

Reflection and Prayer

Finding A Rhythm of Rest

Evelyn C. Davis, Ed.D.
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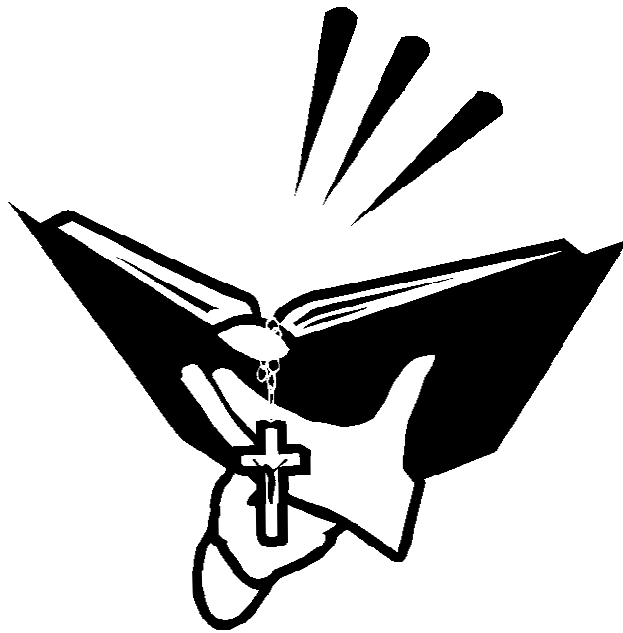
Be still, and know that I am God.

Psalm 46:10a
New International Version

**Find rest, O my soul, in God alone;
my hope comes from him.**

Psalm 62:5

New International Version



Goal of the Topic:

To assist you in establishing a regular, sacred rhythm of rest, with a frequent time of reflection and prayer.

Seven Steps To The Throne

Lydia Fellowship (2002)

In the public domain.

Jesus said, ‘When you pray ... and when you fast ... do it to God alone.’ Matthew 6:6, 16

All you need is ... a quiet place;
a quiet hour;
a quiet heart.

Be Still

‘Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.’

Wait *expectantly* before God with His Word, the Sword of the Spirit.

Worship and praise the Lord for *who* He is.

Contemplate the greatness of God, His power and His love;

or read a Psalm of praise or any other portion of Scripture the Holy Spirit may direct you to, and *meditate* upon it.

Prayer is driving energy, and action is met by action.

Psalm 47:6, 7; Psalm 62:5, 11, 12; Hebrews 11:6; James 4:8a

Be Clean

‘Cleanse your hands ... and purify your heart.’

Take time to let the Holy Spirit search your heart before God. Don’t *you* do it.

Accept **now** God’s cleansing and forgiveness; Ask Him to *fill you* with His Holy Spirit and thank Him for doing so.

Luke 11:13; Ephesians 5:18; James 4:8b; 1 John 1:9

Be Armed and Armored

‘Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.’

Arm yourself with:

(a) the all-powerful Name of Jesus

(b) the Word of God

These are God’s mighty weapons and **your** authority over Satan.

Armored for protection with the ‘whole armor of God’ and ‘put on Christ.’

Luke 10:19; Ephesians 6:10–18; Colossians 3:17; James 4:7

Be Submissive

‘Do not rely on your own insight.’

God is the Giver, not only of the *answer* to prayer, but the *initiator* too.

So put away all pre-conceived ideas and thoughts concerning lists, burdens, needs.

In faith ask the Holy Spirit to *empower, direct, and pray through you*.

Praise and *thank Him* for His willingness to hear and answer prayer.

Proverbs 3:5, 6; Isaiah 55:8; Romans 8:26; 2 Corinthians 10:4, 5

Be Obedient

Jesus said, 'Have faith in God.'

Strengthen your heart on the *promises* of God.

It is God who inspires prayer; imparts faith; thinks thoughts through your heart and puts your body into action.

Therefore, in complete reliance and obedience, speak out what He brings to your mind, and express it in prayer.

Mark 11:22–24; John 18:37b; 1 Corinthians 6:17; Hebrews 11:6

Be Steadfast

'Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.'

Give the Holy Spirit time to fulfill in prayer **all** that God reveals concerning the immediate prayer burden (either individually or in a prayer group), then move on **only** as the Holy Spirit or the Word of God gives direction.

1 Samuel 15:18; Psalm 119:105; Colossians 4:2

Be Thankful

'Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.'

Prayer and thanksgiving are as natural as breathing, because prayer is drawn in of God Himself and is breathed forth in thanksgiving.

Praise releases *power*!

'To the only wise God our Savior be glory and majesty, dominion and power for ever and ever. **Amen.**'

Psalm 50:23; Psalm 86:10; Jude v. 25

Prayer aligned with fasting puts a 'cutting edge' to the intercessory prayer life and produces a *spiritual* and *physical* discipline. It proves effective when combating enemy forces.



Praying the Scriptures

(Lectio Divina)

'Reading seeks for the sweetness
of a blessed life,
Mediation perceives it,
Prayer asks for it,
Contemplation tastes it.'

Guigo II (D. 1188)

Lectio (Read)

Gently read a brief passage from the Word of God, listening with the ears of your heart. Note what word or phrase seems to call to you—what 'sparkles'? *

Meditatio (Meditate)

Slowly reread the passage, and repeat the word that has chosen you, asking God, 'What do you want me to learn from this today?' Ask your heart, 'Why this word, here and now?' *

Oratio (Pray)

As you read the passage a third time, savor it. Let it move you to place yourself before the one who has invited you to intimate dialogue. Trust God enough to speak from your heart. *

Contemplatio (Contemplate)

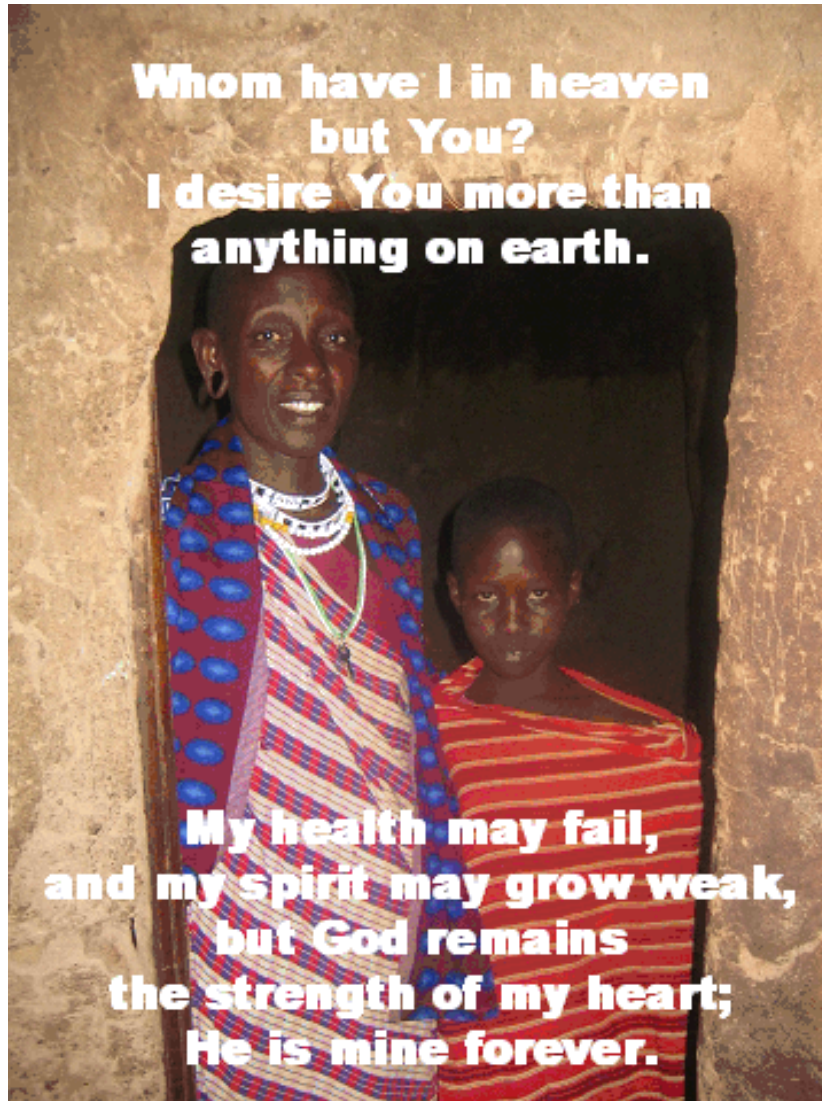
Read the passage a last time and as you sit quietly, let the Holy Spirit speak to your heart. Let go of the text and simply rest in God. As the fragrance of God's word fills the room, enjoy the sweetness of your communion with the God of the Scriptures.

