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Living a Life of Prayer part 3

Elder Charles Moore

"Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving;" (Colossians 4:2).

As believers, we are told not only to devote ourselves to prayer, to be alert, and engaging in spiritual warfare through prayer, but also to be thankful in prayer. In order to be thankful in prayer, it is helpful to remind ourselves of the blessings that we have. It can be as simple as, "Lord, I'm thankful for my life. Lord, I'm thankful for my health. Lord, I'm thankful that I have two arms and two legs that work. Lord I'm thankful that I can see. I'm thankful for my wife. I'm thankful for my children. I'm thankful for my grandchildren." Each one of us needs to remind ourselves to be thankful for so many things that we often take for granted. As we develop this discipline, we come to realize we should thank God for the privilege of prayer.

One reason we should be thankful is because of what you might call a side benefit, that is, stress relief. "Harvard cardiologist Benson has concluded that talking to God may also save your life. (He didn't start out with this conclusion, he first looked to the East) In the 60's, Benson found that practitioners of Transcendental Meditation could dramatically reduce stress by sitting quietly and repeating a mantra. . . . Further

experiments, however, have turned up what Benson has called the "faith factor." Patients who prayed were more successful at lowering metabolic rates, slowing the heart rate and other symptoms of stress than those who used religiously insignificant words to calm their minds. Prayer was more effective than TM." It's funny that as prayer has been removed from schools, schools are now introducing some forms of transcendental meditation relaxation exercises to help students deal with stress. Schools are forced to use something that has been found to be less effective because they can't use prayer any longer. The positive effects of prayer should be no surprise to us. Scriptures says, **"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."** (Philippians 4:6-7) What is the opposite of stress but peace? We can't avoid stressful situations but the effect of them can be minimized through prayer.

My question to you is this, do you pray? Do you really

pray? Most of us do not pray as we know we should for one very good reason. John Piper described it in his book Desiring God: "Unless I'm badly mistaken, one of the main reasons so many of God's children don't have a significant life of prayer is not so much that we don't want to, but that we don't plan to. If you want to take a four week vacation, you don't just get up one summer morning and say, "Hey, let's go today!" You won't have anything ready. You won't know where to go. Nothing has been planned."

Unfortunately, that is how many of us treat prayer. We get up day after day and realize that significant times of prayer should be part of our life, but nothing is ever ready. We don't know where to go. Nothing has been planned. No time. No place. No procedure. And we all know the opposite of planning is not a wonderful flow of deep, spontaneous experiences in prayer. The opposite of planning is the rut. If you don't plan a vacation you will probably stay home and watch T.V.! If you want renewal in your life of prayer, you must plan to see it

Leonard Ravenhill wrote, "The church has many organizers but few agonizers in prayer; many who pay but few who pray; many resters but few wrestlers; many who are enterprising but few who are interceding. Two requirements for a dynamic Christian life are vision and passion, and both of these are generated in the prayer closet. The ministry of preaching is open to a few, but the ministry of prayer is open to every child of God. Tithes may build a church, but tears will give it life.

(Continued on page 2)

That is the difference between the modern church and the early church. Our emphasis is on paying, while theirs was on praying. In the matter of effective praying, never have so many left so much to so few. Brethren, let us pray."

Therefore, my simple exhortation is this: let us take time to rethink our priorities and how prayer fits in to our priorities. Make some new resolve. Try some new venture with God. Set a time. Set a place. Choose a portion of Scripture to guide you. Don't be tyrannized by the press of busy days. Make this a day of turning to prayer — for the glory of God. And then hold your spouse up before God. Hold your children up before God. Hold the church up before God. Hold your pastor up before God. Hold the lost people in the community up before God. And begin to thank Him for what He is doing in your midst. And don't quit praying and praising God until He accomplishes everything He desires to do here. Don't quit praying and praising until He makes his people, His church, a praise in all the earth

Michigan Report

Aurine Moore

July was typical in Michigan this year – hot and hazy, rainy days and overcast nights, with intermittent days of brilliant blue skies punctuated with pillowy, billowy clouds. It was also a month when COLOR camp staff reorganized and caught up with things left undone during June and people found time to visit with friends and relax.

