

**Be Serious about Prayer**

**BE SERIOUS ABOUT  
PRAYER!**

**MERVYN NAIDOO**

# Worldwide Prayer Network24/7



## **Teaching and Encouraging the Church to Pray**

## **Be Serious about Prayer**

**Permission granted for personal and non profit use Commercial use of any form prohibited.**

**All Scripture quotations from the New International Version and The King James version.**

# Contents

---

- Introduction
- What is Prayer?
- Why is Prayer not taken Seriously?
- A Careful Plan

## **Be Serious about Prayer**

**UNLESS THE PEOPLE OF GOD COME TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER VERY FEW OF HIS PEOPLE WILL UNDERSTAND THE URGENCY OF THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL. MAY GOD HELP US WE PRAY.**

The Lord can give us a change  
of heart even in most tragic  
circumstances. When we pray the  
heart gradually changes. Help me  
Lord!

– Mervyn Naidoo



## Introduction

---

**But the end of all things is at hand therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. 1Peter4.7**

One of the most neglected duties in the church today is found in the area of prayer. It therefore begs the question as to why? If prayer is supposed to be the most important facet of any church then why is it overlooked by so many of us? There must be a reason. The bible tells us to '**Pray without ceasing**' 1Thessalonians 5.17 and '**...all men must pray.....**' Nowhere in God's Word are we given relief from prayer. No man is exempted from praying. Yet the role we give to prayer gives one the impression that some *are* exempted from this important duty. The reports of our

## **Be Serious about Prayer**

praying do not speak well when compared to what God wants for the church today.

There are many answers from  
God that were really meant to be  
answered in our personal quiet place!

– Mervyn Naidoo Author

## What is Prayer?

---

To understand why **we all must** pray we need to know what prayer is? Prayer is simply the **union** of the believer's thoughts with Gods'. Prayer is Gods' way of telling the church what He wishes *to be done* here on earth. The duty of the believer is to pray out this accomplishment here on earth. God knows all things. He knows the end from the beginning. He knows how the end begins and prayer is the means we use to enquire and accomplish His will on earth. Our prayers therefore express our faith, our trust and expectations in Him. Our prayers must always show forth to God that we desire what He **already** has purposed for us. *The meaning of the word **amen** is not 'let it be' because we have now prayed, but that 'it is so' because God has already said so according to His word.* The strength of

## **Be Serious about Prayer**

our praying will determine *how much* of what God really desires is being accomplished here on earth. Knowing Gods' will helps us come to know His purpose. For it is through man that Gods' will shall be done here on earth. ***Knowing Heaven is about knowing the heart of God. Prayer opens the door for man to see.*** When man shall pray he shall become more familiar with the ways of God. And so it is that we become more informed of how we shall manage the affairs of God here on earth. It is that which we have come to see with our spiritual eyes.

When a man comes to know Heaven he comes to know the way the affairs of God shall be here on earth. The more familiar he is with Gods' ways the more consistent he may become here on earth in doing Gods' will. He begins to apply the ways of God here on earth. And so God's will is **established** here on earth. **'Your kingdom**

Worldwide Prayer Network24/7 come,

**your will be done on earth as it is in \_\_\_\_\_  
heaven.’ Matthew 6.10.** Simply put Prayer helps man to reign here on earth. Prayer is all encompassing.

Now here in lies the problem. If we are found lacking or sluggish in our praying *there will be very little of Heaven here on earth. The more the body faints in praying the more earth will be bound to collapse through the pressure of the evil one.* Many things have *heaped* up in heaven based on this simple truth of *people not praying.* God is willing to release when we pray His will, *yet many things are stalled when we do not pray.* Heaven is not selfish to release what it has for earth. Remember that whatever God has for earth is already planned and ready to be released from heaven. **‘Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven’** (already done). *Prayer is the means that ‘transfers’ that which is spiritual to the physical which is earth.* God

**Many things are to be prayed for  
and the church coming together  
corporately and in unity of spirit  
helps much when praying for  
government, kingdoms and the  
affairs of the world.**

