

Teach All Nations Inc.

Touching Heaven, Changing Earth: How to Pray with Power

Let prayer be the key of the morning and the bolt of the evening—Matthew Henry

And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. --Revelation 5:8 (KJV)

Many a theologian and practising Christian has pondered two seemingly irreconcilable concepts, both found in Scripture. God's sovereignty, which predestines humankind into His holy purposes (which, for believers includes salvation and sanctification) versus human free-will. How can God "pre-program" people who are created to make their own decisions? When we make a choice, does that negate or conform to God's all-powerful sovereign plan? While some say that predestination and free-will run in parallel lines, others believe that eventually, these two concepts will intersect somewhere in eternity. Yet another possible intersection of sovereignty and free-will, heaven and earth, God and man, can be proposed in the here and now. That point of meeting is called prayer.

Prayer is where we freely and willingly interact with God, so that His predestined plan can come to fruition. As God works with and in us, we are able to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. From this act of volition, prayer becomes the workshop God uses to help us conform to the example and the image of His Dear Son. And, as the title of Reuben Morgan's song suggests, prayer is our God-ordained method of "Touching Heaven, Changing Earth."

The primacy of prayer in Scripture and the Christian life is indisputable. Reflect on the following quotes from famous Christians:

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Martin Luther

“Prayer is the most important thing in my life. If I should neglect prayer for a single day, I should lose a great deal of the fire of faith.”¹

David Yonggi Cho

"Though all Christians believe in Jesus Christ, most of them do not know how to pray effectively. This is the reason they do not grow properly in their faith...Therefore, I urge all of us Christians to learn how to pray".²

Brian Mills

"Everything we expect to see from a relationship with another human on earth...is possible, through prayer, with God in heaven".³

John Wesley

“I have so much to do that I must spend several hours in prayer before I am able to do it”.⁴

E.M. Bounds

"Prayer governs conduct, and conduct makes character...Prayer is related to all the gifts of grace...Prayer promotes righteous living, and is the one great aid to uprightness of heart and life".⁵

Charles Spurgeon

“We may be certain that whatever God has made prominent in His Word, He intended to be conspicuous in our lives. If He has said much about prayer, it is because He knows we have much need of it. So deep are our necessities that until we are in heaven we must not cease to pray...A prayerless soul is a Christless soul”.⁶

¹ Eleanor L Doan, ed. The Speaker's Source Book Zondervan Publishing House, 1973, p. 192.

² David Yonggi Cho, Dr. Cho's Patterns of Prayer, Seoul: Seoul Logos Inc, 1996, page 20.

³ Brian Mills, Prayer Triplets, Homebush West NSW: Anzea Publishers 1988, page 111.

⁴ Doan, ed. The Speaker's Source Book, op. cit., page 193

⁵ E.M. Bounds, The Necessity of Prayer. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993, page 47.

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Charles Finney

"There are two kinds of means requisite to promote a revival: the one to influence man, the other to influence God. The truth is employed to influence men, and prayer to move God".⁷

R.A. Torrey

"Prayer can do anything that God can do, and as God can do anything, prayer is omnipotent. No one can stand against the man who knows how to pray and who meets all the conditions of prevailing prayer and who really prays. 'The Lord Omnipotent' works for him and works through him".⁸

John Calvin

"To prayer, then are we indebted for penetrating to those riches which are treasured up for us with our heavenly Father".⁹

Thomas a Kempis

"The old Serpent shall sting and irritate you, but by prayer he shall be put to flight".¹⁰

D.L. Moody

"...my desire...is to encourage God's children to seek by prayer 'to move the Arm that moves the world'".¹¹

Billy Graham

"Every man whose life has counted for the church or for the Kingdom of God has been a man of prayer. A prayerless Christian is a powerless Christian".¹²

Wanted: Lovers of Prayer

Consider the fact that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, devoted himself to continuous prayer. The gospels tell us that He would go to a mountain apart and spend all night in

⁶ Charles Spurgeon, Morning and Evening, Zondervan Publishing House, 1955, page 4.