* Suggestion: have a few minutes of silence between the readings.

Note: Lectio Divina is also called the 'Teresan Prayer' for Teresa of Avila, a spunky Christian of 16th century Spain, who often used this graced way of praying.

'Let nothing disturb you. Let nothing make you afraid. All things are passing. God alone never changes. Patience gains all things. If you have God, you will want for nothing. God alone suffices.'

(Teresa's prayer book bookmark)



(Submitted by participants in the *Reflection and Prayer Training* for East Africa in Nairobi, Kenya, February, 2008).

Prayers of the Heart

Heart prayers are typically prayed throughout a day. In choosing a heart prayer, keep it short and simple. Let it express a deep desire of your heart. Some examples are listed below, with space for you to add your own.

Heart Prayers (General)

- Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me **or** Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, a sinner.
(The Jesus Prayer)
- Father, let me feel your love.
- Master, teach me humility.
- Refresh me, Lord.
- Holy Spirit, fill me.
- Strengthen me, Jesus.
- Lord Jesus, restore my spirit.
- Settle me, Lord.
- Jesus, teach me discipline and love.
- Lord, help me to see only you.
- May your good Spirit lead me on level ground.
- My God and my All. (A prayer used by St. Francis)
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Heart Prayers (from Scripture)

Often a heart prayer, or an assurance of God's love and grace, comes from Scripture. The words will deepen and expand in meaning as they are prayed (or spoken) in various settings and God's presence and truth can be more fully experienced in the heart. Some examples are listed below, with space to add your own.

- Glory to God in the highest!
- Lord, I want to be still and know that you are God.
- Jesus, I know that you are with me always.
- Create in me a clean heart, O God.
- Lord, I believe; help Thou my unbelief.
- Lord, I know that in quietness and confidence shall be my strength.
- Lord, I worship you in the beauty of holiness.
- Even so, come Lord Jesus!
- Christ, I want to know you and the power of your resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in your sufferings.
- Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you.
- Lord, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure.
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... Those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Isaiah 40:31

New King James Version



Finding A Rhythm of Rest

Evelyn C. Davis, 2010

How do our days go? We have conversations with people, perform tasks, attend meetings, focus on responsibilities. Perhaps we don't realize how much energy we expend on each activity—we expect that we will always have more at our disposal. This one additional conversation, this one extra phone call, this one quick meeting—*what can it cost?*

But it does cost; each drains yet another drop of life. At the end of days, weeks, months, and years—we collapse, we burn out, yet we cannot see how it happened. It happened in hundreds of tasks, responsibilities, and events that may have seemed not so hard on the surface, but that one after the other used a portion of our lives.

God's Promise

We are commanded to 'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy' (Exodus 20:8 NASB). We are given a promise: 'In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength ...' (Isaiah 30:15 NIV). The Jewish Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday; Christians typically begin with Sunday worship. It is not just a *lifestyle suggestion*, but a *spiritual precept*.

Sometimes those of us in Christian service find the day of worship a busy one indeed—then it is necessary to find an additional time for a 'Sabbath'—a time to take our hands from the plow, let our work lay fallow, and let God and others take care of things.

If certain plant species do not lie dormant in winter, there won't be fruit in the spring. '... unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit' (John 12:24 NIV). A period of rest is both a *biological* and *spiritual* necessity.

A Sabbath Requires Surrender

A 'Sabbath time' is not dependent upon our readiness to stop, but requires surrender. We stop because it's time to stop: not when we complete our calls, finish our projects, get through the stack of e-mail messages, and/or complete the report that is due tomorrow. If we only stop when we're finished with our work, we'll never stop—*because our work is never done*. With every accomplishment there arises a new responsibility. If we do not allow for a rhythm of rest in our overly busy lives, illness might occur and force a Sabbath.

A 'Sabbath' can be a *day*, an *afternoon*, an *hour*—whatever preserves life-giving rest and refreshment—a time consecrated to listen to what is true, beautiful, and nourishing. During a Sabbath, we disconnect from the frenzy of work and accomplishment.

It is finding that *balance point* at which, having rested, we do our work with greater ease and joy, and bring healing and delight to our endeavors. So a Sabbath is not only for ourselves, but if we are rested and refreshed we can give more generously to others.



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.

Mark 1:35

New International Version



Jesus' Example

- Jesus found special times to be with the Father, and to pray. The 'heart' of Jesus' prayer life is described in Hebrews 5:7–9. What does that say to you?

- Look up the following references, and read them carefully. List *where* Jesus prayed, *what* he prayed, *who* (if anyone) was with him, and the *result* of the prayer (not every reference will have all of these details).
 1. Luke 3:21–22

 2. Matthew 11:25–30

 3. Matthew 14:22–33

 4. Luke 22:39–46

- Some of Jesus' specific prayers are found in John 17.
 1. What did he pray for himself (vv. 1–5)?

 2. What did he pray for his disciples (vv. 6–19)?

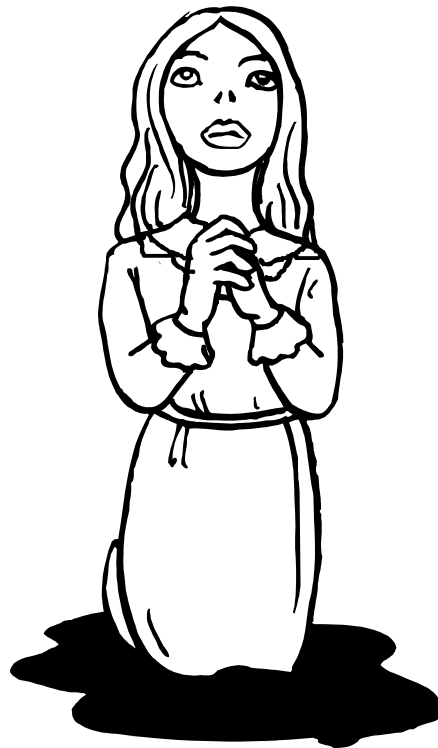
 3. What did he pray for all believers (vv. 20–26)?

- How does Jesus intercede for us today? Refer to Romans 8:34–39 and Hebrews 7:24–25.

**... but tarry ... until you are endued
with power from on high.**

Luke 24:49b

New King James Version



A Sabbath Helps Us To Remember:

- The blessings of what we have received, and to offer thanks.
- To delight in life, and in the opportunity to serve our Lord.
- To rejoice in the fruits of our labor.
- To celebrate what is beautiful and sacred.
- Who we are—the ‘light of the world’ in him.
- To ‘be there’ for someone who needs us.

