6/1/14  Part I Moving Inward: Seeking the Transformation We Need
        Chapter 1 – Simple Prayer

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        Chapter 18 Healing Prayer
        Chapter 19 The Prayer of Suffering

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        Chapter 21 Radical Prayer

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Overview

:: Prayers are divided into 3 parts:
  • Part I – Movement Inward for inner change, for heart transformation
    o Prayer to God the Son, Jesus Christ as our Savior and Teacher
    o These prayers are first because God has revealed Himself to us most fully and most clearly in Jesus Christ
  • Part II – Movement Upward in preparation for ministry and mission
    o Prayer to God the Father, as our sovereign King and eternal Lover
  • Part III – Movement Outward through actions of ministry and mission
    o Prayer to God the Holy Spirit, as our Empowerer and Evangelist

Pete and Repeat…

:: Introduction:
  “True, whole prayer is nothing but love.” – St. Augustine

• Insight: A glimpse into God’s heart - “an open wound of love”
  o God’s heart aches over our distance and preoccupation
  o God’s heart mourns that we do not draw near to Him
  o God’s heart grieves that we have forgotten Him
  o God’s heart weeps over our obsession with muchness and manyness

  God, the Creator of the universe, longs for our presence.

• God, the Almighty Maker of heaven and earth, welcomes us home, home to:
  o Serenity and peace and joy
  o Friendship and fellowship and openness
  o Intimacy and acceptance and affirmation

  The key to coming home to God, to His heart is: prayer.

• Possible experiences with prayer:
  o Prayed in anguish or in terror
  o In an angry expletive
  o Don’t believe in prayer
  o Disappointed and disillusioned in prayer
Avoid prayer due to brokenness of life, being wronged by others, painful memories, too distant, too unworthy, too sinful
Prayed for years but prayer has become cold, little happens, God seem remote
Prayer is the delight of your life and you can attest to its goodness, want more; more power, more love, more God

The Father’s heart is open wide, everyone is welcome to grow higher up and deeper in.

The more we know God, the more we want to know Him.

- The key is prayer, the door is: Jesus Christ.
  - He lived a perfect life
  - He died in our place
  - He rose victorious over all the dark powers
  - He made the way, the door of God’s grace (unmerited favor; doing for us what we don’t deserve) and mercy (doing for us what we can’t do for ourselves), that we might live through him

No longer do we have to stand outside the door, barred from nearness to God by our stiff-necked, hard-hearted rebellion.

Revelation 3:20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

John 10:9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture.

:: Conclusion:

“He prayeth well, who loveth well.” – Samuel Coleridge

- Knowing Jesus Christ through prayer is a love relationship: “an enduring, continuing, growing love relationship with the great God of the universe.”

- Prayer is like the father with his son in the shopping mall...page 3. Let God sing His love song over you through prayer.

In the next 10 weeks, we will discover how we can grow in our love relationship with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, through our prayer life.
Chapter 1 Simple Prayer

:: To pray is to change.
  - We need inner transformation.
  - We want inner transformation.

:: What is inner transformation...? Why is it important...?

:: Simple prayer can transform us on the inside.

:: Have you ever heard someone say: “I don’t know how to pray.” Or “What do I say when I pray?” or “I don’t know the right words to pray.”

:: “Pray as you can, not as you can’t.” – Dom John Chapman

:: The dilemma...pg.7

:: Masters of prayer? “To pray mean to be willing to be naïve.” – Emilie Griffin

:: I just prayed WHAT??
  - The practical effect of analyzing our prayers and soul-searching them is to “completely paralyze our ability to pray.”

:: A hot mess...

:: Grace, grace and more grace!!

:: Be like little children, we don’t have to be professional pray-ers.

:: We can’t offer a “bad” prayer, God accepts us and our prayers just as we are.

:: SIMPLE Prayer is....
  - The most basic, primary form of prayer
  - We are the focus of Simple Prayer – our needs, our wants, our concerns
  - The “Prayer of Beginning Again”
  - Includes “the good, the bad and the ugly” – Moses, Elisha, Psalmist
  - Ordinary people bringing ordinary concerns to a loving Father
  - The prayer of children, we never outgrow it
  - It is necessary and essential to the spiritual life
  - Reveals the condition of our heart and God begins working on it
:: How do we pray a simple prayer?
   - Where we are
   - Ordinary events
   - Crushing failures
   - Loss of a dream
   - Hurt feelings
   - Speak frankly, honestly, openly with God
   - Carry on an ongoing conversation with God

:: It’s like riding a bike - by praying we learn to pray.