⁷ Charles Finney, Lectures on Revival Albany OR: Sage Digital Library, 1995, page 47.

⁸ R. A. Torrey, The Power of Prayer, Zondervan Publishing House, 1971, page 17.

⁹ John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion Book III, Chapter XX, Albany OR: Sages Digital Library, 1995, page 13.

¹⁰ Thomas a Kempis, The Imitation of Christ. Springdale PA: Whitaker House, 1981, page 120.

¹¹ ". D. L. Moody, Inspiration Prevailing Prayer: What Hinders It? Albany OR: Sage Digital Library, 1995, page 4.

¹² Billy Graham, Peace With God, page 151.

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intercession and supplication. Prayer spawned some of His great miracles. His masterful intercession for the disciples in John 17 shows that prayer is a spiritual lifeline to all that love and look to God. If Jesus needed to pray, how much more do we?

The desire for prayer and communion with God is planted like a microchip into the heart of every believer. Yet in light of Revelation 5:8, the question should be asked, "How many of heaven's vials (called "golden bowls" in NKJV) have you filled lately?" Not as many as we should!

We all, like the Apostle Paul, feel lost in this important arena of the spiritual life, for we do not know how to pray as we ought (Romans 8:26). This handicap will not vanish by mere wishful thinking or indulging in church activities. It is essential that if we are going to enter and remain on the road to salt and light integrity, we must join Jesus' disciples by asking, "Lord, teach us to pray."

Creating incentive to enter the prayer closet is not too difficult considering the benefits are great. Simply put: prayer works! It brings answers *from God* because prayer brings us *to God*. James tells us to draw close to God and He will draw close to us (4:8). Once we have come to the throne of grace there is mercy, grace, power, peace, and joy. This throne room doubles as a workshop where God can fashion us into the person He predestined us to be. It is of paramount importance that the formation of our Christian integrity be fashioned on the anvil of prayer.

Scripture upholds the efficacy of prayer time and again. When we come close to God and seek him by prayer, He promises to favour us (Job 33:26), hear our prayers (Psalm 65:2; Job 22:27), and forgive our sins (Psalm 86:5-7). Priceless things like eternal life (John 4:10), wisdom (James 1:5-7), and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13) are promised to

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those who ask in prayer. Most importantly, God's holy purposes will be accomplished (I John 5:14-15) and His Name shall be glorified (John 14:13).

What is a Lover of Prayer? A lover of prayer is another name for a man or woman of prayer. Such a person has a reputation for a deep and growing prayer life, bringing a multitude of needs to the throne of grace. Lovers of prayer do not just come to prayer meetings; they *are* the prayer meeting, wherever they may be! Potent, passionate, perseverant, are some adjectives to describe their prayer life.

How do you know if you are a lover of prayer? Here are some telltale signs:

- You feel the persistent need, at any and all times, to be in communication with God.
- There is an ever-ready attitude to pray.
- A huge hole in your day is felt when the time of prayer has not happened.
- Prayer is not hard work to you but full of delight. This can occur by adding variety to your prayer activity, like singing songs in the Spirit, with understanding (I Corinthians 14:15) and thanksgiving.
- You possess a deep and abiding consciousness that your prayers are filling the bowls of heaven--you appreciate the effectiveness of your prayers;
- Prayer requests flow effortlessly from your lips like a chain reaction;
- Your love of prayer is contagious; you are able to rally others to pray at any and all times;

If this describes the way you want to be, but are not there yet, find someone who is a lover of prayer, pray with them regularly, and let their fire set you alight.

Pointers on Prayer: What is Prayer?

