closer observation this may not have been its primary purpose at all. For example, we do not see Jesus or His disciples routinely repeating the prayer anywhere in the Bible. Although there is nothing wrong with praying the Lord’s Prayer, it has much more to offer in regards to the spirit and discipline of prayer. This is a model prayer meant to teach the disciples how to pray. The Lord’s Prayer appears in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.&quot;</td>
<td>So He said to them, &quot;When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above Scriptures of the Lord’s Prayer present the guidance and substance for our own prayers. If you want to learn to pray, then you must follow what Jesus teaches His disciples. Jesus never took a casual approach to prayer and neither should we. This is evident in each section of His model prayer.

The first section is teaching us to “hallow” or set apart the name of the Lord. This means to make His name holy. A young evangelist once shared at a large prophetic conference in Eastern Europe, a dream he had had of a conversation with Jesus. He said Jesus appeared with him on a beach and they had a very casual conversation and even smoked a cigar together. Needless to say, the Holy Spirit left the conference hall and all 900 in attendance fell silent in disbelief. A casual and humanistic understanding is gaining a foothold in the prayer lives of the next generation. A disciple must learn how to lift up God’s name in prayer above all others for He is holy. Dr. Larry Lea, who conducted prayer seminars in major cities around the world in the 1980’s and 1990’s, discovered a great way to hallow His name in prayer. In his 1984 Prayer Guide he produced the following chart to honor God’s name and His mighty attributes under the New Covenant:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIN</td>
<td>JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU</td>
<td>“Jehovah our righteousness”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JEHOVAH-M’KADDESH</td>
<td>“Jehovah who sanctifies”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPIRIT</td>
<td>JEHOVAH-SHALOM</td>
<td>“Jehovah is peace”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH</td>
<td>“Jehovah is there”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUNDNESS</td>
<td>JEHOVAH-ROPHE</td>
<td>“Jehovah heals”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUCCESS</td>
<td>JEHOVAH-JIREH</td>
<td>“Jehovah’s provision shall be seen”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECURITY</td>
<td>JEHOVAH-NISI</td>
<td>“Jehovah my banner”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JEHOVAH-ROHI</td>
<td>“Jehovah my shepherd”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Giving thanks for the benefits associated with God’s name and making faith declarations in prayer are great ways to exalt and honor God, distinguishing Him from that which is common.

For You, LORD, are most high above all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods. (Psalm 97:9)

Let them praise the name of the LORD, For His name alone is exalted; His glory is above the earth and heaven. (Psalm 148:13)

Likewise the “I am” sayings of Jesus are powerful expressions that set His name apart and declare Him as the Redeemer of mankind.

- I am the bread of Life (John 6:35, 48)
- I am the light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5)
- I am the door (John 10:9)
- I am the good shepherd (John 10:11)
- I am the resurrection and the life (John 11:25)
- I am the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6)
- I am the true vine (John 15:1)

The second section in the Lord’s Prayer involves the coming of the kingdom of God and the doing of His will on earth. A disciple has to learn how to prioritize the things of God in prayer. Jesus again is the greatest example of surrendering His own will to the will of God. A significant part of His discipline of prayer was to regularly come to the Mount of Olives and more specifically the garden to pray.

Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. When He came to the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." And He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. (Luke 22:39-43)

Jesus is teaching us to make the doing of His will a priority in our prayers. Note that an angel came and strengthened Him because God’s agenda took precedence over all else. Our prayers need to follow this same pattern.

The third section of this prayer model is dealing with our necessities of life. “Give us this day our daily bread.” We do have needs and the Lord desires us to ask Him for them.

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. “For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. (Matt. 7:7-8)
This is where our requests are to be presented before the Lord. The asking is referring to a request or petition of someone in a higher position. It denotes an insistent asking, not commanding God, but confidently presenting a request He longs to give. Often we begin our prayers with such requests when we need to discipline ourselves to come into His presence first with thanksgiving and a deep desire to know Him.

The fourth section of the Lord’s Prayer is all about forgiveness. The Gospel of Matthew really highlights this teaching from Jesus:

"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. "But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matt. 6:14-15)

It’s crystal clear that unforgiveness has no part in our prayer lives. There is a flow of forgiveness that must be nurtured and maintained in prayer. Forgiving others opens up the flow of God’s forgiveness to us; unforgiveness shuts it down.

The fifth section of Jesus’ instructions on prayer is about resisting temptation and deliverance from evil. This is where you put on the armor of God and stand firm against the onslaught of demonic forces.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints-- (Eph. 6:10-18)

Every disciple needs to understand and engage in spiritual warfare. There is no escaping the battle. When’s the last time you put on God’s armor and fought against temptation and evil?

The last section of the Lord’s Prayer acknowledges God’s kingdom, power and glory. Our strength is in the Lord who alone has all power. He deserves all the glory and honor. A disciple needs to give it to Him in prayer. How do you end a prayer session?

“You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.” (Rev. 4:11)

Jesus modeled every aspect of the Lord’s Prayer in His prayer life. Not only did He demonstrate the proper spirit of prayer, but He also showed a discipline of prayer. The New Spirit Filled Life Bible has an excellent summary of this model prayer taught by Jesus:

Jesus’ words “Your kingdom come” are more than a suggestion to pray for a distant millennial day, for everything in this prayer is current. This prayer is not a formula for repetition so much as it is an outline for expansion. Worship is to be longer than a sentence. Petitions are not confined to bread. Forgiveness is to be requested in specifics, not generalities, and prayer for the entry of God’s kingdom into present earthborn situations is not accomplished in a momentary utterance. The verb mood and tense of “Your kingdom come” essentially says, “Father, let Your kingdom come here and now!” (Page 1409)
CHAPTER 4
THE PRAYER OF FAITH

And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. (James 5:15)

The Role of Faith

Faith is a vital part of prayer. At the same time it has also been one of the most misunderstood aspects when it comes to individual and collective praying. Even casual observers can see a polarization in those who view faith’s role as one of naming and claiming, demanding and commanding God in prayer and those who preface everything in prayer, even those things which are clearly God’s will, with the proverbial “if.” Neither of these extremes are well-balanced and their practical application in the context of prayer turns a lot of people off who genuinely desire to learn to pray. This chapter of our study will help to bring the role of faith into proper perspective.

Every disciple knows that it’s impossible to please God without faith. The role of faith must be presented in any teaching about prayer.

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Heb. 11:6)

Praying to God requires a conviction of truth that God is who He claims to be and that He wants to answer our prayers in accordance to His will. This is why it’s important to understand what the will of God is or else we find ourselves aimlessly praying rather than seeking His will.

You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. (James 4:2-3)

God wants and even invites us to ask Him, but there is a proper way of asking in order to receive. A self-centered motive is not the proper way though many disciples continue to give their own desires prominence in their prayers. For example, we pray for financial prosperity only to consume it on our desires.

God also implores us to ask for wisdom with the promise that He will give it generously without reminding us of our unworthiness. What a promise! But that promise comes with a condition; no doubting; no double-mindedness.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. (James 1:5-8)

The person who doubts is drawn in two different directions especially in times of trial when faith is being tested. This is when exercising faith in prayer is needed the most and we cannot afford to move back and forth between belief and unbelief. Believing that God will help you and giving up at other times means you are inconsistent in the exercise of faith in your prayer life. You have little or
no anticipation of receiving anything from the Lord because you do not pray in faith. On the other hand, the prayer of faith moves the hand of God to save, heal, and forgive.

**The Faith Balance**

The most frequently quoted passages of Scripture in relation to the prayer of faith are those involving asking anything and I will do it ones.

"And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. "If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. (John 14:13-14)

Sometimes passages like the one above are used to justify anything a person ever dreamed of or desired. Those who pray in this way see only one reason why they do not receive "everything" they ask for. It’s a faith issue. This is why a disciple must carefully examine God’s word to come to a proper faith balance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Some Anything/Whatever Scriptures</th>
<th>Some Condition Scriptures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. &quot;If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. (John 14:13-14)</em></td>
<td>You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. (James 4:3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assurly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. &quot;Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. (John 16:23-24)</em></td>
<td>Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. (1John 5:14-15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So Jesus answered and said to them, <em>Have faith in God. &quot;For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain,`Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. &quot;Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. (Mark 11:22-24)</em></td>
<td>*And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. &quot;But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.&quot; (Mark 11:25-26; Matt. 6:14-15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.&quot; (Matt. 21:22)</td>
<td>And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. (1John 3:22)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The prayer of faith is not a fleshly exercise, but a spiritual one. A disciple needs to pray with a spiritual understanding of the proper conditions outlined in God’s word or things can get out of balance in a hurry with an overemphasis on our own desires and a secondary thought regarding God’s will and what is pleasing to Him. This is why you must see the importance of believing God in prayer and at the same time fulfilling the conditions of praying in His will, forgiving others when praying, obeying His instructions, and doing what is acceptable and pleasing to Him.

**The Effective and Fervent Prayer**

The prayer of faith is described in wondrously fascinating terms. There is power in the prayer of faith. It is effective! This means it works!
Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. (James 5:14-16)

We learn much from the context of the above exercise of faith in prayer. It’s interesting to note that James, the Lord’s brother, did not believe in Jesus until after He was raised from the dead. In fact, James agreed with his brothers and sisters that Jesus was mentally ill or beside himself. Jesus appeared to James after His resurrection; then James believed, and later becomes the leader and apostle of the Jerusalem church. God uses James to convey that faith is not something static, but is active and powerful. We cannot deny the faith connection. The sick person calls on the elders for prayer. This is an act of faith on their part. We know this because of the extensive use of the imperative tense in these verses, “Let him call for the elders of the church…” In addition, the elders are to operate at a high level of faith by praying over the person, including anointing them with oil in the name of Jesus Christ. It’s significant that the Scripture refers to the prayer as the “prayer of faith.” The effect of their prayer is compared to that of Elijah. What this means for us is that the prayer of faith works. The bottom line is this: just as an umbilical cord is connected to a baby in its mother’s womb, faith and prayer are connected. Likewise, our prayers need to be effective and fervent. There is operative power when we actively pray in faith. Those who carefully follow the Lord in His ways can expect God to move in a high degree of strength and power. This is the nature of the prayer of faith.

