LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF
AN INTERCESSORY PRAYER MINISTRY
IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

There are a limited number of Southern Baptist Churches in North Carolina that have an established intercessory prayer ministry. Consequently, there is diminished spiritual power and ministry effectiveness. Prayer releases the power of God to work in the lives of individuals, churches, and nations. It is therefore essential that churches become houses of prayer.

The purpose of this thesis project is to develop a plan that will impress upon the local church the necessity of establishing an intercessory ministry. Furthermore it will serve as a resource for the development of an intercessory prayer ministry.

Abstract length: 94 words.
DEDICATION

To my dear wife, Linda, and our three daughters, Whitney, Ivey, and Ashley who have faithfully prayed for me during the writing of this thesis project.

And

To Danny and Kathy Childers, co-laborers in ministry. Danny as Deacon Chairman and Kathy as Secretary.

And

To the members of Peninsula Baptist Church.
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Introduction

In one of the most unique demonstrations of his power and authority Jesus cleansed the temple and declared "... My house will be called a house of prayer ..." (Matthew 21:12). This quotation from Isaiah 56 reveals the purpose for the house of the Lord. It is to be a place of prayer. This can be understood in two ways. First, the place where believers meet for worship, prayer, fellowship, and instruction is called the house of the Lord. Therefore, the facility itself is to be a place of prayer. Secondly, the temple in the Old Testament represented God's dwelling place on earth and represented his house. The temple of the Old Testament has passed away and likewise the temple of Herod where Jesus spoke these words. Where then does God dwell? The New Testament teaches that He dwells in the lives of believers (I Corinthians 6:19). In a sense then, believers are to be God's house. Clearly then this means that we are to be people of prayer. The church must be a place of prayer and believers must be people of prayer. This is the Biblical model. This is the Biblical mandate. When this model is followed and the mandate carried out, God will be glorified and his people blessed.
If one were to evaluate the present ministry of prayer in the local church, what would be found? Probably prayer before group meetings, prayer in the worship services, and a "prayer meeting" that devoted little time to actual prayer. How can a church go beyond these brief times of prayer? How can prayer become an integrated part of the total ministry of the church? The answer to these questions is the establishment of an intercessory prayer ministry.

An intercessory prayer ministry is intended to function as a vital part of the ministry of the church. This is accomplished by enlisting and training people to pray. A prayer room should be established in the church building as a specific place to pray. The intercessory prayer ministry is to be the focal point for the prayer ministries of the church. It is to enlist, instruct, encourage, and involve people in the important work of intercession. An overall prayer coordinator should be enlisted and become responsible to direct the prayer ministry in the same way as one would direct the Sunday School or other lay directed ministries of the church.

The Bible is very clear that God is seeking intercessors. Consider the following scriptures:
"I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest . . . till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth"  Isaiah 62:6-7

"And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor"  Isaiah 59:16

"And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold"  Isaiah 63:5

"There is none that calleth upon Thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee"  Isaiah 64:7

"And I sought for a man . . . that should . . . stand in the gap before Me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none"  Ezekiel 22:30

Intercession is a special work in that it is the highest form of prayer. Of the various forms of prayer (adoration, intercession, petition, confession,
and deliverance) intercession is especially dear to God's heart. In the Bible seven-ninths of the asking prayers that God answered with "yes" are intercessory prayers. God is most pleased when we ask on behalf of another\(^1\).

Not only is intercession a special work but it is also a spiritual work. Nothing more clearly identifies us with Jesus than the ministry of intercession. His earthly ministry was characterized by intercession. When Satan demanded to sift Peter, Jesus response was "I have prayed for you", (Luke 22:32). His heavenly ministry is now one of intercession. Hebrews 7:25 says that "He ever liveth to make intercession". Spiritual results are accomplished through intercession. It releases the power of God to implement his will on earth as it is implemented in heaven. An intercessory prayer ministry enables the local church to be the house of prayer God intends. An intercessory prayer ministry equips believers to be the people of prayer God intends them to be. Intercessory prayer is a special work and a spiritual work that is vital to the life and ministry of the local church.

\(^1\) T.W. Hunt, *Church Prayer Ministry Manual* (Nashville: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1992), p. 9. Hunt also points out that this same ratio is demonstrated in the high priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17. In that prayer 2/9 of it Jesus asks for himself and 7/9 for his followers.
Chapter 1

A Commitment to Prayer

A firm commitment to prayer is essential in the establishment of an intercessory prayer ministry in the local church. Ten different words are translated to mean commitment in the New Testament. The two that most accurately describe Christian commitment are *parathithemi* and *pisteo*. I Peter 4:19 says, "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit (*parathithesthosan*) their souls before him in well doing as unto a faithful creator." Here commit means to lay something down. In John 2:24 it says, "But Jesus did not commit (*episteusan*) himself unto them because he knew all men." Commit in this verse means that he would not entrust himself to them. In essence commit in the New Testament means to yield to or surrender to something or someone.\(^2\)

A commitment to prayer must demonstrate this New Testament principle. This commitment must first be in the heart of the pastor and then be communicated to the leadership and membership of the church. The commitment to prayer is a vital part of the personal life of the pastor. E.M. Bounds has written this about a praying pastor:

"Preachers are preeminently God's leaders. They are primarily responsible for the condition of the church. They shape its character, give tone and direction to its life. Much depends on these leaders. Prayer is one of the eminent characteristics of strong spiritual leadership. Men of mighty prayer are men of might and bold things. Their power with God has the conquering tread."3

The daily discipline of Bible reading and prayer must be cultivated if it is to bear fruit. This daily discipline has been called a quiet time, or a devotional time. It is during this time when we are searching the scriptures that we learn of God's ways and purposes for our lives. Psalm 119:104-105 declares: "From thy precepts I get understanding; therefore, I hate every false way. Thy word is lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." The pastor should read the Bible for his personal instruction rather than for lesson or sermon preparation only. There needs to be that vital encounter with the Living Word in order to develop and maintain the spiritual maturity needed to lead the church to be the house of prayer God intends. Unless a specific time is set aside, it is likely that only sporadic devotions will occur. The spiritual giants of the past all seem to have recognized this and most of them set the early morning as that time to pray. Psalm 5:3 says, "my voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up." There are a number of books to help in

the establishment of a daily time. Two books that offer a clear method for daily devotions and prayer are *Could You Not Tarry One Hour?* by Larry Lea and the other *The Hour That Changes The World* by Dick Eastman. Regardless of the method chosen, a daily devotional time is imperative in the pastor's personal life.

The commitment to prayer must be not only in the heart of the pastor but also in the heart of the leadership and membership of the church. It is the responsibility of the pastor to effectively communicate the commitment to prayer. Communication is an essential part of pastoral leadership. Adequate information must be given and received if the process of communication is to succeed. Effective communication is within the nature and character of God as he has communicated (revealed) himself to man.

The obvious place for communication of the prayer ministry is in the regular services and meetings of the church. The following suggestions are to broaden the opportunities for communicating the prayer ministry to the church leadership and membership so that they will be informed and desire to participate in it.

1. Enlist the key leaders of the church to pray together on a regular basis. It is during this time of prayer that the pastor can share his
vision of the prayer ministry while at the same time sharing in the prayer burdens of key leaders.

2. Enlist key leaders to be individual prayer partners with the pastor. This would include those leaders who would likely take the leadership role in developing the prayer ministry.

3. As prayers are answered (and it is appropriate to share that they have been answered) then tell the membership that God has answered and is to be praised for it.

4. Create an atmosphere of prayer in the church. Prayer requests should be encouraged, written down, and sincerely prayed for. (The prayer room is the place where these requests can be systematically prayed for until answered).

5. Have special times of prayer. This could include a prayer alert for specific needs; a concert of prayer that focuses on unity; a day of prayer in preparation for a special event; a season of prayer (such as
Christmas or Easter); and a time of prayer and fasting for an urgent need or a special time of seeking God; and prayer chains where a request would be relayed through a network of prayers.

6. Organize small prayer groups that will meet on a regular basis to pray for those specific requests within the church family. These groups could be made up of husbands and wives, men only, women only, or youth.

7. Schedule a meal in conjunction with a prayer time. A prayer breakfast is an ideal time for a prayer meal.

The level of commitment to prayer by the pastor, leadership, and membership of the church will determine the success of that prayer ministry. Prayer is so important that John Wesley said, "God does nothing except in answer to prayer." S.D. Gordon said, "The greatest thing anyone can do for God and for man, is to pray. You can do more than pray after you have prayed, but you cannot do more until you have prayed. Prayer is striking the winning blow." The vitality of the church depends on the
ministry of prayer. In this challenging time in which we live when the ungodly seem more and more bold, the people of God must lift the Biblical standard for godly conduct and overcome evil with good. There is no greater good than the power of the Almighty released to work in answer to faithful prayer.

Chapter 2

A Theology of Prayer

Biblical Definitions of Prayer

The Bible plainly states that God hears our prayer "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come" (Psalm 65:2). As a part of God's holy character he delights in hearing our prayers. In fact, Jeremiah 33:3 says "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." God invites our prayers so that he can act on our behalf by encouraging our prayer with his promises. Not only does he invite our prayer but we are commanded in I Thessalonians 5:17 to "Pray without ceasing." To fulfill this privilege and duty to pray, an understanding of the Biblical definitions of prayer will be helpful. Several passages both in the Old Testament and New Testament will be considered. Yet, the very nature of prayer prevents a comprehensive and definitive definition of it.
Old Testament Definitions of Prayer

The most common word for prayer in the Old Testament is *tephillah* which is interpreted to mean intercession or supplication. Spiros Zodhiates writes about it saying; "It means intercession for someone (II Kings 19:4; Isaiah 37:4; Jeremiah 7:16; 11:14), prayer (Psalm 4:2, 6, 10; 109:4), entreaty, supplication, hymn. This is the most general Hebrew word for prayer in the Old Testament."  

Another frequent word is *palal*. Zodhiates gives this definition: "This verbal root means to judge (officially or mentally); to decide, to punish; to adjudge; to think; to act as a mediator; to pray (to God), to entreat, to intervene, to interpose, to intercede, to make supplication. This important root is found eighty-four times in the Old Testament and is a common word for "pray." Of the total number of occurrences, eighty instances are reflexive, thus expressing the idea of interceding for or praying on behalf of someone."  

*Sha'äl* means "to request or make a petition." Psalm 27:4 is an example:

"One thing have I asked of the Lord, that I shall seek after."  

*Paga'* refers to an "encounter which is a request or an intercession." The word is rendered in the intercessory sense in Jeremiah 7:16; "As for you, do

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not pray for this people, or lift up cry or prayer for them, and do not intercede with me . . . "

The fifth word, *kara*’, is used in a general sense of calling on the Lord or involving his name. Psalm 55:16 says, "But I call upon God; and the Lord will save me." 

Finally, *za'ak* has a sense of desperation about it, having to do with "crying out for aid in times of emergency; to cry out in need". Judges 3:9 reflects a time of crisis for the early Jewish nation " . . . when the people of Israel cried to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer for the people of Israel." It is also the same word in Psalm 22:5 which Jesus used as he cried out from the cross.

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8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
New Testament Definitions For Prayer

The New Testament uses seven words to speak about prayer. These are:

**PROSEUCHOMAI** - The most frequently used word concerning prayer offered to God. The emphasis in this word is on God as the one who is hearing our request. It puts the focus of our prayer upon Him rather than on the request itself.\(^{11}\) The Apostle Paul uses this word when he prayed for others (Phillippians 1:9) when he requested prayer for himself (Hebrews 13:8) and when he challenged the saints to persevere in prayer (Ephesians 6:18).\(^{12}\)

**EROTAO** - The word is translated to ask or make request. It most often implies the one asking is on an equal footing with the person being asked. Obviously, no human being can make such a prayer request. Therefore, the most frequent usage of this word of prayer is used by Jesus himself in John's Gospel (4:31, 14:16; 16:26, 17:9; 15, 20).\(^{13}\)

**AITEO** - The word aiteo also means "to ask." It is used in contrast to erotao. W.E. Vines gives this distinction: "Aiteo more frequently suggests

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the attitude of a suppliant, the petition of one who is lesser in position than he to whom the petition is made; e.g., in the case of men in asking something from God, Matthew 7:7; a child from a parent, Matthew 7:9,10; a subject from a king, Acts 12:20; priests and people from Pilate, Luke 23:23".¹⁴

John R. Rice uses the translation of aiteo "to ask" as the thesis for his book on prayer.

Christians have not because they ask not, and they have not because they ask amiss. That Scripture says that it is not fighting, or warring, or desiring, or worrying; but it is asking that gets things from God. PRAYING IS ASKING.

There are two principal words in the Greek New Testament translated ask. One is the word eperatao, which means to ask, to inquire, as asking questions. But the word used about prayer is aiteo, which means to ask, to crave, to desire, to call for, always meaning asking for something. I have just counted about thirty times that this word is used about prayer in the New Testament. And it is properly translated ask.¹⁵

DEOMAI - This word is translated "to beg, petition, pray, make request." Its use most often relates to a deep longing or desire. Jesus uses this word when imploring the disciples to pray for laborers for the harvest (Luke 22:32).¹⁶

¹⁴ Ibid.
¹⁶ Towns, Spiritual Factors of Church Growth Internal Church Growth, p. 213.
**EPIKALEO** - This word literally means "to call upon". Its implication is to call upon in time of trouble asking for help when no other help will do. This word is used by Stephen in Acts 7:59 who being stoned to death called out to God for help. *Epikaleo* is also used in Romans 10:13 as it relates to a sinner calling on the Lord for salvation. Hallesby affirms the benefit of helplessness before God writing:

"My helpless friend, your helplessness is the most powerful plea which rises up to the tender father-heart of God. He has heard your prayer from the very first moment that you honestly cried to Him in your need, night and day. He inclines His ear toward earth in order to ascertain if any of the helpless children of men are turning to Him in their distress.

To pray is to open the door unto Jesus and admit Him into your distress. Your helplessness is the very thing which opens wide the door unto Him and gives Him access to all your needs.

Be not anxious because of your helplessness. Above all, do not let it prevent you from praying. Helplessness is the real secret and the impelling power of prayer. You should therefore rather try to thank God for the feeling of helplessness which He has given you. For it is only when we are helpless that we open our hearts to Jesus and let Him help us in our distress, according to His grace and mercy."17

**ENTUNCHANO** - This word means "to entreat or plead with". The King James translates this word as intercession in Romans 11:2 as Elijah prays earnestly to God against Israel for their unfaithfulness to Him. It is also

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related to the Holy Spirit praying for believers (Romans 8:27) and the
heavenly ministry of Jesus as he prays for the believer (Hebrews 7:25).
There is an intensity associated with entunchano that reflects a personal
appeal in the presence of the one being asked. The question then could be
asked does this personal appeal to God have an impact on God's response?
Does the personal appeal of prayer touch the heart of God? The Scriptures
answer with a resounding, YES! One example is found in Ezekiel 36:37
where God's sovereign purpose is seen working in unity with the prayerful
plea of the people of Israel where God says he will act in response to the
"plea" (NIV) of his people.

ENTEUXIS - This word speaks of approaching God as an intercessor
(one who comes on behalf of another) in the way one would approach a
King, i.e., with respect and awareness the King was able to grant your
request. W.E. Vines lists enteuxis under prayer and intercession as follows:
... (it) is the regular word for a petition to a superior. W.E. Vines, Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, Volume III, p. 200.