I Timothy 2:1-2 (KJV) *I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;*

Psalm 145:18,19 (KJV) *The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth **19** He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.;*

What is prayer? In its simplest form, prayer is speaking to God. This incorporates asking of God on behalf of others and ourselves. It can also involve a two-way conversation with God. Consider it the reverse side of the devotional coin; the one side God talks to us through His Word and the Holy Spirit, while on the other hand we talk to God through prayer.

Prayer is based on several premises, the first that God is a Person with whom we can know. Despite His heavenly abode, God's nearness is also presumed because otherwise He would be unreachable. God is also all-knowing (omniscient), all-powerful (omnipotent), and present everywhere (omnipresent); these factors are also assumed by people of prayer. Most of all, God is the King of the universe who creates and controls; prayer is the priceless privilege of approaching this Almighty Sovereign to relate to Him and receive from Him.

Biblical teaching exhorts believers to prayer (I Samuel 12:23; Psalm 32:6; Romans 12:12; Philippians 4:6; I Thessalonians 5:17,25; I Timothy 2:8); therefore prayer is not optional for those who call Him Lord. The Master wants us to come to Him regularly in prayer and to do so with diligence. Some use the term "praying through," which implies both persistence as well as penetration into God's presence--going longer and deeper than those who are merely casual inquirers. In so doing, we will find prayer as the avenue of receiving divine blessings and gifts (Daniel 9:3; Matthew 7:7-11; 21:22), the road to victory

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(Ephesians 6:10-18), and the means of deliverance from all kinds of situations (Matthew 26:41; Luke 18:1; Acts 12:3-19; 28:8; Colossians 1:9; James 1:5; 4:7; 5:13-17; James 5:13-17; Ephesians 6:18; and Romans 15:30-33). By faithful on-going prayer we can emulate the Lord Jesus Christ, His apostles, and saints throughout history and press on to maturity.

How does one begin a life of integrity-building prayer? Think about the following practical points:

When to Pray?

Certain periods of the day are given by Scripture as good times of prayer. Daniel prayed three times a day (Daniel 6:10). Psalm 55:17 speaks of evening, morning, and noon as the normal prayer time. The psalmists mentions “in the morning” as the time that prayer will be ordered unto God (Psalm 5:3) and brought before God (Psalm 88:13). Jesus got up very early in the morning to seek the Father in prayer (Mark 1:35). Evenings are also considered prime time for prayer, as alluded to in Matthew 14:23 and 26:36-44. Prayer would continue as the evening sacrifice (Psalm 141:2,5).

In addition to your appointed time, it is great to be ever ready to pray at any time. Take whatever opportunity comes your way. When fellowshiping with others, offer to start and end the time in prayer. Mealtimes are traditionally a good time to offer prayer (Matthew 14:19 and Acts 27:35), while Paul tells us all food is sanctified through prayer and to be received with thanksgiving (I Timothy 4:4-5). If you meet someone in physical, spiritual, and/or emotional need, be sure to pray for him or her. Anytime anyone asks for your prayers, cheerfully accept and, if possible, do it on the spot.

Times of temptation and crisis are eminently suited for prayer, as evidenced in Biblical and also church history. During battles, prayer was offered up before God, as in I

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Chronicles 5:20, II Chronicles 13:13-16 and 20:1-19. We are exhorted to call upon God in the day of trouble (Psalm 50:15; also 77:1-2 and 86:7). Jonah was able to pray to God from the unique (disad)vantage point of the whale's belly (Jonah 2:1-9) and Jesus prayed while in great travail at the Garden of Gethsemane.

Of course, because access to the throne of grace is available continuously, our prayers can be at any given time. Luke 18:1 states that men ought to pray always and Ephesians 6:18 says that we should pray at all times with all kinds of prayers. I Thessalonians 5:17 tells us to pray without ceasing. An ever-ready heart makes "anytime prayer" a regular and welcome activity.