God is willing and is ready to respond when disciples pray with faith and do not lose heart. The Parable of the Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1-8) teaches this very thing:

Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, (Luke 18:1)

The widow did not give up and neither should disciples throw in the towel today. She was not wearied or spiritless, but demonstrated the persistence of faith in the face of injustice. Jesus is coming soon and is wondering if He will find His disciples sleeping instead of praying with faith. Disciples should always pray in faith.

Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:1)
"But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days. (Mark 2:20)

The God Connection

Jesus began His ministry with a forty day fast in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-2). His disciples did not fast while Jesus was with them on earth; however, they fasted after His ascension. Why fasting? The prophet Joel gives us the reason.

"Now, therefore," says the LORD, "Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm. (Joel 2:12-13)

There is an obvious connection with God involved in prayer and fasting. You experience greater clarity about spiritual things when the flesh is subdued and out of the way. You can hear God’s voice and what the Spirit is saying more clearly.

God wants us to fast. Every disciple needs to understand and learn to fast, but for the right reasons. The purpose for fasting is first and foremost to fast “for God.” God Himself brings this to the attention of His people.

"Say to all the people of the land, and to the priests:`When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months during those seventy years, did you really fast for Me-- for Me? (Zech. 7:5)

Fasting, therefore, is not to get something, but to draw closer to the Living God and to clearly hear His voice.

Jesus Teaches on Fasting

Jesus taught His disciples many things in a variety of ways. In fact, the Sermon on the Mount includes teaching on matters of the heart like loving your enemies, marriage, charitable deeds, prayer, and also fasting. In fact, immediately following his teaching on the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus gives instructions about fasting.

"Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. "But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, "so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. (Matt. 6:16-18)

It’s clear that Jesus expects His followers to fast because He takes time to teach them about it. Notice He again makes a stark contrast between His disciples and hypocrites. Our motivation for fasting needs to be pure. It cannot be to impress others with a seemingly superior spirituality. Disciples who do that may get the attention they seek from men, but they get nothing from God. On the other hand, those who fast as a God-inspired means of denying self and drawing closer to the
Lord are openly restored and rewarded. Jesus showed His followers the true nature and importance of fasting with those brief instructions.

Linked closely with the previous teaching of Jesus is the Parable of The Pharisee and the Tax Collector. The contrast between the two is most revealing. The Pharisee represented “some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others” (Luke 18:9):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pharisee</th>
<th>Tax Collector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“went up to the temple to pray” (18:10)</td>
<td>“went up to the temple to pray” (18:10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“stood and prayed thus to himself” (18:11)</td>
<td>“standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying” (18:11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;God, I thank You that I am not like other men-- extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.” (18:11-12)</td>
<td>&quot;God, be merciful to me a sinner!” (18:13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled (18:14)</td>
<td>&quot;I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other… and he who humbles himself will be exalted.&quot; (18:14)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notice the Pharisee use of fasting to justify his spiritual standing. How ridiculous it is that some feel they can fool God! God knows if a fast is “for Him” or not.

God’s Kind of Fast

What kind of fasting is God wanting to see today? As we discussed earlier, true disciples fast for Him; to draw closer to Him; to hear His voice more clearly. Fasting is not some exercise to abstain from food in order to declare I’ve done this religious rite. Rather, fasting positions us to move with God on a straight course in things that really matter. God is saying it’s a new day when it comes to fasting. What He calls a fast and what we call a fast is filled with disparities as the prophet Isaiah points out.

"Why have we fasted, ‘they say,’ and You have not seen? Why have we afflicted our souls, and You take no notice?” "In fact, in the day of your fast you find pleasure, And exploit all your laborers. Indeed you fast for strife and debate, And to strike with the fist of wickedness. You will not fast as you do this day, To make your voice heard on high. Is it a fast that I have chosen, A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush, And to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Would you call this a fast, And an acceptable day to the LORD? (Isaiah 58:3-5)"

Fasting is a beginning of things; not an end.

"Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh? Then your light shall break forth like the morning, Your healing shall spring forth speedily, And your righteousness shall go before you; The glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. (Isaiah 58:6-8)"

The above situations reflect the kind of fasting God has chosen. These are all typical of the ministry of Jesus and its continuation through His disciples in every generation. In fact, we have a long list of additional promises when we engage in His kind of fast:
Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.' "If you take away the yoke from your midst, The pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, 10 If you extend your soul to the hungry And satisfy the afflicted soul, Then your light shall dawn in the darkness, And your darkness shall be as the noonday. 11 The LORD will guide you continually, And satisfy your soul in drought, And strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. 12 Those from among you Shall build the old waste places; You shall raise up the foundations of many generations; And you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In. 13 "If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, From doing your pleasure on My holy day, And call the Sabbath a delight, The holy day of the LORD honorable, And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, Nor finding your own pleasure, Nor speaking your own words, 14 Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken." (Isaiah 58:9-14)

God’s perspective on fasting speaks for itself. Fasting strengthens you in the Lord. The foundations of every generation need to be repaired and restored. The kind of fasting God has chosen will “cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth.”

Fasting Situations

There are a number of fasting situations in the Bible that reflect the kind of fasting chosen by God.

- Casting out Certain Kinds of Demons (Matt. 17:14-21; Mark 9:14-29)
  "However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting." (Matt. 17:21; Mark 9:29)

  Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" (Matt. 4:1-4)

- Repentance (Josh. 7:6-12; Jonah 3:4-5; Neh. 9:1-2; Jer. 36:3)
  "Now, therefore," says the LORD, "Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." (Joel 2:12)

  And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. (Jonah 3:4-5)

  Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, in sackcloth, and with dust on their heads. Then those of Israelite lineage separated themselves from all foreigners; and they stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. (Neh. 9:1-2)

  It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the adversities which I purpose to bring upon them, that everyone may turn from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin." (Jer. 36:3)

- Ministering to the Lord and Releasing Others for God-ordained Strategic Assignments and
Missions (Luke 2:36-37; Acts 13:1-3; 14:23)

Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. (Luke 2:36-37)

Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. (Acts 13:1-3)

So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. (Acts 14:23)

- Inquiring of the Lord (Dan. 9:3; 2 Chron. 20:1-4)

Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. (Dan. 9:3)

And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. (2Chron. 20:3)

- Safe journey (Ezra 8:21)

There, by the Ahava Canal, I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions. (Ezra 8:21 NIV)

- Personal Protection, the Land and National Danger (Esther 4:16; Joel 1:1-20)

"Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!" (Esther 4:16)

Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly; Gather the elders And all the inhabitants of the land Into the house of the LORD your God, And cry out to the LORD. (Joel 1:14)

- Spiritual Agreement in Marriage (1 Cor. 7:5)

Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. (1Cor. 7:5)

"Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. (Matt. 18:19)

- Sickness (2 Sam. 12:13-23; Psalm 35:13)

Then Nathan departed to his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah’s wife bore to David, and it became ill. David therefore pleaded with God for the child, and David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. (2Sam. 12:15-16)
But as for me, when they were sick, My clothing was sackcloth; I humbled myself with fasting; And my prayer would return to my own heart. (Psalm 35:13)

- Times of Affliction and Distress (Neh. 1:3-4)

And they said to me, "The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire." So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven. (Neh. 1:3-4)

When you pray with fasting in situations like those above, you get in tune with God. You position yourself under the heavenly council. The Roman Centurion, Cornelius, did this very thing and put all his relatives and friends in a position to receive God's word, be filled with the Holy Spirit, and water baptized.

So Cornelius said, "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, (Acts 10:30)

The angel told Cornelius to call for a man named, Peter, so he sent for him right away to “hear all things commanded you by God” (Acts 10:33). The rest is Pentecostal history, but the important role of prayer and fasting cannot be denied by those who truly desire to follow Christ. Fasting is important because of the demonic resistance and the temptation to override God’s will with human plans.

Fasting also can bring fresh vision, fresh revelation and spiritual understanding into the will and plans of God for His people. For example, Daniel prayed and fasted for three weeks. It was a very intense fast.

In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled. (Dan. 10:2-3)

This very intense time of prayer and fasting resulted in a heavenly vision (Dan. 10:5-9), an angelic visitation (10:10-11), and a spiritual understanding about the war taking place in the heavens and how his prayers may affect things (10:12-21). This again confirms the important role fasting plays in our prayer lives. Some practical tips on fasting are included in Appendix 2.
Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. (Heb. 7:25)

The Strategic Nature of Prayer

The ascended Lord is actively engaged in prayerful intercession for us. This should bring confidence and comfort to every disciple. The Greek entunchano literally means “to fall in with, to meet with someone for the purpose of conversation, consultation, or supplication.” Just think of it! Jesus actually prays to His Father in heaven on your behalf. He stands in the gap in all the situations mentioned in the previous chapter. Stephen saw the Risen Lord standing in the gap when he was being stoned.

But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” (Acts 7:55-56)

We learn about the strategic nature of prayer from the divine placement of Jesus at the right hand of God and His heavenly function as our chief intercessor. He “always lives to make intercession” for His followers. You need to understand that God is completely right handed. Everything flows through Jesus! He’s the One praying for you!

Paul’s Prayers for Spiritual Wisdom and Understanding

The Apostle Paul often prayed for God to give Christ’s followers spiritual wisdom and revelation in the “knowledge of Him.” This involved understanding His power, His will, and His love. The following chart of these prayers reveals the importance of praying for a spiritual understanding of the things of God.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ephesians 1:15-23</th>
<th>Philippians 1:9-11</th>
<th>Colossians 1:9-14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us.</td>
<td>And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.</td>
<td>For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Our prayers become more strategic and get realigned with God’s will when disciples receive spiritual understanding, spiritual discernment, and revelation knowledge from God. We need to pray this for one another.

**Progressive Layers of Prayer**

Disciples who are serious about learning to pray need to establish an effective prayer life beyond prayer chains and praying for personal prayer requests. As important as these may seem, there is much more to the operation of prayer than meets the eye. A closer examination in the Bible reveals a series of prayer strata or progressive layers of prayer.