**– Mervyn Naidoo**



## **Be Serious about Prayer**

has given us the Holy Spirit to help us do so. Read **1 Cor.2** We ask and receive simply because it was the will of God in the first place. ***God is never obligated to man's asking, if any thing God is 'obligated' to His will.*** Our relationship with God effects this will. Knowing more of heaven helps man to know God's will. The more time one spends with someone the more familiar that person becomes to us. The more familiar is that one. The same with what ever it may be. It becomes more usual, more regular and more established. It is not something foreign but relevant and applicable to where and how we are. We begin to see the importance of it. Prayer allows for man to become established with God. When a man is established with God he becomes one of good reputation, one that can be trusted and one that is reliable to Him. The more we pray the less strange or unfamiliar are

## Worldwide Prayer Network24/7

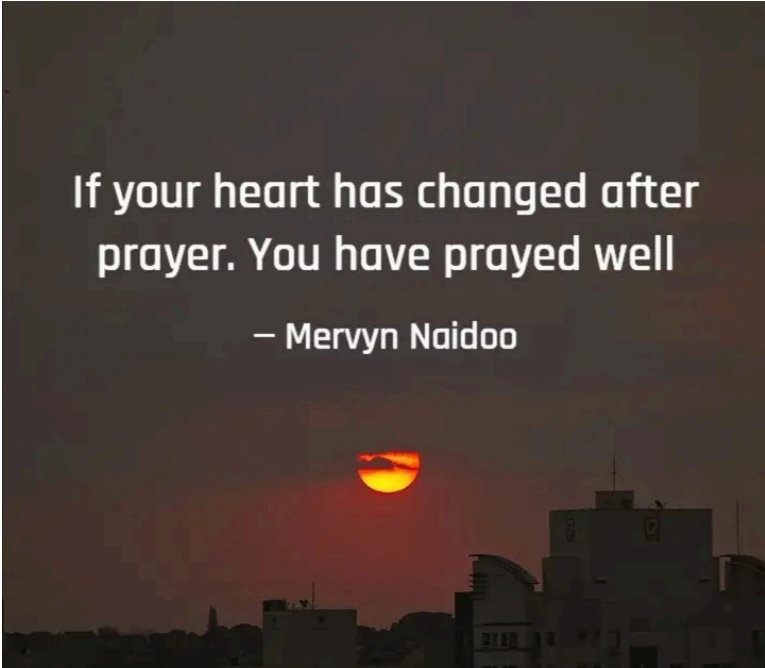
the ways of God to us. The knowledge of God, compared to mans' earthly understanding of this knowledge is huge. An established man in God's eyes is one God has grounded, one God trusts, and one God is familiar with. He is one who is firm in the ways of God. We must be established in the things of God rather than the world order of things. Find a man who is established of God and you shall find a man who is prayer filled. *When a man is established in the Lord he is one that shall know the heart of God. He shall know the heart of God for a city, a nation, for leaders, kings, governments and kingdoms. A man who knows the will of God knows about the estate of God and how that estate should be managed.* This is all part of God's will and prayer is the means that God uses to reveal this. Simply put, Prayer **reveals** God. Prayer reveals **HOW** God would have something done. Faithfully going to God reveals **WHEN** God would have that done

## **Be Serious about Prayer**

and it also helps us to go to God to enquire **WHY** this must be done. Therefore with all the above knowledge we should be taking prayer more seriously yet we don't.

If your heart has changed after  
prayer. You have prayed well

– Mervyn Naidoo



**Why is Prayer not taken Seriously?**

**We can only understand the importance of something when we understand its purpose.** The following is important in us understanding the importance of prayer.