During a Sabbath We Can:

- Read Scripture.
- Gather in worship and prayer.
- Sing songs; listen to music.
- Light candles.
- Keep silence; take a nap.
- Bless children; serve older persons.
- Walk, exercise, enjoy nature.
- Read a book, an article, a poem.
- Call friends; share a meal.
- Write; create something.
- Paint; do sculpture.
- Pursue a hobby.
- Other:
- Other:

Biblical Reminders

- By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. (Genesis 2:2–3 NIV).
- How long will you refuse to keep my commands and my instructions? Bear in mind that the LORD has given you the Sabbath ... (Exodus 16:28b–29a NIV).
- Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman keeps awake in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, To retire late, To eat the bread of painful labors; For He gives to His beloved even in his sleep (Psalm 127:1–2 NASB).
- ‘... but tarry ... until you are endued with power from on high’ (Luke 24:49b NKJV).
- For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit ... (Romans 14:17 NIV).
- So there is a special rest still waiting for the people of God. For all who have entered into God’s rest have rested from their labors, just as God did after creating the world. So let us do our best to enter that rest. But if we disobey God, as the people of Israel did, we will fall (Hebrews 4:9–11 NLT).





So there is a special rest still waiting for the people of God. For all who have entered into God's rest have rested from their labors, just as God did after creating the world. So let us do our best to enter that rest.

Hebrews 4:9–11a
New Living Translation



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**Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened,
and I will give you rest.**

Matthew 11:28

New International Version



The Month I Said No

Angela Dion (2006)

Used with permission.

What I discovered when I put the brakes on busyness.

I used to like telling others how full my schedule was. ‘I’m so busy these days,’ I’d say. ‘I work full time. I’m also a part-time freelance writer. I edit two newsletters. I’m a wife and mother. I disciple several women. I’m in two Bible studies, a book club, and a drama ministry. I cook. I clean. I do laundry. What about you? How are things in *your* life?’

Then the dance would begin as my listeners and I tangoed to out-busy each other. The goal was to prove that each of us was as important, as adequate, and as stressed as the others were.

One day, a friend’s response to my busy-speech shocked me. I was anticipating how I would trump her list of activities when she asked, ‘What if you said no to everything for a month?’

My heart raced. My palms grew sweaty. My smile faded. No way! I thought. I couldn’t do that. ‘Everything?’ I asked.

‘Everything!’

‘Let me pray about it,’ I said.

Sometimes God makes it immediately clear what He wants us to do. This was one of those times. Within two minutes, I knew God wanted me to accept my friend’s suggestion. He had some insights for me that I could only discover during a 30-day fast from saying yes.

Discovery 1: I Need Rest.

My goal for the month was to decline every new activity. (Clearly, I needed to fulfill the commitments I had already made.) It wasn’t long before temptations came. The first week

of my fast I received three writing requests, an offer to participate in a drama, and a speaking invitation. It seemed God wanted to know if I was serious about saying no.

At first, turning down the offers felt weird. I really wanted to say yes, especially to the writing assignments. Then I remembered that an article I had previously agreed to write was due in a week—and I hadn’t even started it yet! *What’s that about?* I wondered. *I’m usually finished with an assignment a few days ahead of deadline.*

As I thought about it, I realized I hadn’t put a lot of effort into this assignment because I was exhausted. I’d been working so much that my body, mind, and spirit never had a chance to rest. But I couldn’t see that until I took a break. I needed to get still so I could hear God whisper, ‘*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest*’ (Matthew 11:28 NIV).

Discovery 2: I Often Have Mixed Motives.

God also spoke to me about my motives for staying busy. I was surprised to discover how attached I was to my hectic lifestyle. I claimed to dislike having so much on my plate. I said I wanted to save time, find time, and use time more wisely. But the truth was, I *loved* being busy. I relished pushing my overworked schedule to the brink. It made me feel very wanted, needed, and useful. Busyness was a status symbol, and I took pride in keeping my calendar full. How important I thought I was!

Pride wasn’t the only reason I stayed busy. And a few weeks after my fast, I attended a

community theater production and watched another actress perform the part I had turned down. She was good. Very good. As the audience applauded her monologue, I couldn't help thinking, *That was my part!* I wanted the attention she'd received. I liked being center stage, and I often said yes to earn applause. Like the Pharisees, I 'loved praise from men more than praise from God' (John 12:43).

Before my fast, I would have confessed a little problem with my pride and approval-seeking. But once I discovered how expendable I was and how angry I felt when someone else got the attention, I understood the depth of my sin. In filling my schedule so I could satisfy my pride and earn applause, I had failed to serve Christ.

Discovery 3: When I Say No, Others Get To Contribute.

During the third week of my fast, my friend Karen related to me a parable about carrots. 'You plant carrots close together. But once they sprout, you pull some of them so that the remaining carrots have room to grow.'

I saw the 'carrot principle' at work during our church's annual retreat for women. Because of my fast I had declined an invitation to speak at the event. The speakers who replaced me were young, but the experiences they shared ministered to me and the other women at the retreat. *Which of them wouldn't have spoken if I had accepted the offer?* I thought. Allowing God to thin my schedule had given others the opportunity to develop their gifts.

In my busyness, I often wondered how things would get done if I didn't do them. In 1 Corinthians 12:18–19, Paul explains, 'God has arranged the parts in the body, everyone of them, just as he wanted them to be.' God would take care of everything if I got out of the way. Once I understood this, fasting from yes became an opportunity to see God work in His body. Instead of trying to be 'chief

carrot'—and hindering growth in myself and others—I could appreciate the ways others serve Him.

Discovery 4: I Can Trust God To Lead Me.

As a young Christian, I believed that spreading myself thin indicated my passion for God. If an opportunity to serve arose, I took it without a second thought. How could I sit by when there were books to write, cookies to bake, meetings to organize, and toilets to clean? My fast taught me to seek God's guidance before I commit to anything. Sometimes He wants me to say no—even to things that seem good.

Near the end of my fast, I received a second invitation to come audition for a part in a community theatre drama. My friend gave me a copy of the script and, as director, basically guaranteed me the part. I was honored. A month earlier, I would have said yes immediately. Now I responded, 'I need to pray about this. I'll get back to you when God shows me what to do.'

I was also considering pursuing a master's degree through a distance-learning program. My employer would pay most of my tuition. The idea made much sense. Why not take advantage of the opportunity to further my education with minimal expense? Again, I needed to pray about it.

Quite clearly, God led me not to take the acting part or pursue the degree. Sure, the offers seemed good, but He had other plans for me.

In the book *Feeding Your Appetites*, Stephen Arterburn and Debra Cherry explain, 'If we aren't discerning, Satan may even use things we would determine to be 'good' things for us to be involved in to draw us away [from God's will for our lives].'

When I agreed to something without seeking God's guidance, I often allowed Satan to distract me from the things God desired for

me. I was acting in my *own* wisdom, and had deceived myself into believing I was on fire for the Lord. Fasting from yes helped me to recognize and resist the lie that being busy is equal to being spiritual.

After The Fast

Six months after my fast, the principles I learned are ones still with me. I'm more intentional about what I say yes to. I don't commit to anything—even things that seem like 'no brainers'—without examining my motives and seeking God's guidance. I'm learning to sense the Spirit's warning *before* I get overwhelmed. And I deliberately spend time relaxing with the Lord.