1. **The Prayer Closet** – Jesus gave His followers detailed instructions on this layer of prayer.
It’s difficult to progress in a prayer life if an individual disciple is unaccustomed to praying in the first place.

"But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. (Matt. 6:6)

2. **The Prayer Request** – The Bible encourages us to make our needs known to God and to bring our requests to Him.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; (Phil. 4:6)

3. **The Prayer of Intercession** – This is simply praying for others. Jesus prayed for Simon Peter that His faith would not fail. One could only speculate what would have happened without the prayer of intercession. God is looking for disciples who are willing to stand in the gap for others.

And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. "But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.” (Luke 22:31-32)

"So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. (Ezek. 22:30)

4. **Corporate Prayer and Intercession** - This can be defined as constant and fervent prayer regularly sustained at the strategic levels of spiritual warfare over a region by a group of trained intercessors at the same time and place leading to a measurable increase of captives set free. There has been a revival of this layer of prayer, but it remains untaught and inactive in most churches.

These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers. And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said, (Acts 1:14-15)

Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church... 12 So, when he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying. (Acts 12:5, 12)

5. **Warfare/Governmental Prayer** – This is when the church engages in spiritual warfare in the face of religious and governmental opposition to the advance of the work of God’s kingdom on earth.

And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. 24 So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, 25 "who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things? 26 The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the LORD and against His Christ.' 27 "For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together 28 "to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. 29 "Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, 30 "by
stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus." 31 And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness. (Acts 4:23-31)

Prayer Training

Every disciple is to be a praying disciple. This takes training and practice. The progressive layers of prayer in the previous section teach us that training must be provided and accompanied with opportunities for group prayer. This simultaneous audible praying should continue until each disciple is confident praying publicly as well as privately. Prayer cannot be confined to a strictly individual activity. Although many individual disciples today feel uncomfortable praying with a group or in public, he or she must overcome this and recognize that the example of the early church teaches us to pray in the following ways:

- **Pray regularly** – each believer should have regularly scheduled times for prayer
- **Pray for others** – each believer should lift up the needs of others
- **Pray together** – each believer should pray in agreement to dramatically increase the power released upon a situation or stronghold
- **Pray in the Spirit** – each believer should engage in praying in the Spirit, understanding that the primary way of doing this is praying in tongues.

It takes time to build a high impact prayer life both individually and collectively, but it's time to begin. The gates of hell cannot overcome a praying disciple nor a praying church that has built its house upon the Rock of Christ.

"And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. (Matt. 16:18)
CHAPTER 7
CORPORATE PRAYER AND INTERCESSION

And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel’s hand. (Rev. 8:4)

The Silent Prayer Phenomenon

There has been a resurgence of corporate prayer and intercession with an emphasis upon spiritual warfare beginning with the 1980’s. This has proven to be a powerful prayer movement around the world; however, the public introduction of the phenomenon of “silent prayer” continues to influence the thinking of many believers when it comes to praying in public. There is no biblical evidence for this growing phenomenon relating to corporate prayer. In fact, there is only one recorded occurrence of silence in heaven.

When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. (Rev 8:1)

The seventh seal actually introduces the seven angels with the seven trumpets. What follows is fascinating to behold and tells us a lot about corporate prayer and intercession.

And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all God’s people, on the golden altar in front of the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God’s people, went up before God from the angel’s hand. (Rev 8:2-4 NIV)

Notice the emphasis on the collective presentation before God of “the prayers of all God’s people.” This is not merely referring to their individual prayers, but their corporate prayers as well. This doesn’t dismiss times of waiting before the Lord to hear His voice, but the emphasis today on “silent prayer” is deafening. A disciple must also engage in the “prayers of the saints.” The church also earnestly prays together.

Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church. (Acts 12:5)

One Accord Praying

There exists a number of types of praying, but the Bible records the Early Church was in “one accord” when it came to praying together.

These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers. (Acts 1:14)

When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. (Acts 4:24 NIV)

What does praying in “one accord” mean? There are 12 occurrences of the Greek word homothumadon in the book of Acts. The word literally means “with one mind, with one passion.” It’s
a combination of two words meaning to “rush along” and “in unison.” This implies the urgency of corporate prayer and the importance of being on the same page with God in gathering together for prayer. This group unity in mind and purpose is greatly lacking in most prayer ministries today. The spiritual harmony modeled in the Early Church would lead to greater action in spreading the gospel today in our respective communities and regions. The image is musical in a sense. A number of prayer notes are sounded which, while different, harmonize in pitch and tone. Like the instruments of a great concert under the direction of a concert master, the Holy Spirit blends together the prayers of His people. These are the prayers the angel offers before the throne of God. Corporate prayer that is in “one accord” has the sense that we are under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Praying in “one accord” always increases the harvest of souls in every place. Paul gives us a strong note of encouragement for such group unity.

Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. (Phil. 2:1-2)

Jesus puts an exclamation point on spiritual agreement in prayer. He’s ready to act when disciples display this kind of unity when praying and interceding together.

"Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. (Matt. 18:19)

Types of Praying and Characteristics of Corporate Prayer and Intercession

In his book Intercessory Prayer, Dutch Sheets defines this strata of prayer as “an extension of the ministry of Jesus through His Body, the Church, whereby we mediate between God and humanity for the purpose of reconciling the work to Him, or between Satan and humanity for the purpose of enforcing the victory of Calvary.” Corporate prayer and intercession consists of constant and fervent prayer regularly sustained at the strategic levels. This is done over a region by a group of disciples, at the same time and place, leading to a measurable increase in the harvest of souls. There are several types of praying that occur during corporate prayer and intercession:

- **One Accord Praying**—all pray out loud at the same time and sustain this fervent prayer for long periods of time.
- **Prayer of Agreement**—one person prays out loud and the others pray in agreement.
- **Scripture Praying**—the Holy Spirit leads one or more disciples to open the Bible to a passage of Scripture and combine reading of the text with prayer regarding what the Lord is showing them about the implications of the text for the actual situation.
- **Praying in the Spirit**—Disciples pray and praise out loud in other tongues (heavenly syllables or languages not understood by the speaker) and/or specially anointed words of understanding (words understood by all, but divinely anointed for the respective context).
- **Prophetic Intercession**—the Holy Spirit prompts disciples to pray for something they have little or no knowledge of by giving them the ability to receive an immediate assignment from the Father and pray about it in a divinely anointed utterance.
- **Travail**—Disciples go through a spiritual birthing process commonly noted by a rocking motion, as well as by weeping, groaning, and wailing during prayer.
- **Prayer and Praise Warfare**—those praying advance against enemy strongholds utilizing the weapons of warfare as offensive weapons to effectively silence and overrun the enemy’s position. (Our praise silences the enemy).
- **Prayer Walking**—(praying on site with insight) - disciples pray while walking around or through key positions of known satanic fortifications treading on the enemy and evicting demonic forces.

There are also a number of characteristics of corporate prayer and intercession. It's important that followers of Christ are aware of these if they are to achieve a unified thrust of prayer that will open up heaven for the multitudes held in bondage to the power of Satan. There are a number of important aspects that can be present in a corporate gathering of intercessors who are focused together on the purposes of God.

- Disciples gather to pray rather than talk.
- Disciples sustain prayer for long periods of time, lasting normally an hour or more.
- Disciples focus on God's corporate vision for cities and nations rather than personal agendas.
- Disciples boldly cry out to God with a loud voice and, at other times, quietly wait in His presence.
- Disciples utilize all types of praying, including tongues and written prayers.
- Disciples follow the agenda ordered by the Spirit of God and not that of a particular individual.
- Disciples share prophetic visions, Scriptures, and words of revelation from God without preaching, teaching, or correcting others.
- Disciples skilled on the instruments of music are encouraged to play prophetically as the Spirit leads.
- Disciples flow in the Spirit together (the corporate flow of the whole body) rather than personal ministry.
- Disciples minister to the Lord in prayer and fasting and listen to His voice.
- Disciples engage the enemy through militant intercession (spiritual warfare) to dispel demonic forces.
- Disciples move in the corporate anointing as they foster teamwork rather than individual "charisma."

**Flaky Prayer and Intercession and the Red Light Zone**

*Flaky* is defined as "exhibiting eccentric, unbalanced or irrational behavior." When disciples are left to themselves without adequate training and accountability to an Ephesians 4:11 leadership team, flaky intercession will inevitably manifest in public prayer gatherings. Here are some prayers that typically violate the Scriptures:

- Strike 'em dead prayers—Luke 9:54-56
- Bearing other's sicknesses—1 Peter 2:24
- Witchcraft praying—Galatians 5:19-20
- Bridal Chamber praying—Genesis 6:1-4
- Fleece praying—Judges 6:36-40

The following chart characterizes such misguided corporate prayer and intercession and exposes the demonic spirits behind it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Red Light Zone</th>
<th>Demonic spirits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prayers that control and manipulate</td>
<td>Absalom or Lucifer spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayers of destruction</td>
<td>Spirit of witchcraft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fleshly/sensual prayers</td>
<td>Sensual spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayers from an unclean heart</td>
<td>Critical/wounded spirit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We can call this the “red light zone” because a church called to pray needs to stop and avoid at all costs these signs of unbalanced and eccentric praying. Sound teaching on this layer of prayer from God’s word will greatly hinder these errant expressions from occurring when God’s people gather to pray. Trained intercessors need to make others aware of the demonic spirits behind the “red light zone” or risk the danger of allowing confusion and all kinds of controlling and sensual spirits into a prayer gathering. It’s unfortunate that manipulative prayer and intercession is a quite common occurrence in prayer meetings. This includes prayers that seek the will of the person praying and those that cut down spiritual leaders. Words like “...now if I was in leadership I would...,” or “Lord, help the pastor see what is really needed,” indicate that one is praying in concordance with the Lucifer or Absalom spirit (2 Samuel 14).

There are also those prayers of witchcraft that include destruction. Some of these prayers could take the following forms: “God, either save them, get them out of the office, or kill them.”; “God, burn their business or building down.”; “Strike the family with illness.” The point is that when someone prays a prayer out of his soul (mind, will, emotion), he is releasing psychic, and many times, demonic forces to work against the one for whom he is praying.

*Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.* Proverbs 18:21

There are also fleshly prayers that arise out of sinful and natural desires. This is when you are in corporate prayer and someone brings in a prayer for “Aunt Betsy” when the group is praying for the Lord of the Harvest to send forth more laborers or breaking down targeted strongholds. It is also when someone changes the direction of the prayer time by stopping the group to hear a personal and often unrelated vision they have received. Instead, they need to pray through the vision. Otherwise, the group ends up in a discussion rather than in prayer. In addition, it is when someone interrupts someone else praying. They are not listening, seeking to be in unity or to flow with the corporate anointing. Rather, they begin praying in a different direction instead of waiting to receive God’s peace that the group has prayed through.

Finally there are prayers from an unclean heart. When someone’s heart is unclean, they will point the finger at others when they need to point the finger at self. This is a critical spirit. This is also when someone prays things out of their own woundedness rather than the desires of God. All these things greatly hinder the effectiveness of prayer meetings. The following will guard and protect the prayer ministry of the church:

- The God-given vision and mission of the church
- The preeminence and confirmation of God’s word
- The spiritual covering of the church
- Spiritual accountability
- Spiritual discernment and witness of other mature believers

Needless to say, the church needs to be protected from the abuses of flaky intercession. It occurs and needs to be corrected through sound teaching and purposeful activation of corporate prayer.

**Ten Conclusions**

Corporate prayer and intercession is essential to bringing in the end time harvest in fulfillment of the Great Commission. This bears repeating over and over again. Disciples praying and interceding in concert need to confidently understand that their prayers can release the blessing of
God upon a person, a home, a church, a city, and even a nation. Their travail can birth fresh revelation from God and their praying in unison can destroy the devil’s plan and set many captives free. Here are ten Biblical conclusions for every praying disciple:

1. You can pray in victory. (Exodus 17:12; Isaiah 37)
2. You can pray in God’s protection against the enemy and foil his plans. (Ezekiel 22:30)
3. You can pray in knowledge, vision, and understanding. (Daniel 10:1-21)
4. You can pray in the healing of the land. (2 Chronicles 7:14)
5. You can pray in the greater harvest. (Matthew 9:37-38; Luke 10:2)
7. You can pray in open gates and deliverance. (Acts 12:5-7)
8. You can pray in God’s direction and the right spiritual leaders. (Acts 13:2-3)
9. You can pray in strength, good, and the will of God. (Romans 8:26-28)
10. You can pray in physical healing. (Isaiah 38:2-5; James 5:16)

This strata of praying is unquestionably the beginning of impacting a targeted region for and with Christ. Dick Bernal describes it well in saying, “It is preparing and planning in the Spirit, getting the mind and strategy of Christ on just how to penetrate a city with the gospel.”

God’s sovereignty must always be affirmed and recognized in the training and activation of corporate prayer and intercession. Disciples today must be repeatedly reminded that 120 believers spent ten days after Jesus ascension in corporate prayer and intercession. They did this in obedience to the instructions of Jesus. They passionately united around one purpose:

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

Every disciple in every generation must unite in corporate prayer and intercession with the same fervent passion around the identical purpose and power.
"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. (Matt. 11:12)

Advancing the Kingdom

Every disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ needs to incorporate spiritual warfare into his/her prayer life. One of the first things a disciple must learn is that Jesus Christ who dwells within them is greater than anyone or anything in this world including the devil himself.

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. (1John 4:4)

The heart of God is and always will be about souls. The advancement of His kingdom on earth is all about souls. This is why the advancing of the kingdom is so aggressive. Satan does not want one more person on earth to come to Christ and when they do he wants to make their life miserable and powerless. This can only take place if God’s people fail to engage in prayer warfare. Ryan Johanning, a young minister of the gospel, received a very timely word from the Lord on July 20, 2014: “Holy men and women should not be CONTENT with all the darkness that invades their city, but rather CONTEND and battle to bring forth light that will dispel the darkness.” This is the way God’s kingdom advances to bring in the end time harvest.

What does it mean to forcefully advance the kingdom of heaven? The context of the Matthew 11:12 passage sheds some light on this. Earlier the imprisoned John the Baptist sent two of his disciples with a question for Jesus: “Are you the coming one, or do we look for another?” Jesus responded in an unexpected way:

Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: "The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. "And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me." (Matt. 11:4-6)

The all-powerful ministry of Jesus moves powerfully upon mankind in the midst of violent opposition from demonic forces and those offended by His advance. Offenders (skandalizo) are those who hinder proper conduct and put a stumbling block in the way of the advance of Christ’s ministry. Jesus then points to the confronting style of John the Baptist’s ministry and that of Elijah to reveal the forceful nature of the advance.

As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? "But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. "But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. "For this is he of whom it is written: Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You." "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. (Matt.11:7-11)

The only conclusion we can reach is that the advance of God’s kingdom is not a “soft”
approach and certainly not a “politically correct” one either. Rather, it’s one of spiritual conflict and warfare that opposes human agendas, corrupt governments, and demonic forces blinding people from the glorious gospel of Christ. This is why this strata of prayer is referred to as warfare or governmental prayer. The New Spirit Filled Life Bible points out that there are four things needed for the kingdom of God to advance in the world:

1. An impassioned pursuit of prayer
2. Confrontation with the demonic
3. Expectation of the miraculous
4. A burning heart for evangelism

Jesus also compared the generation to child’s play in the same context.

“But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions, "and saying:`We played the flute for you, And you did not dance; We mourned to you, And you did not lament.’ "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, `He has a demon.’ "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners! But wisdom is justified by her children.” (Matt. 11:16-19)

Prayer warfare is not child’s play and neither is the advancing of God’s kingdom. The Holy Spirit’s power is designed to work through every disciple. God’s advance expands His kingdom rule and shakes things up. The New Spirit Filled Bible sums it up this way:

Jesus’ references to the nonreligious style of John and the confrontive, miraculous ministry of Elijah teach that the kingdom of God makes it penetration by a kind of violent entry opposing the human status quo. It transcends the “softness” (v.8) of staid religious formalism and exceeds the pretension of child’s play (vv. 16, 17). It refuses to “dance to the music” of society’s expectation that the religious community provide either entertainment (“we played the flute”) or dead traditionalism (“we mourned”). The upheaval caused by the kingdom of God is not caused by political provocation or armed advance. It is the result of God’s order shaking relationships, households, cities, and nations by the entry of the Holy Spirit’s power in people. (p.1310)

Opposition to the advance of God’s kingdom is formidable, but is overcome by disciples who engage in prayer warfare at the strategic levels. In fact, the Bible documents four main areas used by the enemy to oppose the miraculous Kingdom advance.

2. Religion (Acts 4:1, 17)
4. All of the Above Together (Acts 17:5-6)

This is why prayer warfare at the corporate level is so important to the advance of God’s kingdom today. It’s important for disciples to understand that this warfare is also taking place in the heavenly places and when they engage at this level they are “making war in the heavenlies.” We know this from Daniel who heard nothing from God for 21 days due to the warring in heaven and also the Archangel Michael who wars against Satan and his commanders of darkness.

Then he said to me, “Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. ”But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. (Dan. 10:12-13)
And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.

(Rev. 12:7-8)

Perhaps, not every disciple is called to this level of strategic prayer, but every disciple needs to understand it and support it. Demonic armies oppose the purposes of God and this is often reflected in people, religions, businesses, and governments on earth.

The Weapons of Warfare

Disciples need to be trained in prayer warfare and part of the learning process is to understand what believers are warring against. There are rules of engagement. The war is not against “flesh and blood” (Eph. 6:12). Humility before God is essential in the battle because “pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.” (Prov. 16:18). In fact, God Himself resists (battles against) the proud!

But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.” Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. (James 4:6-7)

How would you describe the spiritual war and how would you rate your ability as a spiritual warrior or soldier of Christ? The Bible gives us a description of the war on three fronts.

1. The Flesh – You have to fight and win the inward battle to be most effective in the collective army of God. The Bible describes this war as a boxing match.

For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (Rom. 7:22-23)

Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. (1Cor. 9:26-27)

2. The World – You also have to deal with the spirit of the world including the affairs of this life. Every disciple, spiritually speaking, has a military duty to fight this battle.

You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. (2Tim. 2:3-4)

3. The Devil, Demons, and Spiritual Wickedness – You also need to make war in the spiritual realm.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Eph. 6:12)

The role of every disciple in prayer warfare is to enforce the victory of Christ in every place. To do this one must know the weapons of warfare and how to use them effectively in prayer. The
number one thing that is in the world today resisting the gospel of Christ at every corner is the spirit of antichrist.

But every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. (1John 4:3 NIV)

How do you fight this rascal when he seemingly has a grip on the hearts and minds of so many people and governments of the world?

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled. (2Cor. 10:4-6 Emphasis added)

A closer look at the words used in the above Scripture reveals both the action we are to take in prayer warfare and what the action is strategically targeted against.

**Vocabulary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions (extinction, violence, fitness)</th>
<th>Against (warfare, military service, apostolic hardship &amp; danger)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>◯ katharēsis – (pulling down)</td>
<td>◯ ochuôma – (strongholds)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◯ katharētê - (casting down)</td>
<td>◯ logismos – (arguments)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◯ aichemolǒgitê – (bringing) lead</td>
<td>◯ noêma – (thought) mental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◯ bêstoiμos – (being ready) adjusted,</td>
<td>◯ parakôe – (disobedience)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prepared</td>
<td>inattention, hearing omission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Put on the Armor of God**

How does a disciple enter into prayer warfare? The first thing is to put on the armor of God. The failure of many disciples to do this affects prayer at every level. A disciple cannot stand without God’s armor. His armor is detailed in the book of Ephesians:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; (Eph. 6:10-17)
A disciple needs to be a praying disciple who understands each piece of God’s armor and how to dress himself for battle:

**FIRST PIECE: WAIST GIRDED WITH TRUTH (BELT). JESUS IS OUR TRUTH; GOD’S WORD IS OUR TRUTH.**

- Whenever we stand for truth we should not be surprised if we come under attack.
- All other armor are weapons of truth also.
- Belt of truth covers the middle. Truth will bring balance and stability.
- Attack may come through our fallen nature as men or women.
- The full armor covers our nakedness, our vulnerability.
- Speaking the truth in love may completely stop the attack and win the victory. Quickly!

