

**Repair The Altar**

*Worldwide Prayer Watch Series*

# **REPAIR THE ALTAR**

**Mervyn Naidoo**

Worldwide Prayer Watch Series

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and the King James Version

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Worldwide Prayer Watch Series

# **To Teach and Encourage the Church to Pray**

# Repair the Altar

## THANK YOU

To all the men and women who tirelessly intercede on behalf of this nation and peoples around the globe. Many of you have never graced any pulpit nor have you any great titles but you continue to do what God has called you too. Continue to pray without ceasing for your reservation has been made by God and your reward forthcoming.

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## **Repair the Altar**

**Then Elijah said to all the people  
'Come here to me.' They came to  
him, and he repaired the altar of the  
Lord, which was in ruins. 1Kings 18.30**

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## **1. TAKING HOLD**

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No amount of writing or talking about prayer can ever complete the life of prayer. Books and much about prayer may be seen and heard but they are merely there to assist us in one of the most powerful duties of the Christ life. Yet even though there is a hidden life in prayer it is a life that is bursting to be revealed. ***The more consistent we are in approaching the throne room of God, the deeper we are moved to understanding God.*** Prayer reveals the heart of God.

The apostle Paul understood this fully well. In his letter to the church in Ephesus he wrote the following '**.....and I pray that you being rooted and established in love, may have the power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge - that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.**' Ephesians 3.17-19 Paul knew that the key to this understanding was prayer. The revelation of God's heart must be measured by the consistency of the believer before God. Here in lies much to be known for there are many who are able get a grasp of God but never by the measure God desires.

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There is a measure that may differ for all men in taking hold of God. Our walk with God thus far, will determine this. For the one it may be a simple prayer and he may find himself **'caught'** up yet for others it may be a struggle like the one at Jabbok. Jacob experienced this at the ford and his hunger and persistence for God found him receiving what God really had for him. God desires that all men take hold of Him.

This **'taking hold'** of God reveals the desire that each individual has for God. It is our hunger for that which God has already ordained in the first place. Our little with God has been a testimony we use that we have gotten hold of God as Jacob did at Jabbok. Yet for many of us we are far from this **'taking hold'** of God.

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## 2. THE AFFAIRS OF GOD

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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 is omniscient. He is omnipotent, meaning God is all powerful, invincible, supreme and unstoppable. God is omnipresent, 'where can you go from His presence?' Prayer expresses our faith, our trust and expectations in Him. Our prayers must show 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 as we have wished, but that '**it is so**' because God has already said so according to His Word. The strength of our praying will determine how much of what God desires is really being accomplished here on earth. It is Gods' purpose that man comes to know His Will. For it is through man on earth that many of Gods' Will shall be done. The duty of the believer is to pray out this accomplishment here on earth.

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You see Prayer is the means by which man comes to know this Will of God. Knowing Heaven is about knowing the heart of God. Prayer opens that 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 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 doing the Will of God. He begins to apply the ways of God here on earth. And so God's Will, not mans' is established here on earth. **'Your kingdom 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

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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, Many things are stalled when Believers refuse to 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' Matthew 6.10** (already done). Prayer is the means that *'transfers'* that which is spiritual onto the physical which is earth. God has given us the Holy Spirit to help us do so. The Bible teaches us that God is Spirit, therefore the revelation knowledge of who God is and what He desires will be revealed to the spirit of man by His Spirit. In other words Spirit to spirit. Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Holy Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the

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world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God. **Read 1 Corinthians 2**

We are in need of the Spirit of God. It is the Spirit of God who reveals the Plans of God for our lives. Prayer is the means that God uses to align us to His Will. God's Will is the Perfect Will. The more *intimate* we are with Him, the more we come to know His Ways and Plans. God reveals much of himself through the process of intimacy.

Prayer is also the means that God uses to take away or remove that which is not of Him. How many times have you gone to God about certain things and eventually found that you were no longer praying about or even asking the same things anymore. ***That's because God changes our hearts' desires and brings them in line with His.*** When we do ask and receive, it's because it was simply in and the *Will of God* in the first place. ***God is never obligated to man's asking, if anything God is 'obligated' to His Will.*** Our relationship with God affects this Will. Knowing more of Heaven helps man to know more the Will of God.

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The more time one spends with someone the more familiar is that person to us, becoming more usual and established in our lives. The relationship and person is no longer foreign but relevant and applicable to us. 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 is 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 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

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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, leaders, kings, governments and kingdoms. A man who knows the will of God knows about the estate of God and how that estate is 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 and it also helps us to go to God to enquire WHY this must be done.

After Isaac prayed to the Lord, his wife Rebekah fell pregnant. God answered by giving her twins. The bible tells us that the babies jostled within her, and she then went to 'inquire' of the Lord. Although Prayer may also answer for us WHY God would have something done it is not and should not be the main reason for the believer to heed the call to pray. Many things we shall not know until it is time for God to reveal it to us. Our urgency though in pursuing God 'to know' must never reach a state of death. The true believer though has come to know that through prayer he is given the answer of provision for the vision. In

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other words the calling and purpose for many a life is seldom in doubt but it is the provision for that journey that may create doubt in us. Prayer helps to remove our fears of how provision shall come forth. Knowing WHO God is helps us to see that our provision will be met as long as we can believe. Our knowledge of God that he is Jehovah Jireh helps our faith to accomplish with Him the vision that is set before us. Jehovah Jireh means God has already provided and compliments Matthew 6.10 '...Your will be done on earth as IT IS DONE in Heaven'

Note what I just said the key is to first know who God is. Prayer helps the believer understand who God is. For God reveals himself through the life of prayer.

The revelation of God is the revelation of His nature and His character. The more we are introduced to God the more closely we become associated with Him. It is this association with God that causes us children to become more familiar with His ways. The more time we spend with Him on a personal level, the more we come to know who He is. In us coming to know who God is, we come to know who we are. Prayer

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reveals God in us and us in God. It reveals our depth with God and that which we must still thread. Prayer takes nothing for granted. A man who truly prays will be sincere and not be found assuming the works of the kingdom. In other words he is not presumptuous with the work of God. His closeness with God through a life hidden in prayer shall reveal all about the matter.

1Cor2.10

The great prophets of old were never moved by that which was false. When a man is certain of what he has heard or seen for himself there shall be nothing that will convince him otherwise. It becomes personal. The time spent with God by these prophets of old placed them in good stead with God.

Abraham knew his God, in so doing he had much faith. It was his faith that allowed him to speak to his servant thus 'Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.' Genesis 22.5

Have you asked yourself who is the 'we' that Abraham speaks of in this verse. Have you come to your conclusion, for when you have, you will realize the great amount of faith that this man had in God. Abraham through is personal contact

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with God, when tested knew that he would return with his son.

Prayer involves asking God for things personal or not but is not the highest level of prayer. The desire to request from God provision for daily life was never the principle reason God meant prayer to be. Our going to God for our daily needs must never be the place where prayer begins nor ends. It does have a place in the life of prayer, sure, but should never be the only reason we are found to be going to God. Prayer is meant so that the believer may listen to God. If you are called to pray, you are simply called to listen. When we go to God we must be willing to die to self. '....Yet not as I will, but as you will.' Matthew 26.39. Prayer when manifested more on self shall see very little of God's power on earth.

Prayer gives to us the opportunity to bring glory to God. Prayer puts perfectly in place what God desires. 'I in them and you in Me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me' John 17.23

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The more time one spends with God, the more hunger shall there be for God. The more time we spend with God personally the greater shall be the yearning for what He has promised through His word.

The desire for God must first be found in the closet, one on one with Him. This is the starting point for us all to be really effective within the body of Christ. The less time we spend with God on a personal level the less we will have to give to the corporate life of the church. There is much that is offered in the body of Christ at present yet so much of it is not God ordained.

Our lack in spending time with God has allowed for much to enter the church. That which has entered the church has spread like a wild fire destroying the sanctity and holiness of how the church should be. Here in lies the problem – Our lack of yearning for what God desires. We are willing to receive and implement that which is Godly but only by the measure we have determined. Even the pace at which holiness returns to the body is determined by us and not God and so death to self is long in the waiting. We desire a move of God but we refuse to move

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out of the way for Him to bring about this move. We must not dictate to God about His plan, His purpose and His desires that have already been established and put in place before the beginning of time. Also our contribution to the body must never be set by the standards set by man. No matter how attractive and fruitful it may seem, it is the believers' duty to measure it against God's word. The measure that we use must be that which God has set and not man. In a world that is so enticing we may become so caught up in a way that God has not set in the first place.

The prayer life is the revelation of a Fathers' heart to be with His children and to give them life to the full. John 10.10 confirms this. 'The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life; and have it the full.'

To pray and to know how to pray is the key to knowing the nature of God. Much shall be revealed through the life of prayer that most duties of the church life shall never reveal. Prayer reveals the ordained days for our lives as is written in His book before one of them came to be. Prayer reveals to us how precious are His

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thoughts for us. 'How precious to me are your thoughts concerning me, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Where I to count them they would outnumber the grains of sand....' Psalm 139.17 - 18

God's purpose for our lives is a sole mandate that fits exclusively within the body of Christ. That mandate is always solitary, exclusive and private to you the individual. We find through prayer, God's predestination for us as believers. The call to pray challenges the believer of the certainty of God and His ways regarding us. It proves to the believer that it was meant to be. Prayer is about God's purpose being revealed and lived here on earth. Prayer is about God. When we are able to understand this simple truth then shall we see the purpose of God for man. In going to God we realize that man has a role to play. Through Prayer we understand that we are to become the 'Heaven' here on earth for God.

Our death to self is the greatest example to the world that we are the models of Heaven here on earth. For the world to have some idea of what the Heavenly kingdom is like, all it has to do is

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look at the believer. If we understand that God has already purposed it so, then we as believers will understand the enormity of the task ahead of us.