I have a healthier perspective on receiving approval. There are things I do well, and I often receive praise for them. But instead of seeking accolades from others, I now try to work only for the Lord. I understand that I can do nothing without God and people, and I look for many ways to acknowledge the contribution of others.

I'm also learning to step back so that others can serve. For the first time in years, I belong to a Bible study that I don't lead. And I love not being the chief carrot!

Today when people invite me to tango by telling me how busy they are, I remember what I learned from my month of saying no, and I resist the temptation to enter the dance.

Angela Dion works as an addiction counselor at the Charles County Department of Health in White Plains, Maryland. She wrote this article because 'most Christians are working very hard for something. I want them to know that sometimes the real work is in the rest.' Her Web site is www.angeladion.net.

Creating Spaces

1. The author learned to seek God before adding activities to her schedule. What activities are you thinking about saying *yes* to? List them here.

2. Consider your schedule for the next few weeks. When can you meet with God *and seek his mind* about the activities you listed above?

3. Meeting with God is important when we have decisions to make, but we also want to meet with him just for the pleasure of his company. Look at your calendar. Where can you schedule *an appointment with God* during which you can simply enjoy his presence?

Prayer and Communion

Ron Higey (2008)

Used with permission.

Most Christians generally understand 1 Corinthians 11:25—‘do this ... in remembrance of me’—to mean they are to remember Jesus’ death and resurrection during communion. I believe we need to remember not only His sacrifice on the cross, but also His entire life and ministry. Communion is a wonderful time to encourage our all-sufficient Savior and receive from Him all that He intends for us. This can only happen if we help our people properly prepare themselves through prayer and meditation.

At my church, we took a new approach to both prayer and communion by completely changing how we celebrate the Lord’s Supper. Instead of having it be a small part of a service, we’ve made communion and prayer the focus of an entire service each month.

Here is how we do it: We start our time by seeking God’s presence through singing, worshiping, and reading Scripture such as Jeremiah 29:12–13:

‘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.’

I vary the Scripture and song selections each month.

Since communion is a time when we confess our sins and accept Christ’s sacrifice for us, we instruct the congregation on the practical aspects of confession and allow them to respond. For example, if someone is estranged from another person in the congregation, he or she can take the time provided to go to the other for reconciliation. We stress the importance of being pure before the Lord when we come to the table, citing Acts 24:16: ‘So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.’

Because Jesus’ whole life gives our lives purpose and meaning, I then challenge the congregation to ask the Lord what He might have for them in terms of their lives—their ministry, relationships, job, family, and the lost. During this part of the service, we hope to hear from Jesus, the head of the church. Only then are we ready for communion.

At this point, the elders stand in the front with the communion elements. I tell the people, ‘When you feel that your heart is prepared, come up for the bread and cup.’ When they are ready, participants go to an elder who addresses each person by name, serves him or her, and then offers to pray for that person.

Our service becomes a lively, dynamic time. Some individuals walk forward as soon as the invitation is given; others need more time preparing. After taking communion, some people return to their seats; others move to the side to pray. I’ve also seen people go forward to pray, then take communion. People move back and forth, seek God, receive prayer, pray for others—all the while remembering Jesus’ life and work.

While the service is progressing, an elder is available to pray with anyone who requests prayer. This elder anoints with oil in obedience to James 5:16:

‘Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.’

If the person needing prayer agrees, the elder will ask those sitting in the pews to join him in prayer for whatever the need might be. Men, women, and children are encouraged to participate.

It took our congregation the better part of a year to embrace fully this participatory style of celebrating the Lord's Supper. And the results, we believe, can be seen in other aspects of church life. People have developed closer relationships, have cared for each other more throughout the week, and have grown in their prayer lives.

I'm convinced that prayer has played an important role in making communion at our

church a more encompassing look at Jesus' life and ministry. Church prayer groups pray in advance for the communion service. And we recently started a prayer room in which one or two volunteers pray during the service. Our church's goal is to become a house of prayer. We not only want to pray more, but also to see God answer and grow us to a deeper level of praying.

✠

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... 'do this ... in remembrance of me.'

1 Corinthians 11:25
New International Version

Praying Together: Annoying or Anointed?

Alice Smith (1998)

Used with permission.

Understanding Different Prayer Styles

The prayer meeting begins. The first person to pray is motivated by mercy. He prays with passion and tears, a fever erupting in his heart. His unbridled emotion begins to irritate the woman next to him. Possessing a gift for administration, she thinks, *If they would let me organize this group, we could pray with some direction.*

Across the room another intercessor senses a spiritual battle raging. Responding to her gift of discernment, this believer bursts forth with warfare prayer. With intensity, she waves her hands and fiercely rebukes the rulers of darkness. Others nearby are thinking, *Would someone please give this woman a sedative!*

Next to pray is a man who always prays from lists—for him it's almost unthinkable to do otherwise. As he prays, others are thinking, *This is too calculated and routine.*



Then comes the seasoned prayer warrior, whose many refined and polished prayers intimidate the group with their 'perfection.' And hardly anyone wants to pray now. Eventually the 'off-track' pray-er opens up. In a group that has been directed to pray for racial reconciliation, this person begins to pray for his neighbor's lost puppy.

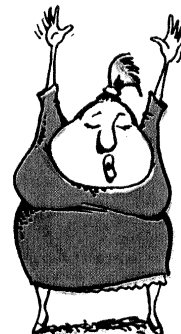
We've all experienced it at one time or another—instead of unified prayer, it seems we've offered up a jumble of separate and mixed agendas. Is it wrong to use prayer lists

in groups? Is warfare prayer inappropriate? Should we hold back our tears? No! Each of these facets is an important part of corporate prayer—but only if they do work together toward the common end.

Intercession: One Ministry, and Also Many Gifts

It begins with our learning to appreciate diversity. According to 1 Corinthians 12, 'There are different kinds of gifts' (v. 4), 'different kinds of service' (v. 5), and 'different kinds of working' (v. 6). Intercessors who possess different spiritual gifts (such as mercy, teaching, or word of knowledge) will pray differently. And God's discipline in each life will affect each person's depth in prayer. Just as we need a diversity of gifts in the body, different kinds of intercessors are required to complete the whole ministry of intercession. If we can understand and put these differences to work, God will be blessed, the enemy crippled, and the group united in powerful prayer. Let's consider a few styles:

Flexible Intercessors. The prayer lives of these men and women are continually changing. They do not adhere to any set mode or method. Pliable in the hand of God, they try to discern the Spirit's direction, whether for travail, warfare prayer, or praying through lists.



Crisis Intercessors. These intercessors pray for both emergencies and traumas. Like ambulance drivers, crisis intercessors are always 'on call.' They sense the urgency in every situation, and they are on the search and rescue team for those who are wounded on the spiritual battlefield. Their gifts might include prophecy, mercy, faith, healing, pastoring, or service.



Intercessors for the Nations. Today, God seems to be calling more intercessors for the nations than ever before! These are the prayer evangelists of the body. They stand in the gap for the nations of the world, praying in the last great revival before Christ's return. They often have a gift mix of evangelism, prophecy, faith, and mercy.

Mercy-Motivated Intercessors. Because of their merciful hearts, these intercessors find great satisfaction in praying for any person or situation needing divine mercy. They pray with compassion and empathy and can minister to heartaches with encouragement and love. They often have gifts of counseling, healing, faith, giving, and helping.

Prayer-List Intercessors. Some intercessors pray through lists. They tend to have the gift of administration or teaching. God guides and also disciplines these pray-ers as they faithfully pray through the assignments that He gives them. Occasionally they will also get emergency requests or prophetic instruction,

but their priority is to persevere for the people, places, and issues on their prayer lists.