:: It’s an ongoing love relationship with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; only one thing is required when praying a simple prayer: love.

:: Lack of prayer causes us to hunger for God. - “The desire for prayer is prayer, the prayer of desire.” – Mary Clare Vincent

:: Don’t try to hard, start with a few quality moments and focus and grow.

“The more time you spend with God, the more time you will want to spend with God.” - Susan

:: “The Lord loves us-perhaps the most of all-when we fail and try again.” – Emilie Griffin

:: One caution: don’t become so focused on yourself that you lose sight of God.

:: God is not part of our life-we are part of His life, He is the center of our life.

“SIMPLE prayer is talking to God anytime about anything, anywhere.” – Susan
Chapter 2 Prayer of the Forsaken

:: To come to the pleasure you have not you must go by a way in which you enjoy not. – St John of the Cross

:: Matthew 27:46b “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

:: We will pray this Prayer of the Forsaken if we seek the intimacy of perpetual communion with the Father.

:: What is the Prayer of the Forsaken?
  - Time of seeming desertion and absence and abandonment
  - Hebrews 13:5 Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”
  - Deus Absconditus – “God who is hidden”
  - The “Sahara of the heart”
  - Spiritual desolation
  - Abandoned by friends, spouse, God, other Christians
  - A dream has died

“The Prayer of the Forsaken is like a spiritual blackhole, we pour into it and nothing comes back out in return.” - Susan

:: How is the Prayer of the Forsaken experienced?
  - Time when you desperately need a word of assurance or demonstration of God’s presence
  - During prayer, worship, serving, living faithfully, we feel nothing, see nothing, sense nothing
  - God has withdrawn Himself from our conscious

:: Many have travelled before us
  - Moses exiled from Egypt waiting for years for God to deliver his people
  - Elijah in a desolate cave
  - Jeremiah lowered down in a dungeon well
  - Mary’s vigil at Golgotha
  - St. John of the Cross “the dark night of the soul”
  - “The cloud of unknowing”
  - Jean-Pierre de Caussade “the dark night of faith”

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- George Fox “When it was day I wished for night; when it was night, I wished for day.”

:: Not your fault
- God is not displeased with you
- You are not insensitive to God
- You did not commit an offense
- There is not something wrong with you

:: Darkness is a definite experience of prayer, to be expected and even embraced...

:: How does God use the Prayer of the Forsaken for our good?
- Every faith journey is unique
- Our sense of God’s absence isn’t scheduled
- It is part of a living relationship with God that thrives in mutual freedom
- God gives us freedom to choose to be in relationship with Him
- God teaches us to give Him that same freedom through the prayer of the forsaken
- Result: our relationship with God is not manipulated nor forced
- Result: we are weaned from fashioning God in our own image (i.e., Genie in a bottle or puppet on a string)

:: It is a purifying silence...

:: We are stripped of our dependence on exterior results
- We are no longer impressed with big buildings, big budgets, big productions
- We are no longer drawn or moved by words of praise and adulation
- We are deadened to acts of devotion, they no longer fascinate us
- We become less in control of our destiny – more dependent on the mercy of others or God?

:: We learn that we cannot manage God, He refuses to jump when we say “Jump”

:: We are stripped of our dependence on interior results
- We become less sure of the workings of the Spirit and what kind of God we believe in
- Our personal motivations become suspect as we uncover our capacity for self-deception
- God is purifying our faith by threatening to destroy it
:: We learn faith in God alone; detachment, humility, patience and perseverance grow

“God uses the Prayer of the Forsaken when we start to become self-reliant, to remind us that we can’t do His will in and of ourselves.” - Susan

:: A habit of prayer is produced, distractions are gone, we are focused.