**1. Prayer is God's Design**

One of the reasons as to why we do not take prayer seriously is because we expect God to work on our terms and conditions. God does not respond to us on our terms. God is the one who has designed prayer. It is Him who has invited man to partake of His design. We are not called to add nor subtract to His design. The way He initially intended prayer to work still works to this

## **Be Serious about Prayer**

day. We must understand that prayer works on God's terms and not ours. The church has to understand the concept of prayer has God designed it. In other words no matter what our need may be we must come to know how God operates, when God chooses to respond and why God will *even* respond. Because God responds to us on His terms it is therefore imperative that we come into His will. God is sovereign. Having said that we must also note that **God will respond to what He has said He will do**. We are His children and He is the one who invites us to pray therefore our prayers should never be in vain. Many in the body of Christ pray simply out of duty. There is nothing wrong with starting to pray out of duty but the believer must move on to praying through a relationship with God. Relationship through His Spirit makes the believer aware of what is on the heart and mind of God. *The more we pray*

## **Worldwide Prayer Network24/7**

*the more we know, the more we know the more we pray.*

The lack of *such* understanding is the very reason many people do not pray. This is the reason as to why prayer is not taken seriously. For many this has resulted in great disappointment.

The Lord can give us a change  
of heart even in most tragic  
circumstances. When we pray the  
heart gradually changes. Help me  
Lord!

– Mervyn Naidoo



## **Be Serious about Prayer**

### **2. Prayer works for all believers?**

Like many things in life when there is ignorance about something we tend to neglect it. It is a human fallacy to pay little attention to that which does not work first time. That is exactly what has happened to the aspect of prayer in many lives. As people we expect things to span out the way we want them too. We expect things to happen at our pace, our time and our way. When we ask for something we do so with the hope to receive it. We may engage in activities and again we expect that such engagement will bring relief or gain for us. If it does not we abandon it. And so we go to God with the same expectations. We expect from God the same rapid response that we demand from life in general. We anticipate that God will sometimes respond even sooner to our requests than man would. There are many of us who have

## Worldwide Prayer Network24/7

prayed and found that *this is not so*. Does the believer really believe that God answers prayers? Or is it that God does answer prayer but it never really works for us. Generally speaking it is difficult for Christians to honestly answer this question. For one to admit that prayer does not work for them is very 'unchristian'. Yet if we look at our prayer gatherings there seems to be something wrong. Why do so few people attend the prayer meeting of the church. If all men believed that prayer worked then all men would be praying. Again I strongly believe that we do believe that there is a God who heals. We do believe that what we hear and see in the lives of others is the true and miracle working power of God **but it just does not work for us**. This is where our problem lies. If we honestly believed that prayer works for **each one of us** as we should then our prayer meetings would be full to capacity. **We believe it works for**

## **Be Serious about Prayer**

*others yet skeptical about it in our own lives.* The task of leaders today must be to first believe that prayer works. They must identify themselves with prayer. ***The teaching of some verse on prayer without personally believing it works for you will not do much to influence the church to pray.*** Leaders must pray. ***Leaders must take prayer seriously.*** Leaders must have a fresh testimony of God working in their **own** lives through the power of prayer. The congregation and those they lead will follow because they see it working in leadership. No greater encouragement can we give to the people than when they know we have praying leaders. When pastors pray without ceasing then their flock will also be encouraged to pray without ceasing.

**More time with the Lord Jesus is  
never in vain. More praying never  
did hinder the kingdom of God!**

**– Mervyn Naidoo**



## Worldwide Prayer Network24/7

So we have two issues so far that must be dealt within the church. The one is that we must see prayer has God has designed it. In other words we must understand what Prayer is. Secondly we must believe that prayer works not just for others but for all of us within the body of Christ. The first is an understanding by any man's writings and a little revelation is needed.

It is the second issue that really needs some in depth study. When the church begins to see that prayer does really work for ***each one of us*** then we will take it seriously. One of the greatest stumbling blocks to effective praying is lack of faith. The believer must believe. Yet how do we get others to believe and trust this God whom we do not see. The adversary is walking around like a roaring lion, seeking the children of God to devour them.