18 Elmer Towns, Spiritual Factors of Church Growth Internal Church Growth, p. 214.
An understanding of these primary definitions of prayer from both the Old and New Testaments will help in the development of a theology of prayer. Prayer that is offered consistent with Biblical definitions will be prayer that God will be pleased to hear.
FORMS OF PRAYER

While the Biblical definitions of prayer can be more fully understood through a word study of the basic Hebrew or Greek word meanings, it is not so with forms of prayer. While indeed the Bible is the perfect guide in all things pertaining to life and godliness, it is much broader in speaking to forms of prayer. Because prayer is a personal expression of one's relationship with the Living God, it assumes a variety of forms as a part of the ebb and flow of the spiritual life. Using the prayer directions of the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 6, John MacArthur writes of the various expressions of prayer in his book on spiritual growth:

"Prayer" is a general word pertaining to its many forms and character. For example, you can pray publicly, privately, verbally, or silently. You can pray those deliberately planned prayers in which you open up a little prayer book, or you can pray those spontaneous prayers that just flow out of your heart. You can request something from God or you can give Him thanks for what He has given. You can be kneeling, standing, sitting, lying down, or even driving. There are many ways to pray - because God has designed prayer to go along with every kind of emotion and every kind of experience. We have a variety of forms of prayer to fit every situation and circumstance.21

Granted, the personal nature of prayer will cause it to be expressed in a variety of ways. There are several specific forms of prayer that can be

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identified and discussed. In his classic book on prayer, O. Hallesby lists five forms of prayer:

1. Supplicatory Prayer. By this we mean request prayer, the turning to God to receive something.

2. The Prayer of Thanksgiving. This follows naturally upon supplicatory prayer. Having received something from God, it is self-evident that we ought to return thanks to Him for it.

3. Praise. Praise and thanksgiving are very closely akin to each other. Outwardly it is not possible to draw a clear line of demarcation between them. Both consist in giving glory to God. From ancient times, however, men have tried to differentiate between them by saying that when we give thanks we give God the glory for what He has done for us; and when we worship or give praise, we give God glory for what He is in Himself. In that event, praise lies upon a higher plane than thanksgiving.

4. Conversation. Conversation is the free and natural exchange of ideas between persons. The wider the range of subjects included in their conversation, the richer their fellowship. To pray is to let Jesus into our lives.

5. Prayer Without Words. We can spend time in silence together with people whom we know real well. That, we cannot do with others. We must converse with them, entertain them either with interesting or profound things as the case may be. But with our own dear ones we can speak freely about common and insignificant things. In their presence, too, we can be silent.22

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Adoration
Confession
Thanksgiving
Supplication

Bill Hybels in *Too Busy Not to Pray*, gives an excellent discussion of the ACTS form of prayer:

Sensing the carelessness and one-sidedness of your prayers, you begin to feel guilty about praying. Guilt leads to faint-heartedness, and that in turn leads to prayerlessness. When praying makes you feel guilty, pretty soon you stop praying. If that has happened to you, it's time to set up a prayer routine. I'm going to offer you a pattern to follow. It's not the only pattern or the perfect pattern, but it's a good pattern that has been used for many years in Christian circles. It's balanced, and it's easy to use. All you have to remember is the word ACTS, an acrostic whose four letters stand for adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication.\(^{23}\)

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Adoration

Adoration sets the tone for the entire prayer. It reminds us of God's identity reinforcing our understanding of who He is. It purifies the one who prays. Finally it reminds us that God is worthy of our adoration.24

Confession

In confession we are to deal with sin specifically. We are to agree with God and say the same thing about sin that He says. (As an example, he refers to "padding" an expense account as charity or promising to do something on Monday when you know you can't do it til Friday is lying). When we honestly confess our sins (I John 1:9) and call them by their true names, here's what will happen:

1. Conscience will be cleansed.
2. Peace will fill you.
3. You will be free to pray.25

24 Ibid.
25 Ibid. pp. 53-56.
**Thanksgiving**

There is a difference between simple gratitude and thanksgiving. That difference is action. Using the Biblical illustration of the ten lepers, the nine probably felt gratitude, but the one who took time to come and express that gratitude to Jesus was the one who really gave thanks. Hybels thanks God for four kinds of blessings; answered prayer, spiritual blessings, relational blessings, and material blessings. 26

**Supplication**

Based on Paul's word to the Philippians (4:6) it is appropriate to make your requests to God. When you have adored God, confessed your sins, and thanked Him, then you are ready to ask what you will. Asking in a spirit of humility and desiring God's best, he offers his prayer requests in these categories: ministry, people, family and personal. 27

A final step in using the ACTS form of prayer is that of writing one's prayers. This helps focus the prayer requests and permits a record to be kept of God's faithfulness in answering prayer. Dick Eastman's writing in

26 Ibid. pp. 56-57.
27 Ibid. p. 58.
The Hour That Changes The World lists eleven forms of prayer that begins with praise and ends with praise. These include:

- Praise
- Petition
- Waiting
- Thanksgiving
- Confession
- Singing
- Scripture Praying
- Meditation
- Watching
- Listening
- Intercession
- Praise

Eastman warns about the forms of prayer by not letting the form overshadow the substance. Although each element is clearly based on Scripture, the particular order in which they are employed may vary. To spend five minutes on each of the twelve aspects of prayer will take exactly one hour. However, some prayer warriors may desire to spend more time on certain elements than others. On occasion only eight or nine of the twelve elements may be included during your devotional hour. Be careful not to become a slave to any "prayer system." 

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29 Ibid. p. 17.
The final mention of forms of prayer can be directly related to a specific Scripture passage found in Matthew 6, commonly known as the Lord's Prayer. It could more correctly be called the disciple's prayer. It has also been described as the model prayer. In it, Jesus gives the all encompassing form of prayer that incorporates all the elements necessary for a balanced prayer life. It is not just a prayer to be memorized but it is a pattern or form of praying that is comprehensive in its teaching. T.W. Hunt summarized the five categories in the Lord's Prayer.

Prayer of Adoration Is a Form of Prayer
Prayer of Intercession Is a Form of Prayer
Prayer of Petition Is a Form of Prayer
Prayer of Repentance Is a Form of Prayer
Prayer of Deliverance Is a Form of Prayer


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Petition is obviously asking God for his blessing. For petition to be effective Cho mentions four requirements:

1. Ask in Faith (Matthew 21:22)
2. Abide in Christ (John 15:7)
3. Proper Motivation (James 4:3)
4. Seek God's Will (I John 5:14-15)\(^{31}\)

Because of God's desire to bless his children and his unlimited resources with which to bless, He delights in answering our prayers of petition.

Devotion as a form of prayer is prayer seeking communion with God. Devotion is in reality seeking God. This requires discipline and effort. However, God rewards those who seek him.\(^ {32} \)

The final form of prayer Cho mentions for the personal prayer life is that of intercession. The one who will be an intercessor should possess these qualities:

1. Devoted to prayer.
2. Patient.
3. Filled with the Spirit.

\(^{31}\) Paul Cho, Revival Praying, pp. 62-68.
\(^{32}\) Ibid. p.76.
5. Vision.\textsuperscript{33}

Intercession is costly prayer. Cho likens it to sharing in the suffering of Christ. Because Cho and his church are willing to pay the price of intercession, he believes that is why there is revival in his country.\textsuperscript{34}

These more commonly known forms of prayer are suggestive and not exhaustive in their presentation. There will be many varied forms of prayer because prayer is a personal relationship with the Living God. He is not static or fixed. He is attentive to every prayer regardless of form. The problem is not with God but with our human weakness. Without specific forms of prayer we can become unbalanced in our prayer life and lose touch with the meaning and purpose of prayer. Hybels sounds a word of caution to those who neglect the various forms of prayer: "Developing prayer fitness is like developing physical fitness: you need a pattern to avoid becoming imbalanced. Without a routine, you will probably fall into the "Please God" trap: "Please God, give me. Please God, help me. Please God, cover me. Please God, arrange this."\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid. p. 81.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid. p. 87.
\textsuperscript{35} Bill Hybels, \textit{Too Busy Not To Pray}, p. 50.
Hindrances to Prayer

There is a saying in business that nothing succeeds like success. As a rule the better you are in your business the more business you are able to do. So it is in the important business of prayer. The more you pray the more you are able to pray. Nothing encourages you to pray more, than to succeed in prayer, i.e. having your prayers answered. When God answers your prayers you are motivated to continue in prayer. The opposite is also true. When you pray and answers do not seem to come you can become discouraged and quit. This will lead to an impoverished Christian life. The wise person will ask, if my prayers are not being answered, why? The Bible assures us that God invites our prayers and answers our prayers (Jeremiah 33:3). Therefore, we need to evaluate our own lives, and in light of the scriptural truth on prayer, to see if we are meeting the conditions God has set down for answering our prayers.

The first and most obvious reason our prayers are hindered is that we fail to pray at all. James 4:2 says, "that we have not because we ask not". All too often we believe in our own strength and ability and only turn to prayer when all else fails. This certainly does not honor God. In fact, the book of I Corinthians 12:23 calls it a sin. It is probably the easiest sin to commit and
the hardest to confess among God's people. John R. Rice speaks of the sin of prayerlessness in harsh terms:

Prayerlessness is a terrible sin. My greatest sin, and yours, is prayerlessness. My failures are all prayer-failures. The lack of souls saved in my ministry is primarily because of lack of prayer, not because of lack of preaching. All the times I have fallen into sin, have failed in my duties, have been bereft of power, or disconsolate for lack of comfort, I can charge to the sin of prayerlessness. Oh! horrible sin, the lack of prayer!  

Our prayers are hindered because we fail to pray.

Closely related to prayerlessness is unbelief. If we do not believe that prayer makes a difference then we will not pray. Thus prayerlessness is rooted in unbelief. Hebrew 3:12 warns "that unbelief comes from a wicked heart that turns away from God". This is a strong rebuke for the sin of prayerlessness that ultimately finds its root is unbelief. Prayerlessness is the first and most common hindrance to prayer.

The second reason our prayers are hindered is that our requests are inappropriate. We ask of God from our limited understanding of our genuine needs and the needs of others. Fortunately, God in his loving mercy must deny those requests that may be self-serving, immature and contrary to his higher purposes. A clear example of a denied request is the one presented by James and John to Jesus for places of honor in his

36 John R. Rice, Prayer Asking and Receiving, p. 314.
kingdom. In reply, Jesus said you don't know what you are asking. In effect he said the request is inappropriate, I will not grant it (Matthew 20:20-23, Mark 10: 35-40).

Another hindrance to prayer that is akin to prayerlessness is faint-heartedness. Jesus said men ought always to pray and faint not. Often our prayers are hindered because we give up. Persistence in prayer demands that we not become weary in well doing, knowing we will reap if we faint not (Galatians 6:9). When the Philistines came against Israel at Mizpah the Israelites begged Samuel to pray (I Samuel 7:8). We need and desire the persistent prayers of others in order to receive God's best. The sin of prayerlessness is rooted in unbelief and results in faint-heartedness.

A third hindrance to prayer is greed or covetousness. It most clearly manifests itself in robbing God of the tithe and offering (Malachi 3:8-9). God can not bless or honor one who has so blatantly disobeyed his divine commands. Bill Hybels illustrates the way a barrier that we have made between God and ourselves affects our requests. Imagine you've been on a vacation for two or three weeks. You come back and discover that the person you hired to mow your lawn went to the hospital the day after you left and has been in traction ever since. Your lawn is about eight inches high, and you know your K-Mart Eclipse is not going to handle it.
Fortunately your neighbor has a John Deere riding mower that will cut anything, and he has often said to you, "Look, if you ever get in a jam, you can use my mower." You decide to take him up on his offer.

On the way to his house, as you're mentally rehearsing your request, your neighbor's little dachshund waddles up and starts bothering your pant legs. Now you hate dachshunds, especially this one. It howls, it messes on your lawn, and it snaps at you - which is exactly what it's doing right now. You can hardly put one foot in front of another without getting bitten or tripped.

Exasperated, you give the little fellow a sly, swift kick. Then you look up and see your neighbor standing on his front porch, arms folded, looking straight at you. Is it a good moment to ask for the lawn mower? Or is there something you need to clear up before asking for favors?37

A fourth hindrance to prayer is unconcern for the poor. Proverbs 21:13 says, when we have the means to help the poor and fail to do so, then God may refuse to hear our prayers because of our uncaring attitude. This relates not only in giving to the poor but also in paying a fair wage to those who work for you. God speaks to Israel about this matter through the prophet Isaiah:

On the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers . . . You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high . . . Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter - when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh

37 Bill Hybels, Too Busy Not To Pray, pp. 82-83.
and blood? ... Then you will call, and the Lord will answer, you will cry for help and he will say: Here am I (Isaiah 58: 3-9).

A fifth hindrance to prayer is selfishness. It is incredible just how selfish the human heart can be even in matters pertaining to the Spirit. Hallesby writes:

Our selfishness knows no bounds. In more or less naive self-love we look upon everything in our environment with which we come in contact as our agencies, as things which exist for our sakes, as something for us to make use of and utilize to our own advantage. We think and act as though everything, inanimate things, plants, animals, human beings, even our own souls, were created for the purpose of bringing gratification to our selfish desires. And we make no exception to God. As soon as we encounter Him, we immediately look upon Him as another means of gaining our own ends. 38

This propensity toward self often sets us at cross purposes with God's best. The people of Israel craved selfish desires in the wilderness and God granted their desires but sent leanness to their souls. Paul amplifies this by warning us: "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted" (I Corinthians 10:6). The problem with being selfish is that you never are contented with whatever you receive. Discontent was the hallmark of the people of Israel regardless of God's blessing. Selfishness ignores the needs of others and the generous

38 Hallesby, Prayer, p. 119.
provision of God himself. Selfishness is one of the great hindrances to prayer.

Another subtle hindrance to prayer is the harboring of idols in the heart. Ezekiel 14:3 indicates that idols do hinder prayer. Idolatry is really putting something else before God. This violates the first commandment and hinders our prayer. Vance Havner has a sermon by the title "God Never Comes Next" where he speaks about ordering our lives so that God is our first priority. In it he quotes a poem:

The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from its throne
And worship only Thee.39

Idolatry is not limited to pagan gods of the ancient world or the third world. Idolatry can be anything that claims the priority of our life. This can include cars, boats, houses, and other property as well as titles, positions, and reputations. God's word warns when other things take his place our prayers are hindered.

A seventh hindrance to prayer is broken relationships. For those who are married they must maintain a proper relationship with their spouse if their prayers are to be unhindered (I Peter 3:7 ff). Many of God's people have hindered prayer lives because of their unwillingness to live in harmony as husband and wife. God has assigned clear roles to husbands and wives that they may respect, honor, and love one another. When spouses fail to follow God's word and live in disobedience, the result will be hindered prayer. Many of the marriage and family problems that plague society today would be resolved if husbands and wives fulfilled their God ordained roles and faithfully spent time together in prayer.

The next relational problem that hinders prayer is between christian brothers (Matthew 5:23-24). The gift mentioned before the altar is a sacrificial animal. God considers reconciliation so urgent that you were to leave the bound animal, go make reconciliation and then come and offer the gift. This would require immediate attention to any wrong relationship. Our tendency is to postpone making right a wrong relationship not realizing that while we are not right with others we are not right with God. Consequently, our prayers are hindered.
The final relational hindrance mentioned is unforgiveness. This prominent and besetting sin hinders many people in their prayer life. They are offended in some way and rather than confront it, they conceal it. A spirit of unforgiveness is deadly to prayer. Jesus said in Mark 11:25-26, "God's forgiveness of our sins depends on our willingness to forgive others". To clearly show the magnitude of the sin of unforgiveness Jesus told a parable in Matthew 18:21-35 in response to Peter's question about forgiveness. The debt owned by the unjust servant to his Lord was unpayable. Yet, the Lord forgave the debt and released the debtor. By comparison the debt owed the unjust servant by a fellow servant was a mere pittance. Selfishly the unjust servant demanded payment from his fellow servant and imprisoned him when he could not pay. When this action was reported to the Master, he seized the unjust servant and brought judgment upon him by delivering him to the tormentors. The word tormentor is a key word in that it really applies to the person who refuses to grant forgiveness. Rather than harming the other person, the one who harbors unforgiveness actually harms himself. He is robbed of peace, joy and fellowship with God resulting in hindered prayers.
The key to dealing with unforgiveness is to recognize that as a Christian, you never have the right to be unforgiving. Through submission to the Spirit of God in the life of the believer, forgiveness can be granted in sincerity to all who offend. Forgiveness represents Christ-likeness in all its purity. Jesus prayed for his enemies even as he was nailed to the cross, "Father forgive them . . ." We can certainly do no less. Larry Lea's, Could You Not Tarry One Hour, says that the time to extend forgiveness is in your prayer time before any offense occurs. Otherwise, our prayers will be hindered because we have kept unforgiveness in our hearts.