We enjoyed some wonderful outings over the Fourth of July holiday, with many members of the local church enjoying their annual visit to Silver Lake with friends near and far. Locally, Dale and Geneva had to miss their annual trip because both were having health issues but Terrie and Dave Fedor (whose camper sprang a leak and also couldn't make the trip to Silver Lake) hosted a lovely get together at their house for the day. They also invited Carol Fruchey, Charlie and Aurine Moore. Erin Gill and newlyweds Branden and Jamie Carothers came as well. While folks were at Silver Lake playing in the annual Dick Lane Golf tournament, the Monroe folks enjoyed Geneva's photo album book dating back to the 1980's of all the past Silver Lake golf games.

A couple of our local members had eye surgeries this month. Jean Lane had cataract surgery on one of her eyes and Dale Begeman had a procedure to relieve pressure from glaucoma on his eyes. Geneva Begeman continues her recovery from an injury affecting her back. Marcia Moore is still struggling with breathing and foot pain.

Jeff Begeman has been the teacher for upstairs adult Sabbath School and doing a great job. It's been an old tradition that the summer Sabbath School lesson always deals with the tough books of the New Testa-

ment, hence his assignment as teacher. What a delight for him and the class to have him walking us through Hebrews. Jeff has a way of teaching that lets everyone in class feel 'all right' about thinking about what scripture says and relating it to our lives and he's comfortable as he engages the class in discussions. We'll miss him as teacher when he takes off next month and goes West with his family.

Jamie and Branden Carothers' thank you party/wedding reception was held at Terrie and Dave Fedor's. The day's weather looked possibly ominous and it did rain for a long while but that didn't stop the adventurous from engaging in outdoor swimming and bag tossing games or a lot of interaction from occurring between the many groups of guests who came – some from both Branden's and Jamie's places of work, old school friends, relatives, church friends and neighbors. The rain didn't dampen the party and mosquitoes didn't carry off any guests.

One of the guests who came to the party came a long way to attend. Katie Begeman, daughter of Jeff and Melinda Begeman, was fresh off the bus from a youth mission trip to a reservation in South Dakota. She spent a week with 17 other youth from her cousin's church (West Ida Emmanuel Lutheran). They helped with building activities and running activities for children at the reservation. It sounds like she had a wonderful time doing something really helpful for others.

While Kathleen Johnson was visiting Michigan from New Jersey, she loaned a book to Geneva Begeman (who loaned it to Aurine who is going to loan it to . . .). The book is called Healing Stones by Nancy Rue and Steve Arterburn. Nancy Rue is the author of several series of books for young girls and has most recently begun writing a series for adults. Steve Arterburn has a nationally syndicated faith-based counseling program called New Life Ministries and plans to continue the collaboration with Ms. Rue on further stories about one of the main characters in the book. The book tells the story of a woman caught in adultery who, though she must deal with the consequences of her sin, finds real grace, forgiveness and an ability to extend grace and forgiveness to others through Jesus. For those of you who like to read and are searching for authentic and moving stories of mature Christians dealing with real issues, this is a good one.

We enjoyed another great afternoon of fellowship singing with the Petersburg Church of God Seventh Day. We're getting to know some of the regulars who come down faithfully for the program and who really appreciate the songs and visitors. The Echoes of Happiness went to Judy Begeman's room to sing just for her following the program. Getting eight plus singers in one room, singing a capella, was a sight to behold. Judy enjoyed the impromptu concert and when David Charles joined the group, they continued singing rounds of camp songs that went back forty years in time. Judy is loved at the nursing home for her spirit and friendliness and is clearly a blessing to the people who know her.