**1Peter5.8.** yet how are we to maintain our faith and still stand. We must understand that to trust God is more spiritual than

## **Be Serious about Prayer**

physical. God has given us a measure of faith. With that faith we stand. ***If the believer does not choose to stand then he cannot be serious about praying.*** The Bible calls us to pray with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit. **Ephesians 6.18** We can only do this if we are standing. The verses of scripture that precede this verse is about us taking up the armor of God. **Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness. And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace, above all taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;** **Ephesians 6.14-17** The battle is a spiritual one. Satan loves to keep believers ignorant especially of the spiritual war that is taking place in the heavenly realm. His attack on the people of

## **Worldwide Prayer Network24/7**

God is a spiritual attack. For us to see this and remain victorious, means our spiritual eyes must be opened and we must use every spiritual weapon available to us.

Our battle is not against flesh and blood. When you look around you today you will find that very few of us know that. The manner in which we respond to others when things go wrong tells us so. For most part we become so personal towards others when we are hurt. We forget that Satan adds fuel to a little spark. Paul admonishes us to put on the whole armor of God in order to stand against the forces of hell – that's right the forces of hell. He makes it very clear to us that our battle is not against physical forces. But against invisible powers who are strategically placed to bring harm to us. The armor is not just a passive response but an offensive one. This in itself tells us the importance of the battle we are faced with all the time.

**You cannot pray short effective prayers if you have not first spent long hours in the closet with God. More time with God strengthens our short prayers**

**– Mervyn Naidoo**



## **Be Serious about Prayer**

Nowhere in the bible does it tell us that the enemy takes a rest from his intentions to destroy us. Satan's' intent is to ultimately destroy us and our families. **He hates God and therefore he will try everything in his power to break us.** It is our duty to be watchful if we want to survive his onslaught. Let us also remind you that we are not publishing this to give any platform for the enemy. But I think as God's people we play into the enemy's hand by not mentioning or making believers aware. The issue is never whether we should be mentioned or even write about such things but that we make the believer **aware** of what is going on. In my years of ministry I have seen the ignorance and childishness of leaders and congregation alike that refuse to speak about these things and thereby effect the encouragement for believers to stand. On the other hand I have had many believers comment that knowledge of the spiritual realm has made

## Worldwide Prayer Network24/7

them more vigilant. It is because of this knowledge that they are willing to spend more time in prayer. **They have begun to take prayer more seriously knowing two things – God has a plan for them and secondly the enemy hates the plan that God has for them.**

Do not ever believe the lie from the enemy that *he has nothing to do with the mess up in your life. If satan has nothing to do with all the chaos then there would be no reason for you to take up the armor of God today.*

Thank God for His protection. Satan comes up against the plans of God because he has determined a long time ago that he will not allow man to serve God. The more we pray the more of God's will come into existence in the physical and spiritual realm for us.

The enemy knows that God has His best for us. Satan also knows that these plans are revealed through the leading of the Holy Spirit and prayer is the means that God uses to release his wishes and desires for

## **Be Serious about Prayer**

us here on earth. Satan hates this with all his might. His purpose here on earth is to destroy the plans of God for all mankind. This means that all our ways must be aligned to God's ways. Prayer is the avenue or means that God has created for this to take place. God has established this long ago and is not something that came about through some chance. God always had in mind the concept of prayer when He set out to create man.

**First pray for the church! She cannot go out and protest against the world when she has many protesters within herself. Unity amongst believers builds strength against the world!**

**– Prayerwatch M**



---

### **3 Be careful from becoming exhausted!**

**Luke 22.45** When He rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, *exhausted from sorrow*. Jesus then reprimanded them to get up and pray so that they will not fall into temptation. *The lack of prayer causes temptation.* **Matthew 26.41** is a perfect demonstration of how to overcome sorrow and exhaustion. At Gethsemane just before His arrest, Jesus took three of his closest disciples to go and pray. As we have just read they could not pray because of the sorrow in their hearts that led to exhaustion. Jesus was also sorrowful as we read in **Matthew 26.38** .....**My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.** The difference is that Jesus went to

## **Be Serious about Prayer**

**pray.** Jesus understood how to handle sorrow. **Going a little farther, He fell with His face to the ground and prayed, My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will. Matthew 26. 39.** We must guard against allowing sorrow to bring us to exhaustion. No man can pray effectively when he is exhausted.