We are the hands and feet of God whilst on earth. These hands and feet are helpless and disabled without the Head which is Christ. Through Christ, Prayer helps us understand this. Prayer is what God has established for this revelation. There has since never been a substitute for prayer. The aspects and characteristics of prayer are the most intimate and fundamental of who God is. That which we know we bring to Him in our prayers. Yet more is revealed as we wait on God. There is much that is revealed about us in going to God. We discover for most part that we belong to Him. We also discover that He has not forsaken us and that there is much that we have that does not come from Him nor belongs in His kingdom. That which does not belong to Him is removed from us through a life of prayer. Prayer is God's design. Prayer was Gods' intention and it will always be the intention of God to have His people Pray. God was the first one that considered it well that

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we should come to Him in prayer. In other words prayer is not something we have made up. We only discover prayer. However we may discover prayer it is still that which God holds closely to His heart.

For many of us we learn much about praying through pain, great suffering and hurt. In so doing we discover the abundant grace of God. Our needs are supplied not by merit as much as by His grace and mercy. It is this grace that enables us to ask and it is by this grace that we receive. Prayer starts with God and ends with Him.

God gives to us by our asking. Yet this is not the highest level of praying. If 'asking and giving' is all we have thus learnt on prayer then it is very shallow. Our asking and God supplying is far from what God intended true praying to be. It is prayer nevertheless and does have its place in the kingdom, yet it is still a far cry from what true praying really is. Prayer must at all times be seen as God sees it. Our Prayers must at all times put God first. Prayer must at all times have its true biblical perspective. It cannot and will not allow for our own in thought and deed. In other words whatever we bring before the Lord must have a

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place in the kingdom of God. We may have great knowledge of scripture yet we still need revelation with many a matter which comes through our close walk with God. The same goes with revelation. It must tie up with the great prophets of old who were called to write. Whatever it maybe we must still be able to see it the way God sees it. '...Yet not as I will, but as you will' Matthew 26.39 This will give us a perspective of how God sees things and how God intends things to be.

Prayer includes God's perspective for the world. Although our understanding of many things may have a solid base we must see the world the way God does. In other words we must see the world through the eyes of God. For many of us we are angry at what we see around us and in our anger and frustrations have spoken in haste. That which emerges is anything but the light intended to come forth. When we go to God first regarding the affairs of the world we begin to see it His way and not our own. If the believer refuses to first go to God he may have a wrong perspective when he eventually decides to. It will therefore be with the wrong motive. The result is that he is not able to discern what God is saying. The effect through

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this is that the light within him does not shine at the strength at which it was supposed to. This helps the world continue to hold on to the lost and the church is not strong enough to come up against the evil one. When we approach God from a wrong perspective we then ask for the wrong things. Instead of bread we ask for stone. 'In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will' Ephesians 1.11 When we pray for the world we must hear God first. What God desires and how He desires to bring something about will show in our praying. If not our prayers will not reach Heaven. For why should it if it does not have the wishes of God in the first place. The believer must make sure that he is aware of that which enters into Heaven. God is certainly aware of it. Only that which God desires is allowed to enter into the presence of God. The Will of God is the shape for all our praying. We must remember though, that we are not called to make the world a better place. The world is already damned. Our duty as the church is to pray that those who are lost will be found and brought into the kingdom of God. 'As it is,

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you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you'. John 15.19

Prayer also helps us to see the enemy through Gods' eyes. It keeps us from being presumptuous in our undertakings here on earth. The enemy has an age old plan to destroy the church but he will not succeed. Even though we are in Christ and all that is promised is true we must still pray. Our personal walk with God helps us in warfare. Through our prayer life we are shown the strategies of the evil one. Christ's demonstration of a prayer filled life saw Him using wisdom to come against the evil one. He is the perfect example for us regarding this. Prayer keeps us from running along and doing it on our own. It also helps and keeps us from being stoned especially when we are foolish. We must have discernment from the Lord every time we encounter the evil one. This is a very sensitive part of our Christian walk. In fact the enemy would actually love you coming against him with no discernment. When you lack this relationship with the Lord, the enemy then knows he has what it is to take you on. The most common aspect regarding this is the use of the tongue.

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**'The tongue has the power of life and death.'**

**Proverbs 18.21** How, when and what we say is important. **'The tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts.'** **James 3.5** We are full of life when we exert our tongue with Godly wisdom. Death reigns when we do not. Jesus quoted scripture correctly that refuted the enemy's temptation on Him in the desert. The result was that the words of Jesus were no match for the enemy. The bible teaches us that the devil left him and angels came to attend him. Read **Matthew 4. 1-11**

Only a man who prays will tell you there is a great force out there. It is an age old plan to destroy the individual and the church. A foolish man refuses to teach or encourage the church on the wiles of the enemy. It is because he never prays. For if he was a praying man, much shall be revealed to him. His denial stems from his lack of prayer.

Prayer also helps us see the church as God would see it. How God sees the church of today is important. This is a very sensitive issue. There is much that we see around us that we are not in agreement with. There is much frustration in the church which has reached 'boiling' point. The life

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that Christ has called us to live as His body is for some far from what scripture demands. Though we can judge the body and we are called to do so it is here that we can make great mistakes. If only we would first pray surely things would be different. We must remember that if there be any area that we must be extra careful it must be in the area of church affairs and our dealings with each other. What we say, when we say it and how we say it is of paramount importance. We cannot be men who just brandish the sword however we feel like. Great fools shall we be if we did so. The way we walk amongst believers may sometimes be the greatest task we have here on earth. Our walk in harmony with other believers may be the best example we have to the unbeliever. Going to God first through prayer reveals much and helps us to grow in this area.

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**‘The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel’s hand’  
Rev. 8.4**

**‘I have reserved seven thousand.... whose knees have not bowed down to Baal.....’ 1Kings 19.18**

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## 3. PRAYER AND A NEW HEART

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Then Elijah said to all the people 'Come here to me.' They came to him, and he repaired the altar of the Lord, which was in ruins. 1Kings 18:30

In our day and age the word revival is so often heard. We all want revival, we prophesy about it and all believe it is the best thing that could happen, if ever it does. But what does it take to cause revival. This is where the church is lacking and lacking big time. We want the things of God but we are not prepared to wait on God for it. We are not prepared to do what God has called us to do. For many of us we do not even know what needs to be done so all we do is wait. God's word tells us that Elijah repaired the altar of God that had broken down. So often we speak and hear about the fire that came down from Heaven and consumed the sacrifice and all the wood in this story yet we miss what Elijah had to do prior to this happening – He repaired the altar of God. So really what is the altar of God? Perhaps you have neglected God in the relationship you ought to have with him or you have made vows before God and have not fulfilled them. Perhaps the thing that God has asked of you has been put on hold because you were busy with things more

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important to you. The problem is never about whether revival will take place in great measure or will not it is about the reparation that each one of us has to make before God. Make right with God and see how revival will sweep the land. As leaders who grace the pulpit of God we so often mislead our people that revival shall come at a certain time. This is not biblical. Revival will not come because of some appointed time. Revival comes because someone has had the guts to lay hold of God and not let go. Go through the history of revival and you will see that every time revival took place it was preceded by men and women who laid hold of God and refused to let go.

Prayer must first change the heart of man. The heart of each man must first be willing to be changed. When the heart of man is transformed he is able to discern the heart of God. That change though must be initiated by man for God to work. In other words it must be the decision of man to go to God for change to begin. Man must with all his ability show to God that he desires this transformation. This is the stepping stone to all that God has for Him. Prayer is not meant to

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enlighten God. God knows all things. God is omniscient. Prayer, true praying is not asking of God to do what we want, although we may think so. Prayer my friend, in actual fact, was never meant to change the heart of God but to change ours.

Prayer is not putting God on the spot. It was never meant to put God on trial. He never is and never will be. The purpose of prayer is never to test God either. Even by the answers we receive we must be careful not to draw our own assumptions. The conclusion if any must still remain with God. Our provisions from God must be a testimony of Gods' faithfulness yet we must be extra careful that we testify in truth. Also our provisions from God must never be used as a yard stick to determine who we are. The supplies from God is not something held back from the unrighteous, just look around you for proof. We would be threading on dangerous ground if we used this as our yardstick. The answers to our prayers for provision must never be used as a measure of who God is nor who he is not. If this is our understanding it is shallow and superficial. For the answer given to one may not be the same for another. What God may allow for the one He

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may not allow for the other! This does not mean that God is inconsistent or contradicts what He has said. All His dealings with us though remain as He is. Each individual is unique and special in the eyes of God and He shall deal with each one as it pleases Him. The relationship you have with God is a unique one that demands a great deal of intimacy with Him.

God will not fill the heart of man with that which is Heavenly if he (man) has not first had a change of heart. Prayer helps towards this change of heart. It is through prayer that God removes our selfish 'wants' and places His desires into our hearts. There must be a change of heart in the believer for God's will to be done here on earth. For God to have His way with our hearts there must first be change or the decision to change. To ask of God, to seek of Him, to knock on the door of Heaven is only worth your while if you are willing to have this change of heart.

Now we know that the human heart can be the most deceitful thing. Jer.17.9. 'The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?' Yet in verse 10 of that same chapter we see that the Lord is still willing and able to change the heart. 'I the Lord search the

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heart and examine the mind to reward a man according to His conduct.....’ But this dependability on God reveals your heart and gives God the opportunity to change it. We need to bring this sacrifice of repentance to God.

Prayer is the key to developing this intimate relationship with God. Prayer is meant to be the means used to change our hearts. All that God desires for us is His best and He will not have that we settle for anything to the contrary.

That’s what prayer does. It takes away the often selfish desires of our hearts and replaces it with His. More so prayer helps remove our wrong desires. There are many times when we assume that we are asking God for the best yet in actual fact we are not. The Psalmist understood this well. Let’s read Psalm 27.4 ‘one thing have I 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 enquire in His temple.’ Now I like that word enquire for it is to seek after and find out. It brings forth an understanding that we once never had. Prayer is the key to developing this intimate

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relationship with God. Our enquiring reveals the heart of God for us.

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### **Delight in the Lord**

I am often asked 'why should we pray?', after all God knows all things. Him being the all omniscient God, surely He knows my needs. To speak thus actually reveals our misunderstanding of who God really is and that of His true nature and character. God does know all things. He knows your needs and your desires. But do you know His desires and His heart. To put God first is to know the very heart of God. The desires that you now have are never as important as the desires and plans that God has. To pray is come to God and surrender your plans and your desires for His.