Set aside some time, even just a few minutes at first. When is the best time to pray? Whenever you can free yourself from the cares and distractions of the day. For many, that means getting up early in the morning. Others find the best time is the last point at night. Make and keep your appointment with God, not in order to fulfill religious obligation, but because you want to spend time in the presence of your Redeemer, whom you love.

Where to Pray?

In the Old Testament, prayer was localised in the Temple at Jerusalem.¹³ Under the New Covenant, prayer was found in some of the following places: in the desert (Mark 1:35) and at the mountain (Matthew), in someone's private home (Acts 12:5,12), and by the riverside (Acts 16:13,16); at the beach (Acts 21:5). I Timothy 2:8 says we should pray in every place.

In other words, prayer has been released from being locally bound to universal...any place, anywhere. You can pray in church, at home, outside, where ever you can. Taking

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“prayer walks” can be an immensely profitable activity as well as good spiritual and physical exercise. One caveat, however, is that while it is possible to pray in bed, it can often be stilted. Many times such prayers are not finished because sleep takes over.

How to Pray?

The following ingredients should be used during your prayer time:

- a) Faith (Hebrews 11:6; Mark 11:22-24; James 1:5-7), believe you are approaching the living God and that He will hear and reward your prayer efforts;
- b) You can pray while standing up (Mark 11:25; Luke 18:13) or sitting down (I Kings 18:42), kneeling (I Kings 8:54; Luke 22:41; Acts 20:36; Ephesians 3:14), lying prostrate (Matthew 26:39), or bowing the head (Genesis 24:26, Exodus 4:31, 12:27). You do not necessarily have to close your eyes (John 11:41; 17:1), in fact, there is no scriptural command to do so. However, it can help us from being distracted from what is going on around us.
- c) Forgiveness of others (Mark 11:25-26), a necessary pre-requisite to heaven-touching prayer. If you cannot freely forgive, then humble yourself before God and ask for His grace. Forgiveness and prayer will begin to flow. If the situation is particularly stubborn, then consider fasting;
- d) Repentance and confession (1 John 3:21-22; Ps 66:18), if you are not clean before God, change your mind, heart, and actions;
- e) God’s Will (1 John 5:14-15; James 4:3), is to be in the forefront of your prayer requests. You can know God’s will from the Scriptures and also the Scripturally-aligned prompting of the Holy Spirit. Prayer for leadership, raising up laborers to serve God in

¹³Thus, the Scripture that declares God’s house will be a house of prayer for all nations, whereas the synagogue

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the harvest field, the fulfillment of the Great Commission, are prayers that are always in order because they are a major part of God's will;

- f) In Jesus' Name (John 14:13): this means in the authority of Christ and by His commission. He wants you to pray. You are sent to the throne of grace to do His work. Just like an ambassador is brought to his King in order to receive instructions, then sent out to deliver the message; so we too through the Great Commission are given authority in Jesus' Name to proclaim the Gospel.
- g) Persistence (Luke 18:1-8, 11:5-10). Napoleon Bonaparte said "Victory belongs to the most persevering." Keep praying until you know you have been heard on high.

During the right time, at the right place, with an open and hungry heart, begin with a time of praise and thanksgiving. This can be done in prose or in song. As mentioned earlier, Psalm 100 says we come before His presence with singing. Do not worry if your voice is not concert-quality; simply making a joyful noise before the LORD is enough to touch His heart. It truly paves the way for a quality time of prayer.

Keep praising and worshipping until there is a sense that you have "entered in" to the throne room. We boldly come to this throne of grace. Once reached, then we can begin to pour out from a full heart to the God Who is always ready to answer.

What to Pray?

The list of possible prayer needs is virtually unlimited. While it is perfectly acceptable to pray for personal and family needs, remember to ask on behalf of others too, especially those in God's service and/or those in great need.

Different types of prayer include:

was considered a place for teaching and fellowship...Jesus went around teaching in their synagogues.