An eighth hindrance to prayer is disregard for the Word of God (Proverbs 28:9). This is not hatred of the Word of God but rather coldness toward it. The connection between spiritual blessing and the Word of God is clearly shown in Psalm 1:1-3, Psalm 19 and Psalm 119 to mention a few. Jesus joined prayer and the Word in John 15:7. Without obedience to and reverence for the Word of God, prayer will be hindered.

The last hindrance to prayer to be considered is that of willful sin. When the Spirit of God brings awareness of sin in the life of a believer, it is for the purpose of bringing the believer to the point of repentance. Paul

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writes in Romans 2:4 that the goodness of God leads to repentance. If a believer refuses to deal with known sin, then their prayers are hindered. Speaking through the prophet Isaiah, God says, "Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." Likewise, the Psalmist wrote in 66:18, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." (to regard means to harbor or keep).

The hindrances of prayerlessness, inappropriate requests, greed, unconcern for the poor, selfishness, idolatry, broken relationships, and unforgiveness all keep God from granting our prayer requests. He does not answer because he is concerned about our ultimate good. Hindrances to prayer should cause one to examine their life and see if they are meeting God's conditions for answering prayer. God requires a life that is consistently living out his truth. To do less would involve God in subsidizing our sin and God will have no part in that.
Prayer & Fasting

True prayer is to be offered from a sincere heart. Man looks on the outward appearance (I Samuel 16:7) but God looks on the heart. The old saying is more true than we realize; "the way to a man's heart is through his stomach". This of course is meant to apply to the courtship process and how a young lady can "get her man" through good cooking. It is normal to enjoy good food and it satisfies a human need. This same truth can be applied to our spiritual life as well as the physical. The way to a man's heart is through his stomach - an empty stomach! The discipline of fasting and praying is a Biblical truth that deepens the believer's walk of faith.

Prayer and Fasting has been practiced by saints down through the ages. Spiritual giants have all referred to its importance in their own lives. Its difficulties have also been mentioned. Martin Luther is quoted in this aspect of the Christian life by saying "my flesh was want to grumble dreadfully". A good definition by Dick Eastman says:

Fasting, of course, is the practice of deliberately and voluntarily abstaining from usual nourishment, which, when performed in the context of prayer, brings supernatural power to our praying. Fasting is to do without, or to practice self-denial. Its meaning can be expanded to include temporary abstinence from anything in order to give more concentrated attention to spiritual matters.41

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41 Dick Eastman, Love On Its Knees (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Chosen Books, 38
Let us consider then the Bible truths about fasting.

First of all, fasting is not going on a diet. While there are some health benefits to be associated with fasting, the purpose of a fast is not to lose weight. Arthur Wallis in *God's Chosen Fast* writes a chapter on the health benefits of fasting, that include benefits for the skin, the digestive system, enhanced sense of smell and sharpened mental powers. The purpose of fasting is to have a spiritual focus that can only be produced by subduing the appetites through fasting.

Next, fasting is not going on a hunger strike. Doing without food has become a form of protest. So called political prisoners have practiced this to call attention to their cause. Recently, a Michigan medical doctor was arrested for assisting in a patient's suicide. He initiated a hunger strike to emphasize his belief that he had done nothing wrong and should not have been jailed. This type of behavior has nothing to do with a Biblical fast.

A third thing that is not Biblical fasting is the abstinence from some pleasure or habit on a seasonal basis such a Lent. While genuine fasting can occur during lent, the more common practice of doing without coffee, tea or chocolate has little to do with Biblical fasting. While it may be admirable and even beneficial to do without some "pleasures" or unneeded food, this

approach is sorely lacking in spiritual purpose, and are usually related to some form of "works" salvation.

There are three types of fasting that are mentioned in the Bible: the normal fast, the partial fast, and the absolute fast. The basic meaning of "to fast" is not eating. When the Bible speaks of Jesus fasting it says that "he ate nothing" (Luke 4:2). It does not say that he drank nothing. When his fast was completed it says afterward he was hungry, but it doesn't say he was thirsty. It would seem then that normally, when a person fasts they refrain from all food but not liquids.42

In the Old Testament the normal fast was for one day, (Leviticus 23:27) the day of atonement. This was the only required fast for the people of Israel. Other fasting would be voluntary as a means of seeking the Lord. The way the Jewish people kept time was from sunset to sunset (Genesis 1:5, 6, 31). Therefore the normal fast would be 24 hours as we keep time.

The partial fast is mentioned in Daniel chapter 10. Daniel and his three friends in their youth had practiced self-discipline in eating and had been shown to be in better appearance then those who ate the King's rich food (Daniel 1:15). As Daniel sought the Lord he wrote, "In those days I,

Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. "I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled." (Daniel 10: 2, 3). God granted Daniel a spectacular victory after this period of fasting.

Other Biblical examples of partial fasting includes the people of Israel.

Note, for example, Israel's battle with the rebellious tribe of Benjamin. When Israel saw the circumstances and feared the worst, they "went up and came to the house of God and wept. They sat there before the Lord and fasted that day until evening" (Judges 20:26). David fasted in a similar fashion (2 Samuel 3:35), as did Cornelius, the centurion, who fasted until "the ninth hour," which was mid-afternoon (see Acts 10:30). In all of these cases the fast was twenty-four hours or less. 43

John Wesley the founder of Methodism practiced partial fasting and required it of candidates for ordination. He set the days of Wednesday and Friday for fasting until 3:00 p.m. Clearly, Wesley felt that the partial fast had great spiritual benefit. The scripture encourages this discipline:

"Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinence." (I Corinthians 7:5).

43 Dick Eastman, Love On Its Knees, p 83.
The third fast mentioned is the absolute fast. This fast would involve doing without both food and water. This strict form of fasting appears to be used in times of great crisis or special spiritual need. Ezra 10:6 says "Then Ezra rose up from before the house of God, and went into the chamber of Johanan the son of Eliashib; and when he came thither, he did eat no bread, nor drink water: for he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away". He was overwhelmed with concern for God's people and their life-style. He expressed this concern by the absolute fast. In the book of Esther when the Jews faced the national crisis of threatened extermination, Esther called for an absolute fast, "Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise: and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish" (4:16). Clearly God heard and answered their prayer for protection. Another example of the absolute fast is given concerning the Apostle Paul (Acts 9:9). It seems that after Paul's conversion experience he was so overcome by the power of the risen Christ that he neither ate nor drank for three days as he sought the Lord.
In the Bible there are two unusual examples of the absolute fast for a prolonged period. Moses on two separate occasions fasted for forty days and nights neither eating or drinking (Deuteronomy 9:9, 18; Exodus 34:28). The first occasion pertained to the receiving of the Ten Commandments. The second pertained to his intense intercession for the sinful people of Israel who had worshipped the golden calf. One would infer from the intensity of these fasts that God sustained in a supernatural way. Likewise Elijah fasted for a prolonged period at Horeb and went in the strength of that food prepared by an angel for forty days and nights (I Kings 19:8). Both Moses and Elijah were God's unique servants and fulfilled his special purposes even to the point of being sent from glory to the Mount of Transfiguration to stand with Jesus as he was transfigured before his journey to the cross. Certainly then, the absolute fast is an unusual measure and should be entered into only under the clear leading of the Holy Spirit.

There are some practical matters to be considered when fasting.

1. When you fast, do not stuff yourself so you can load up on enough food to carry you through the fast. If this were possible (which it is not) you would defeat the purpose for fasting. Stuffing yourself will only make you
more hungry during the fast. Maintain your regular meal schedule until you begin your fast.

2. Be certain you have set a spiritual purpose for your fast. You may be seeking the Lord's leading for a specific desire. You may be seeking the Lord for renewal or spiritual enrichment. You may be interceding for a special need. Regardless, be sure you set a spiritual purpose in your mind. This can also be a reminder not to advertise your fast as a "spiritual show" of piety to others. Tell only as needed but don't get prideful about it. See Matthew 6:16.

3. Determine the length of your fast. Is it to be part of a day, one day, two days, three days? (Be aware that during this period you will feel hunger, dryness of mouth, and maybe even a headache from being without coffee or tea).

4. Determine the type of fast. Is it to be "normal fast" (no food, only liquids)? Is it to be an absolute fast (no food or drink)? (Beware that if you
choose to have a normal fast and drink only liquids that you don't use
nutrition supplements, etc. This again defeats the purpose of self-denial).

5. Plan to devote specific times to Scripture reading and Scriptural praying. 
It may also be helpful to memorize scripture passages that pertain to the 
purpose for which you are fasting.

6. When fasting and going about your daily routine the meal times could be 
spent in prayer rather than eating. If possible it may be best to fast on a day 
when you are free from your normal duties and can devote yourself to 
spiritual matters.

7. When you end your fast do not gorge yourself with a big meal! It would 
be best to break the fast with some soup, crackers, fruit or hot tea.

8. Both physical and spiritual dangers of fasting should not be overlooked. 
Physically you can harm yourself if you have a health problem such as 
diabetes etc. Spiritually you can harm yourself by becoming proud and 
seeing fasting as a way to put God in your debt.
There are seven specific benefits or purposes for fasting that are recorded in Scripture. Each one can be a purpose on its own or may be combined as the benefits would certainly overlap.

1. **Personal Humility**

Psalm 69:10 "When I wept, and chastened my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach". The NEB reads, "I have broken my spirit with fasting". One of our greatest spiritual difficulties is that of pride. Pride sets us against God and God against us (James 4:6). "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble". Pride is one of seven things God hates (Proverbs 6: 16-19). The Scripture exhorts us (James 4:10) "Humble yourselves in the sight of Lord, and he shall lift you up". Fasting does reduce our pride and leads to personal holiness.

2. **Spiritual Power**

As Jesus began his ministry he was "filled with the Holy Spirit and was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness" (Luke 4:1). After fasting forty days and dealing with Satan, the Scripture says Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit. This would seem to indicate that in the period of fasting Jesus
received spiritual power for his ministry that enabled him to do the great work God sent him to do.

Fasting has been followed by great spiritual power in the lives of many of God's servants. Jonathan Edwards fasted for 22 hours prior to preaching his famous sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God". Charles Finney would often stop a meeting and call for fasting and prayer to sensitize hearts to God's spirit.

3. Personal Holiness

Isaiah 58: 1-9 speaks about true fasting. It is not to be just a formality or a religious day to be observed. It is to come from a sincere heart that seeks God and a lifestyle that reflects personal holiness. This personal holiness involves proper relationships with other people. Further, it includes equitable business dealings and concern for the needs of others. The people of Israel had been fasting as a formality but their living had not shown a heart truly set on the things of God. Therefore, God had refused to answer their prayers. In verses 9-11a of Isaiah 58 God shows his willingness to hear the prayer of the sincere heart supported by a life of personal holiness.

Joel 2:12-14 affirms this same thought of personal holiness and Godly lifestyle. Joel sets it within the context of the nation coming together
to fast before the Lord. The purpose is to call the people back to personal holiness and sincerity of heart before God. Joel 2:18 affirms that God will hear and answer when his people seek him with sincerity of heart.

4. Change God's Mind

Jonah 3:5, 10 give us an example of God's abundant mercy toward those who repent. God sent Jonah to preach a message of judgment to the people of Nineveh. Jonah reluctantly obeyed and delivered the message "yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" Much to Jonah's displeasure the people of Ninevah received his message and indeed repented. Evidence of their repentance was shown in fasting and humility before the Lord.

As a result of the people's response, God withheld judgment and spared Ninevah. The Scripture says God repented of the evil he would do to them (Jonah 3:10). The theological issue raised here about God changing his mind is not a contradiction in the character of God. Rather, it is an expression of his divine foreknowledge and mercy toward the repentant heart. Another example of this same expression of mercy is mentioned in I Kings 21:27-29 concerning King Ahab. God had sent Elijah to pronounce judgment upon Ahab for his wicked murder of Naboth. When Ahab heard the pronouncement he fasted and sought the Lord (I Kings 21: 27-29). If
God is willing to defer judgment for a character like Ahab how great is his mercy!

5. Break Strongholds

A stronghold could also be called a besetting sin over which a believer has been unable to obtain victory. Isaiah 58:6 indicates that fasting is one way that God has appointed to give the victory. Many people are bound by the appetites of the body (overeating, lust, etc.). Paul warns in I Corinthians 9:27 "But I kept under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

Part of subduing the body is the discipline of fasting. The spiritual and physical laziness of many believers can be overcome by fasting. The cumulative effect of fasting and prayer give a new mind set and can break free the stronghold that robs the believer of the victorious Christian life.

6. Know God's Will

Daniel 9:13 records Daniel seeking the Lord through fasting, prayer and humbling himself. Daniel did so as a result of studying the Scriptures (Jeremiah) and seeing that the time of captivity would soon draw to a close. Prayer, fasting and studying the Scripture brought Daniel the insight he was seeking about the captivity. God's answer was to send the angel Gabriel and
grant Daniel insight and understanding concerning God's plans and purpose. This teaching in Daniel seems to indicate that when a believer is seeking to know God's will on a specific matter that prayer, fasting, and study of the Word will bring positive results.

7. For Direction in Ministry

At the outset of the missionary ministry of the Apostle Paul the Holy Spirit's direction of that endeavor came as a result of fasting and prayer. (Acts 13:1-3). This joins worship and fasting to have the Lord's guidance. It is interesting to note that the Bible says they worshipped and fasted to determine the Spirit's leading. Then, they fasted and prayed again and laid hands on Barnabas and Saul to affirm their ministry and sent them on their way. This indicates that this occurred over a space of time. It takes time to fast and pray and wait on the Lord. However, it is clear that God will guide and instruct when he is sought in fasting, prayer, and worship.

Not only was prayer and fasting a part of launching the missionary movement but it also was a continuing part of the ministry of Barnabas and Saul as they established churches. Acts 14:23 says, "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they
commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." For God’s guidance in ministry, fasting is a vital part.

Dick Eastman offers a summary of the experience of fasting in a section of his book *Love On Its Knees* entitled Fruitful Fasting.

1. We should fast sensibly (Know what the Bible says about it)
2. We should fast secretly (Matthew 6:16-18)
3. We should fast sensitively (Seek the Lord, Judges 20:26)
4. We should fast systematically (A regular habit when you fast, Matthew 6:16)
5. We should fast sacrificially (Willing self-denial)
6. We should fast specifically (Ezra 8:21-23)
7. We should fast supernaturally (Under the Holy Spirit's direction, Acts 13:22)

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Biblical Intercessors

Samuel

Samuel is the human bridge between the time of the Judges and the time of the prophets. He is the transitional figure that guided Israel from a theocracy to a monarchy. Samuel's life began as a result of the humble prayer of his mother Hannah who sought the Lord's favor that she be given a child. Her prayer not only asked God for a son but included a promise that the child would be dedicated to the Lord all his life. God granted the request and Samuel was born. At an early age he was brought to the temple and ministered unto the Lord under the direction of Eli, the priest. As Samuel grew he developed a sensitive spirit to the Lord and a willing heart to obey. God entrusted to Samuel His plan for Israel and the house of Eli by setting it aside because Eli failed to discipline his sons properly in the things of the Lord. God said he would raise up a faithful priest who would do according to what was in His heart and mind (I Samuel 2:35). Samuel was recognized in Israel as God's man (I Samuel 3:20-21).