:: What do we do during these times of abandonment?
  - We pray the prayer of “complaint”, “Lament Psalms”
    o Words of anguish, frustration expressing reverence and disappointment
    o Psalm 109:1, Psalm 88:13-14, Psalm 42:9 teach us to pray our inner conflicts and contradictions and allow us to shake our fist at God and praise Him at the same time
  - We keep on doing what we have been doing
    o Pray, listen, worship, the same things we do in the light of God’s love we also do in the dark of God’s absence
    o Produces a firmness of life orientation toward God in us
    o We love God more than the gifts God brings
    o This is a wonderful grace
  - Wait on God, silent and still, attentive and responsive
    o Trust is how to put our spiritual life in neutral
    o “I do not understand what God is doing or even where God is, but I know that He is out to do me good.”

:: In God’s time and His way the desert gives way to blessing
Prayer – Finding the Heart’s True Home
by Richard Foster

Chapter 3 Prayer of the Examen

:: Prayer is the inner bath of love into which the soul plunges itself. – St. John Vianney

:: What is “Examen”?
- Psalm 139:1, 1 Chronicles 28:9, 1 Corinthians 2:10
- Something of immeasurable strength and empowerment
- An accurate assessment of a true situation

:: Examen of Consciousness
- How God has been present to us throughout the day
- How we have responded to His loving presence
- Prayerful reflection of our thoughts, words, deeds
- Psalm 19:14
- God makes us more aware of our surroundings
- Being present where we are, in the moment
- Rehearse the mighty deeds of God, we “raise our Ebenezer”

:: Examen of Conscience
- We uncover those areas of our lives that need cleansing, purifying and healing
- We invite God to search our hearts to the depths
- Psalm 139:23-24
- It is for our own good, healing, happiness that we ask
- God goes with us in the search, it is a joint effort

:: Why can’t we search our own hearts?
- Reason #1: Isaiah 5:20
- God will show us what we need to see when we need to see it
- Reason #2: we may declare ourselves unredeemable in the light of our sin
- God protects us and comforts us, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
- With self-examination, we will always end up with either too much praise or too much blame

:: What is the purpose of all of this examination?
- It produces within us the priceless grace of self-knowledge
- An unexamined life is not worth living
- “Know thyself” – Socrates
We come back to this most basic type of prayer over and over again.

Our own sinfulness is “the bread by which we must be fed” How does THAT work?
- Romans 12:1
- We must come to accept and even honor our creatureliness, it’s who we are.
- When we in honesty accept our sinfulness as part of the truth about ourselves, we are nourished.
- Self-knowledge = Self-acceptance + self-love which draws life from God’s acceptance and love.

“God wants all parts of us, the good, the bad, the ugly.” – Susan

How do we practice the Prayer of the Examen?
- Turn inward towards God who is closer than you are aware.
- Bore down deeper and deeper, a journey THROUGH ourselves in which we move closer to God who is at the center of our being.
- Madame Guyon “the law of central tendency”
- “O Christ, be the center of our lives”

How is this turning inward accomplished?
- A spiritual journal which is a highly intentional reflection.
- Shoot baskets.
- Meditate on the Ten Commandments or Lord’s Prayer.
- Personal Retreat.
- Review the week, repent, Holy Communion.
- Others?
Chapter 4 The Prayer of Tears

:: Tears are like blood in the wounds of the soul. – Gregory of Nyssa

:: What is the Prayer of Tears?
   - “Penthos” – a broken and contrite heart, godly sorrow, blessed holy mourning, deep heartfelt compunction (ie, a pricking of the conscience)
   - Cut to the heart over our distance and offense to the goodness of God
   - Weeping over our sin and the sins of the world
   - Repentance
   - Awareness that our sins cut us off from the fullness of God’s presence

:: Saint Ephrem “vigilant eyes bathed in tears”

:: Abba Anthony “Whoever wishes to advance in building up virtue (high moral standards) will do so through weeping and tears.”

:: “Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity?” Micah 7:18

:: Scripture related to the grace of tears

:: A gift to be sought after for inner turmoil, deep joy is the result of a heart perpetually bowed in contrition (ie, remorse for sins committed); Psalm 126:5

:: In what ways have you experienced the prayer of tears or holy laughter?

:: Saint Ammonas “Fear produces tears, and tears joy. Joy brings strength, through which the soul will be fruitful in everything.”

:: Father Hasherr “Compuntion ends in beatitude.”

:: Tears are a sign that God has touched the emotional center of our lives by showing us our sinfulness and the sinfulness of the world.