**Seek first kingdom of God, Seek  
much and you will have much to  
reveal. The church needs more  
revelation!**

**– Prayerwatch M**



# A Careful Plan

---

## 1. Make time to pray!

---

In order for us to pray effectively we must have a plan in place. Any notion that the believer has about having time to pray will never happen. Satan will always try to mess up the time you expect to have to pray. Therefore it is imperative that the believer **makes** time to pray. Looking for time and making time for God is a huge difference. If we are serious about prayer and the will of God then we will **set aside time** for proper communication with God. **When we take that initiative to pray, God then leads us in the manner of *'how to pray'***. The believer must be willing to hear from God. **The decision to pray lies with us**. Many are waiting for a directive from God to start praying yet neither the day nor that hour presents itself. We must understand that

## **Be Serious about Prayer**

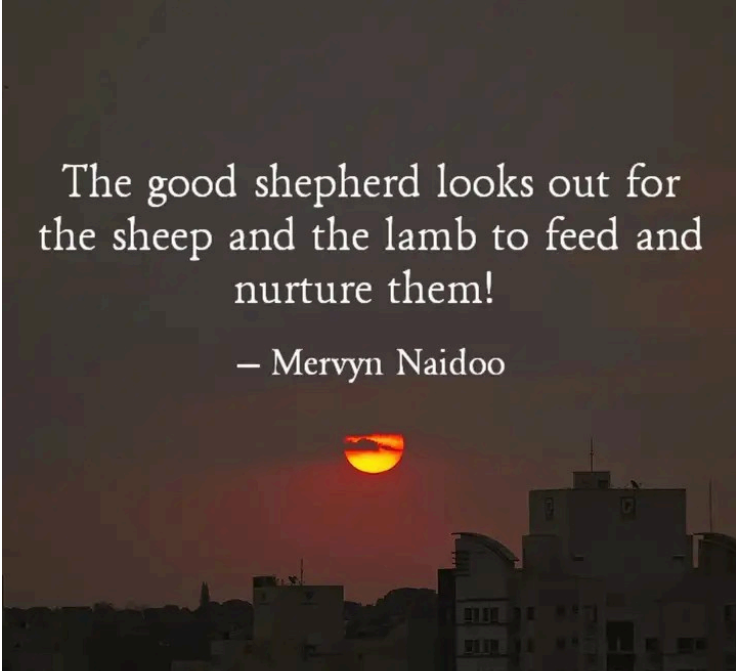
the Lord has already spoken. We must show to God that we desire to be drawn away from the affairs of the world that has so gripped us. It is never the character of the Holy Spirit to force or impose upon us anything. There are however many things that burden the Holy Spirit. Gods' Word tells us that the Spirit of God grieves. That which grieves the Lord is *given to man to pray back* to Him. This is Gods' order of things. **If man desires to see this burden removed then this thing must be given back to God.** That is the purpose of prayer. The burden that Jesus had was given back to the Father through prayer. **Only a man who prays can be trusted with the burdens of the Lord.** Are you a man or woman who can be trusted with the burdens of the Lord? Can you remain still before God for Him to speak? If so, God shall reveal to you His heart for a neighbor, a nation or His church. It starts with a little. The *more* will be entrusted upon us when

## Worldwide Prayer Network24/7

we are faithful with little. The key is to show God our concern for others and not be selfish in our praying. There is much that God is concerned for. Do you know what they are? How many people can you immediately start praying for? This is what pleases the heart of God. When He sees a man or a woman who is willing to be **'led'** to pray – through their firm decisions and already active prayer lives – He (God) will then gently nudge them to take on the things pertaining to His perfect will. That man is one whom God can trust to bring to Him that which is important to His heart.