Going to God has never been about the blessing of one's own desires unless those desires have been put there by the Lord in the first place. The key is to receive from Him that which He so desires. Has this not so stalled the consistency of many a prayer life. The desire to please God springs from the salvation of the spirit. Our souls are often in opposition to the work of the Holy Spirit.

Psalms 37:4-5 'Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.' Vs. 5 says

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‘Commit your way to the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.’

That word heart has to do with you as the inner person, your inner thoughts and deepest feelings. It is also about your inner yearnings.

Prayer is responsible for causing this softness. Prayer my friend, is responsible for the formation of this pliability in Gods’ hands. When we go to God in prayer we allow for our hearts to be flexible as opposed to being rigid. Our praying allows for God to remove what we want and replace them with what He desires. To speak of this desire of God and compare it to anything is foolish unless you have truly gone to God and experienced it for yourself.

That word ‘it’ in verse 5 of Psalm 37 is the desires that He has now placed in our hearts that we then pray back to Him. To ‘Commit’ according to this scripture is to surrender or to turn over the responsibility of deciding on to Him. The original Hebrew meaning of the word delight is to be ‘soft and pliable’ in the hands of God. It is then that God brings to pass those new God given desires that we allowed Him to place in our hearts. Any wonder why we are never the same after going

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to God. I hope that you will understand this very important principle of Prayer.

‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.

‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.’ Isaiah 55.8-9

To know the desires of God for you is important. We know the desires of a Godly heart when we go to God.

The Israelites had rejected God. The bible does not specifically give us all the reasons but we know that they had drawn away from Him. Before they were to experience the outpouring of God’s power in their lives something had to happen – the altar had to be repaired. When our desires and plans are not in the will of God for our lives then we have effectively torn down the altar of the Lord. Elijah had to repair and offer a sacrifice on the altar. The sacrifice that God wants today is that of a genuine heart. David knew this well and begged God to create in him a clean heart. ‘Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.’ Psalm 51.10

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There must be the sacrifice of repentance.

Without it we can go nowhere for God or with God.

Remember that you are unique in the eyes of the Lord. Gods' purpose for you is therefore special, of which He holds the key.

For Heaven to release, we must first desire as God desires. This desire is the work of the Lord. It is placed there by God.

When this yearning has been placed there in the heart of man it is then the duty of man to bring it back to God. It is still the duty of the believer to show that he is in agreement with God for that which God has placed in him. We express this in our praying and worship before God.

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### **To Carry with God**

Prayer allows for man to hear God's voice. Prayer is God enabling the believer to hear from Him. Prayer is meant for one to listen to God and that should be an honour. If you are called to pray, you are called to listen. When we go to God we go to die, to die to self. Self has no place in the kingdom of God. Many of our prayers are never answered because of the great measure of self in them. We are commanded by God to love Him with all our heart. Deuteronomy 6.5-6 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.'

God desires the glory and for man to listen and then do brings glory to God. This is the purpose of man. If all glory belongs to God, then there must a great deal of listening and seeking after God. Prayer does so, for it gives man the opportunity to glorify the Lord. Prayer puts perfectly in place what God desires. The life of Jesus was a life of prayer. Even now He intercedes before the Father on our behalf.

## Repair the Altar

The burden of the Lord is His church and through prayer that burden is released. God wants us to have the same burden he has for the church.

When the burden of the Lord is what we are carrying then we have legal ground to bring it to the Lord for it is His. The burden of the Lord is unselfish. Psalm 51- 17 'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.'

The more prayer the more release. The burden of Heaven is one of a Father for His children. We must be able to empathize with God for His church.

It must be the same as Jesus had on earth to please the Father. If we are called to follow Christ then our desire to please the Father must be the same. We must at all times be found attaining to this. It is now about a bridegroom bringing into the presence of the Father His best. The opportunity to grow and be what the Father desires and to dwell in His house forever is still open to many of us. Prayer is the means that allows man this privilege into the heart of the Father. If prayer is a privilege, then it is an opportunity given to man for breakthrough in the midst of all that has surrounded him as a

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believer. The choice to come before God and hear His heartbeat is given to the believer. No man outside the body of Christ can lay claim to this honour.

‘My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.’ Hosea 4.6 The greatest understanding that the believer must have is that which pertains to life, life that God has called to him live here on earth. Prayer opens the door for the breakthrough of this knowledge. The will of God is knowledge for man. The world and its desires is not the knowledge that God desires for His people. King David said ‘..... I do not concern myself with great matters or things to wonderful for me. But I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother like a weaned child is my soul within me.’ Psalm 131.1-2 What David was in fact saying was that ‘the knowledge of the Lord is sufficient for me pertaining to all of life’ If Prayer is the means by which God reveals His plans to us then the lack of Prayer will see a great lack of Godly planning. This desire to know God and His plans for us must not allow anything to get in the way. It shall come through much humility because that is what prayer demands. The life of praying humbles us. Our affairs within

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community or whatever the matter there maybe, must be put aside to seek God first. The work of the church in community must never be the excuse that we do not have to pray. For a great part in our walk with God we have unknowingly substituted 'works' to be the excuse for us not really giving ourselves to Prayer. Be careful there are many in the body busy with 'works' and really have no time for God. The emptiness that they feel is reason enough they feel this way. The more they do the more they feel they are going nowhere. The leader who does not pray cannot be effective for God. It saddens me how open and candid we are about not spending time with God. It is spoken of with so little regret. If there is any regret then there must be a great deal of conviction to make right. May God help us, in this great task ahead. Every word that I speak, every place I go must be God inspired. It calls for a close walk with God especially if you are a leader.

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### **When believers Pray**

It is the will of God that believers be partakers with Him in salvation for mankind. God has limited Himself to the holy, believing, persevering prayers of His people. There are many things that will not be accomplished in God's kingdom without the intercessory prayers of believers. God desires to send forth workers into the gospel harvest; Christ teaches us that this will only be accomplished through the prayers of His people: 'Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers into his harvest' KJV (Matthew 9:38). In other words, God's power to accomplish many of His purposes is released only through the earnest and effective prayers of His people.

This enables for the progress of God's kingdom here on earth. When we fail to pray, we hinder the accomplishment of God's redemptive purpose, both for ourselves as individuals and for the church as a body. The corporate church that Christ intended suffers the most.

When the body faints in praying the more earth is bound to cave in and give in to the world and its desires.

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Many things have heaped up in Heaven based on this simple truth of people not praying. Heaven is not selfish to release what it has for earth.

Remember that what God has for earth is already determined, planned and ready to be released from Heaven. 'Your will be done on earth as it is (already) done in Heaven' Matthew 6.10

Prayer is the key to attaining the resources that are available to us in Christ, yet more importantly prayer, true prayer reveals to God by the virtue of choice given to us, that we are dependable on Him.

I remind you once again that Prayer is the means that transfers that which is spiritual to the physical and God has given the Holy Spirit to help us do so. If we are found lacking or sluggish in our praying we will see and experience far less of what God has determined for earth. Will you be willing to come away from the madding crowd, away from the glitz and glamour that has so caught the church and find your purpose through Prayer? In so doing thou shall find your purpose amongst the children of God? It is the duty of the believer to prepare oneself to pray. No matter how cast down or confused we may be, we must

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still hope in God. The prayer of a Godly heart reaches the God of Heaven. '.....here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandment, for this is the whole (duty) of man.' Ecclesiastes 12.13 The life of Prayer is one that requires much faith. With faith comes much work. In all of this the believer must understand that prayer has God's designed written all over it. With all things of God prayer must be seen as God sees it. For too long we have assumed things in the spirit and shown much stubbornness to things relating to the spiritual realm. The reason is simple for we have refused to see things the way God would have us see it. The life of prayer cannot continue consistently without us knowing, what prayer is. Although prayer may begin with faith there must be an understanding of this calling from God. Our understanding of prayer as God sees it will only grow by our obedience. And so we have the prayer by faith. Knowing what is prayer. The decision to pray and the consistency of it make prayer the most important decision for the church. It is important that we do not leave praying to be something that we expect to come to us like some fallen thing from heaven. The believer must learn and follow the essentials to

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this great task. It must be that which we are willing to give our heart and soul too. If prayer is hearing from God, then why should this not be the greatest of all tasks? Just as breathing is to continuous living so must prayer be to the life of each believer. When prayer is understood well, it will then be understood of the enemy's' age old plan to destroy effective praying. When we pray we are then able to see more clearly. That which comes first to the believer is the advantage the believer has in coming to God. Yet herein is the other side, he the believer comes to know the force against prayer.

That which sustains the believer in the midst of much attack is to know and follow the essentials to effective praying. Like medication that must be followed properly, like some holy custom that must be adhered, the believer must also hold on to and know of the essentials to prayer. The believer ought to know there is no way he can walk this earth with spiritual negligence. You cannot pursue the physical or the emotional if your spiritual house is not in order especially the things of God. The same goes for our recovery from anything in the physical and emotional. Prayer is that which has been initiated by God.

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The origin of prayer lies with God. It is God that has intended and so desired that His people come to Him in prayer. The call to Pray has gone out a long time ago. If man were to initiate prayer it would be long in coming and would never have the right motive in place. 'Come unto me and I will give you rest.' It is the duty of the believer to now take that initiative.

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## The Decision to Pray

There exists in each one of us the desire to pray. Yet we never seem to rise above desire when it comes to praying. Meet any sincere Christian who has a heart for God, when you carefully examine his thoughts you will find prayer to be the most difficult task. So why is this so even though at times we do overcome desire and make the decision to pray? There should be growing concern amongst believers with regards our attitude towards prayer.

The more God reveals himself to the church the more we see God's desire for the holiness and sanctity of the believer. How does one live a life of holiness before God? As we grow in the Lord it is imperative that the believer must see the importance of the preciseness of God's desire. To not give God the quality time He so desires, is to rob God of a very essential aspect regarding the Christ life. The effective church is the one that Prays. The church must hear from God to become effective for Him on earth. Yet the power of the praying church never starts at a corporate level. The strength of the praying church here on

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earth will be determined by the strength of the individual's prayer life. It is God's mandate that all be effective in this great task. Pray that God help us in this great endeavour. I hope and pray that this book will help you to rise to a greater level of intimacy with the Lord. Most of all may we as believers see the great lack that does exist when it comes to quality time spent with the Lord

The sacrifice of our self before God is important to the repairing of the altar. Romans 12.1 says ' I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.'