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- Supplication for our own needs (Matt 7:7-11, Phil 4:6-7);
- Forgiveness of others (Matthew 18:21,22; Mark 11:25,26; Luke 17:3,4; II Corinthians 2:7-10; Ephesians 4:32; James 5:15,16);
- Intercession, which is Spirit-led prayer on behalf of others (I Timothy 2:1-2);
- Prayer in the Spirit (I Cor. 14:15; Ephesians 6:18);
- Confession of sin or of God's Word (this is an extremely healthy and faith-building practice). This necessitates praying with an open Bible or, better yet, commit the promised Scripture to memory and recite it in prayer (1 John 1:6-10);
- Thanksgiving (Ephesians 5:4,20; Colossians 3:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Hebrews 13:15); a grateful attitude in prayer is a must. It is unlikely a person will get benefit much in prayer without this.
- Worship (Psalm 100:1-5, John 4:23-24; Acts 4:24-31);
- Sacrifice of praise (Psalm 116:12-17; Hebrews 13:15);
- Fasting (Matthew 6:16-18; Mark 2:18-20; Luke 2:37; Acts 13:1-3; 14:23; II Corinthians 6:4,5).

Other Practical Points

Utilize the Bible during your prayer time, reading aloud appropriate portions as part of your prayers, like Psalms. Sing songs of praise and worship to fortify the atmosphere of faith. Again, Paul gives an interesting pattern of a balanced prayer life in I Cor. 14:15 of praying and singing with the Spirit and in the understanding also. No percentages are proposed as to how much "with the Spirit" and how much "with the understanding" should be utilised, however, the end result is nothing short of powerful.

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One of the best classrooms for prayer is in the local prayer meeting. Join a group of people who pray regularly and powerfully and stay with them until the love of prayer permanently saturates your spirit. Remember the metaphor of the wet log: if you momentarily insert the log into a wood-stove with a roaring fire and then quickly remove it, chances are the log will still be wet. But put the log into that same fire and keep it there, a wonderful transformation occurs--that which was cold and wet is now dry and ablaze. Furthermore, if it is removed from the wood-stove, it will still carry its own flame and generate its own heat. That is how the power and anointing of group prayer transfers into the life of the individual believer.

Now is the time to seek God's face in prayer. Find a prayer partner, prayer meeting, but most importantly a prayer time. The formation and maintenance of salt-and-light integrity cannot commence or culminate without it. So come boldly to the throne of grace and start filling the golden bowls of heaven.

FASTING

But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days—Mark 2:20 (NKJV)

A chapter on prayer would be incomplete without a section on fasting. This Biblical practice is making a much-needed comeback as people discover its potency, benefits, and effectiveness.

What is fasting? Voluntary abstinence from food, and sometimes liquid, for the purpose of spiritual devotion. Some think of it as dieting, others as a famine, but it actually feasting on God's Word, presence, and prayer. Fasting can obtain for you what money cannot buy: time with God and, by extension, answers from God. Eating can be both time-

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consuming and money-intensive, and you will be amazed how much of both you will free up when you fast.

The Bible is full of references to fasting. Moses was an early faster and he neither ate bread nor drank water during the forty days and nights he was on Mount Sinai receiving God's law (Exodus 34:28). It was from Moses that Israel's annual fast, known as Yom Kippur or the Day of Atonement, came into being (known as the "day of fasting" Jeremiah 36:6 or "the Fast" in Acts 27:9).

Judah's king Jehoshaphat called for a fast when he was attacked by the Ammonites and Moabites (II Chron. 20:3). The king of Nineveh called for a city-wide fast with the wearing of sackcloth because of Jonah's preaching (Jonah 3:5). Esther and the Jews at Shushan fasted in order to foil Haman's plot to destroy all Jews in the Persian Empire (Esther 4:3, 16; 9:31). Those who were returning to Judah with Ezra fasted at the River Ahava because of the dangers that lay before them (Ezra 8:21,23).