The good shepherd looks out for  
the sheep and the lamb to feed and  
nurture them!

– Mervyn Naidoo



# Be Serious about Prayer

## 2. The Closet

We all need to have a closet. It is that place where we go to find God. The closet is a personal place that you have made. Jesus' closet was not a physical room. The closet can be any place in your home. Even the busiest place in the home can become your closet if you choose the right time. The closet must be that place 'away'. In other words it is that place that keeps out any disturbance. We can therefore learn that the closet and prayer time very often must go hand in hand. ***It is much easier to find a quiet place when you have found the right time.*** Jesus said in **Matthew 6** that the closet is actually your secret place. The word secret is not necessarily the place has it is the heart. The closet is the place of revealing your heart. Just that should make it the most important place. My question to you today - Do you have a prayer closet?

## Worldwide Prayer Network24/7

When the decision to pray has been made, the closet is not hard to find. It should be the most important spot under your tent. It is here where you will meet with God one on one.

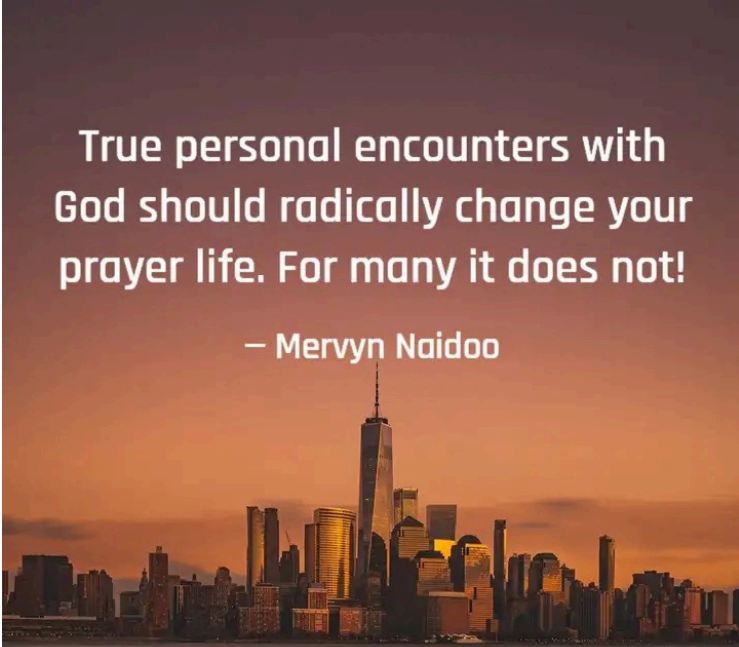
*Our Church and corporate prayer meetings are only as strong as the quality time we have in our prayer closets.* If our meetings are empty then our closets are empty. ***The strength of our prayer meetings will give you an idea of our closets.*** The closet is anything but a place to fear yet its' here the battle rages on. It is not a place you invite friends and have fellowship. The closet is a secret place, where it is just you and God. Here is where the battle becomes fierce. It is here you will receive and it is here you will be asked to let go. It will be personal and at times very emotional in here.

## **Be Serious about Prayer**

You must refuse to let go. I suggest you read one of my favourite stories in the bible, of Jacob's encounter with God and his refusal to let go of Him **Genesis 32.24-32**. It is also a place where the passions and desires of self will have to make room for Gods' desires and plans. It is not a place for babies or for those who want to retreat. It is your place, where you receive your strength and the energy to move on. It is a place where you will become thirsty and also filled to overflow. It is a battlefield, your battlefield. It is a place of confrontation, its' also your place for breakthroughs. And they shall come because of the issues that must be confronted. Here you are not able to play out any part for there is no room for actors. It's a place of much stripping, much gripping. You would do well to hold on. When you have gone in, its' like being in the middle of the oceans, and to make it to

True personal encounters with  
God should radically change your  
prayer life. For many it does not!