Prophetic Intercessors. These intercessors hear from God almost as much as they speak to Him. Exhortation, faith, wisdom, words of knowledge, and discernment flow from the prophetic intercessor. God often shares His heart and the strategies of His work with them. At times, He even reveals the plans of the enemy.

Special-Assignment Intercessors. These intercessors are 'assigned' to pray for certain religious, political, or social leaders. They typically have nurturing, pastoral gifts, and they care deeply about those for whom they pray. They love to minister in prayer and can be misunderstood by those who don't understand their shepherding hearts. Their primary concern is to protect and care for the body of Christ.

Warfare Intercessors. Like a spiritual radar installation, warfare intercessors are always constantly scanning the heavenlies for signs of trouble (see Ephesians 6:12). When the Lord reveals enemy targets, these warriors will lock in and release a payload of prayer. Their gifts are usually a mix of the revelatory gifts that are mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10: faith, wisdom, word of knowledge, discernment of spirits, or prophecy.



Administrative Intercessors. These intercessors have the gifts of leadership, giving, exhortation, faith, and/or administration. They serve as the ‘spinal cords’ in the body, carrying orders to other members. They coordinate and facilitate prayer chains, telephone networks, newsletters, and crisis lines so that everyone can be notified and encouraged to pray. While their personal prayer styles may vary, they are likely to be irritated when prayer times don’t appear to be flowing well.

Spirit-Led Corporate Leadership

In order for all these spiritual gifts and prayer styles to work most effectively in a prayer meeting, discerning leadership is needed. A leader must begin with clear instruction from the Holy Spirit and then facilitate so each member can pray according to his or her Spirit-led gifts. Here are some suggestions:

- 1. Teach on differing prayer styles and gifts.** Understanding prayer styles and the spiritual gifts that motivate them will help participants accept each other.
- 2. Invite the Holy Spirit to reveal the Father’s assignment.** One of the least effective methods of corporate prayer is to jump from one personal topic to another and then quit when the list has been covered. Corporate prayer is a time to listen together for the burden of the Lord, and then to ascend as one body into the heavenlies through intercession. When God lays the assignment on the group, the individuality of prayer styles will not disrupt the flow.
- 3. Provide firm and loving direction.** If a group is freely going to follow God’s assignment for prayer, the leader needs to discern when it has drifted, and not be afraid to bring it back. This may mean gently interrupting a person who has gone off track by saying, ‘We’ve sensed that

we should pray about _____ for a time. Maybe we could come back to your topic later.’

Revealing the private matters of others is not appropriate during corporate prayer. Intervene by saying something like, ‘These are not issues we all need to know. I think we should move on to something else.’ Talk with the offender in private. If the gossiping pray-er persists, you may need to say something out loud, like, ‘God knows the details of this situation, so we don’t need to share them here.’

Watch for any condemning or judgmental prayers. Remind the group that God alone is judge, and our responsibility is to ask the Lord for mercy in all situations.

Try to discourage group members who monopolize the prayer time by speaking gently with them in private. If this doesn’t work, you may have to ask the group to be sure to give everyone plenty of time to pray. And let them know that trading the corporate effectiveness for individual liberty will defeat the whole purpose of united prayer.

- 4. Work to preserve unity of heart.** While each intercessor will petition the Lord in a different way, the goal of corporate intercession is to maintain focus and flow throughout the prayer time. Suppose your group senses it should pray about Bosnia. Effective intercession might begin with Bosnia in general, then move to political unrest in Bosnia, then to the children of Bosnia, and then on to salvation for the people of Bosnia. If, however, you start with political unrest in Bosnia, then someone moves on to pray about abortion in India, and then another prays for the Sunday morning worship service, you’ve lost the depth and focus. Try to keep the group focused on the topic, once God has revealed it, by avoiding distractions and heading off disjointed, splintering prayers.

5. **Spend a few minutes ‘debriefing’ when prayer time is over.** Take some time to discuss and comment on what God was saying to the group—and also to each person—during the entire time of prayer. Recapping the experience brings a sense of purpose, balance, unity, and closure to the group.

Effective Intercession

Silence blankets the room. The holy hush suggests that each heart is seeking to discern the will of the Father for their prayers. Then without warning, a woman passionately asks the Lord to forgive them as a church for alienating the African Americans who live in the same neighborhood. She weeps with an agony that draws in the others.

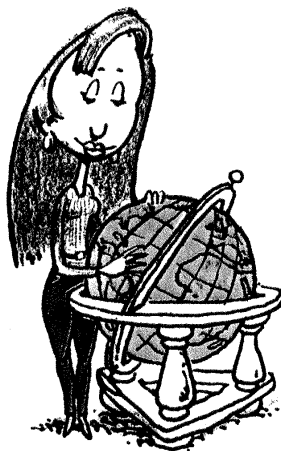
Then a man with a burden for evangelism earnestly asks the Lord for the salvation of the African Americans who are in the city, and he petitions the Lord to open the doors. Immediately, a man fervently repents for offending his African American neighbor and promises the Lord that he’ll make it right. The Holy Spirit prompts a gifted teacher to read a portion of Scripture about unity and a person gifted in prophecy follows with an encouraging word. A few moments later, another person cries out for much racial reconciliation and healing in the nation.

Fully absorbed in the unity of prayer, the corporate faith to believe God soars. The cycle of intercession steadily flows with prayer focused on reconciliation. Then, like a weight lifted, the whole group explodes in spontaneous clapping and rejoicing. Quiet settles over the group again, as every believer senses the presence of God. United, corporate intercession has occurred.

All spiritual gifts should work together for the common good of the body. Above all else, our gifts should always be governed by love. In corporate prayer, as in all things, Romans 12:3 is a good reminder: ‘Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.’

*Alice Smith is a gifted speaker and author. Her book *Beyond the Veil: Entering into Intimacy with God through Prayer (Regal)* has had a profound effect on those who have read it; Pray! highly recommends it to our readers. Alice is also the lead editor of ‘PrayerNet,’ a weekly e-mail newsletter.*

Alice and her husband, Eddie, (the co-coordinator of the US Prayer Track of AD 2000), are Southern Baptists who have had a longtime prayer ministry among all streams of the church.



His Smile

I've come, Lord, to engage the quiet
Before a dancing fire that crackles and pops
Seeking to be noticed and fanned appropriately.
I'm thankful you are here, Lord,
And as I wait comfortably in your presence,
I wonder if you'll speak;
And what you might say.
The stillness is soothing.
You smile at me;
It is enough.

My body is warmed by the fire
And my heart is warmed by your smile.
It is a genuine smile
That reaches to your eyes
And makes me want to burst out laughing
Because of the delight I see in them.
Did you know you smile with your eyes, Lord,
And when you do my heart leaps for joy?

Though you never spoke a word
I know it's time to leave the quiet place
Where only embers now burn.
I go confident you are pleased with me.
It is enough.
Thank you, Daddy, for sitting with me by the crackling fire
And letting it illuminate your laughing eyes
To cheer my heart.

—Diana Stuhr
Reflection and Prayer Training
May, 2007



On The Front Lines

You may never tap on a keyboard,
Write on a chalkboard,
Translate a single word,
But you're on the front lines
when you pray.

You may never dig a deep well,
Teach an adult to spell,
Find the Tboli word for hell,
But you're on the front lines
when you pray.

You may never sleep on a mat,
Tell marauding beasts to scat,
Learn other words for this and that,
But you're on the front lines
when you pray.

You may never pilot a Helio,
Handle the money flow,
Help someone else to go,
But you're on the front lines
when you pray.