:: Tears are a way that God helps our mind to descend into our heart and bow in perpetual adoration and worship.
:: Rock bottom reality of the Prayer of Tears is that we are sinners and at the heart of all sin is: refusal to believe, lack of faith, warped and distorted actions that result from our separation from God.

:: Repent: John the Baptist, Peter at Pentecost, Jesus to the seven churches in Revelation

:: The cross of Christ makes repentance possible; Jesus too into himself all of our evil and hostility and reconciled us to God.

:: The resurrection is God’s abrupt absolution.

:: Our response to the gospel of repentance should be daily and the Prayer of Tears is the primary aid to our turning away from sin and toward God.

:: How do we experience a contrite heart? A grieving, broken, sorrowing, repentant heart?
  - We ask God for this gift of a broken and contrite heart, the gift of tears
  - We confess our sins without excuse, we leave no space for excuses or extenuating circumstances “by my own fault, my own most grievous fault”
  - We receive, as God will forgive and God will cleanse
  - We obey by making things right and practicing “virtue with boundless zeal”

:: C.S. Lewis “the true Christians nostril is to be continually attentive to the inner cesspool.”

:: We have a gracious ministry of bringing God’s forgiveness to one another.

:: The early monastic movement began with laypeople giving reciprocal confession to one another, receiving the assurance of Christ’s forgiveness from one another.

:: We bind bitterness and hardheartedness. We loose forgiveness and tenderheartedness.

:: To those who cannot weep, certain temperaments are slow to furnish tears.
  - Be both firm and friendly with yourself
  - Habits over come habits
  - Immerse yourself in the gospels
  - Have a weeping heart
Our will struggles with God’s will.

It is an essential, “inferior” stage of our spiritual growth.

In time, we enter into a grace-filled release of our will and a flowing into God’s will.

The Prayer of Relinquishment moves us from the struggle into the release.

The Prayer of Relinquishment is shown perfectly in the image of a person falling into the arms of Jesus with a thirst-quenching sense of “ahhhh!”

The result of the Prayer of Relinquishment is a soul-satisfying rest.

We learn the Prayer of Relinquishment in the “school of Gethsemane.”

“Not my will but yours be done.” Luke 22:39-46

Andrew Murray “For our sins, He suffered beneath the burden of that unanswered prayer.”

“My will be done” vs. “Thy will be done”

Jesus shows us the more excellent way: of abandonment, of relinquishment; not my will.

My will, my way must yield to higher authority.

The struggle of the Prayer of Relinquishment is no easy task.

Scripture supporting the Prayer of Relinquishment

- Abraham and his son Isaac
- Moses deliverer of Israel
- David and his son by Bathsheba
- Mary mother of Jesus
- Paul’s “thorn in the flesh”

Prayer of Relinquishment is Christian prayer and not fatalism
Catherine Marshall “Resignation is barren of faith and God’s love; it lies down quietly in the dust of a universe from which God seems to have fled and the door of Hope has slammed shut.”

Our prayer efforts are a genuine give and take, a true dialogue with God and a true struggle.

Why is this struggle important?

The Prayer of Relinquishment is letting go, but it is a release with hope.

The Prayer of Relinquishment results in a deeper relationship with God and includes training in righteousness, transforming power, new joys.

Sometimes the release is given back and sometimes it is permanent.

Why does God require relinquishment before bringing something into being?
- God has to help us let go of our tiny vision to release the greater good He has in store for us.

Relinquishment brings us to a priceless treasure: the crucifixion of the will, the death of our own will, which brings about great freedom.

Soren Kierkegaard “God creates everything out of nothing-and everything which God is to use he first reduces to nothing.”


We are free: to care for others, to put their needs first, to give joyfully and freely.

How can we practice the Prayer of Relinquishment?
- Prayer of self-emptying by praying through Philippians 2 which describes the self-emptying of Christ
- Prayer of surrender by reading and meditating on any of the gospels and go with Jesus into the Garden of Gesthemane
- Prayer of abandonment
- Prayer of release, giving God everything that is “ours” and walk away
- Prayer of resurrection (Isaiah 43:19)
Prayer – Finding the Heart’s True Home
by Richard Foster

Chapter 6 Formation Prayer

:: Prayer – secret, fervent, believing prayer – lies at the root of all personal godliness. – William Cary

:: Prayer changes things, especially US!