People fasted in times of grief and distress. The men of Jabesh-Gilead fasted for seven days after burying the bodies of Saul and Jonathan (I Sam. 31:13), while David also fasted in their memory (II Samuel 1:12). During the seventy year exile, fasting was held on the fifth and seventh months to commemorate both the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem and its fall to the Babylonians (Zech. 7:5). Upon learning of Jerusalem's sorry state, Nehemiah fasted and prayed (Neh. 1:4). After putting Daniel in the lion's den, Darius, king of Persia, fasted and prayed all night (Dan. 6:18).

The New Testament has several notable incidents of fasting. Anna the prophetess "*served God with fastings and prayers night and day*" (Luke 2:37) and John the Baptist and his disciples fasted (Mark 2:18). Jesus fasted forty days and nights before

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commencing His ministry (Matthew 4:2). Cornelius and Peter were both fasting simultaneously when then received their divine visions (Acts 10). Paul and Barnabas were sent on their first missionary journey by the church at Antioch after a time of prayer and fasting (Acts 13:2,3). This missionary duo fasted and prayed as they appointed elders in the churches (Acts 14:23).

Jesus speaks about “when,” not “if” you fast, and that it should be done in such a manner as not to attract unwanted approbation; however, those who fast discreetly will be rewarded openly (Matthew 6:16-18). He also said that a particularly powerful case of demonic possession would not come out except by prayer and fasting (Matthew 17:21). Paul suggested that married couples could voluntarily abstain from sexual relations while they committed themselves to a period of prayer and fasting (I Cor. 7:5).

Why should a person fast? Jesus says that His disciples will fast after the bridegroom has been taken away from them. How much do you need the bridegroom? Are you close to the Him or far away? Are you a dried-out wineskin, aged before your time or are you being renewed day-by-day? Are you in a time of need (Ezra 8:21)? A time of worry (Daniel 6:18)? A time of trouble (Acts 27:9,33)? A time of spiritual warfare (Matt. 4:1-11; Eph. 6:10-18)? A time of danger (Esther 4)? Or do you simply want to draw near to God so that He can draw near to you (James 4:8)? If there is a habit to break, a sin to overcome, or a worry to discard? If you said yes to one or more of these questions, then it is time to plan a fast.

The reason we should fast is because it is a Biblical practice that delivers results. It brings us closer to God and makes us more aware of the spirit world. Lusts are routed, religious spirits cast out, natural reasoning broken down, and life-controlling habits

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overcome. Divine provision is obtained, prayers answered, guidance granted, health restored, and the anointing increased. Fasting demonstrates a diligence before God that we are earnest in coming close to Him. Many ministries that have been powerfully used of God attest to the efficacy of fasting. Health practitioners advocate fasting because it gives the digestive system a rest and cleanses the body from impurities; it may also assist in weight reduction. Even non-Christian religions recognise the value and power of fasting (most notable is when the Muslim world fasts during the month of Ramadhan).

Having established the existence and effectiveness of fasting, let us examine how we should fast. Basically, there are four types of fasts:

1. The Total or Absolute Fast: Also known as the “dry” or “Esther” fast, this means the person neither eats food or drinks liquid. This fast is appropriate in times of danger, grief, or great need. While it is still practised today, it is advisable not to undergo this fast for a long period of time. Esther did it for three days. Since the body is made up of 80% fluid, do not attempt this fast for a longer period unless supervised (and under divine protection). If in doubt, don't.
2. Water Fast: As the name suggests, the person eats no food but drinks water only. This is a common type of fast and probably employed a lot in Scripture. People can go long periods of time (even twenty-one and forty days) on this type of fast, though length is not the key factor. It is the time spent seeking God that makes the difference. It is best to have the water warm or at room temperature rather than cold. Make sure to drink plenty of it. A squeeze of lemon juice can help with the taste and also cleanse mucus out of the system.