After repentance we still need to offer ourselves as pleasing sacrifices to God. We must be willing to die for the Lord. We must be willing to go where God sends us, to do what God wants and to walk away from situation and circumstances as God desires. Our entire lives are now in the hands of the living God. We become pliable in His. Just like the animals at the sacrifice they were to be consumed by the fire of God. Our

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time, our talents, our gifts, all is meant to be given back to God to be consumed by Him

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### **How do we make that firm decision to Pray?**

We must be careful of not giving prayer second place in our lives. The apostles were very aware of this. In the book of Acts the 6th chapter the prayer life of the apostles were being effected or were about to be. The wisdom of the twelve was a decision that was in the will of God. They decided to gather all the disciples together and transfer duties so that more time could be spent in prayer. ‘... And we will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.’ Acts 6.4 Here is a great lesson to be learnt especially for leaders. We must learn to delegate to others for the sole purpose of spending more time with God. In our present day and age there is no doubt that our lifestyles have hindered our prayer lives. The result is that we have not given God the place He so desires in our lives. Our lifestyles are the main reason many of us have come to give God second place in our lives. Even our works for the church can be the greatest hindrance to prayer. For many of us we have failed to see this because of our belief that all works within the church is surely ‘Godly.’ This is wrong. We

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assume that we are always a great help to God when we are busy with works regarding the church. The more we do the more we think we are in the will of God. There are many in leadership today that have no time for God. We have become so busy with church activity that we have actually neglected the Lord. The sad part of all of this is our ignorance of this wrong. Be careful for God shall call you to account. The ministry and all its work must be sacrificed for the love of Christ. We must show To God that we desire to be drawn away

Do not allow doctrine to be your sole thing but let the Holy Spirit do His work. The Spirit will always have the word to confirm the work. Satan is stealing God's time. We must not be co-workers with him in this regard or any other matter. Making time for God will help you understand the relationship that must exist between God and His children.

Reverently prepare yourself to enter into the presence of God. Listen to God to help you make those adjustments in your life. Let your heart be sincere before God. You may think it impossible but I ask of you to first go to God about this. Having done this you must be willing to listen to

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Him. God will confirm to you the adjustments that must be made in your life. Be prepared to be used by God in and through prayer.

1 John 3.22 'whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him because we keep His commandments.....' the more you love the more you're able to pray. For years I thought that my prayer life is what got me to obedience. That is not entirely true; my obedience to Gods' word helps bring my prayer life in line. If we set a high value to prayer we will then be found 'praying without ceasing.' That is obedience.

It must be settled in our hearts that we desire the will of God more than anything else. No matter what earth has to offer our hearts must be fixed on Heaven

This begins the process for God to help us through His Spirit. The Spirit reveals God and confirms His word when we pray. The word is revealed and more is opened and so it is that we are helped to pray according to the word of God. We must believe that Heaven is all encompassing. The kingdom of God has all that we need. We will not borrow from the world to fulfil Gods' purpose here on earth. We must believe that Prayer is the means to this estate.

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We must make a firm decision that we will not be sluggish to attain to God's perfect will for our lives.

We will ride on the peace that God gives to us to get there.

Our time with God must be preceded by sentry praying. In times of old the sentry soldier never went to war with those who did, yet his share from the plunder was exactly the same when the soldiers returned. The sentry soldier was the one who saw to it that that soldiers left with their proper armour and at the same time looked after the soldiers personal belongings after they had gone to war.

God has created the time to Pray. God has not slipped up in the time He has already given to all believers. When we say 'we do not have time,' then surely the problem must be with us the believers.

It is important that we pray in the morning and not leave all our praying for the evening. Jesus went away early in the morning to pray. Mark 1.35 The psalmist arose before dawn to cry for help.

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Psalm119.147 The manna melted away when the sun grew hot. Exodus 16.21

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## How are believers led to Pray?

God takes the initiative to cause us to want to pray. We do not naturally desire to seek God. In accepting Christ as Saviour we accept the will for God in our lives. This imparts in us the Spirit to work that Will into our lives. Therefore the will to pray must surely be in all believers. The difference lies in the believers' willingness to go to God. God chose us. The truth that we have the Holy Spirit dwell in us would therefore have man take credit for nothing. All that pertains to God would be the initiative of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit always prompts man to Pray. Man must act on that prompting of the Holy Spirit. If we fail to act on these promptings it will eventually go away. The Spirit of the Lord shall not strive with man forever. The decision to pray though, that first step will always lie with us. We must show to God that we desire to be drawn away. Prayer is that which has been initiated by God. The origin of prayer lies with God. It is God who has intended and so desired that His people come to Him in prayer. The call to Pray has gone out a long time ago. If man were to initiate prayer it

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would be long in coming and would never have the right motive in place. 'Come unto me and I will give you rest.' It is the duty of the believer to now take that initiative.

God walked with Adam in the cool of the day. There was a relationship of great intimacy that existed. It was all part of Gods' plan. When sin came upon the land it was God who came looking for Adam. '...Where are you? 'Genesis 3.8 God was not asking for information but was making sure that Adam knew what had come of his relationship with Him.

Many there are who are waiting to be 'led to Pray'. That hour or day has never come for most simply because God leads when one first takes the initiative to Pray. The promptings of the Spirit is always there. One must make that decision to Pray. It is then that God steps in.

This word 'led' comes from the word lead – it is for one to show the way, it is to guide and direct in the manner we are going. The word initiate though means to begin. God has already begun this process of Prayer. God offers Prayer to us. We are called to take up this offer. It is our duty to 'continue instant in prayer'. Romans 12.12

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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 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 burdens 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 neighbour, a nation and His church. It starts with little. The more faithful we are with little the

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more shall be entrusted upon us. The key is show to 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? Do you know? This is what pleases 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. For many of us we have failed to recognize and be sensitive to this gentle act of persuasion by the Holy Spirit. The result has been a neglecting in our communication with the Father and what He is saying now. The writer of the book of Romans understood this well and was very much aware of how we can become insensitive to the call to Pray. The activity of daily living is one of the main culprits. In fact we are more hard pressed to perform other duties that steers us away from praying. It is absolutely important that we are not more into activity and in so doing place more emphasis on the activities. Over the years various activities in

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the body have been just cover ups initiated by the enemy to stop the people of God from praying. The enemy knows fully well that if the believer were to be more active in praying, by arming himself in prayer, and moving ahead together, more harm would be done in strategic areas of his (enemy) kingdom than years before. No matter what the day holds for us unless we are going to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in this regard nothing will change. Our response to us being 'led' to pray must be taken seriously if not we will not be used of God. Our disobedience to pray reveals to God that we cannot be burdened with that which grieves Him. The person who is led is the person who can be trusted by God. Many will be tested in this matter as believers. To 'Continue instant in Prayer' Romans 12.12 this means we are to be steadfast and unwavering. We must have a determined purpose to Pray. We must have our heart and mind set on the will of God. This is an encouragement to God's people to respond immediately to the call to Pray and not leave it for later. For 'later' never comes nor does the anointing that was initially present when you

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were being nudged and gently persuaded to hear what God was saying then.

Whatever God has for man it will be His best. The decision not to pray is one that man has to suffer alone. There is no backup if man does not pray. The prophet Samuel knew this well. 'Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to Pray for you; .....'  
1Samuel 12.23 God speaks to us in prayer. When God meant prayer to be, He had in mind that we will be obedient to this simple request 'thou shall pray.' You see prayer is first a request from God. If you start with man you will be wrong. Prayer does not suddenly awaken God. The Lord slumbers not and is forever watchful for the prayers of His children.

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## The practical application to praying

1. Spend time with God preferably in the early hours of the morning. Meet with God first before you meet with the world. Let that time be the most important. It must be for the day ahead. Bring before God your fears and aspirations and hear His heart.
2. Go to bed early in order to arise early – sacrifice time for the Lord. Deuteronomy 6.5 ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.
3. Before going to bed, pray over the prayer time for the morning ahead. This can be a very simple and short prayer asking God to help you arise to pray and for Him to help you during your actual time of prayer. (Sentry prayers)
4. Set a fixed time to arise early. Some of you may not need an alarm clock. Those who need an alarm clock must set it for a specific time.

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5. When your alarm goes off in the morning – Refuse to bargain for more time. This might find you not praying at all or even getting late for work.

6. Do not enter your closet still sleepy. You may find yourself asleep after the first five minutes. Freshen up and be awake before you meet with God. Remember this is your most important appointment of the day.

7. Let this be a sacrifice unto the Lord. I know this may sound harsh but if you can sacrifice the coffee or the breakfast for later, this will help you to pray continuously without any interference. Many times simple chores or needs can offset your praying times

8. Remember that this is not a bible study. This is time to meet with the Lord on a one on one basis. Read the bible before prayer, you may receive a word through your daily reading that will help you during your praying.

9. Many of you may be wondering what to do after reading scripture. This is not a rule but I

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have found through the years that speaking in tongues for at least ten to fifteen minutes or even longer help me to pray more effectively. Praying in tongues opens the door for the Spirit to teach and enables us to pray. I have found through the years that there is a greater flow in my praying as result of this. This may give you an idea of the importance of tongues. I have written a book on this subject it will do you good to read it. 'I desire you all pray in tongues'

10. Remember God speaks to us in prayer. It would be wise to have a note book handy so you can jot down that which you sense God is revealing. For most as you continue you will sense God leading you to pray for others and not just yourself. This is a breakthrough in your prayer life. Do not hold back but pray for those you sense God leading you to pray for. As names and faces appear - Pray

11. The Lord's Prayer is also excellent for believers. It teaches us the manner in which we should pray and must never be misunderstood as a recitation. Do not just recite the prayer but ask God for wisdom as He opens the prayer to you. It

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will enable you to cover all aspects of praying. As you continue God will lead you to pray more effectively. Remember God desires to see your heart regarding this matter. Read 'On My Knees' – Mervyn Naidoo.