—Diana Stuhr
Reflection and Prayer Training
May, 2007



All Work and No Pray

Gary Thomas (2008)

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Balancing ministry for God and intimacy with God

‘The man who is always available isn’t worth much when he is available.’

The Elton Trueblood quote all but floored me. There are many things that can hinder our ministry. Sickness. Sin. Lack of resources or focus. But sometimes busyness in ministry can be just as big of a foe, as it clearly was in this season of my life. I was stretched too thin, and it was affecting my spiritual balance.

It is possible to ‘outwork’ our prayer lives by getting so busy trying to complete the work God has for us that we ignore building intimacy with Him through prayer. But we can also become unbalanced in the other direction and fall into spiritual self-absorption that ignores the need to minister to others. How can we find the ‘happy middle’ where our spiritual passion and spiritual mission support each other in a way that pleases God?

A spiritual metaphor that has helped me find the right balance between prayer and ministry is the Garden of Gethsemane.

A Favorite Retreat

Preachers usually wait until Passion Week to bring up Gethsemane, but the reason the garden features so prominently in the Passion is because it loomed so large in Jesus’ life well *before* the week of His death. Luke clues us in to this reality: ‘Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives [where the Garden of Gethsemane was located]’ (Luke 22:39).

John confirms the garden as a favorite retreat:

‘When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the

Kidron Valley. On the other side there was an olive grove [the Garden of Gethsemane], and he and his disciples went into it. Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had *often* met there with his disciples.’

—John 18:1–2 (emphasis added)

On the night He was arrested, Jesus knew the crux of His mission was at hand. That knowledge meant He could choose where He would spend those crucial moments of spiritual preparation. Out of all the places He could have gone, Jesus chose the very familiar Garden of Gethsemane. It was where He had often sought His Father’s favor, direction, and guidance. Before Gethsemane was a place of betrayal, it was a sacred fountain of spiritual blessing.

Seeing Gethsemane as a picture of a healthy spiritual life has done wonders for me, as it portrays a balance between intimacy and mission, prayer and work. I can’t think of Gethsemane without being moved by the intimate communion between Son and Father. On the other hand, this garden is also the scene of intense spiritual preparation for the most important work ever done.

In a healthy Christian life, as in Jesus’ life, prayer and ministry go hand in hand. As we build intimacy with God in prayer, He shares His heart with us. He communicates His love for us, but He also gives us our marching orders. In this way, prayer feeds our sense of mission and the urgency of that mission. Correspondingly, Christian work—whether it’s evangelism, helps, administration, teaching, discipleship, or something else—reminds us of

our need for God's strength, and so drives us further into prayer.

Maintaining this dynamic between prayer and ministry is a balancing act. We can coast on one or the other for a while, but shortcomings in one dimension will eventually shrink our ability to be faithful in the other dimension.

Overworked, Underprayed

What happens when we get too caught up in ministry? Dr. Wayne Grudem experienced this while he was working on the New English Standard Version of the Bible.

A dozen scholars from around the world met in Cambridge to do the final 'polish' of the translation. They worked nine-hour days discussing tricky passages, voting on final word choices, and completing the project. Informal discussion often stretched into the evening as the scholars contemplated the next day's work. Wayne said he started getting up a little later each day, cutting time from prayer.

Many people might not see much danger in this; after all, Wayne was spending all day studying and discussing the Bible. What was the big deal if, for a rather short season, Wayne allowed his prayer life to suffer?

According to Wayne, it became a really big deal. After God convicted him for not giving prayer its due, Wayne wrote in his journal about the spiritual sickness that followed from not tending to his heart in this way: 'Pride, talking about myself a lot, inwardly hoping people would praise me, lack of love for friends, irritability, a general inward feeling of unease, self-reliance, no peace.'

These are classic signs of a heart that is drifting from God. Wayne was devoted to a very pleasing work—translating the Bible—but even translating the Bible can leave us spiritually empty if we ignore building intimacy with God through prayer.

Our spiritual health isn't the only thing at stake. Whatever our sphere of involvement, if we let our zeal for ministry steal our first love—passion for Christ—our effectiveness in God's work will also take a hit. We will grow weary in our task and lose our heart for God's people. We will stop depending on God and start ministering out of our own strength.

Brother Giles, the one who is featured in the Franciscan classic, *The Little Flowers of St. Francis*, warns,

Many men who did not know how to swim have gone into the water to help those who were drowning, and they have drowned with those who were drowning. First, there was one misfortune, and then there were two. If you work well for the salvation of your soul, you will be working well for the salvation of all your friends.

We can't save our friend from 'spiritual drowning' if we allow ourselves to become spiritually weak.

All Prayer, All The Time

There's another danger, of course: We can become so enamored with our prayer and devotional lives that we forget we're being fed to feed others. When this happens, our spiritual lives often turn inward, and we measure ourselves by narcissistic evaluation. I've been in some accountability groups that focused primarily on not sinning: 'I went on a business trip and didn't get into trouble once!' But the goal of the Christian life isn't to avoid sinning; it's to learn to enjoy and love God and, out of that intimacy, surrender to His plan for our lives and finish the work He has for us.

Gethsemane reminds us of this two-sided focus. So do Jesus' words in John 17:4: 'I have brought you [the Father] glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.' The mission Jesus describes was passionately

Do I Have To Go To A Garden?

Finding a 'Gethsemane' doesn't mean you have to locate the nearest garden. You may discover that a garden is the best place for you to experience prayer and intimacy with God; or you may prefer a different setting.

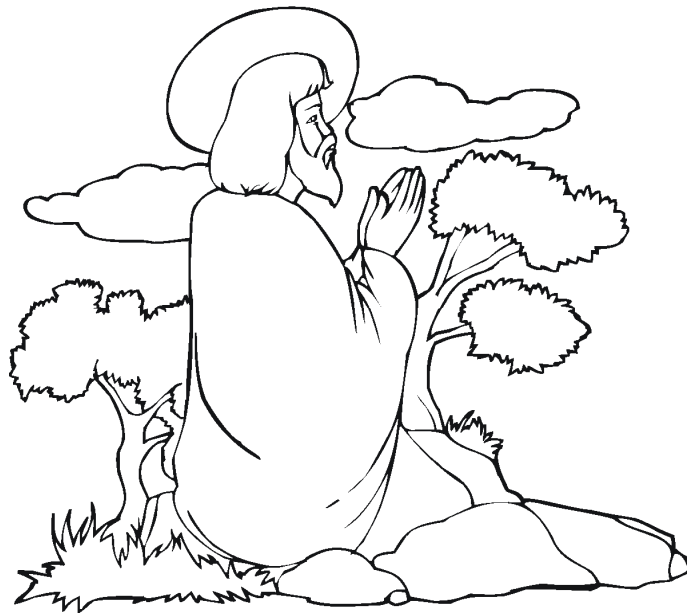
Perhaps your small group is where you are most built up and challenged to fulfill your calling. Your 'Gethsemane' may take place every Wednesday night.

Or maybe going on a solitary retreat helps you foster intimacy with God. In that case, your Gethsemane may be a situation—being alone with plenty of time to think, pray, and reflect—more than a place.

Or you may have found that playing a familiar instrument best tunes your heart to God's voice.

One Gethsemane is not 'better' than another, as long as you have one.

Gary Thomas is a writer whose books include *Authentic Faith and Sacred Pathways*. His most recent book is *The Beautiful Fight* (all published by Zondervan). Gary confesses to a serious weakness for *Bottle Caps and Mint Mentos*.