While Samuel functioned both as a priest and a judge in Israel, it is his priestly role of intercessor that stands out. Samuel E. Balentine includes the prophet Samuel as one of the three intercessors *par excellence* in the Old
Testament (the other two being Moses and Jeremiah). The first example of Samuel as an intercessor is found in I Samuel 7:3-13.

The Ark of the Lord was returned to Israel by the Philistines after a brief and costly stay in their land. Rather than returning it to Shiloh the ark was kept in Kirjathjearim (7:1) in the house of Abinadab. During this lengthy stay of the ark at Kirjathjearim, the people of Israel turned away from the Lord. Samuel challenged the people to return to the Lord and put away their false gods. This challenge culminated in a great prayer gathering at Mizpeh.

Samuel called the people together for the purpose of returning to the Lord in worship and reverence. The importance of gathering with God's people for public worship is emphasized in Scripture from the words in Deuteronomy 31:12 to Hebrews 10:25 this truth is plainly taught. The willingness of the people to come together for this purpose indicates a heart ready to seek the Lord and his ways. Our public behavior and worship is often the result of our private devotion to God. We are known by the company we keep. Gathering with God's people for worship identifies us publicly with Him.

Samuel was willing as an intercessor to call the people together so he could pray for them. The word pray in verse 5 is the most common use of the word for intercessory prayer in the Old Testament (*Palel*). It is noteworthy that the priority of the meeting was prayer. So often our present day worship service devotes little time to prayer.

Next, we see the confession offered by the people in verse 6. They poured out water before the Lord as a symbol of the complete offering of themselves to the Lord in repentance. A further indication of their attitude was fasting. Fasting prepares the heart to be sensitive to the spirit of the Lord and is a sign of humbling oneself before God. The people plainly say that they have sinned against the Lord and the word for sin *chata* is the most important word in the Old Testament for sin meaning to miss the way, to fail.46 Their worship of idols indicates their failure to honor God. Confession of sin and genuine repentance opens the ear of the Lord to hear the prayer offered by his servant.

I Samuel 7:7, 10, 11 reveals the conflict the people of Israel faced with their enemy, the Philistines. When the Philistines realized Israel was gathered together they considered it an opportunity to attack and defeat

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46 Spiros Zodhiates, *The Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible*, p. 1590.
them all at once. When God's people seek to gather to pray there will always be conflict. Satan opposes the prayers of God's people because the battle is not really with flesh and blood but is a spiritual one. (See Ephesians 6:10-18). Prayer is supremely a spiritual work and requires devotion and perserverance.

The contrition Samuel demonstrates in verse 8 and 9 reveals the attitude of prayer that God respects. Psalm 51:17 says, "a broken and contrite heart thou wilt not despise." The word for prayer here is cry meaning to shriek from anguish, or a sense of danger. It is a cry usually directed to God\(^\text{47}\). Samuel offered the whole burnt offering to the Lord as an indication of total devotion and the Lord answered his prayer. The victory obtained by the people of Israel led to a time of consecration.

In verse 12 Samuel set up a stone and called it Ebenezer (the Lord has helped us). This act of consecration was to be a memorial and a reminder of God's presence and protection of his people. The placing of stones as a reminder for God's people of his intervention on their behalf goes back to the crossing of the Jordan when the twelve tribes placed the stones in the river bed as the waters were held back while they crossed on dry land.

\(^{47}\) Ibid. p. 1589
Further, the stones were to be a reminder and an object lesson to the future generations declaring God's mighty action on behalf of his people. (See Joshua 4). As Samuel sets up the stone Ebenezer it is a testimony to God's faithfulness in response to the intercessory prayer offered by the prophet.

The next example of Samuel as an intercessor is found in I Samuel 12: 19-23. Here Samuel not only prays for the people but also chides them for their unfaithfulness to the Lord in asking for a king. In the twilight years of his ministry as judge and prophet Samuel affirms his commitment to pray for Israel. He has gathered them together to recall God's goodness to them and to review his years of ministry and affirm his integrity as a faithful minister among the people. In part, his prayer is not only a prayer of intercession but also a prayer of instruction. He declares that he will teach the people what is good and right (v. 23) which implies it is good and right to pray for one another. Samuel considered it a sin against the Lord to fail to pray. He assures the people of God's continued acceptance because of the greatness of His Name. Further, he warns the people to consider all that God has done for them and to refrain from sinning against the Lord. Otherwise, they will be swept away by God's judging hand.
Jeremiah

Jeremiah, whose name means "whom Jehovah appoints", was set apart for God's service before his birth (1:5). He grew up in the town of Anathoth some three miles from Jerusalem. His father, Hilkiah, was a priest (whom some believe to be the priest in II Kings 22 that brought the Book of The Law to King Josiah that launched a great revival in Judah under this godly King). Jeremiah was reluctant to accept God's call (1:6), pleading his youth and inability to speak as sufficient reason to refuse God's call. The Lord, however, overruled Jeremiah's reluctance and appointed him a prophet to the nations. In his call is the foundation for a life of intercession (1:10).

Jeremiah is appointed over nations and kingdoms. Obviously he is not to rule them physically. This is a spiritual appointment. He is "to root out and to pull down, to destroy and overthrow to build and to plant" (1:10). To root out is to get to the source of a problem and Judah's problem was rejection of God. To pull down is to remove something that has been elevated and Judah had elevated idols in the place of God. To destroy is to utterly defeat or remove and Jeremiah's message spoke of Judah's removal for her sins. To throw down is to discard quickly by force even as Judah
would be forced into exile. *To build* means to follow a plan or process, to give shape or substance to something even as God was shaping Judah as the potter shapes the clay (Chapter 18-19). Finally, *to plant* means to put something in place with the capacity to grow.\(^48\) Jeremiah's heart was "planted" with the people of Judah to call them to repentance and to the obedience of God's word. Jeremiah's tender heart for the people is reflected in his tears over their backsliding.

Jeremiah's message, though given from a compassionate heart, was not received by the people. He was called a traitor and persecuted for his message of truth. Even though Jeremiah was persecuted by his people, he maintained his burden for them and we have in the midst of this tension between prophet and people an example of his faithful intercession.

Jeremiah's devotion to prayer is first of all seen in the very language of the Old Testament. The word *phalal* means to intercede or pray for.\(^49\) Evaluating the meaning of the major linguistic possibilities for expressing the idea pray or pray for is not used frequently or consistently with any prophetic figure other than Jeremiah. Further indication of Jeremiah's role as a intercessor is shown in the prohibitions God gave him concerning

praying for the people of Judah (7:16, 11:14, 14:11). Certainly if it were not Jeremiah's practice to pray for the people then why would God have prohibited it?⁵⁰

God's refusal to permit Jeremiah to pray for the people is an indication of his judgment on them for their sinfulness and rejection of Him. God is adamant about this, declaring that even if Moses and Samuel were joined with Jeremiah in prayer (implied) then he would still refuse to hear because of the sin of Judah (15:1). In contrast to the prohibition to pray is God's generous offer found in Jeremiah 33:3 and 29:11-14. God's overwhelming love and mercy are revealed in his willingness to hear prayer. God can not condone sin and sin is a hindrance to prayer. Yet, when prayer is offered in the right spirit and from a life that reflects obedience, God is pleased to hear. God's refusal to hear was only temporary until the judgment on his people was complete.

Examples of Jeremiah's role as an intercessor can be found in several key passages that identify Jeremiah with the ministry of intercession. These include 7:16, 11:14, 14:11, 15:1, 18:20, 21:2, 37:3, and 42:2.

Three times God forbids Jeremiah to pray for the people:

7:16 - reverence for the house of the Lord, holy lifestyles, justice and fairness

11:14 - faithfulness to covenant

14:11 - recovery from drought and resulting suffering.

While the specific prayers of intercession are not listed, it is implied that Jeremiah was praying for the people of Israel. If he was not praying otherwise why would God have prohibited him from praying for them? In part these prohibitions show us the burden Jeremiah had as an intercessor. It is difficult to pray for those who reject you and your message. However, the heart of the intercessor places the need before God, confident that he will hear.

Two times Jeremiah is identified as standing before the Lord with a clear implication of intercessory prayer as the purpose. "Then said the Lord unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth". (15:1) "Shall evil be recompensed for good? for they have digged a pit for my soul. Remember that I stood before thee to speak good for them, and to turn away thy wrath from them". (18:20)
In 15:1 Jeremiah is identified with Moses and Samuel who indeed seem to stand out as intercessors *par excellence* in the Old Testament. On two occasions Moses is specifically mentioned as interceding (Numbers 21:7, Deuteronomy 9:20) as well as other occasions where it is implied (Exodus 32:11-14; Numbers 14:13-19). Samuel is listed specifically three times as praying for others. In I Samuel 7:5, 12:19, 23 the implication of the passage is that even if intercessors of the stature of Moses and Samuel were to pray, God would not hear because of the sins of the people that had separated them from God.

In Jeremiah 18:20 his complaint to the Lord speaks of those who have persecuted him. His prayer is like others of the Psalms of Lamentation. These psalms offer intense personal expression of the needs of the one praying and are bold, honest, and direct. 51 In his distress Jeremiah reminds the Lord that he has prayed for the people so that God's wrath would be turned away from them. Yet, their treatment of him indicates a return of evil for good and Jeremiah appeals to God for vindication.

Again both references deal only with the fact Jeremiah prayed for the people. For whatever reason the Holy Spirit did not feel that we needed the

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content of the prayers as much as we needed to know that Jeremiah in fact
did pray as an intercessor for the people.

The final verses to be considered are two direct requests made to
Jeremiah that he specifically pray for the needs mentioned to him (Jeremiah
37 and 42). The first request came from King Zedekiah. In the midst of
political turmoil and military conflict King Zedekiah asked Jeremiah to
pray. It is interesting that verse two says, 'they gave no heed to Jeremiah'
yet desired his prayers in verse three. The implication is that the King
wanted Jeremiah to find out what the Lord had in mind concerning their
fate. When Jeremiah delivers God's message, that indeed the Chaldeans
will come and capture the city, he is arrested as a traitor and a deserter.

The other prayer request comes after the fall of Jerusalem and the
remaining leaders ask Jeremiah to pray on their behalf for God to give them
guidance. They were deliberating on whether to go to Egypt for "safety" or
to remain in Jerusalem and be subjects of the Babylonians. Jeremiah after
ten days replies to their request with the pronouncement that God desires
that they remain in the land. If they follow God's instruction they will be
safe, if they reject his instruction they will die. Oddly enough the leaders
rejected the word of the Lord and of course suffered the consequences.
With the captivity underway, Jeremiah chooses to go to Egypt with the remnant rather than remain in Jerusalem. In the true spirit of an intercessor, Jeremiah identified himself with the people and shared with them in their sorrow and exile.
Paul

The apostle Paul carried a deep burden for all the churches (II Corinthians 11:28). The expression of that burden is found in the frequent mention of prayer for the churches. Accepting the role of an intercessor, Paul speaks of praying night and day for the churches (I Thessalonians 3:10). His devotion to the role of intercessor is seen throughout his New Testament writings. Certainly when Paul wrote the Thessalonians urging them to "pray without ceasing" (5:17), he was doing so out of his own experience of prayer. Paul related to the churches as missionary-pastor and priestly-intercessor. Gordon Wiles writes about Paul's concerns in praying as an intercessor:

Here we approach the side of Paul's ministry to which his practice of intercessory prayer more directly belongs. Signs are present throughout the letters that he believed himself appointed a mediator between God and the churches in his care, charged with the priestly responsibility of presenting them blameless to God at the parousia. The indicators are sufficiently clear and frequent to reveal a deep intercessory sense lying behind all his preaching, teaching, prophesying, and pastoral work, adding new dimensions of meaning and urgency. While such mediation was clearly only one aspect of his complete apostolate, yet it seemed to lie near the heart of his self-understanding.52

Examples of Paul's ministry of intercession found in Ephesians 1:15-23, Philippians 1:9-11, and Colossians 1:9-12 show the depth of his concern for the spiritual welfare of those for whom he prayed. A brief analysis of the three prayers reveals the emphasis on spiritual matters requesting specific spiritual blessings.

**Ephesians 1:15-23**

- verse 17 Knowledge of God
- verse 18 Knowledge of His calling
- verse 19 Spiritual power

**Philippians 1:9-11**

- verse 9 Love may abound
- verse 10 Spiritual perseverance
- verse 11 Filled with the fruits of righteousness

**Colossians 1:9-12**

- verse 9 Knowledge of God's will
- verse 10 A life that pleases the Lord
- verse 11 Spiritual Strength

While the physical needs of people are important, it is the spiritual need that Paul most often addresses.
The devotion to prayer demonstrated by the Apostle Paul in his life and revealed in his letters begins almost immediately after the powerful conversion he experienced on the Damascus road. When the Spirit of God directed Ananias to go and lay hands on Paul he was informed "Behold he prayeth" (Acts 9:11). Certainly Saul of Tarsus had been a man of prayer. His knowledge of the Old Testament as a Rabbi and scholar had accelerated him ahead of his peers to a place of prominence in the Sanhedrin. Paul's own testimony (Acts 26:4,5) speaks of his devotion to the traditions of his fathers which included prayers and the Scriptures. However, Saul of Tarsus' prayer life had a form of godliness without its power. The power was manifested to him in the person of Christ that day on the road to Damascus.

As an apostle, church planter, and missionary Paul felt a keen sense of duty to pray for the churches that he established. Paul as an intercessor had not only the burden of the churches he established, but also those he did not establish. Romans 1:9 "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers". Colossians 4: 13-16 "For I bear him record, that he hath great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you. Salute the
brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in
his house. And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read
also in the church of the Laodeicians; and that ye likewise read the epistle
from Laodicea".

The following phrases from Paul's letters further illustrate his prayer
burden for the churches.

Romans 1:9: "God is my witness . . . that without ceasing I
make mention of you always in my prayers . . ."

Romans 10:1: "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel
is, that they may be saved".

I Corinthians 1:4: "I thank my God always on your behalf".

II Corinthians 6:4-5: "Approving ourselves as the ministers of
God . . . in watching, in fastings."

Galatians 4:19: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth
again until Christ be formed in you."

Ephesians 1:16: "I cease not to give thanks for you, making
mention of you in my prayers."

Ephesians 3:14: "I bow my knees unto the Father . . ."

Philippians 1:3-4: "I thank my God upon every remembrance
of you, always in every prayer of mine".

Colossians 1:3, 9: "We give thanks to God . . . praying always
for you. For this cause we also since the day we heard it, do
not cease to pray for you, and to desire."
I Thessalonians 1:2: "We give thanks to God *always* for you all, making mention of you *in our prayers.*"

I Thessalonians 3:9-10: "We joy for your sakes before our God; *night and day praying exceedingly.*"

II Timothy 1:3: "I thank my God . . . that *without ceasing* I have remembrance of thee . . . night and day."
Philemon 4: "I thank my God, making mention of thee *always in my prayers.*"

The prayers that will be emphasized from Ephesians, Colossians, and Thessalonians are excellent examples of Paul's concern for the churches as an intercessor. Each of the prayers reflects a deep concern for the spiritual welfare of the churches (and obviously for the people who comprise the church).

Paul founded the Ephesian church on his second missionary journey. He spent 18 months in Corinth, then visited Aquila and Priscilla staying only a short time and promised to return. During the third missionary journey Paul stayed in Ephesus three years (See Acts 18:11-26, 19:8-10, 20:31). This long stay endeared the people of Ephesus to Paul and he to them (Acts 20:31). His ministry there was fruitful.

Ephesians 1:15-23 "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that
ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church. Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all".

This prayer begins with a spirit of thanksgiving unto God for the faith in the Lord and the love for one another the Ephesians have shown. This thankful attitude leads Paul right into his prayer for the Ephesians with the specific requests.