**SECOND PIECE: BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. JESUS IS OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. WE ARE NOW THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS. (1 Corinthians 1:30)**

- This piece covers vital organs of heart and lungs.
- Satan will try and condemn us by reminding us of past failures, present weakness, or future fears.
- Satan will want us to respond emotionally and negatively!
- Refuse to accept what the blood has removed!
- Continue to speak truth, not to defend yourself but to bring light into darkness. (Ephesians 5:8-10, 13)
- Love those who are being used by the enemy to wound you. Remember that they too are being wounded as they are being used by him in the attack.
- Remain in an attitude of forgiveness; “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”
- Remember who the enemy is; it’s not people.
- Be quick to repent.

**THIRD PIECE: FEET SHOD WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE (SHOES). YOUR STAND WILL BREAK UP THE FALLOW GROUND WHICH SATAN HAS HELD SO THE GOOD NEWS THAT GOD REIGNS CAN BE PLANTED. TRUTH BRINGS PEACE.**

- Continue to STAND and to press on as the Holy Spirit leads.
- Do not defend; press for peace, STANDING firm. Pressing on will open prison doors even to those who are being used to attack us.
- We STAND with the enemy under our feet on Calvary Ground.

**FOURTH PIECE: SHIELD OF FAITH. CHRIST’S FAITH, HIS GIFT TO US. FAITH IN HIS FAITHFULNESS. FAITH THAT HIS FINISHED WORK AT CALVARY IS ALL THAT WE NEED.**

- Jesus and His works always stand between the enemy and us. He is our buffer and our shield.
- This is a mobile piece, so it is to move with us and to be used with other pieces wherever needed.
- Attack will come through doubt and condemnation, but we can resist in Christ’s strength, not our own.

**FIFTH PIECE: HELMET OF SALVATION. JESUS WORE THE CROWN OF THORNS SO THAT WE MIGHT HAVE A HELMET OF SALVATION.**

- Often Satan’s attack is mental: confusion, weariness, trying to remember, and sorting out what is happening.
- Satan can at times distort speech; we may see or hear things that haven’t been said or done; he can cause forgetfulness. Oppression and attack can come later in thought life: “Why did I say that? Why didn’t I say...?”
- Truth and asking what is truth will help us overcome.
- Be careful to repent of wrong or hasty words so that your thought life is cleansed by the blood.
- Cast down thoughts and take them captive.

**SIXTH PIECE: SWORD OF THE SPIRIT (WORD OF GOD)**

- God’s Word is to be in our hands as well as in our mouths. We can speak it, but should do so carefully.
- God’s Word wrongfully used can wound people.
- Guard against self-righteousness and pride.
- We must continually offer grace and help to people while driving back our common enemy.
- Be at home in Word and worship so that the Holy Spirit can call forth the Sword.
- We must be willing to hold God’s Word as all we need for life and godliness in every situation we encounter.

How do you put this armor on? This is very important because most believers do not “put on the full armor of God.” Paul answers the question in this way.

…praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints. Eph. 6:18

We put on the armor of God by praying it on! How do you do this? Simply take each piece just described and pray like this: “Lord, I thank you for your armor. I put on the belt of truth. I am your disciple and your truth has set me free from all satanic bondage past, present, and future. Today, I can stand against the devil in battle because of God’s truth. I take up the belt of truth in battle now!” Then, go to the next piece of God’s armor and pray it on. Keep going through each piece and, in this way, you will be fully dressed for battle.

**Use the Authority of Jesus Name**

Jesus sent the twelve and the seventy forth two by two and gave them authority and power to heal the sick and cast out demons; even raise the dead. They recognized the authority was in His name.

Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.” And He said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. “Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. (Luke 10:17-19)

It’s telling to realize just how many disciples today fail to use the strong name of Jesus in prayer warfare. We lift up His name in praise and worship and also with thanksgiving, but why such shyness in exercising the authority of His name? There can be no other reason apart from that which Jesus gave to His disciples. It was because of their weakness of faith!

And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?” So Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. “However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.” (Matt. 17:18-21)

Faith in the name of Jesus is something every disciple must have to engage in prayer warfare. The Jewish exorcists and seven sons of Sceva found this out the hard way.
Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. (Acts 19:13-16)

At one point the apostles asked Jesus to increase their faith and He again told them what a mustard seed of faith would do if they faithfully exercised it in prayer.

And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. (Luke 17:5-6)

In prayer warfare, this means speaking to the opposing spirit, "In Jesus name I command you to go!" Or "You tempting spirit, I rebuke and silence you in the name of Jesus Christ!" There is little difference when engaging in corporate prayer only it’s at a more strategic level against territorial spirits and strongholds over cities and regions. It’s imperative for every disciple to understand that the authority of the name of the Lord Jesus has been granted only to those who follow Him.

"And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; (Mark 16:17)

Every demon cast out; every stronghold demolished by an individual disciple or a collective group of Christ’s disciples advances the kingdom of God.

"But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. (Luke 11:20)

Pray in the Spirit

God is serious about teaching His disciples to pray at every level of engagement. However, modern disciples have built up an aversion to what the Bible refers to as "praying in the Spirit." Regardless of what individual church doctrines say, God gives a disciple “new tongues” when he/she is baptized or filled with the Holy Spirit as recorded in the Early Church experiences. Although not the only way, a primary way of praying in the Spirit is praying in other tongues as indicated by Paul.

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays (1Co 14:14a)

This is Holy Spirit assisted praying and there is a confidence with disciples who pray in the Spirit because the Spirit brings them in agreement with God. In addition, the Holy Spirit builds up their faith.

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, (Jude 1:20)

Praying in the Spirit also creates a spiritual unity focused around Christ and the Father’s business. We have the assurance that the Holy Spirit is directing us when we let Him intercede for us.

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. (Rom. 8:26)
There are no understandable words that can be spoken when the Holy Spirit is praying through us. Our understanding is limited in comparison to Him so we need to pray in the Spirit and let Him lead the way into the perfect will of God.

**Declare God’s Word**

Jesus defeated the devil in the wilderness temptation with the Scriptures. In all three frontal attacks He addressed the enemy with, “It is written...” On the final attack, Jesus declared:

>Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'” Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him. (Matt. 4:10-11)

Disciples today need to do the same. Faith declarations of God’s word are propelled by the Holy Spirit from the mouths of His followers. They place the written judgment upon the enemy. The Devil is fearful of this and his plans and strongholds are shattered when God’s people declare His word.

>"Is not My word like a fire?" says the LORD, "And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces? (Jer. 23:29)

How followers of Christ view God’s word is critical for every generation. You must pray in accordance with God’s word knowing that “the Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35b) and that it cannot be subjected to man’s personal feelings and interpretations.

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2Peter 1:20-21)

The word of God is not called the “sword of the Spirit” (Eph. 6:17) for nothing. How sharp is your sword? You need to use it in prayer warfare.

>For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Heb. 4:12)

**Pray Through to Victory**

King Hezekiah was 39 years old when Sennacherib, king of Assyria, surrounded Jerusalem intending to engulf it with utter destruction and defeat. Hezekiah sent word to the prophet Isaiah: “This day is a day of trouble and rebuke and blasphemy; for the children have come to birth, but there is no strength to bring them forth.” (Isaiah 37:3). Hezekiah acknowledged their weakness and yet viewed prayer as their only possible hope. He took the blasphemous letter from Sennacherib and laid it before the Lord and prayed:

>And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. Then Hezekiah prayed to the LORD, saying: “O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. "Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. "Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their lands," and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands—wood and stone. Therefore they have destroyed them. "Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the LORD, You alone.” (Isaiah 37:14-20)
This is an example of the importance of praying through to victory. It was the second time Hezekiah had turned to prayer on the situation. A disciple cannot afford to give up and fall short in tough situations. You have to pray through till the victory comes. God's intervention was in response to the prayers:

Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, this is the word which the LORD has spoken concerning him: (Isaiah 37:21-22)

God fought for His people and 185,000 were killed in the Assyrian camp in one night (Isaiah 37:36-38). God Himself defended the city and saved it for “His own sake and for My servant David's sake.” (Isaiah 37:35). In Christ, we have the same promise of victory when disciples pray through.

Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. (2Cor. 2:14)

A Final Word

The church with praying disciples can ward off any of Satan's attacks with a solid united front. Why do you need to be a praying disciple in concert with others? Because prayer opens doors so that the ministry of the gospel can be advanced with power in every place. We are on a triumphal procession with Christ spreading His knowledge everywhere.

Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. (2Cor. 2:14)

Although all believers have an individual prayer life to nurture and maintain, there is also a house of prayer where every disciple is needed. Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem before He entered and cleansed the temple calling the people back to a house of prayer. Solomon prayed with his hands spread out to heaven. He recognized that God was far greater than the temple He had built. Nevertheless he asked Him to hear his prayer:

"But will God indeed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built! 19 "Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O LORD my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You: 20 "that Your eyes may be open toward this temple day and night, toward the place where You said You would put Your name, that You may hear the prayer which Your servant prays toward this place. 21 "And may You hear the supplications of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and when You hear, forgive. (2Chron. 6:18-21)

In the midst of Solomon's prayer he prays for those who are not a part of God's people. This reveals that a house of prayer has an undeniable evangelistic purpose.

"Moreover, concerning a foreigner, who is not of Your people Israel, but who comes from a far country for the sake of Your great name and Your mighty hand and Your outstretched arm, when they come and pray in this temple; 33 "then hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as do Your people Israel, and that they may know that this temple which I have built is called by Your name. (2Chron. 6:32-33)
Solomon dedicated the temple and specifically the altar for seven days with the people of God. Then they kept the feast for seven days. Once the people returned to their homes filled with rejoicing, the Lord appeared to Solomon in the night with a message that is quoted to the present day.