– Mervyn Naidoo



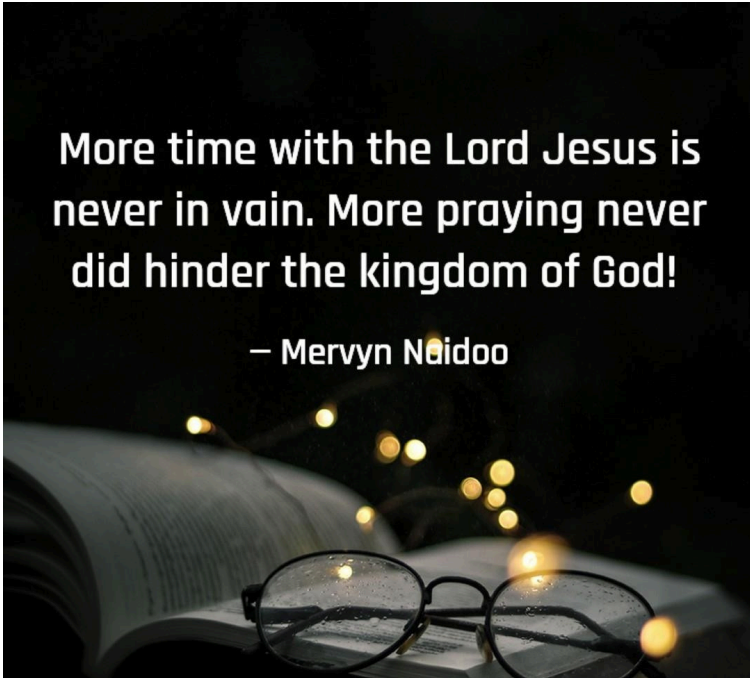
## Worldwide Prayer Network 24/7

ashore, you will have to overcome the ocean giants. Let me warn you that it can become very personal in here.

Any wonder why God's words speak about a 'door and it being shut.' If you have no closet you will have no place to rest. *The irony is that the place of battle is also the place of rest.* You must overcome in the closet to come to this place of rest. The closet is never a place hard to discover once the heart is already made up. It starts with the heart. It is time each one of us in the body of Christ discovered our closets. We discover God and His ways when our closets are found. The place of prayer is not a place of pretence. God help us. God has proposed it to be the first place we find but through our stubbornness it has become the last place we usually go to find. If we are wise enough to find the closet first we would save ourselves much pain and suffering over the years.

**More time with the Lord Jesus is  
never in vain. More praying never  
did hinder the kingdom of God!**

**– Mervyn Naidoo**



## Be Serious about Prayer

### 3. The Quiet Heart

A heart that is still before God hears well what God says. But how does the believer get his heart to be quiet before God. A quiet heart is essential in the life of the one praying. With the great amount of activity in each one of our lives this may not be easy to come by. **It is therefore important that the believer is willing to make a firm decision to spend time with God.** When we are willing to believe the word of God about a Heavenly Father, a Son who was willing to die and the help given to us in the Holy Spirit, it is much easier to have a quiet heart before God. The prerequisite is therefore faith. We must believe that God is willing to speak to us and that He is willing to hear us. To be still before God the heart must sincere. **Hebrew 10.19-22 ‘ Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the**

## Worldwide Prayer Network24/7

**Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ..... and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith.....'**Faith helps make that firm decision

to spend time with God. God knows about the plans He has for us and it is this quiet heart to which the plans will be revealed.

**Jeremiah 29.12-13 says the following:**

**'Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.'**

One can not find God when the heart is not quiet. According to Gods' word He will listen to you when you pray, and this takes place when the heart has sought Him with all that it has. In other words the heart must be willing to surrender. A quiet heart is one free from anger, it is one that is willing to wait and let God have His way. A quiet heart is characterised by the absence of ones' own selfish thoughts and desires.

## **Be Serious about Prayer**

Or at least it is willing to let God show His heart first.