The first request (v. 17) is that they be granted knowledge of God through the spirit of wisdom and revelation. The word for revelation is *Apokalupsis* which means an unveiling, uncovering, or disclosure. This is a comprehensive word that includes not only the thing shown but an interpretation of that thing. The word for knowledge *epigeios* expresses a "more through participation in the object of knowledge on the part of the knowing subject." Without the knowledge of God, man moves in a degenerative spiral downward toward destruction. Romans 1:18ff reflects

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54 Ibid. p. 1690
this decline from ignorance to idolatry, to immorality, and finally to indecency and judgment. This knowledge of God is not merely awareness of him. James indicates that demons have a knowledge of God i.e., awareness but have no knowledge of him unto salvation (2:19).

Knowledge of God is to know him in an increasingly growing way. Jesus' prayer in John 17 was for the Father to be known. The knowledge of God provides eternal life (17:3).

The second request (v. 18) seeks understanding for the Ephesians to know God's calling. The word elpis (Hope) means "the desire of some good with expectations of obtaining it". To understand God's calling is a worthy concern of every Christian. God called Adam, (Genesis 3:7) and still calls his people. The church in its basic meaning is composed of ekklesia the called out ones. John MacArthur lists these scriptures:

*Romans 1:6-7* - Paul, writing to the church at Rome, said, "Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ; to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints."

*I Corinthians 1:2* - "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place shall call upon the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord."

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55 Ibid. p. 1688
I Corinthians 1:26 - "For ye see your calling, brethren," Paul then went on to describe the character of those who make up the church.

Ephesians 4:1, 4 - "Walk worthy of the vocation to which ye are called . . . Ye are called in one hope of your calling."

I Thessalonians 2:12 - "Walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory."

II Timothy 1:9 - "(God) hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace."

I Peter 5:10 - "The God of all grace . . . who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus."

The third request (v 18b) deals with the Ephesians realizing that they are considered by God as part of his own riches! God places great value on his people. He sees us not only for what we are but what we can be. This is how God could have a shepherd boy like David anointed as King or how Jesus could call the impetuous fisherman Peter the rock. 57

We are saints (hagios - holy ones) made holy in Christ. This title exalts God's people and is consistent with the over all theme of the Ephesian letter that calls them to realize the position and possessions they have in Christ. These riches in Christ belong to God's people NOW. Wiersbe illustrates this truth in his book Be Rich.

Too many Christians have never "read the bank book" to find out the vast spiritual wealth that God has put to their account through Jesus Christ. They are like the late William Randolph Hearst, who invested a fortune collecting art treasures from around the world. One day Mr. Hearst found a description of some valuable items that he felt he must own, so he sent this agent abroad to find them. After months of searching, the agent reported that he had finally found the treasures. They were in Mr. Hearst's warehouse. Hearst had been searching frantically for treasures he already owned!58

The fourth request is that the Ephesians may know God's power. Paul speaks of the "exceeding greatness" of God's power in verse 19ff. John MacArthur gives the power mentioned according to the New Testament:

Paul was trying to describe how powerful we are, so he used every word for power he could imagine. There are four different Greek words used for power in verse 19.

(a) *Dunamis* - "This exceeding greatness of his power (*dunamis*)." We derive the English word *dynamite* from *dunamis*. It refers to inherent power.

(b) *Energeia* - "According to the working (*entergeia*)." That word is the basis for the English word *energy*. It refers to operative power.

(c) *Kratos* - "The working of his mighty (*kratos*)." Sometimes *kratos* is translated "dominion." It refers to ultimate power.

(d) *Ischus* - "His mighty power (*ischus*)." It refers to endowed power.

Paul was saying that God has given believers unbelievable power. Many Christians claim they don't have enough strength

58 Ibid. pp. 29, 30
or power. That's why Paul prayed for the believer to know the power available to him.\textsuperscript{59}

Colossians 1:9-12 "For this cause we also, since the day we heart it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all his wisdom and spiritual understanding: that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

Colossians is an example of Paul's concern for the churches he did not personally help establish. The Colossian church was apparently started by Epaphras as a part of the fruit of Paul's three year ministry in Ephesus. During this time of teaching in the house of Tyrannus (Acts 19: 9, 10) Epaphras was motivated to win people to Christ throughout the Lycus Valley which contained these important cities Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colosse. It is possible that he started both the Colossian and the Laodicean church. It is also likely that the church met in the home of Philemon and that Archippus (Colossians 4:17) his son was the pastor. There is a strong similarity between the Ephesian and Colossian letter. Seventy-eight out of ninety-five verses in Colossians are nearly identical to those in

Ephesians.\textsuperscript{60} The church is presented as the body in Ephesians while in Colossians Christ is presented as the head of the body.

The focus of the prayer is for spiritual blessings not physical or material needs. So often prayer is concerned with the temporal things. However, Paul recognizes the importance of spiritual matters and intercedes for the Colossians from that godly perspective.

Paul prefaces his prayer with thanksgiving to God for the faith, love and hope found in the Colossian church (1:3-8). These evidences of God's grace as they were demonstrated in the lives of these believers motivated Paul to pray on their behalf. Paul chooses the word \textit{proseuchomia} (for prayer) which embraces the comprehensive idea of asking and requesting special things of God. There are six requests in this prayer for the Colossian Church.

The first request is to be filled with the knowledge of God's will. The implication of the word filled is to be complete. It was used to describe a ship ready to sail on its voyage. Another usage of the word \textit{filled} in the New Testament is that of being controlled by. Ephesians 5:18 speaks of being filled with the Spirit in contrast to being drunk with wine. When a

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person is drunk with wine he is filled with it or controlled by it. Thus Paul's sincere desire is for a total grasp of God's will.

Knowledge is a key word in Colossians. The heresy of Gnosticism prevailed in Colosse which focused on special knowledge that could be known only by the initiated. It implies additional understanding that can be received to make one complete. The form of the word used (Epignosis) indicates the relation of the person knowing to the object known. 61 This is a knowledge that influences the life.

The knowledge of the will of God should be a concern for every believer. Unfortunately, many lack a knowledge of God's will and go to great lengths to find it as though it were lost. Most certainly, there is a mysterious aspect about God's will that keeps one from becoming too familiar with God's ways. On the other hand God has revealed His will in many ways and his word plainly says so. The word thelema (will) expresses the idea of God's gracious disposition toward something and is to be carried out in a manner that is pleasing or joyful. This is not the harshness of an "iron will" but the gentleness of a disposition that desires the best for the believer.

61 Spiros Zodhiates, The Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible, p. 1725.
This knowledge of the will of God is to be emphasized with wisdom and spiritual understanding. Wisdom is another key word in Colossians and here it communicates the ability to properly evaluate one's relationship with God. This wisdom coincides with spiritual knowledge which literally means to have insight and the ability to critically evaluate that relationship.

The next request in this prayer is to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing. The Christian life is represented by the word walk and refers to the manner of life, or lifestyle. In Genesis the Bible says Enoch walked with God. The writer of Hebrews (11:5) tells us that this was pleasing to God and as a result of his walk, God chose to deliver (exempt) him from death and translate him directly to glory. The lifestyle that this walk involves is one that pleases all. This does not mean pleasing people at the expense of principle, but pleasing because of godly principle.

This worthy walk reveals itself in good works. The Christian's words and actions must match. Our walk is validated by our works. James 2:14-18 says that we are to show faith by our works and this results in practical, applied Christian living that ministers to others. As we do fruitful works our knowledge of God increases. The Christian experience is not all "book" knowledge about God. The Bible is foundational in our knowledge
of God. In the living of the Christian life there is the increasing knowledge of God and his ways. The better we know the Bible the greater will be our knowledge and experience of God.

Paul continues the prayer realizing that the worthy walk can only be lived out by God's power. Strength for this kind of living comes from God's inherent power *dunamis* and God's manifested power *kratos*. This power shows itself in the life of the believer through patience, long-suffering and joyfulness. These are part of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) which is pleasing to God and others.

Patience (*hupomone*) does not mean sitting and waiting as though you were waiting for a fish to bite but rather it means to bear up under circumstances and trials. It is part of the worthy walk of going on when the going gets tough. This kind of endurance comes only from the internal strength that God's power gives.62

Patience deals with circumstance, while long-suffering (*makrothumia*) deals with people. An example of long-suffering is when King David endured the cursing of Shimei (II Samuel 16:5-13). David had power but restrained himself. Proverbs 16:32 says, "He that is slow to  

62 Ibid. p. 1736.
anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city".

Joyfulness reflects our own response to the difficulties we face. Patience and long-suffering are directed toward others while joyfulness deals with our own heart. The root of the word joy is *charis* which means grace. God's grace is always sufficient. Joy abides within apart from circumstances or people. Nehemiah 8:10 said about God's people that "the joy of the Lord is your strength".

Joined with patience, long-suffering and joyfulness is the giving of thanks. It is an attitude toward God for what He has done for believers by making them fit to participate in the inheritance of the saints which is our present walk with Christ. This includes the forgiveness of sins and the fellowship of His presence.

Paul's prayer for the Colossians seeks their spiritual well-being. It requests enablement for the living of the Christian life with an ever increasing knowledge of God. God provides the power to accomplish this worthy desire as the understanding of God's will is lived out in the experiences of a life that is pleasing to Him.

II Thessalonians 3: 1-5 "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even
as it is with you: and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith. But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from evil. And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you. And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ."

The final prayer we will consider that speaks of Paul as an intercessor is the prayer found in II Thessalonians 3:1-5. This prayer differs from the others in that it is not an intercessory prayer of Paul offered for the Thessalonians but rather it is a request that the Thessalonians pray for him. As we study this prayer we will find the heart of Paul the intercessor revealed in the request for himself as a person in need. Often, what we desire for ourselves is an indication of what we would desire from others (if it is a godly desire of course).

The Thessalonian church was founded by Paul on his second missionary journey (See Acts 17: 1-10). Only the churches at Thessalonica and Corinth received two letters.

Paul suffered persecution at the hands of the Jews in the city of Thessalonica and as a result was only able to stay there for a brief time. However, Paul had a great appreciation for the Thessalonian church and
writing in I Thessalonians he commended the church for being a church with an excellent testimony. He recognized they were:

- Energetic in Labor - 1:3 "work of faith"
- Exemplary in Conduct - 1:7 "example to all"
- Evangelistic in Outreach - 1:8 "sounded forth"
- Expectant in Attitude - 1:10 "wait for his son"  

Notice the spiritual nature of this prayer request. Consistent with Paul's other prayers mentioned, the spiritual concerns receive the first place. Any preacher would desire this prayer that the "word of the Lord may have free course". The preaching task is a demanding one and is hindered by many obstacles. The preacher is weak in his preparation and speaking. The people are dull and apathetic in their hearing. Paul alludes to the race course in which obstacles have been placed in the way that would impede the runner from reaching the goal. Prayer will come against these. Psalm 147:15 is perhaps the background for Paul's thought. It says, "He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth: his word runneth very swiftly." An example of the free course of the word is found in the book of Acts 13:48-49. It says, "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and

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glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region." When the word of God goes forth it does so in power. Isaiah 55:11 says the word accomplishes God's purposes as he sends it. Hebrew 4:12 says, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Not only does Paul request the word be glorified but that his ministry be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men. This is the only usage of the word unreasonable in the New Testament. It means those who are odd, perverse or outrageous. This certainly is a reference to the Jews that approached Paul and hindered his work. Where the Word is preached the devil always opposes and he does so through wicked men.

Sometimes he uses not only wicked men, but unwise men such as Peter (Matthew 16: 21-23) or Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5: 1-11). Regardless of the unfaithfulness of men the Lord remains faithful to establish and keep his servants from evil. A.T. Robertson says that the

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word evil could be taken to mean the Evil One, a clear reference to Satan.\textsuperscript{65} Therefore the prayer of intercession is urgent for the Apostle Paul and for any who would desire that the Word of the Lord be glorified, and overcome any hindrance to its reception.

In conclusion, the emphasis of intercessory prayer in the life of Paul is seen in the frequency of these prayers. Wiles lists eighty-one references to intercessory prayer by Paul.\textsuperscript{66}

In the evaluation of Paul's prayers Wiles, presents them in four categories.

Class I: Intercessory Wish-Prayers

Class II: Intercessory Prayer -Requests

Class III: Paraentic References To Intercessory Prayer

Class IV: Didactic and Speculative References to Intercessory Prayer.\textsuperscript{67}

The preceding evaluations of Paul's prayers haven given an encompassing view of the life of Paul as an intercessor par excellence. The deep burden Paul had for the churches and the Lord's work manifested itself


\textsuperscript{66} Gordon P. Wiles, \textit{Paul's Intercessory Prayers} p. 297.

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid. pp. 299-301.
in intercessory prayer which God was pleased to answer. Truly, Paul was able to live out his own commitment to pray without ceasing.
Jesus

To write of Jesus as a Biblical intercessor is to truly consider the premier person of prayer in all the Scripture. The Lord Jesus lived out a life of prayer in continuing communion with the heavenly Father. The gospel writers give us a glimpse of his glorious life of prayer as Jesus teaches on prayer by precept, practice, and principle.

A survey of the gospel's material on the teaching of Jesus about prayer include these nine truths about prayer:

1. Sincerity Matthew 6:5
2. Forgiveness Matthew 6:14, 15
3. Privately Matthew 6:6
4. Combined with fasting Matthew 17:21
5. Faith Mark 11:23, 24
6. Persistent Luke 11:5-10
8. Obediently John 15:7
9. In the Name of Jesus John 15:16

Examples of Jesus praying are primarily found in Luke's gospel. A characteristic of Luke's gospel is a special emphasis on prayer. The life of prayer that Jesus demonstrated began with a praying mother. Luke 1: 46-55 shows that Mary was a woman of prayer. This beautiful prayer is similar to the prayer of Hannah in I Samuel in exalting the Lord for his favor. From this godly influence in the home we see Jesus as he lives out a life of prayer.

Jesus presented himself to John the Baptist for baptism in the Jordan River to fulfill all righteousness. Luke tells us that Jesus was praying during his baptism. God's response was the descent of the Holy Spirit and the voice of approval "Thou art my beloved Son in Thee I am well pleased." (Mark 1:9-11, and Luke 3:21,22).

Prayer was not only at the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus, but it was also part of his life as he withdrew from the public. "But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmilities. And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed." Luke 5:15-16. After the drain of ministry serving the needs of people, Jesus found the refreshment to his spirit that came in prayer.
The disciples learned from Jesus about prayer by his teaching and by his example (Luke 9:18). Prior to receiving Peter's confession that he is Messiah, Jesus was in prayer. The text indicates that after he prayed he asked the question that brought the personal response of Peter that he was indeed the Christ of God.

The transfiguration again shows the prayer emphasis of Luke. Neither Matthew or Mark mention that the transfiguration occurs as Jesus is praying. In fact the text states that Jesus took with him Peter, James and John with him for the purpose of praying. Certainly the symbolic and spiritual significance of this is not lost on the reader. Many a saint has been "changed" while in the place of prayer and come away touched by the glory of God.

Mark 6:45-52 contains a reference to Jesus opening an extended time in prayer alone while the disciples are on the sea of Galilee. As they faced contrary winds Jesus came to them as he walked on the water. This mighty expression of his power over nature and the laws of nature were manifested after Jesus left the place of prayer on the mountain. Further implied in this text is that Jesus was also praying for the disciples before he stepped out on the water to come to them (6:48).
John's gospel records two stirring incidents in the prayer life of Jesus. The first is at the tomb of Lazarus, the dear friend of Jesus (11: 41ff) The other is after Jesus has heard the request the Greeks have made in seeking him. At the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus prays aloud so that those nearby can hear his prayer and believe he has been sent by the Father. After the prayer, he raised Lazarus from the dead to the amazement of all. In John 12 as the Greeks seek Jesus he prays a prayer for God's glory to be manifested as his hour of destiny has come. Their presence seemed to indicate a definite signal to Jesus that the events leading to the cross would now unfold in an accelerating fashion. Prayer would be the key to sustaining himself for the ordeal that lay before him.