12. Praise is an essential part of praying. Do not neglect to give thanks to God for your life and that which He has blessed you with. Thank Him for your marriage, your children, your job, that vision and even the ministry. Ask God to show you that which you must still be thankful for. There are many things in our lives that go unnoticed for which God receives no thanks and no glory. Thank and Praise Him for that which you are still hoping for. This helps build your faith whilst you wait on Him to fulfil that request. Remember that we are talking about time that will draw you closer to God. If there is anything that the enemy hates most this is it. The enemy will try his best to distract you from this duty. Even when you refuse to give in, be careful of compromising with the enemy. Do not give in for you shall be greatly rewarded. Reverently prepare yourself to enter into the presence of God. Listen to God to help you make

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those adjustments in your life. Let your heart be sincere before Him. You may think 'it is impossible' yet I ask you to first go to God. Then be willing to listen to Him. God will confirm to you the adjustments that must be made in your life. Be prepared to be used by God through prayer.

When you pray the world around you notices. It is meant that our light must shine forth. All that we say and do shall have a bearing effect on the world around us. Our decision to pray will eventually show. There is a light in each believer that is the determining factor. The more time with God the brighter shall that light be. Prayer, deep intimacy with God determines this. God will help us in this great task ahead.

### **What are we to do when we neglect to Pray**

If we are reluctant to pray, we shall be found slack in all other matters pertaining to the kingdom of God. The decision to pray sets the stage for the church rising up against this plan. Even though we are in Christ and all that is promised is true we must still pray. If thou shall not pray it would be foolish. The prophet Elijah went to pray whilst the king went to party. The promise of rain was given yet it took prayer to see it through. Read 1kings 18.

Yet we must not allow the enemy to come down on us when we have slipped in our duty to pray. This is no easy task. To pray without ceasing is one of the most difficult tasks in our walk with God. Through Prayer comes fresh revelation of God's plan for each one of us. This is the last thing that the enemy wants you to know. When your spiritual eyes are opened 'thou' shall see God's love for all men. And we are all called to be a part of this.

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When 'thou' has failed, when 'thou' has overslept, when 'thou' has made the decision to pray yet failed to follow through with it go back to God and ask Him to forgive you. Present your case to Him and surrender yourself to Him. It shall be a good thing for 'thou' shall hear His voice 'my door still remains opened unto thee' It shall be a confirmation as it was from the great prophets of old who prophesied 'If my people who are called by name, will humble themselves, repent, seek my face and turn from their wicked ways then shall I hear from Heaven and will forgive their sins and heal their land'. 2

Chronicles 7.14

Be careful of any condemnation- blame and criticism. Where there is a sudden lacking in this great duty remember God still loves you and is still waiting for you to come into His presence. You are not a loser and will still receive God's pardoning grace. Prayer is about overcoming. We must know the conviction that comes from the Holy Spirit. It shall come forth with confidence and assurance that there is still hope in the matter.

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Speak to God about the matter of prayer regularly. The ability to pray without ceasing is not one carries alone. The decision to pray is one of consecration. It is a decision to sanctify oneself. To sanctify is to make holy. It is sacred. It is to purify oneself before God. Holiness is consecration. The decision to pray is to hear from God. What comes from God is Holy. We do not deal with the things of God in any unholy way. There are many in the body of Christ who are battling to break through with the word they know is from the Lord. Why is this so? You have a generation of young and old before you. The truth of God is meant to be seen. When men are separated unto holiness, when they are consecrated unto God, it is not difficult for any generation to see God. With the generation of young people seeking much help, this is the key. When they are able to see the light of holiness through a consecrated life they shall be touched. To attempt any other method is ungodly. The believer who has separated himself from the world will tell you that you cannot apply any world system in the body of Christ. Let us not be a people who will try anything to just to save the lost. In so doing we may find ourselves

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compromising the standards of the kingdom. Hear from God, He has an age old plan that works. We must understand that we are ALL called to pray and it is the Lord who will send out the labourer. 'Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into His harvest' Matt.9.38 KJV. (NIV – 'Ask the Lord of the harvest therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.')

The business of the church is to Pray. The duty of the Lord is to send.

Prayer will involve sacrifice and perhaps that is what you must know. You must be willing to sacrifice all. To those who have walked this long journey with God the greatest example that you can be to young believers is the sacrifice you make in serving the Lord. Abandon all to spend time with the Lord.

Our sermons today must be filled with a preceded life of prayer. Let your sermons and the words of your mouth come from you first having ventured with God. It is so that those who have ventured with God in prayer have turned more to Him than those with all their good 'works' put together. To those who preach and teach Gods' word you must understand the importance of a life filled in prayer. Your time

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with God has a great bearing on the word you bring to His people. To all may the closet never be a foreign or a lonely place. Sacrifice the pulpit, friends and family if need be until you have truly given God first place in your life. We shall bring many a lost sheep to the pen if we would first labour with God in the closet. Each time you meet with His sheep let it be that you speak openly that which thou has heard from Him your maker. When it is fresh it shall feed his people. When it comes through labour and much sacrifice the effects shall be for all to see. You will stand back and marvel at the work of the Lord as you distribute this fresh manna.

To those faithful servants of the Lord those men and women who are labouring with God for His people day and night, your reward shall not go astray. As the eyes of the Lord move to and fro your strivings shall be seen. Continue on this part and not long now it shall be echoed in the corridors of Heaven for all to hear 'well done my faithful servant.'

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## 4. THE ESSENCE OF PRAYER.

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The decision to pray is an important one. In fact to decide on the matter of praying will see many pray. For a large part many of us do not pray simply because we have not come to the conclusion that we will pray. This decision is one of the most important that the believer will make. Having made a decision to pray sets the course for us to pray. Decision is what sets all things in motion. Solomon may have been synonymous as the one who built the temple yet his father David was the one who had in his heart to do so. It started with the desire in David's heart even though God had Solomon build it. God blessed David and the initial provision came from him. The house to be built for the Lord should be of great magnificence... Therefore I will make preparations for it.' 1Chronicles 22.5 David had ordered the work to begin on temple. '...Now begin the work, and the Lord be with you.' 1Chronicles 22.16

Decision gets things going. For the believer however there is an element of trust that goes with decision. It is when we make a decision like this that God then aids us along the path mapped

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out by Him. It is also a confirmation from the Lord for two things:

1 We will be guided by His Spirit John 16. 13 'But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth'.

2 Having made a decision we has believers have an advantage for we through faith are rewarded with confidence that we will make it through.

Genesis 22.5 Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."

We must make that firm decision that we will pray. Prayer is a continuation of what we have after we leave earth. If we are able to communicate well with God here we will certainly be able to further that which was started here on earth. Our communication with God never comes to an end. Earth is a good place to start. Firstly all believers are called to Pray. Secondly the believer has little or no relationship with God if he does not pray. Many are there who are waiting to be 'led to Pray'. That hour or day never comes for most, simply because God leads when one first takes the initiative to Pray. The promptings of the Spirit is always there. One

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must make that decision to Pray. It is then that God steps in to lead us.

The word 'lead' is for one to show the way, it is to guide and direct in the manner we are going. The word initiate though means to begin. God has already begun this process of prayer. God offers prayer to us. We are called to take up this offer. It is our duty to 'continue instant in prayer'.

Romans 12.12

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 the believer. Many are waiting for a directive from God to start praying yet neither the day nor that hour presents itself. We must understand that 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 burdens 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

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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 neighbour, a nation or His church. It starts with a little. The more faithful we are with little the more will be entrusted upon us. The key is show to 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. For many of us we have failed to recognize. And be sensitive to this gentle act of persuasion by the Holy Spirit. The result has been a neglecting in our communication with the Father and what He is saying to us now.

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The writer of the book of Romans understood this well and was very much aware of how we can become insensitive to the call to Pray. The activity of daily living is one of the main culprits. In fact we are more hard pressed to perform other duties that steers us away from praying. It is absolutely important that we are not more into activity and in so doing place more emphasis on the activities. Over the years various activities in the body have been just cover ups initiated by the enemy to stop the people of God from praying. The enemy knows fully well that if the believer were to be more active in praying, by arming himself in prayer, and moving ahead together, more harm would be done in strategic areas of his (enemy) kingdom than years before. No matter what the day holds for us unless we are going to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in this regard nothing will change. Our response to us being 'led' to pray must be taken seriously if not we will not be used of God. Our disobedience to pray reveals to God that we cannot be burdened with that which grieves Him. The person who is led is the person who can be trusted by God. Many will be tested in this matter as believers.

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To 'Continue instant in Prayer' Romans 12.12 This means we are to be steadfast and unwavering. We must have a determined purpose to Pray. We must have our heart and mind set on the will of God. This is an encouragement to God's people to respond immediately to the call to Pray and not leave it for later. For 'later' never comes nor does the anointing that was initially present when you were being nudged and gently persuaded to hear what God was saying then.

The bible says that the 'Kingdom of Heaven is taken by force' this is so because the heart of man is stubborn and self-pleasing. Man must make that firm decision that he desires what God has and not what the world has to offer. The only way that the heart of man can be drawn away from the things of the flesh is for the heart to be settled that it desires what is Heavenly. In other words the heart of man must be fixed on Heaven. Man must vow he will settle for nothing less. It must be resolved that no matter what earth has to offer and how attractive it may be or sound – Heaven will still be the choice that man will make. John 7.63 – 64 'It is the spirit who gives life, the flesh profits nothing.....But there are

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some of you who do not believe...’ That firm decision that I speak of will mean you will have to stand in faith without wavering. When we go to God in prayer, we are helped not only in us receiving what we ask for but we are also helped to stand whilst our table is being prepared. Prayer is therefore all encompassing. By this I mean that prayer helps us to wait on God, prayer helps us to fight the good fight and it helps us not to be sluggish. It also helps us to gain peace even before we receive what is ours in Christ. Prayer goes even further by helping us to use what has been given. For God to release that which is in Heaven, He must first see that the heart is willing to have what Heaven has to offer. If God had to force on man that which is in Heaven, it would violate a principle of God which is the ability given to man to choose. As children of God we are never forced but may be gently persuaded to do what God desires of us. This gentle nudging comes through the leading of the Holy Spirit. The more we are found praying the more we become sensitive to the leading of His Holy Spirit. Hopefully you will be led by the Spirit to know more of Him and His plans for your life here on earth today. The more time we spend in Gods’

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presence the more familiar we are with His voice and His leading. This time with God is a time of prayer.