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3. Liquid Fast: This is very similar to the water fast; it means abstaining from food but drinking liquids only. By liquid, this means clear broth, water, herbal teas, anything that is not technically food (for example, milk and milky drinks). Some do drink tea, coffee, and cocoa; others do not. You can fast for weeks on liquids.
4. Partial Fast: This means abstinence from certain foods and drinks. The most famous partial fast was Daniel. As an older man, he probably could not stand the rigours of a water or liquid fast. He says *“I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled”* (Daniel 10:3 NKJV). As such, it appears he had a plain diet. While it seems to be the easiest fast, in many ways it is the most difficult. The digestive juices keep churning and the hunger never dies out, like it does with the other types of fasts. Yet the results for Daniel were indisputably powerful. Partial fast can be on soup, fruit, or vegetable. It can also mean skipping one or two meals a day over a period of time. In the early days of one Protestant denomination its ministers were required to fast two days a week until four o’clock. No wonder it made such a powerful impact in its formative years.

It is very important not to be dogmatic about the types of fasts or the length. Some say that unless it is a water fast or total fast, and at least three days long, it is not a *real* fast (these same ones tend to fast the least!). Remember, fasting is the voluntary abstinence of food for any amount of time in order to seek God. In fact, if you do not seek God, you are not really fasting...you are dieting.

Other points to bear in mind:

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- When undergoing a longer fast, try eating fruit, yoghurt, or soup, a day or two before commencing. This helps prepare the body and makes sure the last foods in your system are wholesome.
- Avoid tea and coffee during this preparatory time as the lack of caffeine later can cause terrible headaches.
- Once fasting, you may experience hunger or fatigue during the first few days. These symptoms are temporary and will go away.
- At times fasting can be uncomfortable due to the flushing out of toxins in the body.
- During this time inward attitudes may come to the surface. Take heart: this is a time of cleansing, physically and spiritually. Practice forgiveness and hand every painful, hurtful, and unhealthy thing to the Lord (I Peter 5:7) so you can be healed.
- A program of devotion and relaxation should be planned: prayer, Bible reading, listening to tapes, taking a walk.
- Write down any revelations or impressions God gives you while fasting.
- You will become more sensitive to the spirit world, both good and evil, hence the need to pray often.
- Drink as much water or liquids as possible.
- When you finish the fast, do not quickly return to your normal food. If you are completing a long water fast, try diluted fruit juice or clear broth on your first day. The second day could be soup and toast; after this may be a soft boiled egg and yoghurt. Your regular diet can recommence after this.
- If you have a serious medical condition, diabetes, or currently nurse an infant, check with a health care professional before undergoing a time of fasting.

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Whether it is an absolute fast, water fast, liquid fast, or partial fast, your experience can be spirit-cleansing, spirit-lightening, and spirit-strengthening.¹⁴ Those who practice it regularly will have a great anointing on their lives. With prayer and persistence, they will see the nations touched by God.

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Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men,² for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.³ For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth—I Timothy 2:1-4 (NKJV)

Can fervent prayer by concerned Christians change world events? The short answer is: Yes!

February 1986: Long-term Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos called a “snap election.” Corazon Aquino, wife of the slain popular opposition leader Benigno Aquino, decided to challenge Marcos for the presidency. Despite Aquino’s impressive showing, Marcos “won” the election. Many Filipinos suspected that the vote was rigged and visible public anger came to boiling point. Over a million people spontaneously converged at Luneta Park from all over Manila to demonstrate their displeasure. Mrs. Aquino did not send the crowd to storm the barracks—she called them to prayer and non-violent protest. When the crunch time came with the military, and heeding the radio call of Jaime Cardinal Sin, over two million Filipinos went to the military camps. Dozens of dispatched tanks were stopped in the streets by these unarmed civilians. The very next day, Ferdinand Marcos fled the country. What was their weapon? Prayers and hymns!