Luke records Jesus' words of warning and encouragement to Peter (22: 32,32). As Peter approached the hour of testing, Jesus reveals the effort of Satan to bring Peter down. Jesus makes it clear that Peter will endure Satan's assault. The key to his endurance will be Jesus' intercessory prayer. Notice that Jesus does not say to Peter "I will pray for you" but rather he says I have prayed for you. This is indeed encouragement that Peter has been the object of Jesus prayer prior to the time of testing. It is also comforting to know that Jesus prayed for Peter as an individual by
name. A specific prayer, prayed for a specific purpose that records a specific answer.

The three synoptic gospel writers, include Jesus prayer experience in the Garden of Gethsemane. John affirms the entrance into the garden and its familiarity but does not mention prayer specifically (18: 1,2). The intensity and agony of Gethsemane can hardly be measured. This solemn scene so often depicted by artists in stained glass and canvas stands alone as the place of devotion and dedication to the Father's will. The reality of the cross, the horror of separation from the Father and the burden of the sinless one being made sin (II Corinthians 5:17) produced in Jesus an earnestness in prayer that Luke says revealed sweat drops akin to blood falling to the ground. In this hour of sorrow even to the point of death, Jesus yearned for human companionship. Sadly, the weakness of the disciples was plainly revealed and they were unable to "tarry one hour".

The loneliness of the cross was foreshadowed there in Gethsemane as Jesus sought the will of the Father. Luke tells us that an angel appeared from heaven and strengthened him in this hour of trial. Jesus rose up from the prayer strengthened and said in total submission to the heavenly Father "not my will, but thine by done".
The last prayer that Jesus prayed in his earthly ministry was the prayer from the cross. There Jesus prayed for forgiveness for those putting him to death; for understanding of the separation from the Father; and for the commendation of his spirit into the hands of the Father. The holy character of the Son of God was seen in all its fullness in the prayers from the cross. In the midst of the deepest sorrow, torture and scorn he thought not of himself, but of others. He never lost confidence in God. Even in abandonment he could say My God. Even in the final moments of his earthly life a prayer was still on lips completing a life of prayer lived out in the fullness of the power of the Holy Spirit and totally dedicated to the Father's will.
The Holy Spirit is our helper in prayer. Jesus in John's gospel spoke of sending the Holy Spirit as the helper (paraclete) who would teach the disciples (and us) all things and bring to mind all he said (14:26). This promise of the Spirit is an indirect promise of help in prayer. Often times in the weakness of humanity it is difficult to pray. Truly, this is a sin filled sin cursed world. Even our best effort in prayer will deal with this reality. In Romans 8:22-28 Paul writes about the Spirit as our helper in prayer. He uses the word groan to illustrate this sin principle. Creation groans, believers groan. There is suffering (v. 18). There is vanity (v. 20). There is bondage and decay (v. 21). There is pain (v. 22). In a marvelous expression of God's goodness not only do creation and believers groan but also the Holy Spirit groans. The Spirit groans to help us in our sinful weakness and in our prayers. His groans are the groans of intercession on our behalf.

The intercession of the Holy Spirit in no way sets aside the place of prayer in the human spirit. We do not abrogate our responsibility of prayer and cease to pray because the Spirit prays for us. Rather, our prayers are empowered by the Spirit and made acceptable to God because the Spirit is able to search our hearts and know our true intent in prayer even though we
may not have clarity of thought or adequate expression of our prayer concerns. In Romans 8:26 the word for helps is the same word that Martha used when she asked Jesus to tell her sister Mary to help her in the kitchen (Luke 10:40). This is a very specific request. Likewise, the Spirit is able to give us the specific help we need in prayer.

As our helper the Holy Spirit performs these ministries in the life of a believer:

- * He Speaks (Acts 13:2)
- * He Teaches (John 14:26)
- * He Guides (John 16:13)
- * He Convicts (John 16: 7, 8)
- * He Commands (Acts 8:25)
- * He Comforts (John 14:16)
- * He Produces Fruit (Galatians 5:22, 23)
- * He Empowers Witnessing (Acts 1:8)\textsuperscript{69}

The Spirit's work in the believer's life is to control us so that we may live out the Christian life in the will of God. We are not to grieve the Spirit but rather we are to be filled with The Spirit and hence are under his control.

The life of the Lord Jesus was characterized by the continued presence of the Holy Spirit. His conception, (Matthew 1:18) his baptism, (Mark 1:10) his temptations, (Matthew 4:10) his public ministry begins (Luke 4:1), his Galilean ministry, (Luke 4:18) his confrontation with evil, (Matthew 12:28) and his resurrection (I Peter 3:18) all were performed by the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus taught his followers to also live in dependence upon the Holy Spirit. In Luke 11:13, Jesus said: "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." The work of the Spirit in the lives of His followers comes to those who are willing to ask. The pattern of prayer shown by the apostles and the early church demonstrate that the power of the Spirit filled those who asked. The book of Acts is the mighty working of the Holy Spirit in using the believers to send the message from Jerusalem to Judea, to Samaria, to the ends of the earth.

The Holy Spirit is the very Spirit of prayer. In Zechariah 12:10 the scripture says: "I will pour upon the house of David ... the Spirit of grace and of supplication". Andrew Murray writes that the Spirit is sent forth to enable us to pray. He further adds:

Prayer is the breathing of the Spirit in us. Power in prayer comes from the power of the Spirit in us, waited on and trusted
in. Failure in prayer comes from the weakness of the Spirit's work in us. Our prayer is the index of the measure of the Spirit's work in us. For us to pray right, the life of the Spirit must be right in us. For praying the effective, prevailing prayer of the righteous man, everything depends on the indwelling of the Spirit.  

The Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Prayer joins with the believer in four specific ministries of prayer.

1. The Spirit intercedes on our behalf helping us in our weakness so that we pray according to God's will. (Romans 8:26-28).

2. The Spirit teaches us to pray "Abba Father" that we might receive the benefits of sonship (Galatians 4:6).

3. The Spirit enables us to pray in an unselfish manner on all occasions and for all saints (Ephesians 6:18).

4. The Spirit joins us in praying for the return of the Lord Jesus that the completion of God's redemptive purposes may be fulfilled (Revelation 22:17).

As believers enter into the ministry of prayer they can be assured of the Spirit's enablement. The necessity of the Spirit in prayer is affirmed by E.M. Bounds as he writes:

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The Holy Spirit is the spirit of all grace and of each grace as well. Purity, power, holiness, faith, love, and all grace are brought into being and perfected by him. Would we grow in grace in particular? Would we be perfect in all graces? We must seek the Holy Spirit by prayer.

We urge the seeking of the Holy Spirit. We need him, and we need to stir ourselves up to seek him. The measure we receive of him will be gauged by the fervor of faith and prayer with which we seek him. Our ability to work for God, and to pray to God, and live for God, and affect others for God will be dependent on the measure of the Holy Spirit received by us, dwelling in us, and working through us.71

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Chapter 3

The Implementation of the Prayer Ministry

Enlisting People to Pray

The Bible teaches us that God himself is seeking people who will pray. The Prophet Isaiah communicates God's desire for intercessors saying: "And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor" (Isaiah 59:16). Ezekiel 22:30 also expresses this: "And I sought for a man . . . that should . . . stand in the gap before me . . ."

Enlisting people to pray joins God in His holy activity. Prayer fulfills God's purpose in accomplishing his will on earth. God is seeking intercessors. This awareness will give confidence and encouragement to the leader engaged in the enlistment process.

It is an ongoing challenge to enlist people to serve in the various positions in the work of the church. Anyone who has served on a nominating committee or been involved in the enlistment process would certainly say "amen" to the challenge.

A common reason for refusal to accept a responsibility is the "time factor". People face schedule demands that limit the time they will give to a volunteer organization. While the church is not just another organization
from a spiritual viewpoint, it is an organization nonetheless that functions primarily through the efforts of volunteers. Mark Senter in *The Art of Recruiting Volunteers* lists several obstacles to the enlistment process. Two stand out in particular. The "me orientation" of today's consumer-oriented society that judges an activity by its benefits to them personally and the "project orientation" that will commit to a short-term "do it all at once" activity but refuse a long-term commitment. Acknowledgment of the fact of a reluctance to serve by many people will avoid an unrealistic expectation in enlisting people to pray.

Another factor in enlisting people to pray will be the reality that people do what they want to do. Most people prioritize what they want to do and plan their schedule accordingly. If they consider it important for their children to be in sports or take music lessons they will make the necessary sacrifices to allow participation. If they consider it important to go to the Garden Club on Thursdays or the Rotary on Saturday they will do it. The point is when enlisting people to pray you must communicate to them the importance of the ministry of intercession. If a person is convinced it is important they will be more willing to participate. How do

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you communicate it's importance? It will require a coordinated effort that begins with the senior pastor and is communicated to the other staff and lay leadership. When the leadership believes it is important and so indicates by words and actions the membership will begin to believe it also.

The first step in enlisting people to pray is to be in prayer yourself. You are presenting the opportunity for individuals to participate in the prayer ministry. The Holy Spirit does the calling out of those who will be intercessors. The Holy Spirit will work in the lives of those you will enlist and plant that desire to be an intercessor. It will bear fruit as they obey the call to prayer. As you pray for intercessors to participate in the prayer ministry the Holy Spirit will bring to your mind those whom you can personally enlist. Make a prayer list of these individuals and pray for them. Then, as the Spirit leads, you can personally visit and enlist those individuals with a sincere heart believing that God has guided you to invite them to become part of the prayer ministry. Faithfulness in prayer on your part will not only give you the Spirit's direction but it will also give you the opportunity to set the example as a person of prayer.

Next, you will need to enlist a prayer coordinator. This is the lay person responsible to direct the prayer ministry. Just as a lay person directs
the Sunday School or missions organizations they would also direct this ministry. The person who serves as prayer coordinator should be a person of prayer. They should see their work as a form of Christian service and perform their responsibility as unto the Lord. It will be best if they do not have additional responsibilities in the church (such as Sunday School teacher, or deacon chairman, etc.). If they properly fulfill their duty it will require their complete attention.

Some of the duties of the prayer coordinator would include the following:

1. Overall prayer ministry.
2. Work closely with the pastor, staff and lay leaders to keep the prayer ministry an integrated part of the total ministry of the church.
3. Direct the prayer secretary in keeping the prayer requests current and the prayer room in order.
4. Keep the prayer ministry before the congregation.
5. Encourage and assist the participants in the prayer ministry.
6. Develop budget needs.
7. Plan and promote special prayer events.
The enlistment of a prayer secretary will facilitate the administration of the prayer ministry. The prayer secretary will record and file prayer requests. It is essential that requests be kept current and answers recorded. Also, the prayer secretary will keep the prayer room supplies current and orderly.

The heart of the prayer ministry will be those who are drawn by the Holy Spirit and respond to the invitation to be intercessors. As mentioned, the first group enlisted will be those whom the Holy Spirit brings to your mind to contact directly. After this initial group is enlisted personally they should be asked to invite those they feel God would have them to pray for and involve just the way He worked through the pastor to involve them.

The pastor will begin to preach on prayer and announce the establishment of the prayer ministry. Information should be included in the church newsletter, placed on bulletin boards, and announced in Sunday School classes asking people to become part of the prayer ministry. This information should include the who, what, when and where of the prayer ministry. Individuals should be asked to communicate their willingness to participate either to the pastor or the prayer coordinator. A response form could be included in the Sunday bulletin. This general communication to
the church will give all the membership the opportunity to respond to the
Spirit's leading in joining the prayer ministry. Those responding should be
contacted, affirmed and instructed as to the next steps toward involvement
in the prayer ministry.
Training People to Pray

The teaching task of the church is part of the fulfillment of the great commission that Jesus gave (Matthew 28:19-20). If disciples are to be effective followers of Christ they must be taught. Likewise if people are to pray effectively and in unity they need to be properly instructed how to pray. Prayer is not just the mechanics of praying in the prayer room but it is the attitude of the heart and life focused on God's holy purposes. Therefore, the emphasis will be on a lifestyle of prayer with part of its expression being demonstrated by praying in the prayer room.

Three training tools will be used in equipping people to pray. The first is the Church Prayer Ministry Manual compiled by T.W. Hunt and published by the Sunday School Board of The Southern Baptist Convention. It is a part of the Church Study Course educational system that includes over 500 courses in 23 subject areas. It includes an overview of how an intercessory prayer ministry functions and how people can be involved in the ministry. A 4 1/2 hour teaching video is available with the manual that facilitates group study or individual instruction. This is the primary teaching resource to equip a person to participate in the intercessory prayer ministry.73
The second resource is the book *The Doctrine of Prayer*, by T.W. Hunt. This book gives a general teaching about prayer and its significance in the life of a believer. Individuals will be encouraged to read this book for their personal instruction and spiritual development. It includes eight chapters dealing with the following topics:

- The Foundation of Prayer - the God Who Cares
- Jesus - the Example of Prayer
- The Holy Spirit - Our Helper in Prayer
- The Ways People Pray
- Questions About Prayer
- Hindrances to Effective Prayer
- Prayer in the Church - Then and Now
- Developing an Effective Prayer Life

The third training resource is *The Disciples Prayer Life: Walking in Fellowship with God*, by T.W. Hunt and Catherine Walker. This book is part of the Lay Institute For Equipping (LIFE) learning system that equips

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laiity for ministry in the church and in the world. All LIFE courses have these common characteristics:

* Thirteen lessons
* Daily study of the material
* Each participant meets weekly to process and practice what they are learning in a small group
* Practical life-related, life application material

The LIFE course book includes the following chapters:

Developing a Life of Prayer
Knowing God
Walking in Personal Fellowship with God
Using the Bible in Prayer
Expressing Gratitude in Prayer
Worshipping God in Prayer
Praying Together
Agreeing with God
Applying the Principles of Asking
Dealing with Hindrances and Delays
Asking for Yourself and Others

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Praying for Missions

Establishing a Ministry of Prayer\textsuperscript{75}

This course can meet in a small group setting (preferably the leader's home) where the support and encouragement of fellow believers will enhance the learning process.

As the prayer ministry is organized an initial group meeting of the participants should be held. At this meeting a prayer ministry summary sheet should be distributed that explains the prayer ministry and what is expected of those who participate. You can schedule the teaching sessions for the Church Prayer Ministry Manual that will equip the intercessors to pray as part of the church prayer ministry. An effective way to teach the manual would be as a Saturday morning retreat. Another method would be to schedule four weekly sessions. Whichever teaching method is chosen, once the task is completed you are ready to launch the prayer ministry.

Involving People In Prayer

After individuals have been enlisted and trained they are ready to accept their assignment as a person of prayer through the prayer ministry of the church. The intercessor should follow the prayer guide that gives the outline on how to spend their hour in the prayer room. This guide is the basis for a balanced prayer ministry and as a rule should be followed. However, there may be times when the Holy Spirit would lead an intercessor to pray in a specific way that differed from the outline. Certainly obedience to the Spirit's leading would be appropriate. Unless the Spirit directs otherwise it is expected that the intercessor would follow the prayer guide.

It is a sacred trust to be asked to share the concern of people as they make their prayer requests. Therefore, an intercessor must hold in STRICT CONFIDENCE all prayer requests and not discuss them or mention them outside of the prayer room. One who can not keep a confidential matter does not reflect the heart of an intercessor. Regrettably, violation of a confidence would disqualify a person from participation in the prayer ministry. The only exception to this matter of confidence is when the nature of a request is very serious and someone may be in danger or have some
immediate need. In that case the pastor or prayer coordinator should be notified.

The prayer room will be organized in such a way that the requests will be filed in a manner that will make consistent orderly prayer possible. A prayer notebook divided by sections will handle the long-term requests. A box marked PRAYER REQUESTS will hold the cards that are turned into the prayer ministry. As the requests are prayed for a marker should be placed to let the next intercessor know where to begin their prayer time.