There are significant essentials that any believer must know when it comes to the life of prayer. They are the essentials needed to keep one focussed. There are many prayers by many people that are really not the fragrance intended for Gods' presence.

The prayer of a Godly heart reaches the God of Heaven.

The desire to know God is the first step on the road of one acquainting oneself to Him.

To know the desires of God for you is important. Remember that you are unique in the eyes of the Lord. Gods' purpose for you is therefore special, of which He holds the key. Psalm 139.16 - 17  
'.....all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.'  
How precious to me are your thoughts, O God, how vast is the sum of them.'

Three essentials are the order to the life of prayer. To have these essentials would do the believer well, for without them the life of prayer is non-existent followed by excuses not pray.

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### **The Quiet Time**

The heart that is quiet before God is most difficult to find and may be found only at the feet of Jesus. It is therefore not the first of the essentials found in prayer. To get there the mind must be made up to pray. The time of quietness will come because of the decision one has already made, that being the decision to spend time with God. The duty of the believer is to make up his mind that 'I will spend time with my maker.' Whatever God has for man it will be His best. The decision not to pray is one that man has to suffer alone. There is no backup if man does not pray. The prophet Samuel knew this well. 'Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to Pray for you; .....' 1Samuel 12.23 God speaks to us in prayer. When God designed prayer to be, He had in mind that will be obedient to this simple request 'thou shall pray.' You see prayer is first a request from God. If you start with man you will be wrong. Prayer does not suddenly awaken God. The Lord slumbers not and is forever watchful for the prayers of His children. God takes the initiative to cause us to want to pray. We do not naturally desire to seek God. In accepting Christ

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as saviour we accept the will for God in our lives. This imparts in us the Spirit to work that Will of God into our lives. Therefore the will to pray must surely be in all believers. The difference lies in the believers' willingness to go to God. God chose us. The truth is that we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. That is God's choice to allow the greatest person on earth to dwell in us. Man can take no credit for this. It is no great exploit of man but of God. All that pertains to God would therefore be the initiative of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit always prompts man to Pray. Man must act on the response of the Holy Spirit. If we fail to act on these 'promptings' it will eventually go away. The Spirit of the Lord shall not strive with man forever. The decision to pray, that first step, will always lie with us. We must show to God that we desire to be drawn away.

It is here that the believer would do well not to look for time, but to make time. For truth be told, in looking for time, there is rarely any time found to spend with God. The enemy has a mandate already in place to steal time from the believer. It is the duty of the believer to make time to spend with God. Many adjustments are to be made, for the hour of prayer will be more

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important than work and play. The life of Jesus on earth was a busy one yet he made time to spend with His Father.

Lets' read Mark 1.35 'Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.'

We know that even though Jesus demonstrated great power over the evil forces, He never neglected time to Pray.

Again the need for prayer was a need to hear from the Father - 'what next.' With His time well spent with the Father, He knew well, when and when not something had to be done. So it was that not 'just anytime' was the right time, but only as He was led by the Spirit of God.

The key is to set ones' heart to pray. The believer cannot pray too much for there will always be a need for more prayer. The decision to have a quiet time with God lies with the believer. Once that decision is made it starts the process of you and God regarding proper relationship.

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## The Quiet Place

Let's hear what Jesus had to say about a place of quietness regarding prayer – which is the prayer closet. Matt.6.5-6 'And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth; they have their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.' The closet is the last place most people find themselves in. We all need to have a closet. It is that place where we go to find God. It is not the place you go on a Sunday morning to fellowship. The closet is a personal place that you have made. Jesus' closet was not a physical room. I am glad for that for it keeps us from finding excuses that we do not have a place in our homes to pray. The closet can be any place in your home. Even the busiest place in the home can become your closet if you choose the time right. When others are asleep that place can become your closet. The closet must be that place 'away'. In other words it is that place that keeps you from any disturbance. We can therefore learn that the closet and prayer

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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? 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 you and God. The closet is a place that must have its' doors closed, so that one may hear what God has to say. That door does not have to be a physical door it could just be a spiritual door that says 'do not disturb'. Here

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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. You must refuse to let go. I suggest you read one of my favourite stories in the bible, of one mans' 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 shore, you will have to overcome the ocean greats. Let me warn you that it can become very personal in here.

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Any wonder why Gods' word speaks 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 closet may be a very messy place.....a place of wrestling, struggling and letting go and may at times give others the impression that all is well in there. This is the place where there is no room for pretence, no room for acting. What you see is what you get. The place of prayer is the last place of pretence. God help us. It is your place, the place you have come having wandered for so long. Many of us find it last. God has proposed it to be the first but through our stubbornness it becomes the last place. If we are wise enough to find the closet first we would save ourselves much pain and suffering over the years. You get here for most part because all other destinations have failed. It is the final place and you know it so. This is the place of holiness.

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## 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 be sincere.

Hebrew 10.19-22 ' Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the 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

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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 cannot 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. 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

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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 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

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Lords' Prayer. God must surely enjoy the position of a 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.'

When the heart of man has been impregnated with the will of God it is then helped by the Holy Spirit to bring Gods' kingdom wherever he may go. I pray that today your heart will be one that is adjustable, flexible and adaptable for Gods' use. The duty of prayer brings a man to this place. Prayer allows us to be more intimate with God, more intimate with the affairs of Heaven. The more we come to know about the secrets of Heaven the more we are able to implement those rules on earth through His Holy Spirit. So it is that we fulfil an important part of prayer – 'your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven'

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## 5 The Principles of Prayer

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Does the believer really believe that God answers prayers? Or is it that God does answer prayer but it never really works for me. Generally speaking many in the body of Christ will not 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 believe that there is a God who heals and what we hear and see in the lives of others is the truth and miracle working power of God but it just does not work for me. Based on this very fact I have discovered there are principles in God's word that govern prayer. If we do not abide by these principles we will encounter unanswered pray

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## **1. We must apply Faith in God**

We must expect what we ask for. This expectation is a demonstration of our faith. If our faith is pleasing to God then we must have a high expectation of that which we have asked for. But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Hebrews 11.6

The believer must believe in what he is praying for. He must believe in the promises of God for his life. Our understanding of God and his purpose in creation has to be correct. We must understand that God's creation is not random or by blind chance but by definite intelligent action. Secondly we must learn from those of the bible that theirs was not just random faith but that they had a personal relationship with Him and saw the provision of God in their lives. By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. Hebrew 11.6

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Rahab's faith for instance was based on her knowledge of God's impressive deeds in the life of the Israelites. Hebrew 11.31

One of the key reasons as to why many of our prayers are never answered is because we really do not believe prayer works for us. That is quiet a statement to make but it is true nevertheless. We believe prayer works but not for us. We have witnessed great miraculous healings on television we have heard of great things God is doing in other peoples' lives but for ourselves we tend to have a lack of faith. So there must be something wrong. The problem obviously is with us and not God. What is it that we are not doing right? If we believed that prayer works for us, I mean all of us then believe me our prayer gatherings would be overflowing. In fact our prayer meetings should then have more people than any other meetings. Having said that we must conclude that there is a problem that exists and we need to resolve it immediately. If we were seeing the miracle working power of God in our own lives then we would be praying more. It is that simple.

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## **2. We must ask according to God's Will.**

I remind you of Paul's prayer for the believers again which was as follows '.....and I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have the power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge- that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Ephesians 3.17-19

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### **3. When we pray we must be God minded.**

In other words our goal must be to know the Will of God for our lives. Otherwise we ask inaccurately. The apostle James says that we do not receive because we ask amiss, to spend on our pleasures. James 4.3

What is the Will of God for our lives?

It is that which God has already predestined for us. Anything that God has in store for us is the Will of God.

Now all of God's Will is perfect. But there is one that is predetermined by God yet is only accomplished through prayer.

The both are intertwined and both involve prayer. The Greek word for Will is Boulema and Thelema. In the original Greek Boulema means the eternal Will of God. In other words it will be done whether we like it or not. The return of Christ is one example; the other is the ingathering of the elect, Matt.24.30-31. The judgement of each person according to what he has done here on earth. Revelation 20.13 is another.

Thelema however is God's desire for us and is very much dependant on us praying- it involves the response of the believer. Does the believer

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wish for that which God has for him? Then he must pray into existence those wishes.

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### **4. Our Prayers must be void of any offence**

Our asking must be so God minded that it is completely void of any hypocrisy. Psalm 66.18 says if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.

Where there is no iniquity God attends to such a voice verse 19. We must make sure that we take no offence against any man or any offence against the Lord. For if our hearts condemns us, then God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. 1 John 3.20 - 22  
He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy Proverbs 28. 13

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## **5. We must have clean hands**

Part of prayer is the lifting up of holy hands before a Holy God. How holy is your hands. This is determined by the way you conduct yourself in conversation, business or any exchange between others. 1Timothy 2.8 says the following I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

We must at all times speak the truth. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double minded. James 4.8

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### **6. We must attempt to settle all disputes and animosity**

Matthew 5.23 – 24 Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

This applies to the body of Christ. And many today do not realise what a stumbling block this may be our prayers. Many in the body do not realise the strength of opposition from the enemy and how we play into his hands because of this. We need to learn to practice instant reconciliation and know that God forgives us as we forgive others. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Matthew 6.15 We must learn to adopt this spirit of forgiveness into our prayers daily. I learnt very early in my prayer life that I have to love out of choice and not circumstance. That means I have to follow what God's word says.

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## **7. We must walk in humility and approach God in humbleness**

One of the first requirements of repentant prayer is humility. When God withholds something, or commands a blockage or gives permission for the enemy in any area you better believe humility is needed.

2 Chronicles 7.13 -14 When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, 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.

Humility brings a greater revelation of God. Even God is pleased with this response. The bible tells us that in the days of King Josiah when the book of the Law was read to him, he tore his clothes in humility and enquired of the Lord. God saw the humility in him and responded. Because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants, that they would become a desolation and a curse, and

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you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also  
have heard you, says the Lord

2 Kings 22 .19

James 4.6 says ....'God resists the proud, but  
gives grace to the humble'

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## **8. Always Pray in the Name of Jesus**

When we pray we must do so in the Name of the Lord. John 14.13 – 14 '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.' We must know that praying in the Name of Christ means praying in accord with His revealed nature and purpose. This allows for our prayer to have the full backing of heaven.