Then the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: "I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. 13 "When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, 14 "if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. 15 “Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place. 16 ”For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. (2Chron. 7:12-16)

Prayer is not the only thing that takes place in modern church services. Neither was it the only thing taking place in Solomon’s temple, Herod’s temple, or when believers gathered in the Early Church from house to house. Nevertheless, God’s house is to be known as a house of prayer for all people; a place where anyone can seek the Lord and be heard by God.

"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." (Luke 21:36)
SEVEN INGREDIENTS FOR AN ONGOING DEVOTIONAL LIFE

- TIME
- SUCCESS
- PLACE
- TOOLS
- READING THROUGH the ENTIRE BIBLE
- VARIETY
- RECORD YOUR PRAYER LIFE
SEVEN INGREDIENTS NECESSARY FOR AN ONGOING DEVOTIONAL LIFE

“The Psalmist David said, “One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, And to inquire in His temple. For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: In the secret place of His tabernacle, He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a Rock”. (Psalm 27:4, 5, NKJV)

INTRODUCTION

Darrell Royal, a very successful football coach for the University of Texas, of the late 20th century said, “Many football teams are as talented as others, yet they all do not win big games. Why is this so? This is because some teams are short on desire, while winning teams are propelled by desire.”

I have noticed many people often struggle with this thing that we call a “Devotional Life”. Most of us pray fervently for a while then somehow we become side tracked and stop praying, except when necessary. We all can get discouraged at times, regarding this thing called prayer.

How then, do you succeed and stay focused on devoting your affections toward God on an ongoing basis? What do you do to enrich your prayer life? Do you sometimes feel frustrated, guilty and often belittle yourself for not praying? I too have felt the same painful disappointments in my personal devotion to Jesus, my Lord. However, I slowly discovered that belittling myself only complicates and compounds the problem. Therefore, my advice to you is this; do not put yourself down for not praying. That will surely defeat your purpose.

Instead, encourage your heart regarding prayer, tell yourself that you can succeed, and ask the Holy Spirit to assist you in prayer. Then you can succeed, because Jesus Christ calls you to prayer and what He calls you to do, He empowers and equips you to do.

In 1980, I attended a Change the World School of Prayer at Bethel Friends Church, Poland, Ohio. Fifteen members of my church in Youngstown, Ohio attended the seminar with me. This was a life changing experience for me and I have never been the same since that event. I also attended two sessions of Larry Lea’s Prayer Seminar. Out of the seminars, plus the practical experience I have received through praying, I have developed my own plan of prayer strategy. As you pray, the Holy Spirit will guide you to develop a plan of your own.

As a follower of Jesus, you are called to a holy life; a holy life can only be kept by an ongoing prayer life. I pray that this teaching will prompt you to begin, or to expand your prayer ministry with Jesus.

Through experience, I have discovered SEVEN INGREDIENTS NECESSARY FOR AN ONGOING DEVOTIONAL LIFE. When practiced on a regular basis, these SEVEN INGREDIENTS will keep you active in prayer. Let us begin our study of this wonderful subject, with lesson or ingredient one.
FIRST INGREDIENT
TIME

You must set aside a specific time to pray every day. It can be morning, noon or evening, but it needs to be a set time that you plan to keep. After choosing the time, you must hold tenaciously to it, because many things will work against you to keep you from keeping this daily appointment. All sorts of good things will seek to take this time, but resist them all, with an emphatic “NO”. If, however, you should miss a day with the Lord in prayer, and surely this will happen, come right back to it the next day. Try not to allow more than one day go without your devotion time with Jesus. There will be disruptions in your schedule, friends will drop by, the telephone will ring, and often lack of desire will attack your prayer life. Through such circumstances, you will quickly learn that the enemy of our soul does not like to see us spending time with our Heavenly Father. Often the attacks will last for several days or sometimes even weeks, but do not become discouraged, keep praying in spite of opposition, in time you will have a break through.

Allow your time with God to become a holy, sacred and joyous meeting; allow it to become a holy habit. Habits, we have been told are all bad, however; that is not so, for if a habit leads you to spend time with the Lord, daily, it then becomes a good habit. Look upon your time with God as a wonderful treasure that you share with the great God of the universe, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We all have daily habits of sleep and rest, eating, exercise, work, family time, entertainment time, hygienic time, and leisure time. We would not think of giving these times up or of substituting them. Therefore, we should also make the habit of holy times; all time is sacred to the believer in Jesus. Daily time alone with him in His Word and in conversation with Him is exhilarating beyond words.

The story is told Susanna Wesley, mother of John and Charles, that as the mother of seventeen children, she took time to give each child one-hour of Christian instruction each week. In addition to this, she spent one hour each day in private devotion to hear her Lord. What makes the story so challenging is the fact that she raised all seventeen children in a very small house. There was virtually no privacy in the house, but Susanna was not deterred. When the hour arrived for her daily devotion time, she would instruct the children to be quiet, as she sat in a chair and pulled her apron over her face, and prayed to her Lord for one hour. Dare we say we have no time, place, or atmosphere in which to pray, I think not. Let us follow the example of Susanna Wesley in returning to private devotions to Jesus Christ.

Ralph Spaulding Cushman, the author of A Pocket Prayer Book, indicated that “if we want to know God through Jesus Christ, we must have the will to worship God.” He went on to say that we must develop holy habits of prayer, of times daily to meet with God, in order to know Him. Therefore, I challenge you to block out a time slot for prayer and keep our appointment with God each day. In a few weeks, months and years, you will be so glad that you learned to put God first in your life. You will begin to know, people around will begin to know, and even strangers will begin to sense God’s presence in your life, as you practice meeting with Him daily.

(Part one of a seven-part teaching)
SECOND INGREDIENT
SUCCESS

Set your will to succeed in daily devotions. You need to make a commitment to succeed in prayer. Begin to promise yourself that you will succeed in this adventure of prayer. Begin by believing that you will succeed, allow no defeatist thought to enter your mind. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a faithful heart regarding prayer. Ask Him for confidence to believe that you will become a successful and faithful devotee to Jesus.

You need to become as determined as the Olympians who rigorously trained for the summer Olympics in Sydney, Australia. They trained for hours on end daily, pushing themselves to succeed. They set their wills that they would place in the Sydney games.

Your will is the key to your success as a devotee to Jesus. You must will to succeed to Jesus, to know Jesus, to bless the lost and wayward and to advance the kingdom of God, in order to succeed in daily communion with God.

Jesus told his disciples, “I came to do my Father’s will.” He came to earth to do the will of His Father, not His own will. You must know that setting your will, to do God’s will, is most important. Your will sets the course for your life, therefore, set your will to do His will.

Desiring to commune with our Father God is the natural development from your will to seeking His will. Did not our Lord say to the disciples, “But seek you first, the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.” (Matthew 6:33 NKJV)

In this familiar passage of scripture, our Lord is saying, that as we seek him, his will and his righteousness, everything that we need in life will be added to us. I challenge you to hear the testimony of great Christians from the past and the testimony of great Christians of our day. In so doing, you will find that they all made a definite commitment to devote to Jesus every day.

By setting your will to devote to do God’s will, you have successfully begun your adventure of prayer. You have said to Jesus Christ, “I am committed to meet you daily, for spiritual food from your word, conversation with you through prayer, direction for my life, to receive your wisdom and guidance and to worship you.” You have said, “My relationship with you is built upon commitment, not my emotions, or how I might feel about you on any given day.” The reason commitment to success is so important is because many days you won’t feel like devotions. Commitment will keep you on the job with Jesus, whereas emotion, many times, will let you down.

Make your commitment today to succeed in daily devotions to Jesus

(Part two of a seven-part teaching)
THIRD INGREDIENT
PLACE

As you study the Scripture concerning prayer, you will discover that people of prayer have special places of prayer. The more you pray in that special place, the more hallowed that place becomes. The story is told of John Wesley’s horse being so anointed that stable hands would fall under the power of conviction just from leading the horse to his stall. Why was this so? Because Wesley was a man of prayer, a man who prayed constantly.

Scripture is replete with examples of Bible characters who had blessedly wonderful places of prayer. Let us look at some of these wonderful people of prayer to learn where they prayed and how these places became hallowed.

Our beautiful Lord Jesus had His own Garden of Gethsemane where He prayed when He was about to face the cross. I choose to believe that the Garden was our Lord’s favorite place to pray. It was where He retreated when He wanted to spend time with His Father. Could Gethsemane be the place He went to? (referred to in Mark 1:35) Is it possible that Judas Iscariot knew where to find Jesus because He prayed so often in the Garden? I would say that it is plausible that Judas knew this because he had seen Jesus go into the Garden quite often to pray.

I used to lead my church during a 6:00 A.M., one-hour corporate time of prayer. After about one year of prayer at this time in the sanctuary where we met, I could open up the church sanctuary doors and sense the sacred presence of my Lord. I would do this each day, and it was a special moment, as if Jesus was standing there saying to me, “I’m here, come in and let us commune for a while!” Those were sacred moments, early in the morning, in the presence of my Lord. Such experiences with Jesus in prayer lifted my spirit, fed my soul, encouraged my heart, gave me direction for the day, empowered my witness, and tilled my life with the peace of God. Have you experienced the joy of a hallowed place of prayer, where you habitually encounter His presence? I pray that you will make such a discovery.

John, the beloved disciple, had a special place of prayer: it was the island of Patmos. His was a forced place, as he was a prisoner there; nevertheless it was a hallowed place. On the island of Patmos, John received the Revelation of Saint John the Divine, all twenty-two chapters. There is something so wonderful about meeting Jesus daily, in a particular place. Why not seek out such a place for yourself? You will be so glad that you did.

The place becomes hallowed by the daily visits of Jesus with His people, who meet Him in prayer. When I was a child in Sunday School, I learned the children’s chorus, “Every Day with Jesus is Sweeter than the Day Before.” The more you pray in your special place, the sweeter and more sacred it becomes. Truly every day with Jesus is sweeter than the day before.