:: The purpose of prayer is to bring us into such a life of communion with the Father that, by the power of the Spirit, we are increasingly conformed to the image of the Son.

:: We have to want to change in order to keep up a life of prayer.

:: God wants to free us from greed, avarice, fear, hostility and move us into holy obedience.

:: As we follow the nudgings of the Holy Spirit, we are changed from the inside out.

:: Conversatio morum – death to status quo; constant change; constant conversion; constant openness to the movings of the Spirit.

:: Formation Prayer makes the issue of changing the ingrained habits of our lives the center of concern.

:: Prayer changes our self-centeredness, self-importance; stimulates our spiritual growth; it produces fruit.

:: Prayer is one key ingredient in helping us to form “holi habits” but there are others.

:: Dallas Willard – “golden triangle” includes spiritual disciplines, continual interaction with the movings of the Holy Spirit, patient endurance.

:: Prayer works in concert within the overall spiritual life and as a result we should see progress, growth, more molding of us into the image of Christ.

:: Formation Prayer has an active (pursuing God) and a passive (God pursuing us) side.
Three Classical Ways of Proactive Prayer (ie, pursuing God)

1. 4 Weeks of Spiritual Meditation Exercises from the Gospels Using All Senses
   - Our sins in light of God’s love – Focus on being loved by God
   - Life of Christ – Formed into the image of Christ
   - Passion of Christ – Die to attachments of this world
   - Resurrection of Christ – power to choose God and His way

2. Rules of St. Benedict – 12 Steps to Humility
   - Humility – live as close to the truth as possible; filled with power to bring forth life; fertile ground; principal aid to prayer
   - Focus on our relationship with God by:
     - Have a constant reverence for God
     - Reject our own will and do God’s will
     - Confess all of our evil thoughts and actions
     - Cultivate silence of our tongues
     - Avoid frivolous talk and use plain, simple speech
     - Enduring with patience the injuries and afflictions we face
     - Be content in all things

3. The Little Way – St. Therese of Lisieux
   - Seek out the menial job
   - Welcome unjust criticisms
   - Befriend those who annoy us and help those who are ungrateful

Three Classical Ways of Passive Prayer (ie, being pursued by God)

1. Solitude
   - Frees us from our bondage to people
   - Disregard what others thing of us
   - Let go of the opinions of others
   - Less manipulated by the expectations of others
   - Better able to hear the Divine Voice
   - Open to the expectations of God
   - Die to ourselves; our false, busy selves are unmasked
     - Let go of inner compulsion to acquire more wealth than we need
     - Let go of looking more youthful that we are
     - Let go of attaining more status than is wise

2. Contemplation of One’s Own Death
   - Life would continue on without us
   - The world does not revolve around us or our decisions
   - Pray Galatians 2:19 for one another

3. Prayer of Docility
   - Being completely supple, transparent and abandoned in the hands of God
   - Unguarded accessibility; weak, frail, vulnerable
   - Reveal our true condition
Chapter 7 Covenant Prayer

:: What we need is a desire to know the whole will of God, with a fixed resolution to do it. – John Wesley

:: Covenant Prayer
  o A profound interior heart call to a God-intoxicated life
  o Crossroad of personal decision
  o Sacred commitment
  o Holy obedience
  o Vow of unswerving allegiance
  o High resolves

:: We are simply not good at commitments of any kind. Why?
  - Commitment means responsibility which sounds confining

:: Freedom – complete absence of restraint vs. commitment, discipline, fixed habit

:: When it comes to prayer, we do not want to feel duty bound.

:: Dietrich Bonhoeffer – prayer is not a free-will offering to God; it is an obligatory service, something which he requires

:: When undertaken in the power of the Spirit, acts of duty can be filled with great joy and blessing.

:: We shy away from commitment because we fear we will not be able to fulfill our covenant.

:: We feel condemned in our hearts over broken covenants, however, God knows the intentions of your heart.

:: God is pleased with our attempts to please him.

:: The point of covenant is commitment.

:: Biblical covenants include:
  o God blessing the world through the offspring of Abraham
  o Jesus committed himself to dying for our sin
Moses agreed to be used by God to deliver his people.