We cannot pray without authority. When we pray in the name of Jesus we are coming in the authority that has been given to us. We have no legal ground without authority. We cannot take back or even stand against the enemy without authority.

We must learn to confess our sins in the name of Jesus. We must forgive in the name of Jesus. We must offer ourselves in the name of Jesus and we must lift our hands to God in the name of Jesus.

Coming to God in any other way is not prayer.

What God has promised shall be so only in the name of Jesus.

We must understand that all power and authority has been given to Jesus. Matthew 28.18 all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Religion often is not divided by manners

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or people but because of Jesus. The world and religions refuse to accept the authority that has been given to Christ.

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## 9 We must pray without ceasing

We must be zealous about what we are asking. So often we are least passionate about the prayer gatherings in the church. How can God give to us if we are not passionate about what He has for us? God wants to see the evidence of passion for heaven in our lives. It is passion that gets us to pray again and again. We need to ask God to help us develop this passion for what He has.

Paul prayed without ceasing and made this known to others so that they may be encouraged to do the same. Paul knew that people pretend to pray with passion and without ceasing and therefore mentions to us that God is his witness in this regard. 2Thessalonians 1.11 Therefore we also pray always for you.....

We pray once and never pray again. Jesus prayed thrice before His arrest. And He left them again, and prayed a third time, saying again the same words. Matthew 26.44

Paul did the same - concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. 2 Corinthians 12.8

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I have discussed this principle of praying again in more detail in an entire chapter that follows. One of the most neglected principles of prayer is the principle or habit of praying again. If we are able to catch onto this principle then many of our prayers will be answered. The problem however is the tendency for us to tire too soon after praying about a matter. Jesus, Elijah and the widow in Luke 18 are just some examples in the bible that help us understand how important it is to pray without ceasing even if it is for the same request. Remember that not hearing God speak must not bring us to our own conclusions on any matter.

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## **10. We must labour in our Prayers**

Galatians 4.19 My little children, for whom I labour in birth again until Christ is formed in you.

We need to pray until that thing gives birth or that thing is formed whether it is something tangible or simply character. There must be a travailing of the soul when it comes to true prayer. Intercession is like a woman in labour.

That is how the bible describes it. Isaiah 66.7

‘Who has heard such thing?

Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day?

Or shall a nation be born at once?

For as soon as Zion was in labour she gave birth to her children. Shall I bring to the time of birth and not cause delivery?’ says the Lord ‘Shall I who cause delivery shut up the womb?’ says our God.

Such prayers are often not meant to be in public, just as childbirth is not. There are severe pains preceding birth. They are intense and will cause much weeping.

These prayers are prayers that often recede revival for a nation, for a church or for those who have strayed from the Lord. We must be careful

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not to fear such travailing. It is such times that the heart of the Father is being revealed through His Spirit and words are inadequate. You must be pliable in the hands of the Spirit. Romans 8.25-26 But if we hope for what we do not see we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. 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 groaning which cannot be uttered.

It is important to note that we never really know how to pray as we ought therefore we need to learn to wait on God. When we labour with God in our prayers as opposed to presumption we see the real effects of Godly prayer and also what God desires to come forth.

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## **11. We must be specific in our prayers**

This is an important aspect of prayer. God's purpose for our lives is not random. It is not choose as you wish, but wish and choose as I have already prepared. We need to come into the Will of God. We need to know that all things work together for good to those who love God and are called to His purpose. Romans 8.28 The word purpose comes from the Greek word prothesis, pro as in before and thesis meaning a place, thus, a setting forth. It is a deliberate organised advanced plan or intention. Just like salvation of mankind was a deliberate plan of God. So too are God's plans for our daily lives. There will always be some uniqueness to the word given by God to us about our lives. Even in a specific situation that word is unique to us. It is this uniqueness that should cause us to be specific in our prayers. God is a God of specifics. When God wanted something done He was specific. Look at Noah and God's specifics in building the Ark, His instructions to Moses when building the tabernacle and so on. This was information already in the mind of God and all these men had to do was follow the instruction of the Holy Spirit. The same with us, God has a

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specific plan and we must be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit to pray this plan back to God. He has a specific heavenly plan for your marriage, for your children, for your role in the work place and in the kingdom overall manifestation. Have you enquired of the Lord about the specific plan He has for your spouse, daughter or son. What God reveals is what we must then pray back to Him for it to materialize here on earth.

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## **12. We must mean what we say in our prayers**

Lack of attention is the main reason as to why we do not mean what we say in our prayers. We babble and think we are praying. Most people do not even know that they are babbling. To put it bluntly babbling is talking nonsense. Babbling is not repetition but not being focussed on God when praying. Prayer has become a ritual in our homes, in our classrooms, in the church and even at the work place for many of us but with absolutely no meaning. Where there is no meaning there can be no hope. When we babble we are just speaking out without meaning. We speak to God without any serious intention. How often have we walked around during the prayer meetings talking to God but as soon as someone walks into the room every ones attention is focussed on that person? We leave our conversation with God and concentrate on people and things. This shows how serious we are in our prayers. Or while praying, you may receive a text message on your phone and you abandon your praying just to see what the message is all about. If we say we want more of God, we must then place ourselves in a position to receive more of God. Nothing must come in

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the way of our request. The devil is very good at manipulating our thoughts and actions before, during and after praying. We must be serious that we truly desire God's reign in every facet of our lives. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

Matthew 6.7. Again it is not that there should not be many words or repetition but that our words are not in vain. Our words must have meaning and it must be Godly and Holy. Finally on this matter, if our prayers are according to the Will of God then we must reveal to God that we are serious about what we have asked for.

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## 13. Making use of what we have

We must use the resources that God has given us now. Too often we do not see the means that God has already given at our disposal to secure the end. Many times our answers are stalled because we do not move on with what we have in our hands. There is always something or someone that God places before us that is the tool in the fulfilment of the vision. Like Moses we too complain or make excuses to the Lord But suppose..... So the Lord said to him, 'What is in your hand?' He said a rod.....Exodus 4.1- 2 God takes that which is at our disposal, such as a shepherd's rod and uses it in an extraordinary way. That same rod in Moses hand was used to perform various miracles by God's power. We must grow to see what God sees. Sometimes it is wisdom, knowledge, finances; most times it is none of this but just our time that we can use effectively for praying. Ask God to open your eyes to see what you do actually have at your disposal today. Ask Him to show you how to use it for His glory.

Today many churches are praying for revival, yet we when we go outside we are silent. How can

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we pray for revival yet not minister to others  
outside?

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## **14. Watching unto all Prayer**

Finally all men must be watchful unto all prayers. 'And what I say to you I say to all: Watch!' Mark 13.37.

Prayer brings forth revelation. What is revealed through prayer is alertness to what is coming. The end times will bring great revelation to God's people so that they may not be unaware of the enemy's schemes. Being watchful keeps us from spiritual exhaustion. Prayer, consistent prayer keeps us alert and from falling into temptation.

'Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Matthew 26.41

Prayer is what sustained Jesus through all His life here on earth. Jesus life of prayer must be a model for us today. Even now He is at the right hand of the Father interceding for us. We must learn to overcome and conquer through our praying. We must prevail over the enemy's schemes and tactics. God has given us a mandate to pray and He has given us the principles by which prayer works.

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## **6.TO PRAY WITHOUT CEASING**

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To understand why we all must pray we need to understand what is the purpose of prayer? As we have discussed in the first chapter we need to understand that prayer is the union of the thoughts of God with the believer. The purpose of prayer is to unite the thoughts of God with that of the believer. It is not the union of man's thoughts with God's. Most times the thoughts of man are not in line or alike to the thoughts of God. So prayer is the means that God has design to bring our thoughts in line with His. This may sound strange to people as our understanding of prayer has always been about asking and God giving. That thought is partially correct, for God does give to man but only on His terms. Our thoughts must come in line with His. Unless the desires of man are aligned with the thoughts of God there can be no union. The purpose of prayer is to align us with God and His plans for us. Hence for the plans of God to be effective in our lives means that our thoughts and ways must come in line with His. 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 God's will the more of His plans come into existence in the physical realm.

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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 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 His. 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 or dilemma that He may have had. God always had in mind the concept of prayer when He set out to create man.

‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.’ Isaiah 55.8-9

1Corinthians 2.10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the

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Spirit searches all things, yes the deep things of God.

We come to know the desires of God's heart when we go to God. Remember that we are unique in the eyes of the Lord. Gods' purpose for us is therefore special, of which He holds the key. For Heaven to release, we must first desire as God desires. In other words we must desire what heaven has for us, before God must release. This desire is the work of the Lord. It is placed there by God. It is God who tells us what he has already prepared for us.

The instruction from the Word of God is that all men must pray. 1Timothy 2.8 says the following I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting holy hands, without wrath and doubting. I think we need to rid ourselves of all the wrong thoughts out there. These thoughts have had their dominion in our lives for a long time. Tradition has a lot to answer for this. In fact tradition has placed many obstacles in the path of true prayers. There is a misconception out there that not all men must pray. Please understand that when I use the gender men I mean men and women. Therefore biblically

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speaking God has called all people to pray. The wrong perception in the church is that only a selective few are called to pray. This is wrong and must be rectified. God wants to reveal His purpose to you through the means of Prayer. Prayer is God's design for more revelation. The bible says in Romans 8.26 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 groaning which cannot be uttered.

When there is a supernatural act of God restraining the provision of God, the bible tells us that prayer is the answer. 2 Chronicles 7.13 -14  
When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, 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.

Paul knew that the only way for the eyes of the church to be opened was through prayer. '.....and I pray that you.....that you may be filled to the

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measure of all the fullness of God. Ephesians  
3.17-19

Prayer establishes and makes God's ways firm in our lives. The more we come into the presence of the Lord the more sensitive we are of God and His ways. The more time with God the more we come to know the leading of His Spirit. You cannot expect to be familiar with someone if you are not willing to spend time with that person. We tend to understand this from a human perspective yet when it comes to spiritual matters we expect more of God yet spend less time with Him. It does not work so.

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## The Principle of praying again

One of the most neglected principles of prayer is the principle of praying without ceasing. Paul admonished the church at Thessalonica to Pray without ceasing. 1Thessalonians 5.17

Why is it that we do not pray again and again?