When the heart is willing to be quiet before God, it will surprise you of how much you initially desired to say and do, that eventually becomes useless and undesirable to God. That eventually becomes undesirable to you. A quiet heart is willing to change. ***Having a calm heart before God in prayer is one of the most important aspects of the prayer life of any believer.*** The more our hearts are soft and pliable before God, the more God is able to speak to us. The more we listen the more we are able to do. The quiet heart prepares us for action. I believe that it is this heart of sincerity to hear from God that will help us to get more done here on earth than all our attempts before.

You see the most important decision in having that continuity with God fulfilled is the firm decision made to spend time with God. The decision to set a time and then

**One of the most gravest mistake  
the church can make is to use an  
earthly guage for spiritual matters**

**– Mervyn Naidoo**



## Worldwide Prayer Network24/7

find that place to spend with God helps to have that quiet time with God. **The quiet time and quiet place sets the precedent for that still heart before God.** It is this very heart that God can now speak to. One sets oneself well when one has come so far. **'Come away'** – the coming away for us is not a gentle act, but one of persuasion. The hustle and bustle of everyday life does not make room for God in our lives. To come away would mean more to 'run away'. It is then that we are able to hear the heart and cry of God. Jesus exemplified this mystery for when the disciples searched for Him He was found praying..... **Luke 5.16 'but Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed'**

When the disciples looked for Jesus they often found him in a quiet place praying. It is on one of those occasions that they asked Jesus *'Teach us how to pray'*. And so it is that we now have the **Lords' Prayer**. God must surely enjoy the position of a

## **Be Serious about Prayer**

quiet heart most for it is then that He is most able to have His way. It is the quiet heart that God takes as His own to be used by Him. It is this heart that is most pliable in Gods hand. It is such a heart that places Him first and so fulfils the most important commandment of the Bible, **‘To love the Lord your God with all your heart.’**

**Watch and Pray without ceasing**

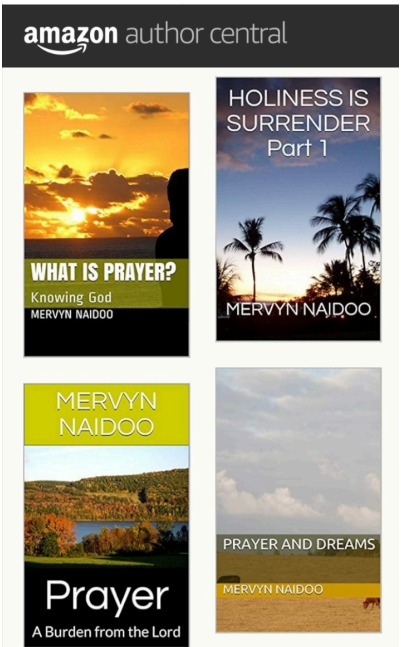
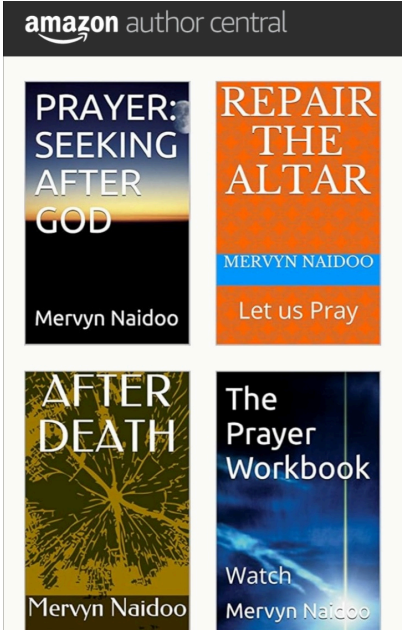


**Go into your prayer closet with a  
willingness to have a change of  
heart**

**– Mervyn Naidoo**



# Other books by the author



# Other books by the author







**Author and Teacher Mervyn Naidoo is from Cape Town South Africa. Mervyn is the founder of Worldwide Prayer Watch 24/7 and the PrayerWatch -A-Minute Series. Mervyn has written more than 30 books on the Importance of Prayer. His radio and writing ministry encourages the church to pray without ceasing!**

**Pray without ceasing!**