November 1989: For over forty years, to quote Winston Churchill, an “Iron Curtain” was firmly in place in Europe. This was most visibly symbolised by the Berlin

¹⁴ Two books that are helpful on this subject include Arthur Wallis’ God’s Chosen Fast and Derek Prince’s

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Wall surrounding the wealthy enclave of West Berlin. This one hundred and sixty kilometre (one hundred miles) concrete belt effectively divided Germany's imperial capital and served as a constant reminder of the partition of the nation. The Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies were heavily armed, held a slight military advantage over NATO, and appeared to be entrenched for years to come. Yet, within months, the communist grip on Eastern Europe began to break and unravel rapidly. The Berlin Wall was breached and the names of both East Germany and the Soviet Union disappeared from the world map.

January 1991: The United States and its coalition allies launched Operation Desert Storm against Iraq and its occupation of neighbouring Kuwait. Some experts predicted the war would go on for many months and be costly in terms of American and coalition casualties. The war ended victoriously after forty-three days, the last four being on the ground, with fewer than three hundred coalition deaths.¹⁵

May 1994: For decades tension was building up between the ruling white minority government in South Africa and the non-white majority. Many understandably believed that the prelude to a change in the government system would be a blood bath. When the first all-race election ushered in a post-apartheid government, it was a remarkably smooth, even miraculous, transition.

Prayer Answered: What do these illustrations, and other equally astonishing world events have in common? The faithful and fervent prayers of God's people saturated each situation. Many prayers were uttered for these breakthroughs. There was even a literal "laying on of hands" on the Berlin Wall. Truly, we can touch heaven and change earth.

Shaping History Through Prayer and Fasting.

¹⁵ Sadly, the same cannot be said for the Iraqi side.

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Experienced and dedicated intercessory groups worked overtime during the Gulf Crisis in prayer and fasting for a swift conclusion to the Gulf War. One group called for a nationwide "Take Ten at Twelve," meaning ten minutes of prayer could be offered at twelve noon during the duration of the crisis. Other groups, like Operation Esther, prayed to see God rain down mercy and peace on the troubled nations of southern Africa. And He did!

What the world needs now... If Christians are to face the future with courage and confidence, it is more crucial than ever that we become people of prayer. Evidence is overwhelming in Scripture, history, and current events, that prayer works. *Prayer makes a difference.* The Holy Spirit is inspiring many "busy" and "successful" Christians to come back to the basics of prayer. No alternative, substitute, or short cut, exists for this time-honoured and effective practice.

Many believers know the strong yearning within to draw aside and seek the face of God. Often, however, our good intentions to pray seem to slip away as the day goes on. No wonder, as one study suggests, the average western Christian prays only sixty seconds a day and the average minister only ninety seconds. How can we tackle the future challenges when we give God the crumbs of our time?

Let us not wait for a crisis or mega-challenge before we are forced, awkwardly at that, into the throne-room of grace. Salt-and-light integrity is fuelled by the power of prayer. We cannot shine for Jesus if we neglect our prayer life...ever. So let us draw near to God, knowing He will draw near to us. Great adventures and a changed world await us when we do.

Chapter Synopsis

Prayer's indispensability in salt-and-light integrity was outlined, with endorsements by famous Christians, practical points, fasting, and illustrations from history. A person of salt-and-light integrity must never neglect his or her prayer life.

Study Questions

1. How would you define a "lover of prayer?"
2. What is the link between prayer and salt-and-light integrity?
3. List the different types of prayer.
4. How does fasting undergird our prayer life?
5. What positive steps can you take to improve your prayer life?

Read and Reflect

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

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1. Note the relationship between prayer and spiritual warfare.
2. List the various items of the armour of God. How does each one of them help you in prayer and the Christian life?
3. When you face difficulties from other people, how does verse 12 help you to put things in a heavenly perspective?
4. Verse 18 gives you the practical side of spiritual warfare. Explain it in your own words.