The involvement in the prayer ministry will become more than a mechanical routine of Christian duty. The intercessor who is spiritually alert will recognize the great need for prayer on every hand. It will not only be a duty but it will be a delight. Wesley Duewel writes of God's wonderful plan for world-wide influence through prayer:

God has a wonderful plan by which you can have worldwide influence. Through prayer you can stand beside Billy Graham as he preaches in crusades anywhere in the world. Through prayer you can stand beside George Beverly Shea as he sings the glorious gospel. Through prayer you can accompany any missionary to remote reaches of the earth. Through prayer you can contribute to the ministry of any pastor or evangelist in a church or gospel hall anywhere in the world. Through prayer you can take a suffering infant in your arms.

There is no reason in the world why you cannot become so steadfast in your personal prayer life that Christ will count on
you to help build His church and advance His kingdom in many parts of the world.

Prayer is the greatest resource of the church. It is the most effective means of preparing the way of the Lord available to us as Christians today. You yourself can influence more people for God and have a greater role in advancing Christ's cause by prayer than in any other way. It is not the only thing you must do, but it is the greatest thing you can do. It has often been said,

The Devil trembles when he sees
God's weakest child upon his knees.

If that is true, think what could happen if every Christian really took his prayer role seriously and began to pray regularly and specifically, uniting with thousands or millions of others, all praying for the same priority needs around the world. Are you willing to be a part of such a prayer army?76

Those who will involve themselves in the ministry of intercessory prayer will find that they have touched the throne of grace and found mercy and help in time of need.

Prayer Guide

As you enter into your hour of intercession in the prayer room this outline will help you to pray in a balanced way. It will assure that all intercessors are praying in unity for the requests that have been presented. As a general rule the prayer guide should be used. However, there may be times when the Holy Spirit will direct you to prayer in a different way or for a specific need. Always you should obey the leading of the Holy Spirit. Let this time of prayer be filled with faith and the assurance of God's great power to hear and answer prayer. "Call unto me and I will answer thee and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not" Jeremiah 33:3.

1. Come before the Lord as the sovereign of the universe (Pray approximately 5 minutes).

Praise "Enter into . . . his courts with Praise"

Psalm 100:4

Reverence "Let them praise thy great and terrible name: for it is holy". Psalm 99:3

Alertness "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching there unto . . ."

Ephesians 6:18
Yield "O come let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker". Psalm 95:6

2. PRAYER REQUESTS BOX (Pray approximately 10 minutes)
Review each card beginning at the place marked from the previous intercessor. Pray faithfully for each request. Initial the back of the card after you have prayed.

3. Long-term Requests Notebook - (Pray approximately 10 minutes)

4. List of Church Families, Prospects, Sunday School, Mission Organizations, (Pray approximately 10 minutes)

5. Notebook of those in Authority
Spiritual Authority - Pastors, Church Staff, Church Officers, Denominational Leaders (Pray approximately 10 minutes)
Government Leaders

6. Missionaries, World Evangelization, The Lost
Missionary Prayer Calendar (Pray approximately 10 minutes)

7. Praise God for answered prayer (Pray approximately 5 minutes)
Address and sign prayer-gram with written scripture verse to encourage the one prayed for today that the Lord would have you send a note.
Encouraging People to Pray

In Jerusalem the church of the Nations is adjacent to the Garden of Gethsemane. On the door of the church in bronze is the scripture verse:

"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41)

The verse affirms the desire to pray but recognizes the fact it is easy not to pray. In the hour of great need when Jesus desired the prayer support of his own they failed him. If the intercessory prayer ministry is to succeed, those who participate will need to be encouraged.

The pastor sets the tone for encouraging the prayer ministry. He does so by affirming the prayer coordinator in his work as well as the other intercessors. He should announce from the pulpit (as appropriate) answers to prayers that have been answered and give thanks and praise to God. Also, he should verbally affirm the participants in the prayer ministry as faithful intercessors. It would also be helpful to make an occasional phone call to the different intercessors and express appreciation to them for their faithfulness in prayer. Another avenue of expression of appreciation and encouragement would be to send a card or brief note to the intercessors.
The pastor's example (along with other staff) if it is a positive one will be an encouragement to the intercessors. The pastor should take his hour in the prayer room and faithfully serve as a fellow intercessor. Don Miller in *A Room That's Like a Mountain* suggests that a pastor or staff member should let their prayer time in the prayer room be on their own time rather than as a part of their ministerial duties.\(^7\)

A strong factor in encouraging the intercessors will be the joy of seeing prayer answered. As the prayer ministry grows and requests are faithfully recorded and prayed for the list of answered prayers will grow. Each one will be a cause for joy and celebration. When souls are saved, lives are changed, families are strengthened, churches are established, missionaries are sent and God's kingdom is extended intercessors will be greatly encouraged. Clearly, the promises of God as they relate to prayer also make answered prayer more encouraging.

Another source of encouragement for the intercessors will be the encouragement they give to one another. I Thessalonians 5:11 says, "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up."

Encouragement comes when intercessors pray together and become prayer

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\(^7\) Don Miller, *A Room That's Like a Mountain*, (Forth Worth, Texas: Bible Based Ministries, 1984) p. 29.
partners. As they pray together, the oneness of the Spirit strengthens and encourages. The intercessor feels a sense of fulfillment and affirmation as he prays for another individual and that individual prays for him.

Additional encouragement to pray can come as the members of the prayer ministry meet together on a periodic basis (perhaps quarterly) and pray together as a group. There could be a time of testimony about what the Lord is doing in the lives of different ones. These prayer times could even be made part of an evening that included a meal, singing and a message on some aspect of prayer that will motivate and challenge. Coming together as a group is an affirmation of the intercessors role as a vital part of Christian service through the church. They are able to see that the prayer ministry has a meaningful place in the lives of others just as it does their own. This common bond of service as intercessors strengthens the prayer ministry and gives encouragement to the participants.
Chapter 4

A House of Prayer

Jesus affirmed that the house of the Lord was to be a house of prayer (Matthew 21:12, Isaiah 56:7). God has given significance to the place of prayer. In II Chronicles 7:14,15 God says this about his house:

"If my people, who are called by my name shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears (attentive) unto the prayer that is made in this place."

Certainly, prayer can be offered anywhere at any time. Yet, God desires that his people pray in His house. When a church becomes not just a place for preaching, singing, instruction and fellowship but also a house of prayer, God will be glorified and his people blessed. E.M. Bounds speaks of the importance of the church being the place of prayer:

The life, power, and glory of the church is prayer. The life of its members is dependent on prayer and the presence of God is secured and retained by prayer. The very place is made sacred by its ministry. Without it, the church is lifeless and powerless. . . Prayer converts even the bricks, and mortar, and lumber, into a sanctuary, a Holy of Holies, where the Shekinah dwells. It separates it in spirit and in purpose from all other edifices. Prayer gives a peculiar sacredness to the building, sanctifies it,
sets it apart for God, conserves it from all common and mundane affairs.

As God's house is a house of prayer, the divine intention is that people should leave their homes and go to meet him in his own house. The building is set apart for prayer especially, and as God has made special promise to meet his people there, it is their duty to go there, and for that specific end. Prayer should be the chief attraction for all spiritually minded churchgoers. Prayer is the one distinguishing mark of the house of God. As prayer distinguishes Christian from non-Christian people, so prayer distinguishes God's house from all other houses. It is a place where faithful believers meet with their Lord.  

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The Prayer Room

The focus of the prayer ministry of the church is to be the prayer room. By having the church set aside a special place for prayer it makes a visible statement that prayer is important. In a church were space is limited, a Sunday School classroom can serve as the prayer room. It is ideal if a space can be designated as the prayer room only and that no other activity occur in that room except prayer.

The prayer room should be equipped with simple furniture, adequate lighting, heating and cooling. There should be a desk or writing table and book shelf for books on prayer. A kneeling bench or altar should also be included. Other supplies needed for prayer such as notebooks, request card boxes, prayer lists, etc. should be provided. Prayer-grams for encouraging those for whom the intercessors have prayed as well as general office supplies need to be included. A clock, and a world map or globe will also be useful. The key to furnishing the prayer room is simplicity. Supply what is needed but do not make the room appear to be a lounge. It is to be a place of prayer! You may also want to hang scripture verses on the walls along with art that is focused on the theme of prayer. The appearance of the prayer room needs to reflect its holy purpose and clearly communicate that.
It should be kept clean, neat and orderly, ready at all times for those who enter to pray and seek the Lord.
Prayer in Public Worship

A.W. Tozer, Alliance Church pastor from 1919 until his death in 1963 and author of numerous books, in one of his best known books has written that worship is the missing jewel in modern evangelicalism. He says that we are organized and have almost everything - everything except the ability to worship. This is a rebuke of our modern inability to worship. While written decades ago, it is still up-to-date. It is a lament many contemporary believers can affirm. The heart of the Christian life is worship. The teaching of the Lord Jesus on worship is made plain in John 4: 23,24 as Jesus declares that those who worship the Father must do so in spirit and truth. In fact the Father is "seeking such to worship him."

Regrettably, worship can often fall short of being in spirit and in truth. Worship is not defined in the scripture but we can come to a biblical understanding of it. Each glimpse of heaven reveals to us the essence of worship. Whether it is the prophet Isaiah in his vision of the heavenly host crying "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:3) or the apostle John in Revelation 4 as he hears the angels perpetually saying "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty", the view is the same; reverence and recognition of the holiness of God and his worthiness to be worshipped. It
is ascribing to Almighty God what He alone is due. Genuine worship will employ the mind, will and motion in the acknowledgment of God. W.E. Vines says this about worship:

1. PROSKUENO, to make obeisance, do reverence to is the most frequent word rendered to worship.
2. SEBOMAI, to revere, stressing the feeling of awe or devotion.
3. SEBAZOMAI, to honour religiously.
4. LATREUO, to serve, to render religious service or homage.
5. EUSEBEO, to act piously towards.

The worship of God is nowhere defined in Scripture. A consideration of the above verbs shows that it is not confined to praise; broadly it may be regarded as the direct acknowledgment to God, His nature, attributes, ways and claims, whether by the outgoing heart in praise and thanksgiving or by deed done in such acknowledgment.79

The awareness of the essence of worship should be foremost in the mind of the worship leader as prayer in worship is considered. Sadly, prayer in worship can become a recitation of pious sounding phrases that have been learned at some point in the past with seemingly little application for the present. A contributing factor to ineffective prayer in worship is the view that prayers should be extemporaneous and not written. The Baptist tradition of extemporaneous prayer encourages prayer to be given without prior preparation or thought. While prayer in this way is not bad, one

wonders whether it is best. If time and thought were given to public prayer in the same way that sermon preparation is done, certainly prayer would be enriched. Oswald Sanders writing in *Spiritual Leadership* said this about time given to prayer:

Mastering the art of prayer, like any other art will take time, and the amount of time we allocate to it will be the true measure of our conception of its importance. We always contrive to find time for that which we deem most important. \(^{80}\)

E.M. Bounds speaks of the importance of devotion to prayer:

To men who think praying their main business and devote time to it according to this high estimate of its importance does God commit the keys of His kingdom, and by them does He work His spiritual wonders in this world. Great praying is the sign and seal of God's great leaders and the earnest of the conquering forces with which God will crown their labors.

The preacher is commissioned to pray as well as to preach. His mission is incomplete if he does not do both well. \(^{81}\)

The leader who will give time to thoughtful preparation of his public prayers will be a leader that will bring heavens blessing to those who worship.


When it is understood that effective public prayer must be preceded by thought and reverence for the one we worship public prayer then can be incorporated into the worship service. Those who lead in prayer should be instructed about the purpose of each prayer and maintain consistency with the purpose. The *invocation prayer* is not a time to pray for the sick, the missionaries, the homeless and whatever else comes to mind. The invocation is to focus the attention of those who worship upon God and to invite his blessing upon the time of worship. The *offertory prayer* is to acknowledge God's ownership of all and man's stewardship of his resources. It is to acknowledge giving as an expression of worship and should sound a note of thanksgiving for God's provision and blessing. The *pastoral prayer* is the place to present the needs of the congregation to the Lord. As mentioned, if this prayer is thoughtfully prepared, its impact will touch the lives of those for whom it is offered. The pastoral prayer can reflect special needs within the congregation as well as God's kingdom in its worldwide domain.

John Killinger in *Mastering Worship* gives these suggestions on public prayer:

* Prepare your prayers in a spirit of prayer.
* Fill prayers with important matters.
* Be specific.
* Employ biblical words and phrases.
* Block those clichés.
* Use strong, short words and employ as few adverbs and adjectives as possible.
* Vary the pace and rhythm by creating sentences of different lengths.
* Watch the tone.
* Aim for a sense of "sacred intimacy."
* Prime your pump with selections from volumes of published prayers.
* Surround prayers with a context conducive to prayer and praise.
* Leave pauses and silences for private prayer within the public liturgy.\(^82\)

The *benediction prayer* should offer thanks for the time of worship and the blessings experienced. It should then ask God's blessing upon those who leave the place and pray for his grace and mercy in the living of their lives. When the purpose of each prayer is clearly understood and consistency with that purpose maintained, public prayer will be more meaningful.

There are times in the public worship experience when it may be appropriate to ask the worshippers to join together in praying out loud in small groups of three or four or even with one other person. This concept may need careful introduction allowing for those who would feel

uncomfortable praying out loud. Even in a small group people need to have the option to pass and allow others to lead the prayer.83 Another way of involving the people in prayer in worship would be to invite them (those who feel led) to kneel at the altar in silent prayer while the pastoral prayer is offered. As a congregation grows in its understanding of prayer other ways of involving people in prayer in the worship service should be considered and developed. The key is to remember the one who is worshipped and his mighty power to hear and answer prayer.

83 Jack Hayford pastor of the Church on The Way, Van Nuys, California in his cassette series on worship talks about their worship service that regularly involves the worshippers in prayer. He instructs the people to join in prayer groups and says that the one who is more experienced take group leadership and thus alleviates the fears of the less experienced. In a church where there is an intercessory prayer ministry the intercessors would likely take the lead.
Prayer Groups

It is a principle of life that people group together. The first group is the family unit. There, husband and wife and their children make up the building block of society. This family unit is linked to their extended family and ultimately to their national identity. Sociologists deal with the grouping of people and find that people tend to group according to ethnic, and socio-economic standing. Like joining with like. In this grouping is a level of comfort, security and commonality. Churches tend to group by certain characteristics as well. Douglas A. Walrath, as a sociologist, has determined that there are a dozen distinct church types based on community and neighborhood characteristics. Just as churches can be identified by groups, within those churches are distinct groups. A typical Southern Baptist Church has Sunday School groups, men's groups, women's groups, music groups, missions groups, Senior adult groups, and prayer groups.

Each group draws people together on the basis of age or special interest. The prayer groups can serve that function. However, the prayer group can go beyond the special interest of a specific group and have a

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positive impact on all the other groups. Certainly this affects not only other groups but the entire church as well. There is a blessing and a bonding in prayer that brings people together. As people pray confessing their dependence on Almighty God, it brings unity and the presence of God into their midst. Obviously groups should be established and encouraged for the benefit of God's work and for his people.

The first prayer group that should be encouraged is the family prayer group. In the appendix of this paper the number of those who had a family devotion in their home answered only forty percent affirmative. This summary was among Baptists in North Carolina. George Barna in *What Americans Believe*, found that only 45 percent of Christians read the Bible in a given week. This national survey in 1991 using bonafide research methodology shows clearly the weakness of family/personal devotions.85 The church should encourage family devotions and family prayer. An excellent resource to help families have an established method and structure is the *Family Worship Bible* published by Holman Publishers. It gives suggestions for family worship, family prayer, family discussion, and

family activity. It uses the New International Version for the scripture text and speaks to a wide range of issues that affect the family.