:: There are stipulations to the covenant; there is a response, the Ten Commandments, a way of expressing gratitude for God’s mercy.

:: New covenant that Jesus established; he has written his law on our hearts.

:: Commitment demands commitment – a covenant relationship which is unconditional acceptance, loyalty and commitment to one another.

:: What is our response?

1. **Covenant of Holy Obedience** – follow the Father’s faintest whisper
   - God will never give us the desire to do something that he will not also give the power to obey
   - Cultivate the habit of Godward-directed mind and heart
   - Immediate obedience
   - Fall down, get up, again and again
   - We will desire absolute purity
   - “No, Lord” is a contradiction - Susan
   - Obedience strengthens us
   - Obedience of patience, gentleness, settled peace

2. **Covenant of Time**
   - Commitment to a regular experience of prayer (three times a day, early morning, Saturdays, etc.)
   - Helps us remember who is in charge
   - Defeats self-importance
   - We must make time in order to learn to pray “all the time everywhere”
   - Overcome distractions

3. **Covenant of Place**
   - Calls us to stability
   - Gives us the gift of focus
   - Includes a commitment to community

4. **Covenant of Heart Preparation**
   - Meeting God in an uninhibited way so that our deepest feelings burst forth
   - Cultivate “holy expectancy”
   - Listen in utter silence for the voice of the Lord
   - Disciplining the tongue
   - Read a Psalm or other devotional
   - Draw our heart into worship

:: We are glad to “waste” our time with God.

**Prayer – Finding the Heart’s True Home**
:: In the school of adoration the soul learns why the approach to every other goal had left it restless – Douglas Steere

:: Prayer is the natural human response to the outpouring of God’s love.

:: The most direct response is adoration; the spontaneous yearning of the heart to worship, honor, magnify and bless God.

:: In the prayer of adoration, we love God for himself, for his very being, for his radiant joy.

:: Loving adoration heals our sorrows and draws us near to the heart of the Father.

:: There are two sides to the Prayer of Adoration: thanksgiving and praise.

:: In thanksgiving, we give glory to God for what he has done for us.

:: In praise, we give glory to God for who he is in himself.

:: Praise lies on a higher plane than thanksgiving as the focus is on God alone.

:: Blessing is jubilant praise, praise raised to its highest point (or exaltation).

:: The more we see the heart of the Father, the more we offer praise and thanksgiving.

:: Things that keep us from adoration:
  ○ Inattention, caught up in the whirlwind of life.
  ○ Wrong kind of attention (such as toward the gift and not the Giver)
  ○ Greed “encore”
  ○ Conceit “how wonderful we are”

:: The Prayer of Adoration must be learned:
  ○ Start simply by experiencing pleasures rather than scrutinizing them
  ○ We are drawn to the Giver of pleasures
  ○ Find your “grateful center” and practice gratitude
  ○ Magnify God using a Psalter, ABCs of Adoration
    Prayer – Finding the Heart’s True Home
Chapter 9 The Prayer of Rest

:: Rest. Rest. Rest in God’s love. The only work you are required now to do is to give your most intense attention to His still, small voice within. – Madame Jeanne Guyon

:: Prayer of Rest is in the “eye of the storm” where there is stability and serenity; we are still and relaxed.

:: Even in the midst of life’s storms, we are able to remain focused and attentive – the fruit of the Prayer of Rest.

:: It results in a life free from strain, anxiety, hurry with the steady peace of God, with a firmness of life orientation.

:: Prayer of Rest is a Sabbath rest, where we are refreshed, we are still and have peace; we enter this intense stillness, this quiet alertness.

:: Through the Prayer of Rest, we learn to trust in a heavenly Father who loves to give rather than striving to make things happen on our own.

:: We place things in God’s hands and then act out of inner promptings.

:: How do we enter the Prayer of Rest?
  o Not manipulative, firm control
  o Not “doing nothing”
  o Not resignation nor idleness nor listless passivity

:: We enter by “the middle voice”
  o We both act and are acted upon
  o We are involved in the action
  o We participate in the results
  o We do not control or define it
  o It’s a way of receiving and responding

:: Otium Sanctum – “holy leisure”; sense of balance in life; activity and rest; work and play; ability to carry on activities of the day with the patience of God.