Why is it that we do not pray without ceasing?

One of the keys that Satan uses against us is trouble. As long as there is enough trouble in our lives he knows he has got us. He knows as human beings we can only manage so much. The more burdens and trouble he brings the more sorrow there will be in our lives. Sorrow is what brings exhaustion. When we are tired there is very little that we can do and want to do. When Jesus was on earth, the disciples enjoyed that close communion with Him. They believed He was going to be with them forever. When news spread that He was the Messiah but was going back to the Father, they became sorrowful. They felt they were being abandoned; after all, they had left everything to follow Him. Luke 22.45 When He rose from prayer and went back to the disciples; he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow.

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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 the disciples closest to Him 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 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.

The bible tells us that when He returned to the disciples he found them sleeping, he admonished them for sleeping and not keeping watch with Him. He then went away a second time and prayed the same thing. He came back again, found them sleeping and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

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Each time Jesus went away He prayed the same thing.

We must get into the habit of praying once more. The idea being that we pray until the burden has been released. Most times because of our disobedience of not praying without ceasing we have broken the command of not quenching the Holy Spirit. We must be careful that we do not dampen the flame of the Spirit's fire which is poured out to purify. And we do this so often when we are close to a break through. We must learn to stay in the presence of the Lord for that anointing burst through. We must pray once and then pray again.

Paul did the same concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. 2 Corinthians 12.8

The number three is not limited to only three times but it may be many times until God gives us release. We must learn to pray until God gives us release. What this signifies is that before we stop praying we must make sure that God has heard us. This principle must be applicable in our personal and corporate prayers. The principal

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here is thorough praying. Such prayers will be painstaking, careful and meticulous. Such praying cannot be careless. We must be clear on God's Will for our lives.

When the prophet Elijah was running away from Jezebel, it was not out of fear. It could not be fear for this was a mighty man of God. Just a while ago he had called down fire from heaven, killed all the false prophets of the land in plain sight for everyone to see. So how could he be afraid of a message sent to him by this woman Jezebel? Elijah like the disciples became tired. His tiredness came from his sorrow, for he was witnessing the deterioration of the land and he could not take it anymore. He began to run for his life because of exhaustion. The bible tells us that he even prayed that God would take his life. 'I have had enough, Lord, Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.' 1Kings 19.4 Then he lied down under the tree and fell asleep. The bible tells us that the angel of the Lord had to get him up twice and provide a meal for him. He was strengthened by that food and travelled forty days and forty nights to the mountain of God. Having being strengthened he was able to pray again. He went into a cave and spent the night

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and the word of the Lord then came to him. We are told having being strengthened, he heard from God and he had to go back the way he came. You see, many of the times we too have to go back the route we came. Many of us have become exhausted and we have started to run and we need to be sustained once more by God. We need the energy and provision from God to pray again. We need to again wait on God. We need to go into a spiritual cave and listen to God. We read that Elijah heard the voice of the Lord in a whisper, not in the crashing of the rocks, not in a mighty wind or fire. Many of us today are at this place of sorrow and exhaustion. What we do and the choices we make are important. When we find ourselves at this place we need not run but wait on God.

It was to Elijah whom God spoke too about the coming of rain. Remember there had been a severe drought in the land for more than three years. Having heard from God Elijah did not go and party but instead he went to pray. So Ahab went off to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees. 1Kings 18.42

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Although Elijah was promised rain, for he heard the sound of heavy rain he continued to pray for its manifestation. Seven times he sent his servant to go and look towards the sea. It was only on the seventh time the servant reported a cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea. 1Kings 18.44. Elijah prayed without ceasing. We have a common problem in our prayer meetings today, having prayed once for something we feel obliged not to pray again. We assume that one prayer is enough per request and even feel embarrassed to pray for the same thing over and over again. This is exactly what Satan wants us to do. If someone stands up in a meeting and request prayer for healing those who are present must pray as the Lord leads them. Many times we do not pray as we are led but by tradition and force of habit. We often feel that once someone has prayed about a specific need no one else needs to pray and we can move on. This is wrong. Once is not too much. There needs to be prayer till the burden is released. We must be careful of not letting our prayers jump from one thing to the other without first allowing a release of the burden.

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Before Elijah called down fire from heaven he built an altar with stones. He then dug a trench around the altar and then asked the people to pour water on the offering and on the wood. They did so but it was not enough. Do it again, he said and they did. Do it a third time, he ordered and they did it a third time.

The water ran down round the altar and even filled the trench. 1Kings 18.34-35. There is a spiritual trench around the throne room of God and the prayers of God's people are what are needed to fill that trench. When we pray and then pray again and again that altar is wet with our prayers and the trench then becomes filled to overflow. This is the incense of our prayers that rise before God day and night.

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### **The Adversary**

Many are not aware of the enemy's schemes and we often play into his hands. We are only not unaware of his schemes as the bible says if we stay in the Spirit. Satan hates prayer. We who are the children of God are called to pray. And because of this it is our duty to go to God and find out the strategies and schemes Satan uses against us, to keep us from praying.

One of those schemes that he uses is the lie that 'God is not concerned about us.' He lies to us that God will not answer our requests. Jesus said the following and in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name He will give you. John 16.23

The parable of the persistent widow is about us praying again and again. This widow refused to let the adversary get away. She knew by persistence she would somehow get relief. The parable of the persistent widow teaches us about praying without ceasing and not losing heart. Jesus taught this parable to his disciples with the intent to encourage them to pray without ceasing. The purpose of this story is persistence and faith in the midst of adversity. Jesus asked a

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very important question at the end of this parable: Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth? Luke 18. 8

The parable starts as follows: Then He spoke a parable to them that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, saying 'there was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'get justice for me from my adversary.' And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, 'though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.' Luke 18.1 -5

Based on this parable Jesus said the following, and shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though he bears long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.

We see so clearly from this parable that the widow refused to let go until she got justice. There is another story in the bible where we see healing taking place in stages. Mark 8.22 -25 Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a

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blind man and to Him, and begged Him to touch Him. So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything. And he looked up and said 'I see men like trees, walking.' Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly.

We need to pray again because of another important aspect in this story and that is the contrast that Jesus uses about the unrighteous judge and our Heavenly Father. The willingness of God to effect justice and mercy lies in contrast to the lack of enthusiasm of this earthly judge who only dispenses justice out of irritation with the widow's determination. We go to God because He is our Father. All of creation cannot call Him Father but those whom He has called. Those who believe in Christ are one with the Father. John 17.20 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.

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We need to understand that prophecy is divine insight as to what God has purposed. God always prophesies before a thing is birthed in the physical. When prophecy comes Satan now knows what he did not know before. Therefore he now goes out of his way to disrupt and prevent that prophecy from coming to pass. That is why when King Herod heard that the wise men had come from the East and was told of their purpose, he falsely requested that the child be brought to him. Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, 'Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him,' King Herod's plan was to destroy the child before the plan of God was fulfilled. We see from this story that Joseph heard from God and obeyed. What God's people need to understand is that all hell breaks loose when there is prophecy. Many of us love prophecy and that is good but we do not know what to do when a prophecy is given. In fact after a prophecy is given it is then that the believer must pray more earnestly. Prophecy is reassurance from the Lord. It is reassurance of

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something God already had in mind. Before prophecy Satan knew very little. After the prophecy he knows more. He therefore attacks more and becomes more determined to destroy what God wants to do in our lives. It is therefore imperative that we must pay more, we must fast more and we need to draw closer than ever before to the Lord. Jesus slept in the boat because he had advanced knowledge. The disciples on the other hand did not. That is why when they got Him up he was upset with them. He expected them to know more.

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## We must labour in our Prayers

Galatians 4.19 My little children, for whom I labour in birth again until Christ is formed in you. We need to pray until that thing gives birth or that thing is formed whether it is something tangible or simply character. There must be a travailing of the soul when it comes to true prayer. Intercession is like a woman in labour. That is how the bible describes it. Isaiah 66.7 'Who has heard such thing?

Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day?

Or shall a nation be born at once?

For as soon as Zion was in labour she gave birth to her children. Shall I bring to the time of birth and not cause delivery?' says the Lord 'Shall I who cause delivery shut up the womb?' says our God.

Such prayers are often not meant to be in public, just as childbirth is not. There are severe pains preceding birth. They are intense and will cause much weeping. These prayers are prayers that often precede revival for a nation, for a church or for those who have strayed from the Lord. We must be careful not to fear such travailing. It is

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such times that the heart of the Father is being revealed through His Spirit and words are inadequate. You must be pliable in the hands of the Spirit. Romans 8.25-26 But if we hope for what we do not see we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. 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 groaning which cannot be uttered.

It is important to note that we never fully know how to pray as we ought therefore we need to learn to wait on God. When we labour with God in our prayers as opposed to presumption we see the real effects of Godly prayer and also what God desires to come forth.

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If you are a believer and have felt that you have not been making progress in your walk then I want you to make time to speak to God and let God speak to you. If you sense that there may be issues in your life that God is not pleased with then I want you to repent. If there are vows that you have made as a believer and have not kept them then you need to repent and ask God to release you from those vows. The bible says it is better not to vow than to vow and not keep it. Continue to fellowship with the Lord. Spend regular time with God.

If you are an unbeliever then make that decision today to allow the Lord Jesus into your life. Perhaps you have heard a knocking on the door of your heart but just did not respond until now. Let go of bad habits. You have to make that conscious decision to walk away from sin. Pray and read your bible regularly. Get baptized, it is a sign that you are now away with the old and you are a new creation in Christ Jesus. Have fellowship with other believers. Know that the gathering of the saints whether it is in the church or even a home is not for people who are well but more so for those who are sick. And finally go out and share your testimony. Others will hear

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you and they will be helped to overcome. At the same time as you share with others you will be encouraged.

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..... No where 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 praying do not speak well when compared to what God wants for the church today.

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**PRAY WITH OUT CEASING**



## *Worldwide Prayer Watch*

Author and Teacher Mervyn Naidoo is the founder of the Worldwide Prayer Watch Ministries. The Ministry's purpose is to teach and encourage the Church to Pray without ceasing!

Mervyn is the author of more than 30 books.

*Pray without ceasing!*



*Watch  
and  
Pray*

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