For God's Sake

Philip Yancey (2006)

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What 147 elk taught me about prayer.

The author Brennan Manning, who leads spiritual retreats several times each year, once told me that not a single person who has followed his regimen for a silent retreat has failed to hear from God. Intrigued and a bit skeptical, I signed up for one of his retreats, this one extending over five days. Every attendee met for an hour each day with Brennan, who would give us assignments in meditation and spiritual work. We also met together for daily worship, during which time only Brennan talked. Beyond this, we were free to spend our time as we wished, with only one requirement: two hours of prayer per day.

I doubt I had devoted more than 30 minutes to prayer at any one session in my life. The first day I wandered to the edge of a meadow and sat down with my back against a tree. I had brought along Brennan's assignment for the day and a notebook in which to record my thoughts. How long will I stay awake? I wondered.

To my great fortune, a herd of 147 elk (I had plenty of time to count them) wandered into the very field where I was sitting. To see one elk is exciting; to watch 147 elk in their natural habitat is enthralling. But I soon learned that to watch 147 elk for two hours is, to put it mildly, boring. They lowered their heads and chewed grass. They raised their heads in unison and looked at a raspy crow. They lowered their heads again and chewed grass. For two hours, nothing else happened. No mountain lions attacked; no bulls charged each other. All the elk bent over and chewed grass.

After a while, the very placidity of the scene began to affect me. The elk had not noticed

my presence, and I simply melded into their environment, taking on their rhythms. I no longer thought about the work I had left at home, the deadlines facing me, the reading that Brennan had assigned. My body relaxed. In the leaden silence, my mind fell quiet.



**How often do I come to God, not
with consumer requests, but
simply with a desire to spend
time with him?**



'The quieter the mind,' wrote Meister Eckhart, 'the more powerful, the worthier, the deeper, the more telling and more perfect the prayer is.' An elk does not have to work at having a quiet mind; it feels content standing in a field all day with its fellow elk, chewing grass. A lover does not have to work at attending to the beloved. I prayed for, and in a fleeting moment received, that kind of absorbed attention to God.

I never saw the elk again, even though every afternoon I searched the fields and forest for them. During the next few days, I said many words to God and also sat silent in his presence. I made lists, and many things came to mind that would not have come to mind had I not been sitting in a field for hours at a time. The week became a kind of spiritual checkup that pointed out paths for further growth. I heard no audible voice, yet at the end of the week I had to agree with Brennan: I had heard from God.

I've become more convinced than ever that God finds ways to communicate with those

who truly seek him, especially when we lower the volume of the surrounding static. I remember reading the account of a spiritual seeker who interrupted a busy life to spend a few days in a monastery, 'I hope your stay is a blessed one,' said the monk who showed the visitor to his cell. 'If you need anything, let us know, and we'll teach you how to live without it.'

We learn to pray by praying, and two concentrated hours a day taught me much. To begin, I need to think more about God than about myself when I am praying. Even the Lord's Prayer centers first on what God wants from us. 'Hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done'—God wants us to desire these things, to orient our lives around them.

How often do I come to God not with consumer requests, but simply with a desire to

spend time with him, to discern what he wants from me and not vice versa? When I did that in the elk meadow, I mysteriously found that the answer to my prayers for guidance was around me all along. Nothing changed but my receptors; through prayer, I opened them to God. 'For all things sing you,' wrote the poet Rilke, 'at times we just hear them more clearly.'

Some have called meditative prayer a useless act, because we do it not for the sake of our getting something, but spontaneously, as uselessly as a child at play. After an extended time with God, my urgent requests, which had seemed so significant, took on a new light. I began to ask for them for God's sake, not my own. Though my needs may drive me to prayer, it is there I come face to face with my greatest need: an encounter with God himself.



Philip Yancey has written many books, and is an editor-at-large for Christianity Today. This article was one of his monthly columns, 'The Back Page,' for that periodical.



Anthony of the Desert: A Friend from the Past

James L. Wakefield (2007)

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Life of Anthony by Athanasius might have been a late fourth-century bestseller if anyone had bothered to keep such odd records. Athanasius was bishop of Alexandria and also friendly to many of the hermits in the Egyptian desert. It is likely that he and Anthony (251–356) became friends during one of the times Athanasius was exiled for his vigorous defense of the Nicene Creed.

Life of Anthony is the story of a man who obeys Matthew 19:21: ‘If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.’ Anthony’s example has both instructed and encouraged generations of disciples, especially in the area of fearless spiritual warfare.

Anthony was about 20 years old when he sold his property and—led by the Holy Spirit—moved to the edge of his village to make time to pray. But Anthony didn’t withdraw completely. He still cared for the poor, doing manual labor to provide for both his meals and theirs. He began imitating the life of an older man known for his goodness and sought advice from many faithful prayer warriors. And so persistent was Anthony in praying, fasting, and caring for the poor that the devil made him a target for oppression.

In their first serious battle, which Athanasius describes as a ‘contest,’ the devil tried to distract Anthony from his prayers with memories of the comfort, ease, and pleasures he had enjoyed with his wealthy family. But with firm determination, great faith, and also constant prayers, Anthony successfully shrugged off these temptations.

Then next, the evil one tried to intimidate Anthony, suggesting that a life of prayer would be much too difficult and lonely. But

Anthony just kept on praying. Angered by Anthony’s discipline, the devil assumed a woman’s shape and tried to seduce Anthony into lustful thoughts. Anthony escaped this deception by fortifying his body with prayer and fasting, and by filling his mind with Christ and His excellent life. And when the evil one complained, Anthony quoted Psalm 118:7: ‘The Lord is with me; he is my helper. I will look in triumph on my enemies.’ At this, the devil fled. Such contests occurred repeatedly over the next decade.

The Holy Spirit then led Anthony to an abandoned fortress in the desert. Anthony accepted no visitors, so his friends supported him by throwing loaves of bread over the walls. He prayed in solitude there for almost 20 years.

After a brief period of public ministry, Anthony was then led to move to an even more remote location near the Red Sea. There he devoted himself to gardening and praying, and also to teaching, healing, and encouraging those who braved the desert to seek his counsel. It is said that a continual stream of kings, philosophers, and young men sought his advice and blessing. From this hermitage, Anthony contended fearlessly against the demonic attacks that continued until his death approximately 50 years later.

The secret of Anthony’s successful warfare is simple: He let his Lord fight the battles. Although no records exist of his actual prayers, it appears he relied upon Paul’s instructions on spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6:10–18. He believed Christ had stripped the devil of any real power, so he was to regard the evil one’s intimidations and promises as empty threats. Anthony openly mocked the devil—especially when hordes of demons assailed him. His strategy was to chant the

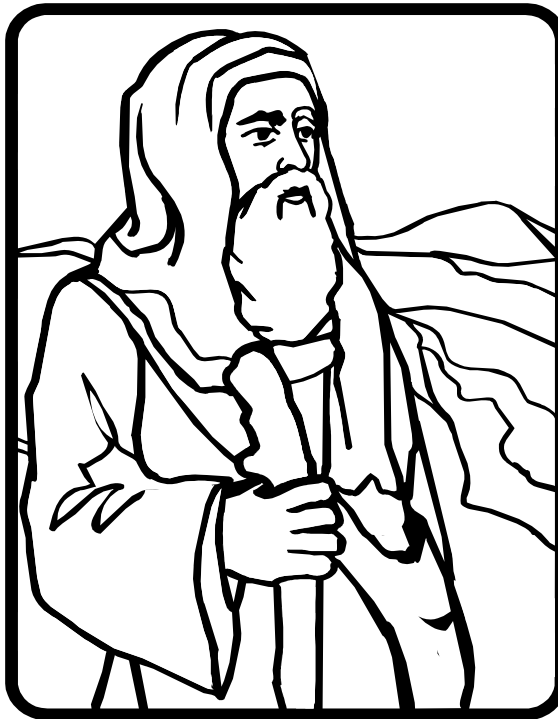
psalms and to ignore his foes. When other people were threatened, he commanded the demons to be silent, made the sign of the cross, and invoked the name of Jesus until the demons departed.

