

Voice of Thanksgiving

Calling a Company of Believers Together for Prayer

For the Week of April 26, 2009

Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen; such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of heaven on earth. God does nothing but in answer to prayer.—John Wesley

The Life of Prayer

Study Guide for Effective Prayer

David Williamson

Have you ever wondered about how many things there are to know? Not just the basic facts that are common to most of our conversations and thinking, Sure there are times we read something and the author uses atypical words. There are times we listen to someone speak and they talk of a subject in an abnormal way. However, beyond our vast reading and listening, how many things are there to know? Maybe I am the only one who wonders about things like this, but it is a thought. The *Encyclopedia Britannica Reference Suite DVD* contains over 100,000 articles. The online version has more than 120,000 articles. The English version of *Wikipedia* has more than 2,843,000 article and the combined *Wikipedias* for all languages have a combined total of more than 9.25 million articles. That is a lot to know. Unfortunately, none of us are going to know all of this. So we all have to be specialists in limited areas of information and ignore all the other information.

For a number of years I taught world history to high school students. Obviously this was a subject too big to learn in a school year, even if the students were interested in history; there was no way they could learn it all. So I had study guides for each unit. These guides would help students focus on what I deemed to be important for them to learn and a guide to the material that would be on the unit test. Most of my students use these guides and were successful on the test and in class.

The subject of prayer is very large. While prayer is so simple a child can do it, there is so much to learn that is can be and should be a life long pursuit. A valid and important questions is what do we study and prepare for lessons in the Holy Spirit school of prayer. The Holy Spirit guides us and directs our steps, but it would be nice to have a study guide to effective prayer. Always the great teacher, the Holy Spirit has provided us with several guides to effective prayer. The Lord's Prayer is one of these guides. Millions of people have used this guide as a tool for learning to pray.

There are other study guides for our use recorded in the Bible. Another example is found in verses nine and ten of the first chapter of Romans. Paul the man of faith, power, commitment, love, evangelism, is also the man of prayer. In these verses he shares some secrets to success in prayer. His guide to effective prayer included dealings of our heart, our practices, and our relation with God. There are other keys, but this is a good list, well worth our time to review, study, and practice.

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For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you. Romans 1:9-10 (NKJV)

Here is a study guide to effective prayer and it would be of great value to review these points carefully. With the help of the Holy Spirit, measure your understanding and more importantly your faithful practice of each of these points. If you so choose, this can be a powerful tool, useful for improving your prayer life and effectiveness.

Point one, God is my witness. A witness is one who has personal knowledge of something. Does God have personal knowledge of your prayers? The answer is of course He does, He is God and knows everything. However, the key here is does He have personal knowledge because you and He have a close, ongoing relationship in prayer? Effective prayer is first of all a relationship with God. Jesus' power in prayer came from His relationship with the Father. We must work to have a close relationship with the Father. We are to be one with the Father just as Jesus was and is today. Does God witness today to your close relationship with Jesus and the Father?

I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 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. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: John 17:20-22 (NKJV)

Point two, whom I serve. The call to prayer is a call to service. There are people who pray because they are desperate for answers, or face seemingly impossible situations. However, a prayer life, especially an effective prayer life, one that avails much, comes from a servant. Jesus stated that He came to serve. Paul claimed to be a servant. We must, if we are to have success, be servants as well. Please also note that knowing the Father comes to those willing to take the yoke of Jesus and carry a burden. If you are not willing to be a servant, then you limit your success in prayer. And a note for advanced students, or those longing to be advanced; meditate on this, a servant does not get to pick where and how he will serve.

All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

Matthew 11:27-30 (NKJV)

Point three, with my spirit. Prayer is not just physical, nor is it just words, it must be spiritual. We cannot pray that is having true Christian prayer, if we are not praying in the spirit. The heathen practice prayer by their activities and many words, but to reach God we must pray in the spirit. God

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is spirit and those that come to Him must come in spirit and truth. If we are going to be successful in prayer we must come to the Father by faith and faith is a spiritual and physical act.

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. John 16:13 (NKJV)

Point four, in the Gospel of His Son. The central theme of all of our work and prayers should be the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I have been crucified with Christ and I do not have a life of my own, it is Christ who lives in me. My life, service, work, play, and everything else, including prayer, is to be a part of spreading the Gospel message. That is the reason for our life and ministry. Our prayers and the answers to these prayers, is first and foremost to be for the spreading of the Gospel.

Point five, without ceasing. Without ceasing, means we will pray without interruption and without omission. God has called us to pray for people, situations, and nations and if we are going to be faithful to this call we must not let anything keep us from our appointed duties. There are many ways we can be kept from our prayer. First there are physical ways; many things try to interrupt to our prayer time and schedule. For example, “A desire for God which cannot break the chains of sleep is a weak thing and will do but little good for God after it has indulged itself fully. The desire for God that keeps so far behind the devil and the world at the beginning of the day will never catch up” from *Power through Prayer* by E. M. Bounds. Second there are spiritual ways to keep us from effective prayer; for example the Devil does not want prayer, but he is especially concerned about effective, fervent prayer. So he works to bring omission of faith from our prayers. He works to keep us from prayer and if that is not accomplished then to keep us from praying in faith. Is it my consistent practice to faithfully pray, in faith, everyday?