All in all, it was another great month. Until next month, may God be with you and you with Him.

The month of July started off with the usual trip to Silver Lake, MI. Dale and I were unable to get there this year, but Kerry and Kathleen Johnson from New Jersey, Kay, Jim and Katie Nevil from Baroda Mi, Larry and Peggy Charles, Brad and wife Sarah Charles and Annie and Jeff Malburg from the Chelsea Michigan area, Jane and Mike Brown and son Tim from Florida were some of the gang there from the outlying regions. There were quite a few of the Begemans there to enjoy golf and sun and sand. Glad they were able to enjoy the place and the renewing of friendships.

Jon Lane and son Scott flew home from Phoenix earlier this month to spend some time with Mom Jean and enjoy a family gathering at the Fedors'. Scott just keeps growing! He was excited when he was here as he had just tried out for a traveling hockey team and made it! He is 14 now and starting high school this year. It was really good to see you, Jon and Scott.

Seth Begeman moved the last of June to the Cleveland area to take a job with the parks and recreation department there. Seth has gotten settled in and was back one weekend to visit Mom and Dad and all of us. He loves his new job and we are glad he did not move too far away!

This is the month for babies I guess as we have two to tell about. On Thursday July 24 Emily Morris gave birth to a baby girl-8 pounds, 12 ounces. Her name is Carly

Madison. Emily is the daughter of Sally Johnson Smith and the granddaughter of Ethel Johnson. Both parents and Ethel were on hand for the big occasion. Emily and Robert live in California so everyone hopped on that plane and got to enjoy a little vacation as well. Congratulations to all.

Brent Charles writes, "At 4:01 Monday afternoon, (July 28) we had a little girl 8lbs 4oz, and 20 inches." Her name is Charlotte Anne. Mom, Julie, had a cesarean but was able to come home July 31. Congratulations to the whole Charles tribe!

Dorothy Layton reports slow progress on her rehabilitation from her knee surgery. She is still able to get around on her own in the car some. She is very thankful she is able to go places on her own these days. The rest of the gang in Maryland is doing fine. Karen Dorsey is having a birthday this week so "happy birthday", Karen.

I hear good news from Ellen Momberger and the Ripleys. They are all enjoying life and especially family get-togethers are precious. They all consider our church family as very dear so drop a line to some of these outlying folks! They would really appreciate it.

Hope each of you is having a great summer and enjoying all of God's great creation. See you next month.

TEN GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE PRAYER

1. Set aside a few minutes every day. Do not say anything; simply practice thinking about God. This will make your mind spiritually receptive.
2. Then pray orally, using simple, natural words. Tell God everything that is on your mind. Do not think you must use stereotyped, pious phrases. Talk to God in your own natural language. He understands.
3. Pray as you go about the business of the day. Utter minute prayers by closing your eyes to shut out the world and concentrating briefly on God's presence. The more you do this every day, the nearer you will feel God's presence.
4. Do not always ask for something when you pray. Spend most of your prayer time giving thanks for God Himself and His blessings.
5. Pray with the belief that sincere prayers can reach out and surround your loved ones with God's love and protection.
6. Never use negative thoughts in prayer.
7. Always express willingness to accept God's will. Ask for what you want, but be willing to take what God gives you. It may be better than what you ask for.
8. Practice the attitude of putting everything in God's hands. Ask for the ability to do your best and to leave the results to God.
9. Pray for people you do not like or who have mistreated you. Resentment is guaranteed to short-circuit spiritual power.

Submitted by Elder Moore

**CHURCH OF THE
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Teasing

My grandson, Justus, age 10, and his sister Taylor, age 13, were always teasing each other. One day, Justus was getting "sensitive" about things his sister was saying to him. I reminded him that he had said the same types of things many times in days past.

With quiet reflection, he spoke a gospel truth: "But it doesn't hurt as much coming out of my mouth as it does going into my ears."

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