Speaking to a group of ascetics in 305 A.D., Anthony warned that the enemy tempts not only with evil, but also with otherwise good things, such as too much prayer or too severe fasting. The enemy's strategy is to mislead us, to encourage us to trust ourselves and our discipline, and finally to bring us to ruin. To counter this, Anthony instructs us to pray for

the gift of discerning spirits.

It was common in Anthony's experience for demons to appear to him as angels of light. But the Holy Spirit gave him discernment. Knowing God well, he sensed that these spirits were indeed evil, so he rebuked them in Jesus' name.

Anthony's long life is a preeminent example of the victory over the evil one that belongs to every believer who chooses to exercise faithfully the spiritual weapons and gifts that are ours through Jesus Christ.



Suggested Reading

Finding A Rhythm of Rest

Periodical

Pray! magazine, formerly published by NavPress, was a tool (1) to guide believers into a deeper relationship with Christ through prayer; and (2) to help believers pray more powerfully and effectively. To get a downloadable prayer library, go to www.navpress.com/prayerlibrary.aspx.

Books

Anderson, Fil. 2004. *Running on empty*. Colorado Springs, Colo.: Waterbrook Press.

If you've decided that the busy life is no longer worth the headaches, heartaches, pressure, and pain, this book will show you the way back home. You'll learn how to utilize silence, solitude, prayer, listening, scripture, and other spiritual disciplines.

Baab, Lynne M. 2006. *Fasting: Spiritual freedom beyond our appetites*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

It is easy to forget that we are holistic creations who need to cease from our strivings and spend some time fasting from the things that keep us enslaved.

Barton, Ruth Haley, 2004. *Invitation to solitude and silence*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

Much of our faith and practice is about words—preaching, teaching, and talking. Here is an invitation to meet God deeply and fully in spiritual transformation.

Bezek, Cynthia Hyle. 2008. *Come away with me: A guide to prayer retreats*. Colorado Springs, Colo.: *Pray!* Books, NavPress.

Is spiritual refreshment a luxury or a necessity? God has more for us than working on empty, and he longs to be our source of renewal. This is a practical, easy-to-follow guide on how to create your own personal getaway. Jesus found time to be with the Father, and so can you.

Blackaby, Henry and Norman Blackaby. 2006. *Experiencing prayer with Jesus: The power of His presence and example*. Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah Publishers.

This 2006 U.S. National Day of Prayer book will revolutionize your prayer life. The One who loved us to his death continues to pursue us, humbly laying his heart over ours. His presence and power will be with us, and we will be changed forever.

Breedlove, Sally. 2002. *Choosing rest: Cultivating a Sunday heart in a Monday world*. Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress.

One of God's greatest gifts to us—rest—is also one of the most elusive. Whether the chaos in your life is subtle or extreme, this book will give you the tools to help cultivate your soul.

Buchanan, Mark. 2006. *The rest of God: Restoring your soul by restoring Sabbath*. Nashville, Tenn.: W Publishing Group, Thomas Nelson.

Most of us are tired and overstretched, and this book is a meditation on Jesus' promise: 'Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.' To observe Sabbath is to get in tune with God-designed rhythms of work and rest that make us sane and holy.

Evans, Michael. 2008. *Why not waste time with God?* Lake Mary, Fla.: Archer-Ellison Publishing Company.

By spending time in intimacy with God, you will learn to love more compassionately, give of yourself more freely, and break free from dependence on others for approval.

Lamb, Joy. 2007. *The sword of the Spirit: The word of God*. 7th ed. Jacksonville, Fla.: Lamb's Books, Inc.

This 'handbook of praying God's Word' is not a book to read, but one to be used daily. It is a powerful tool to use when you pray individually or in a group, for Word-centered praying, led by the Spirit, is an absolute must for effective intercession.

Lawrence, Brother and Frank Laubach. 1993. *Practicing his presence*. Jacksonville, Fla.: The Seed-Sowers.

Besides *Pilgrim's Progress*, there is probably no other piece of Christian literature that has stood the test of the centuries as well. The publishers have revised and included in this edition not only the letters of Brother Lawrence (17th century), but also those of Frank Laubach (20th century) who, like Brother Lawrence before him, wrote a series of letters chronicling his experiences.

Lotz, Anne Graham. 2010. *Into the Word*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan.

These fifty-two weekly studies emphasize personal application and will draw you directly into God's Word ... in order to love him more.

Manning, Brennan. 2009 (from 1979). *Souvenirs of solitude: Finding rest in Abba's embrace*. Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress.

The call of solitude is a gentle but insistent tug on our hearts. We long to go deeper with God, and we pause to wait on him in silence.

Norris, Kathleen. 1996. *The cloister walk*. New York: Riverhead Books.

The author experienced two extended residencies at a Benedictine monastery—she found that time slowed down, offering a new perspective on community, family, and even small-town life. Upon leaving, she began to feel herself transformed, and the daily events of her life on the Great Plains—from her morning walk to going to sleep at night—took on new meaning.

Swenson, Richard A. 2004. *Margin: Restoring emotional, physical, financial and time reserves to overloaded lives*. Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress.

Overload is not having time to finish the book you're reading on stress. Margin is having time to read it twice. Overload is fatigue. Margin is energy. Overload is red ink. Margin is black ink. Overload is hurry. Margin is calm. Overload is anxiety. Margin is security. Overload is the disease of our time. Margin is the cure. *Margin* is the space between ourselves and our limits, and what we must hold in reserve for contingencies or unanticipated situations.

... Spend Thirty (or Forty) Days with a Great Spiritual Teacher. Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press.

Fear not the night: Based on the classic spirituality of John of the Cross. 1998.

Let nothing disturb you: A journey to the center of the soul with Teresa of Avila. 1996.

That you may have life: Let the mystics be your guide for Lent. 1998.

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Yancey, Philip. 2006. For God's sake. *Christianity Today*, March, 112.

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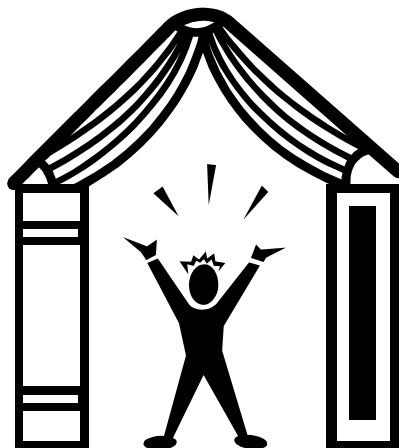
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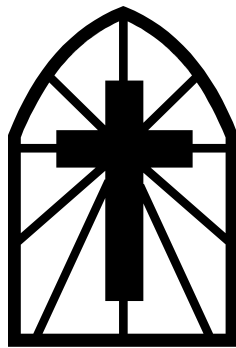
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Notes

So, if you're serious about living this new resurrection life with Christ, *act* like it ... don't shuffle along, eyes to the ground, absorbed with the things right in front of you. Look up, and be *alert* to what's going on around Christ—that's where the action is. See things from *His* perspective.



Colossians 3:1-2

The Message





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