:: The Holy Spirit accompanies us in our prayers: the Spirit straightens out, purifies, adjusts our prayer to conform to God’s will
  :: Jesus Christ is interceding for us; He is praying for us.
God who lives in us is speaking through us to Himself.

Three practices to lead us into the Prayer of Rest

- Solitude “serves to crack open and burst apart the shell of our superficial securities”
- Silencio “stilling creaturely activity”
- Recollection, “focus”, Contemplative Prayer, a life of reflection
Chapter 10 Sacramental Prayer

:: Sacramental Prayer is incarnational prayer; God mediates his life to us through visible realities.

:: God reveals himself to us through the physical and the visible.

:: Division in churches: Liturgy, sacrament, written prayer vs. intimacy, informality, spontaneous prayer – Embrace BOTH

:: Bible is full of rituals, liturgies and ceremonies - Jesus went to the synagogue to recite the Shema (Deut. 6:4) twice a day and observe three hours of prayer morning, afternoon and sundown.

:: Liturgical Prayer is structured way of prayer:
  o Helps us articulate the yearnings of the heart (The Book of Common Prayer)
  o Helps us unite with the “communion of saints”
  o Helps us stand against the temptation to be spectacular or entertaining
  o Helps us resist the temptation of private religion
  o Helps us avoid the familiarity that breeds contempt

:: Concerns about Sacramental Prayer:
  o Sameness of set prayers and liturgies; “going through the motions”
  o Relevance
  o “Vain repetition”
  o Fear of making Jesus “the prisoner of the Tabernacle”

:: Goal of hymns – to glorify God

:: Goal of prayer – lead us into the will and way of God

:: Music tied to prayer is a powerful combination.

:: Celebration of Holy Communion
  o At the heart of Christian prayer
  o Includes nearly every aspect of prayer
  o “The most complete prayer”
  o Senses are employed
  o Christ is truly present among us
“Visible means of an invisible grace”
Reveals the passion is the heart of the gospel
Our feelings are irrelevant
Should not be received flippantly, casually or in an unworthy manner
God receives us just as we are

:: Church is found “wherever the Word of God is preached in truth and purity and the sacraments are administered according to the Word and institution of Christ”.

:: Sacrament of the Supper is Gospel through the eyegate, sacrament of the Word is Gospel through the eargate.

:: Sacrament of the Word is more than preaching:
  o The living, speaking voice of God
  o Jesus, the divine Logos (Word made flesh)
  o Scripture, the Word of God written
  o Speaking forth the truth of God by the power of the Holy Spirit

:: Sacrament of the Word is uttering anointed words that “speak truth to power”.

:: “The character of our praying will determine the character of our preaching.”
E.M. Bounds

:: Unction is the mystery of spiritual anointing that comes upon preaching; divine preaching and prayer is the one, sole condition of keeping this unction.

:: Pray for our pastors, take on a spirit of teachability, listen for the voice of the Lord, examine our lives and praying.

:: Listening is a key part of prayer; we must learn “holy listening”.

:: We can pray with our whole bodies, using our arms, laying down, dancing, laying hands, falling prostrate
  o Most common posture is laying prostrate with hands stretched out
  o Second most common posture is with hands lifted and palms up
  o Praying with our hands folded and eyes closed is nowhere in the Bible
  o Praying confession and repentance – lie prostrate, face down, in contrition and heart sorrow
  o Praying adoration – kneel with hands slightly raised, palms up
  o Worship and praise – stand with hands raised, palms out
  o Bless God – stand with arms stretched out, palms up
  o Christian dance “tripudium” 3 steps forward, one step backward
Chapter 11 Unceasing Prayer

:: When the Spirit has come to reside in someone, that person cannot stop praying for the Spirit prays without ceasing in him. No matter if he is asleep or awake, prayer is going on in his heart all the time. He may be eating or drinking, he may be resting or working—the incense of prayer will ascend spontaneously from his heart. The slightest stirring of his heart is like a voice which sings in silence and in secret to the Invisible. – Isaac the Syrian

:: Unceasing prayer is:
  o A way of living always in God’s presence;
  o A life of perpetual communion with the Father;
  o The best, finest, fullest way of living.
  o “Continual conversation with God”
  o “In constant touch with God, making Him the object of our thoughts”

:: Achieving constant communion with God is a process of practiced living. Causes us to become more focused, centered Allows us to go through the stresses and strains of life with ease and serenity

:: We develop intimacy by regular association (we can begin to speak to God “face to face” as a friend)

:: We form fixed habits of righteousness, ie “holy habits” (Our identity, part of our DNA, who we are rather than what we do. – Susan)

:: Biblical examples

:: Unceasing prayer speaks peace to the chaos and gives us a firmness of life orientation.