John Bunyan prayed in Bedford Prison in England. He could have complained, become bitter, or gone into depression, but instead he sought a life of prayer. Out of his rich prayer life, came the classic book, “The Pilgrim’s Progress”, which will always be a Christian classic.

Moses prayed for forty days during a total fast, at the end of which God gave him the Ten Commandments. Can you imagine the sacredness of those forty days alone with no one but God? Praying people, praying in the same place over an extended period of time, have special
encounters with God. Moses encountered God face-to-face; this was his reward for spending time with the Father God.

Would you like special encounters with God? Then spend special time with Him in your special place over an extended period of time. Do this, and then watch as the Lord reveals Himself to you in wonderful and life-changing ways.

Hebrew Rabbis have a special place with God anywhere they go. As a matter of fact, they are able to carry their place with them: it is their prayer shawls. When a Rabbi wants to pray, he simply puts his shawl over his head and begins to pray. Now you might say, “But this is New Testament times. Such a thing is outdated since it goes back to a period before the coming of Christ.” I remind you then that Christ would have used His prayer shawl to pray while He was here on earth on many occasions, as a good Jewish teacher would have done. And Jesus was the greatest person of prayer the world has ever known.

Dick Eastman, president of Every Home Crusade, has a Prayer House in his backyard in California. Every morning he spends two hours alone there with Jesus. Mr. Eastman has prayed, taught others to pray, led seminars on how to pray, and led conferences on prayer all over the world. All of this is possible because of his daily “Hour That Changes the World.” Do you want to know God, share in His purposes in the world, worship Him, and bless others? Then find a place of prayer and frequent that Holy place. You will be amazed at the power that comes from such a sacred place as you daily encounter Jesus there.

Since attending Dick Eastman’s School of Prayer while pastoring in Boardman, Ohio in 1980, I have had a consistent time with God every day. During these last twenty years, I have had several special places of prayer. In the late 1980’s that place was the right end of a Duncan Fife sofa, in the library room of the basement in our home. It was also the sanctuary of the Market Street Baptist Church in Boardman. In the early 1980’s it was the swing on the wrap-around porch of our beautiful farm in Jewett, Ohio. And from the mid 1990’s to this present day, my sacred place has been my office at the back of my house in Houston, Texas.

I cannot tell you all the joys that have come to me as a result of finding and keeping a place of prayer with my Lord Jesus Christ each and every day. When I go into my office there is a wondrous peace that welcomes me there. It is as if Jesus is physically present and is inviting me to come in, saying, “Come, I have been expecting you.”

Do you have a special place of prayer? Is the Holy Spirit prompting you to search for such a place? I challenge you to begin asking Jesus to show you where He would like to meet with you each day for Holy and Sacred Communion. He made you for fellowship with Himself, He loves you with and everlasting love, and He longs to commune with you. Will you allow yourself that wonderful privilege, accepting the call of the great God of heaven, our Lord Jesus Christ, to come apart and commune with Him daily, in a special rendezvous place? When you do, you will become more and more like Him daily, and in so doing, you will find your place with God.

(Part three of a seven-part teaching)
FOURTH INGREDIENT
TOOLS

The computer programmer would never go to his office without his computer. The football player would never enter the playing field without his pads, helmet, and uniform. The airline stewardess would never think of boarding her flight without her travel kit and travel bag. The carpenter would never leave home without his hammer, rule, saw, ladder, and plumb line.

Yet many of us spiritual leaders show up at the place of prayer without thought of bringing tools with us. We glibly believe the Lord will suddenly drop down the tools from heaven that we need. Do you remember the apostle Paul admonished young Timothy to study in order to be approved of God? God has already done His part, now you need to do yours.

To become an effective prayer you must plan to use the tools of your trade. Christianity is thinking man’s religion. Since it is, we need to put on our thinking cap and use it. Think, plan, prepare, and utilize the tools that the Holy Spirit gives you.

These are tools, which I have found to be useful in my daily prayer experience:

- The Holy Scriptures are indispensable for my devotional life. Eva, my wife, and I have read through the Bible annually for the past eighteen years. I cannot adequately tell you all that this discipline has meant to us. Always take the Word of God with you into your prayer chamber.

- Have a hymn book, CD, cassette or chorus book with you. As praise and worship arise in your soul, use your tools at hand to enhance this adoration of our Lord. Learn to sing unto the Lord and bow down before Him.

- I have also found prayer books helpful in focusing upon God. My favorite is “A Pocket Prayer Book” by Ralph Spaulding Cushman, published by The Upper Room. There are many good prayer books readily available at most Christian bookstores. These written prayers, poems, selected scriptures and inspirations, will only lead you along closer to your Lord and Savior. Use them, you will be glad that you did, and you will be blessed. (Other devotional books that have blessed my prayer experience are “Streams in the Desert”, “My Utmost for His Highest”, “Morning and Evening Devotions” by Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “God’s Best Secrets”, by Andrew Murray)

- A magic marker can be useful in underling scripture, prayer items in magazines, or notes from devotional reading. So have one close by at all times.

- A prayer journal should be used to record what the Holy Spirit speaks to you in your prayer closet. I have been journaling since 1987. The messages that I receive become a pathway for me to follow my Lord. At the end of the year I do a resume’ of the year’s journal. It is
both directional and inspirational to see how many times the Holy Spirit speaks regarding the same subject.

- Maps can be helpful in praying over the world, your country, state, county, city or precinct. I have found that the more specific I am in prayer, the more specific the answer will be. Maps keep your prayers specific.

- A list of the governmental leadership of your country is helpful when you pray. We should regularly be praying for national, state, county and city officials. Learn to pray for those in authority over you.

We should pray, by name, for those in spiritual authority over us. We should pray for our pastor, elders, deacons, worship team members, men’s ministry leaders, ladies ministry leaders, youth workers, children’s workers, nursery workers, and building and grounds workers as well as others the Holy Spirit inspires you to pray for.

We must pray for missionaries by name, unsaved friends by name, and other people, events, regions and needs as the Holy Spirit directs us.

Are you beginning to understand the tremendous value of using scriptural tools in your prayer closet experience? God has given us creative tools to use in sitting at His feet, let us use them to His glory and for our good.

(Part four of a seven-part teaching)
FIFTH INGREDIENT
DEVELOP A PLAN FOR READING THROUGH THE ENTIRE BIBLE

Develop a plan for reading through the entire Bible on a regular basis. It is pathetic the ignorance that is found among some Christians regarding basic fundamentals of the Holy Scriptures. What causes this void of Biblical knowledge? I believe that our ignorance is predicated upon our slothfulness in reading through the entire cannon of scripture. Instead, we pick and choose our “sugar sticks” of truth to the exclusion of the vast reservoir of truth as revealed in all of scripture. Let us return to reading and studying the entire cannon of scripture, not just the sections that we like.

I challenge you to ask the Holy Spirit to give you a plan of action that will lead you to read the entire Biblical record on a recurring basis. You will be amazed at what you learn and how it impacts your life and ministry. Here are some plans that have proven to be effective for many:

- The One-Year Bible, which arranges scripture readings for each day of the year, is one such plan. With this plan you read an Old Testament passage, a Psalm, a portion of the Proverbs and a New Testament passage. This divides the word of God into bite size pieces by which our mind can readily assimilate.

- Bible Pathways Ministries has a good plan by which the reader reads Holy Scripture from Genesis, chapter one, through Revelation, chapter 22. I have used this plan to great profit for many years and have been greatly blessed, challenged and enriched.

- The American Bible Society has a good plan of reading through the Word of God. The International Bible Society has a good plan also. Local Christian bookstores usually have plans available upon request. Groups like Campus Crusade for Christ, Promise Keepers, the Navigators, as well as most denominational headquarters have plans available upon request.

I encourage you to get a plan in place and then work the plan. Plan your devotional reading of the Word of God; do not just aimlessly and randomly read. Now that you have selected a plan, use it. As you read, read with the purpose of meeting God afresh, not just to fulfill an obligation. Never read just to find sermons or Bible studies, but read to find God, through Christ our Lord.

Do you have a plan of Bible reading? Do not live without one, you will not accomplish much without a plan of reading through the entire Bible. I CHALLENGE YOU TO READ, DEVOTIONALLY, THE ENTIRE CANNON OF SCRIPTURE, ON A REGULAR BASIS. You will be glad that you did.

(Part five of a seven-part teaching)
Any activity done by rote with never a change soon becomes boring. Therefore, many Christians start out well in a Devotional Life, yet after getting started they become bored with the process. Why is this the outcome? Many times people become bored with the process because they have no variation in their time with the Lord.

I have found the following to be very helpful in providing variety in my devotional life. I find that singing unto the Lord is very beneficial. Try reading the word of God as a prayer, either back to Him or for someone you know. Learn the power, peace and refreshment of quietness before God. Learn to listen for the voice of God by talking less and listening more. Prayer is a two-way experience, not merely a monologue.

Try kneeling when you pray. Try standing when you pray. Learn to walk and pray. Try dancing unto the Lord as you pray. Fast and pray. Walk a beach and pray. Walk a mountain trail and pray. Walk in a park and pray. Go on a prayer retreat from time to time. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a variety in your prayer life. Try fasting from time to time to enrich your prayer life. Learn the value of having a prayer partner. Discover the power of corporate prayer.

Prayer is a discipline to be learned but please do not allow prayer to become routine, mundane, trite or boring. Prayer after all is talking with our great God from heaven. Do we not all think that this is a privilege to be enjoyed constantly? Do not allow Satan to rob you of this joy by causing prayer time to become entrenched in tradition. Instead, allow prayer to rise from your heart in variety, multiplicity and enthusiasm.

Allow variety in prayer to be the norm, not the exception. As you do this, you will find God meeting you in infinite and manifold expressions. Prayer can be down-right exhilarating. Try variety, you will like it.

(Part six of a seven-part teaching)
SEVENTH INGREDIENT
KEEPING GOOD RECORDS OF YOUR PRAYER LIFE

Keeping good records of your prayer life keeps your prayers focused. It also reduces ambiguity in prayer. I learned many years ago to make a prayer journal. I cannot over emphasize how this has enriched prayer for me. I can go back as far as 1987 and reread what God showed me through prayer. How rich this has been to me. Never destroy your prayer journals. After you are finished with them move them to a data base to keep permanently. Someday your journal will become a treasured possession of your children, grandchildren and friends.