Point six, mention. Effective prayer is spoken prayer. We need to hear with our ears what we are saying to God. Faith is an act and if we are to pray effective we must act on our faith. This begins with our words and continues with our actions. It is easy to have negative thoughts cloud the issues of our prayers and hinder our faith. The best way to clear away these clouds is to speak out our prayers. By speaking we tame our thinking. No longer do we allow negative, faith dampening thoughts to reside in our mind. This of course is assuming you do not speak out negative words when you pray out loud. David knew the importance of what he said and asked God to put a guard over his mouth so he would not say negative, faith killing things. What do you have to say in prayer?

Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips.
Psalm 141:3 (NKJV)

Point seven, always. If we are going to be effective in prayer, there will be times when the answers seemly never come. When we face these times we must continue to pray. Prayer is by faith and commitment and we can not falter and stop. Part of Paul's great success was so simple anyone can see it, when he prayed he always prayed. Nothing would stop him, nothing could hinder him. He

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was fully persuaded that God was faithful and since he always prayed and knew he would have answers. Do you pray always?

Point eight, making request. In a relationship between a son and father there are different roles for each. The father provides for all of the needs of the son, including: security, provision, guidance, direction, encouragement, love and much more. The son's role is to love the father, to honor him, and receive from him. The faithful son will ask from his father, knowing that the good father delights to give to the son. Our Heavenly Father is far better and more loving than any earthly father and He delights to give to His sons and daughters. As a part of our relationship with the Father we must come to Him and ask knowing that He delights to give answers to us. Have you been a good son or daughter; have you been asking?

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. 1 John 5:14-15 (NKJV)

Point nine, a way in the will of God. The will of God is a key to success in prayer. God has made bold promises concerning answers to prayer when we pray in His will. When I yield my will and seek first and foremost His will, there is no limit to the answers I can receive in prayer. We must draw close to God and tune our ear to hear His voice, listen carefully, and then obey what He says. This is finding the way in the will of God. It is making His way of chief importance, not my way.

So there is a quick and simple study guide for effective prayer. If we study these points concerning prayer and our relationship with the Father we can be very successful in prayer. How about you, will you be a good student. Will you study the points of the guide and apply them to your prayer life? Will you seeking to be close to the Father, faithful in practice and effective in prayer?

Let us Pray!

A Call for Prayer

Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem Pray for protection and safety for the Jewish people.

Pray for the Lost. Pray for ministries reaching out to the lost. Pray for the work of people willing to share the Gospel with people. Pray for opportunities for sharing. Pray for soft hearts willing to receive the Gospel message.

Pray for Opportunities. Pray for opportunities for the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Pray for hearts of men and women to be prepared to receive the Word. Pray for open doors for witnessing. Pray for willing ministers of the Gospel (not just pastors, but all who are Christians. Pray that we will reach this generation with the Gospel.

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Basic Prayer Focus

Remember to be always in prayer for the following:

For Israel and the Peace of Jerusalem

For the reaching of souls from every nation

For governments of your country and other countries to be open to the Gospel

For your home Church and the people of the church and community

Continuing Faithful in Prayer

Remember to be in prayer for these ministers and ministries. Ask the Holy Spirit to each week guide and direct the specifics of your prayers.

Joyce Abrahamson – Head of school in Brazil

John Coon – Ministry in Europe and the USA

Churches in Belarus – Growing number of churches in Belarus

Churches in Lithuania – Growing number of churches in Lithuania

DK Limbu Daniel – Pastor of a church in Nepal and church planting among Nepalese people

Marianne and David Dean – Missionaries on college campuses in East Asia

Lori Farquhar – Children's Ministry Director

Jacek Gromadzki – Pastor of a church in Kolobrzeg, Poland

Marek Kaminski – Pastor of a church in Kaszalin, Poland, leader in Polish churches, and co-founder and leader of BBB Conference

Bernd and Heike Pastor – Ministry in Germany

Mark Spencer – Pastor of a church in Longmont, Colorado, worldwide ministry, and co-founder and leader of BBB Conference

Patty Spencer – Pastor in Longmont, Colorado, worship leader, and artist with a great new CD

William Williamson – Pastor of a church in Cedaredge, Colorado

Charles and Janice Wilson – Pastors in Wyola, Montana

David Williamson – Editor of *Voice of Thanksgiving*

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Voice of Thanksgiving is published in a weekly version in English. *Voice of Thanksgiving* is also published monthly in German and Polish and is available in book form, *Prayer: A Force that Causes Change – A Call to Prayer*.

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