A second prayer group would be the intercessors who participate in the prayer ministry. Periodically they should be brought together to pray and fellowship with one another. This will strengthen the prayer ministry by allowing the intercessors to get to know one another better. As they share the common bond of praying together they will be united in purpose and commitment to continue as faithful members of the prayer ministry.

A third prayer group would be a men's group. This group should meet on a weekly basis to pray. The time and purpose of the group should be clearly understood. The basics of group dynamics should be remembered. A group leader/facilitator should keep the group focused on its purpose, guide the discussion and call the group to pray.

A fourth group could be a ladies prayer group. This group could be divided into two sub-groups: a day group and an evening group. This would reach those who work outside the home and those who do not. Group leaders should keep the group focused on its purpose and lead the members to faithfully pray during their time together.
A final consideration of groups will be to list a number of potential groups as a suggested model. Each church can uniquely develop prayer groups that will suit the needs within its own ministry.

* Youth Prayer Groups
* Missions Prayer Groups
* Senior Adult Prayer Groups
* Pastor's Prayer Groups
* Deacon Prayer Groups
* Mother's Prayer Groups
* Single Adult Prayer Groups
* Special Project Prayer Groups

People need to pray together. Prayer groups encourage united praying. In every group gathering prayer should be a priority. Specific prayer groups will help maintain that priority and strengthen the total ministry of the church.

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This special prayer group would pray for the specific events and activities of the church such as Vacation Bible School, musical presentations, visitation ministry, etc.
Public Relations and The House of Prayer

The church that becomes a house of prayer for all people will be a church that brings the blessing of heaven not only to its own members but also to those whose lives are touched by its ministry. As requests are prayed for and glorious answers received, faith will increase and the number of requests too! How can a church make known its prayer ministry in the community? By making a deliberate effort to communicate using the skills and tools required for effective public relations.

Frank Schmitt has given a brief definition of public relations: "... (It) is understanding and evaluating the church program, and communicating to those inside and outside the church to gain their understanding and acceptance of the program." 87 If the prayer ministry is to accomplish its purpose it must be supported by the church membership and impact its community for Christ. The community will be impacted as the church becomes known as a house of prayer. Non-members can make their requests known and receive encouragement because of the intercessory prayer ministry. Ministry opportunities may be discovered that will include

87 Frank Schmitt, A Practical Introduction to Church Administration (Lynchburg, VA: Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, Class Notes EDMN 505 1988.) pp. 197,198. 128
not only prayer but some direct action in meeting needs that will fulfill the mission of the church. Those to be informed include:

Inside the church.
  a) Leadership with separate categories for deacons, Sunday School workers, bus workers, ushers, and choir members.
  b) Active members.
  c) Inactive members.
  d) Nonmembers attending.
  e) Family members of attenders.
  f) Age groups with separate categories for children, youth, young marrieds, retired, college students, singles, and other adults.
  g) Members of organizations such as Christian Day School, bus riders, and Good News Clubs.

Outside the church
  a) Christians in the community but not members of a local church.
  b) People who do not profess to be Christians.
  c) Members of other churches
  d) Other churches
  e) Businesses near the church
  f) Governmental agencies
  g) Communication media

There must be a faithfulness in the prayer ministry that demonstrates the church's commitment to be a house of prayer. Then, those who are informed about the prayer ministry will have confidence in it.

\[88\] Ibid. pp. 198, 199.

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Effective means to communicate the prayer ministry can be word of mouth, and by media. A great deal will depend on the perception that is held about your church. Concerning word of mouth, the influences of one individual is greater than you may think. A public utility in one mid-Atlantic state determined that each individual was acquainted with 250 people. That individual has a "considerable" degree of influence over 50 of those acquaintances.\(^9\) Concerning the use of media there are the commonly known outlets of newspaper, direct mail, radio, and television. Other outlets do exist but may not be as commonly known for use by the church. These include billboards, transit posters, community events, restaurant menus, high school athletic programs, specialty items, community service clubs, and chamber of commerce church listings.

A proven method of communication of the ministry of the church is house to house visitation. An ideal way to inform the community is to go through the neighborhood door to door. Take a brochure about the church and its prayer ministry and simply ask the resident (after an introduction and explanation of the visits purpose) if they have a prayer request that they would like for the prayer ministry to pray for. This visit can be conducted

\(^9\) Joel B. Curry, Public Relations For the Local Church, (Lynchburg, VA: Church Growth Institute, 1991) p. 14.
on the door step and need not be lengthy. A prayer request card could be left with the resident for a future request that could either be mailed or delivered to the church. Again, in the process of this kind of outreach prayer effort needs may be discovered that will allow the church to minister in the name of Christ and fulfill the mission and purpose of the church.

Another effective means to communicate the prayer ministry would be to conduct a member to member prayer visitation within the church family. The purpose would be to visit in each home and share about the ministry of the church, discuss prayer requests, read a scripture, and then pray. This would be a tremendous unifying factor within the church and a spiritual enrichment to the members. The Stewardship Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention in their capital funding campaign "Together We Build" has used the prayer visitation concept in helping the church prepare spiritually for the commitment needed to accomplish large financial goals. Often this becomes the "highlight" of the entire fund raising effort. Likewise, it can become a spiritual "highlight" for the local church when conducted for the sole purpose of prayer.

How can the effectiveness of your communication effort be measured? Certainly prayer itself can't be measured from an earthly point
of view. Only in eternity will the full effects of prayer be shown. However, there are simple measures that show how effective your communication has been. Public relations expert Joel Curry gives these indicators;

Your success in relationship with people in your community - that is, how they respond to events, news about your church, invitations to attend services or participate in some other way in your ministry - depends on how your church is perceived. . . One of the simplest measures of public attitude about your church is its rate of growth. People make choices they perceive as positive or beneficial for themselves. If they believe your church will benefit them, they will tend to visit services and events at your church, and a certain percentage of them will join your congregation. . . Also measure other indications of growth and/or deepening relationships to God and the church - Sunday School attendance, Sunday morning offering, Sunday evening attendance, prayer meeting attendance, small-group participation, etc. 90

Genuine concern, faithful prayer and effective communication will help the church be the house of prayer that God desires it to be. The church will know it, the community will know it and the hand of God will be upon it.

90 Ibid. pp. 12, 13.
Appendix A
Devotional Books or Study Course Books
taken from the results of the
Church Prayer Ministry Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Henry Blackaby</td>
<td>Experiencing God</td>
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<tr>
<td>E.M. Bounds</td>
<td>Power Through Prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Bunyan</td>
<td>Pilgrims Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oswald Chambers</td>
<td>My Utmost For His Highest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wesley Duewel</td>
<td>Ablaze For God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dick Eastman</td>
<td>The Hour That Changes The World</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Foster</td>
<td>Celebration of Discipline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Billy Hanks</td>
<td>Christian Discipleship</td>
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<tr>
<td>T.W. Hunt, Catherine Walker</td>
<td>Disciples Prayer Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill Hybels</td>
<td>Honest to God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rick Ingle</td>
<td>My Life to Live Over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Stanley Jones</td>
<td>The Way</td>
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<tr>
<td>Larry Lea</td>
<td>Could You Not Tarry One Hour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peter Lord</td>
<td>2959 Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don Miller</td>
<td>&quot;Video Series on Prayer&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>D.L. Moody</td>
<td>Today in The Word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Olford</td>
<td>Manna In The Morning</td>
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Charles Stanley
Barry St. Clair
Jack Taylor
A.W. Tozer
Dawson Trotman
Warren Wiersbe
Avery Willis

No Author Publications

Our Daily Bread
Open Windows
Royal Service Magazine
Home Life Magazine

In Touch Magazine
Time Alone With God
Prayer: Life's Limitless Reach
Pursuit of God
Seven Minutes With God
What Happens When Churches Pray?
MasterLife
Appendix B
Church Prayer Ministry Survey Evaluation

The survey was taken in November 1992 at the Southern Baptist Pastor's Conference of North Carolina Annual Meeting and at the Annual Meeting of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina representing the 3,557 Southern Baptist churches in that state. The pastor's conference was held at the Calvary Baptist Church in Winston Salem and the Baptist State Convention was held at the Lawrence Joel Coliseum. At the pastor's conference the surveys were handed out to individuals as they entered the building. Those responding were asked to leave the survey on their seat upon leaving. The survey at the Baptist State Convention was placed on the seats on the ground floor and first seating level of the coliseum. The surveys were collected in the same manner as the pastor's conference. Six hundred seventy-five surveys were distributed at the pastor's conference and two hundred seventy-two were returned for a forty percent response. At the Baptist State Convention one thousand surveys were distributed and one hundred ten responses were received for an eleven percent response. The surveys were then combined for a total response of three hundred eighty-two. With sixteen hundred and seventy-five surveys distributed the
percent of response was twenty-two percent. The data was then complied and evaluated.

Two questions from the survey were of special interest to this project.

1. Does your church have an organized intercessory prayer ministry?
2. Do you have a regular prayer service? If yes, how much time is devoted to actual prayer in the service?

The response to the organized prayer ministry conflicted with the assumption that there were a limited number of churches with an organized prayer ministry. The average of all responses showed that sixty-one percent do have prayer ministries. Possible flaws in the response could come from a different view of what an intercessory prayer ministry involves. Another possible flaw could be that only those with an intercessory prayer ministry were more inclined to answer the survey. Regardless of the responses the data in the survey indicates more churches had an intercessory prayer ministry then the original assumption of this project. In order to test the data and see if there has been any change in intercessory prayer ministries another survey was conducted in November 1994 at the Annual North Carolina Baptist Pastor's Conference. Seven
hundred surveys were distributed and one hundred and one were returned for a fourteen percent response. In this survey sixty-six percent indicated that they did have an intercessory prayer ministry. Therefore, based on the data it appears that there is a growing prayer movement within the Southern Baptist Churches in North Carolina.

The other question concerning time spent in actual prayer in the prayer service shows a limited amount of prayer being offered in the prayer service. Thirty-nine percent devoted less than twenty percent of the service time to actual prayer. Thirty-six percent devoted only twenty to forty percent to actual prayer. Only seven percent devoted forty to sixty percent to actual prayer. This data shows that the prayer service is either misnamed or its purpose is not being fulfilled. Seventy-five percent of the prayer services devote less than forty percent to actual prayer. This indicates that the greater amount of prayer is offered at times other than the prayer service. In light of the data, pastors would be wise to study carefully the prayer services in their churches and make them more consistent with their stated purpose.
## Appendix C
### Survey Data Summary

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Position</th>
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<th>Staff</th>
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<tr>
<td>Downtown Average</td>
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<th>40-60%</th>
<th>80-100%</th>
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<td>173</td>
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<td>401 - 600</td>
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2. Average - all churches: 331 responses.

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<th>Rural Average</th>
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<td>52 responses</td>
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5.  
| Pastor Coordinator | 196 | 172 | 14 |

6.  
| Pastor Coordinator | 361 | 17 | 4  |

7.  
| Pastor Coordinator | 214 | 157 | 43 |

8.  
| Pastor Coordinator | 325 | 48 | 9  |

---

138
9.  
   a. yes  216  
   no  130  
   36 No Response  
   b. List other times given  

10.  
   a. yes  332  
   no  24  

   b.  
   5  24  10  54  15  71  
   20  57  30  64  45  16  
   60  22  longer  3  71 No Response  

11.  
   yes  119  
   no  227  
   36 No Response  

12.  
   yes  149  
   no  184  
   49 No Response  

13.  
   yes  171  
   no  170  
   41 No Response  

14.  
   a. yes  162  
   no  139  
   81 No Response  
   b. List titles & authors
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## Convention Church Survey Results

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<th>Devotional book or study course that has been especially helpful to you</th>
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<td>42</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>46</td>
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Appendix D
Peninsula Baptist Church Prayer Ministry Survey

1. Gender: Male Female

2. Age ______

3. Number of years a Christian ______

4. Number of years member at Peninsula ______

5. Employment status:

   employed full-time part-time homemaker retired

6. Are you married or single? (please circle)

7. Do you have a leadership responsibility in the church?

   yes no If yes, what area?

   teacher committee member other ______

8. Do you (circle one)

   tithe give a percentage of your income

   give regularly give occasionally

   do not support the church financially

9. I participate in the prayer ministry because (circle letter of all that apply)

   A. It is my Christian duty

   B. I feel a special call to prayer
C. I have experienced answered prayer

D. I want to learn more about prayer

10. Since you began participating in the prayer ministry of the church has your involvement in the life of the church:

   increased  decreased  remained about the same

11. Do you have a daily devotional time?

   yes no

   If yes, how many minutes do you spend in prayer?

   5 10 15 20 30 45 60 more than an hour

12. Do you have a family devotional in your home?

   yes no

13. Do you feel comfortable leading in public prayer?

   yes no

   If yes, has your participation in the prayer ministry made you more open to lead in prayer?

   yes no

14. Do you believe that the prayer ministry in our church is:

   A. As important as the other ministries

   B. Less important.
C. More important

15. How can we improve the prayer ministry in our church?
After an enlistment effort as mentioned in Chapter 3 of this paper the prayer ministry was launched on Sunday, January 8, 1995. Fifteen participants agreed to serve one hour per week as part of the intercessory prayer ministry of our church. The intercessors were given instruction about the responsibilities of an intercessor and agreed to serve in compliance with these responsibilities. Enough participants were enlisted to have prayer morning and evening in our church (based on the passage in Exodus 29: 38-46) each day of the week. In addition to the enlistment of regular participants alternates were also enlisted. Alternates were not able to commit to a weekly time in the prayer room but were willing to be called to fill in at the time a regular would be unable to keep their scheduled hour. In the nine weeks that have passed since the prayer ministry began, there has been consistent faithfulness by the participants.

The survey of the participates was taken during the ninth week. It indicated an appreciation for the prayer ministry and affirmed its importance in the total ministries of the church. The following is a summary of the survey responses.
1. Gender of participants.
   6 men  9 women

2. Average Age.
   Men 49  Women 50

3. Average number years a Christian.
   Men 27  Women 27

4. Average years member of Peninsula.
   Men 4.6  Women 3.3

5. Employment status.
   5 employed full-time
   4 employed part-time
   1 homemaker
   4 retired

6. Marital status.
   10 married
   4 single

7. Leadership responsibility in the church?
   10 yes
   3 no
8. Financial support of the church.
   
   10 tithe
   
   2 give percentage of income
   
   4 give regularly

   
   A. It is my Christian duty 10
   
   B. I feel a special call to prayer 11
   
   C. I have experienced answered prayer 12
   
   D. I want to learn more about prayer 12

   
   increased 5
   
   decreased 1
   
   remained the same 8

11. Daily devotional time?
   
   A. yes 12
   
   no 2
   
   B. Average time of all devotional 29 minutes
12. Family devotion?
   yes  5
   no  8

13. Comfortable leading public prayer?
   A. yes  9
      no  5
   B. More willing to lead in public prayer because of participation in prayer ministry?
      yes  8
      no  0

   A. As important as the other ministries  5
   B. Less important  0
   C. More important  9
Peninsula Baptist Church
Prayer Ministry Survey Results

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<td>It is my Christian duty</td>
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<td>I have experienced answered prayer</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel comfortable leading in public prayer?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, has your participation in the prayer ministry made you more open to lead in prayer?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you believe the prayer ministry in our church is:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As important as other ministries</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less important</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More important</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


VITA
Robert Houston Jackson, Jr.

PERSONAL
Born: October 27, 1951
        Ivey Louise, born August 1982.
        Linda Ashley, born March 1987.

EDUCATIONAL
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MINISTERIAL
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PROFESSIONAL
Branch Manager, Wholesale Heating and Air Condition Company,
Pastor, Peachtree Baptist Church, Spring Hope, North Carolina,
Pastor, Peninsula Baptist Church, Mooresville, North Carolina,
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