At the end of each year I review my journal, highlight recurring words and gain rich insight into the Holy Spirit’s work in my life, family, marriage, ministry and the world. Has not our God said, “Ask of me and I will give you the nations for your inheritance?” (Psalm 2:8 NKJV) When you ask Him for the nations you are asking for specific people, language groups, races, ethnic groups and religious groups. The more specific your prayer request, the more specific will be God’s answer to you.

Scripture commands us to know the condition of our flocks and herds at all times. (Proverbs 27:23 NKJV) Why then are we so nebulous in our prayer life? Keeping prayer records keeps prayer on track.

Since 1980 prayer has been the joy and rejoicing of my heart. I have not prayed every day. There have been circumstances and emergencies that have kept me from my prayer chamber. But just as soon as I could, I returned to prayer without condemning myself.

My life has been enriched, widened, deepened, expanded and lifted through prayer. I have seen thousands of answers to prayer. Martin Luther said, “Prayer is the breath of the soul.” Every born again person longs to commune with his Lord and Savior. Yet few enjoy an ongoing successful prayer life. I pray that because of this study your life will be strengthened. May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ bless you as you press into Him seeking His face daily in prayer; this is my prayer for you today and every day.

(Part seven of a seven-part teaching)
Appendix 2

TIPS ON FASTING

By

Thomas Hare

The following tips are given to offer some information on the more commonly asked questions about fasting. This is in no way a definitive list, and anyone planning to do a protracted fast is urged to get one or more of the books available on this subject.

REMEMBER... FASTING IS NORMAL FOR CHRISTIANS. Jesus, in speaking of giving, praying and fasting said, “When you give...”, “when you pray...”, and “WHEN YOU FAST... not ‘if’” (Matt. 6:2,5,16)

Although in our culture fasting is a practice a bit like an ancient weapon somewhat rusty from disuse, it is in no way outdated in its worth in your personal spiritual arsenal. Dr. Bill Bright has gone so far as to refer to it as “the spiritual atomic bomb of our moment in history to bring down the strongholds of evil”.

So, be encouraged and proceed with your plans in faith. Without faith, it is impossible to please God” (Heb. 11:6). This applies to fasting also. Fasting in faith will keep your effort from deteriorating to merely “not eating”.

Clearly fasting is in the Bible, and many of God’s people have fasted for numerous reasons. Nonetheless, fasting is not a device to twist God’s arm, although God may use it to rend your heart. “Turn to me...with fasting...and rend your heart.” (Joel 2:12,13)

Preparation for the fast

Like most things in life, preparation makes a difference in fasting, as well. To help you prepare yourself to receive the greatest benefit from hour time of fasting and prayer, consider the following pointers:

1. Determine your purpose. II Chronicles 7:14 is a standing invitation form the Lord and a worthy purpose. People fasted in the Bible for other reasons, too.
2. Inquire of the Lord how long He would have you fast. Is He prompting you to fast three days, seven, twenty-one...or even 30 or 40 days? Fasts of many lengths are recorded in the Bible. Check the word fast, fasted or fasting in your concordance for examples of what people in the Bible did.
3. Decide what sort of fast you feel you want to and are able to do. Do you feel the grace to fast with water only or with water and juices? Or, because of your responsibilities, should you enter into a restricted diet fast like Daniel (Dan. 10:2,3), or even a partial fast with one light meal a day?
4. Prepare yourself mentally and spiritually through prayer. Ask the Lord to fix your heart and mind with godly purpose and fortitude, to grant you the grace to do your fast unto Him, and for His protection from evil, temptation and harm. Since a primary purpose for fasting is “humbbling” ourselves before God, spend time in a repentance mode (II Chron. 7:14; Ps. 35:13). Ask the Lord to reveal areas of unrepented sin; of “weights” or other things
displeasing to Him. Personal cleansing is one of the blessings that can result from fasting.

5. A sometimes overlooked point is to give your calendar to God during your fast. That is, plan ahead to NOT plan a lot ahead. You will want to give yourself a lot of open time to be with the Lord in prayer and in His Word, and reduce the social times with others. (Note – the longer you fast, the more of a burden social interaction will become. You need alone time with God.) Guard against much activity. Fasting is best thought of as a kind of prayer (Eph. 6:18). Your fast should thus include much time set aside for prayer. If you have friends fasting with you, meet together for encouragement and for the power of agreement in your praying (Matt. 18:18-20).

6. Prepare yourself physically. Fasting can produce some discomfort, and some real problems. The following observations are based on personal experience, and although good for shorter fasts, are very important on longer fasts [>21 days].

- My experience has been to cut out caffeinated drinks at least 5-7 days in advance. Switch to water. Much of the discomfort of headaches and the like during the early stages of a fast can be avoided.
- Cut out meats and other high protein and high fat content foods 3-5 days in advance switch to vegetables.
- Three days or so in advance, eat high-fiber foods like bran muffins each morning and evening. (NOTE: Cleaning your system out as much as possible in advance can save you some genuine gastro-intestinal discomfort.)
- Return to a normal diet slowly. Conclude your fast with juicy non-acidic fruits (watermelon or grapes); next add steamed vegetables; leave protein (meats, cheeses) for last. Eat small amounts frequently; do NOT binge!

7. Lastly, educate yourself about fasting as much as you can. Titles of some works include: “God’s Chosen Fast” (Arthur Wallis); “The Adventure of Fasting” (James Beall); “The Coming Revival, America’s Call to Fast, Pray & Seek God’s Face” (Bill Bright). In Isaiah 58, we find the lengthiest passage in the Bible about fasting. It includes some extraordinary promises and benefits related to fasting. Just reading Isaiah 58 creates a desire to fast! This chapter also expresses some cautions, and reveals that there is nothing magical about the act of fasting alone. God looks at more than just the act of fasting.

“So we fasted and sought our God… and He listened to our entreaty.” (Ezra 8:23)

Thomas Hare is a pastor at Church of the King in Cleveland Heights. He has over 30 years of personal experience with both protracted and shorter fasts. You may contact him if you have additional questions:

Phone / (216) 691-9919; FAX / (216) 381-0000; e-mail / ckh@juno.com
Appendix 3
Discussion Questions

Chapter 1: The Call to Prayer

1. How would you respond to a person who says, “I don’t see why it is necessary to be taught how to pray…I just pray what comes to my heart and mind.”?

2. Reflect on the words of Isaiah 56:6-7 and what the Lord says about His house of prayer. Share some of your reflections.

3. In your own words, describe what it means to “call on the name of the LORD.” Can you give an example of when you have done this in your own life?

4. God desires that we pray in truth without hypocrisy. How would your practically apply this knowledge to your own life?

Chapter 2: The Spirit of Prayer

1. What does it mean to you to “watch and pray”? What things in life affect your ability to watch and pray?

2. Consider the connection between praying to God and having fellowship with God. Do you feel that you have this balance in your life? Why or why not?

3. How often do you worship the Lord in your prayers? How often are you making requests? Why do you think this is so?

Chapter 3: The Discipline of Prayer

1. Consider this statement: “I have a disciplined prayer life. I pray the same prayers each morning and each evening. I even pray over my meals, whether in private or in public.” How could you expand this definition to be more comprehensive in regard to the discipline of prayer?

2. Do you have an established place for daily prayer? How might this benefit your prayer time?

3. What tools and resources provided by the Holy Spirit are you currently using in prayer? How might you expand your use of His tools?

4. Take time to reflect upon the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13 or Luke 11:2-4). We discussed 5 sections in this Scripture that provide a model for how to pray. Are any of these sections lacking in your prayer life right now? How might you correct that?
5. If a person struggles with praying from a self-centered motive, what could be done to correct this?

6. In your own prayers, how do you practically place what the Lord desires above any self-centered desires?

7. “Faith and prayer are connected.” Describe how prayers can be impacted by our faith.

Chapter 5: Prayer and Fasting

1. “I am going to fast because I have a need.” Could you expand this statement to better reflect God’s purposes for the practice of fasting?

2. What does it mean to you when we say “fasting is a beginning of things, not an end”?

3. Focus on a time when you were led to pray with fasting (if this has occurred in your life). Why do you think that you were led to fast in that particular situation? If you have not fasted before, why do you think that is so?

Chapter 6: Prayer Strata

1. Take time to reflect on the fact that Jesus prays to His Father on your behalf. Having this knowledge, consider what is happening in the heavens when you choose to pray strategically. Discuss your reflections with another person who has read this chapter.

2. What layers of prayer are you most regularly engaged in? Why do you think this is so?

3. How often do you worship the Lord in your prayers? How often are you making requests? Would you make any adjustments to the time regularly spent on each area? Why or why not?

4. How regularly do you pray with and for others? Are you comfortable praying with others? Why or why not?

Chapter 7: Corporate Prayer and Intercession

1. Describe what it means to be in “one accord” when it comes to corporate prayer.

2. Have you been present for times of corporate prayer and intercession where those present were clearly focused together on the purposes of God? If yes, what evidence was there that the prayer going forth was done within the Lord’s boundaries?

3. Ask the Lord to show you how to guard and protect the prayer ministry of the church. Record what He shows you. Reflect on this in light of what you have learned in regard to prayers that please God vs. prayers that violate Scripture.
Chapter 8: Prayer Warfare

1. In your own words, describe what it means to “forcefully advance the kingdom.”

2. The war rages on three fronts: the flesh, the world, and the devil and his demons. How might each of these fronts be reinforced by targeted prayer in the Church today?

3. Consider the pieces of armor which a disciple is expected to wear when it comes to standing in prayer. Could you describe why this combination of pieces is so necessary for our effective prayer?

4. All three parts of the Godhead are involved in prayer. Why do we pray in the name of Jesus? Why do we pray in the Spirit? Why do we declare God’s word in prayer?

5. One of the more popular Scriptures on prayer is 2 Chron. 7:14. Based on the teaching which you have received here, reflect upon the context of this verse and how it might be appropriately applied to the Church today.