:: We must want this life of being continually in God’s presence, it doesn’t come automatically.

:: Two expressions of Unceasing Prayer:
  1. Formal and liturgical (breath prayer)
2. Conversational and spontaneous

:: Breath prayer is a simple prayer of petition that can be spoken in one breath. “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.”
“O Lord, baptize me with love.”

:: Pray the breath prayer continually until it moves from our mind to our heart and to our whole body.

:: Create your own breath prayer during a time of prayer:
  o Uninterrupted time, quiet place
  o Sit in silence
  o Allow God to call you by name and ask “What do you want?”
  o A single word will come to your mind or a phrase.
  o Connect the phrase with your unique name for God
  o Allow God to adjust your breath prayer
  o Pray your breath prayer as often as possible

:: Conversational and spontaneous is the second expression of Unceasing Prayer.
  o Go through all the activities of our days in joyful awareness of God’s presence.
  o Whisper prayers of praise and adoration, allowing them to flow continuously from your heart.

:: “Life from the Center is a life of unhurried peace and power. It is simple. It is serene. It is amazing. It is triumphant. It is radiant. It takes no time, but it occupies all our time. And it makes our life programs new and overcoming.” – Thomas Kelly

:: Constant communion comes over a period of time in practical steps.
1. Outward discipline using a practical reminder (such as a color)
2. Move this work of breath prayer into the subconscious so that we are almost unaware that we have said it.
   o Inward prayer bubbles forth at the oddest moments.
   o Dream our prayer
   o Behavior changes (for the good!)
3. Prayer moves into the heart.
   o Sentiment and reason act more in concert
   o Our prayer work becomes more tender, loving, spontaneous, delightful
4. Prayer permeates the whole personality and becomes a deep rhythm inside

:: No one needs to know we are engaged in Unceasing Prayer; breaks are ok.
:: Heart speaks to heart. – John Henry Newman

:: Prayer of the heart is the prayer of intimacy, “abba prayer”; we allow God to gather us to himself.

:: God wants to warm our hearts, He longs to commune with us, heart to heart.

:: Jesus experienced and taught deep, personal, intimate nearness of the Father.

:: We have an invitation to address God in a personal and intimate way; in familiar terms like “daddy”.


:: Through Prayer of the Heart, God has special words for us and Jesus sings over us.

:: Prayer of the Heart is:
  ○ the Holy Spirit praying within us
  ○ the Holy Spirit initiates and creates and sustains the prayer

:: Ecstatic expressions of the Prayer of the Heart include:
  ○ Special revelatory impressions and words, “rhema” words, God speaking directly to us about a given situation
  ○ Speaking in tongues “glossolalia”; a release of our spirit into the Spirit of God; heavenly language
  ○ Resting in the Spirit; interior communion with God, increase of holy love, profound inner healing
  ○ Holy laughter for our healing, our joy, our wholeness

:: Prayer of the Heart includes receiving; our participation seems more passive.

:: Other expressions of the Prayer of the Heart include:
- Simple warming of the spirit toward the things of God
- Feeling of loving God more, wanting His presence more and to learn His ways
- Ready to face the demands of the day

:: Prayer of the Heart is developing a familiar friendship with Jesus.
   Simple love
   Special love name for God
   Speak words of love and compassion to the Father
   Falling asleep is ok

:: Invite God to kindle a fire of love within you.
Meditation is the tongue of the soul and the language of our spirit. – Jeremy Taylor

Meditation is comparable to a cow chewing its cud, we “rework” what we have eaten (God’s Word) to fully assimilate what we previously consumed.

Truth of God’s Word being meditated upon passed from the mouth into the mind and down into the heart.

The most fundamental form of Christian meditation is bound to Scripture.

We must first have our minds filled and disciplined by Scripture before we can enter into the presence of the Holy in unmediated communion.

In Meditative Prayer, the Bible ceases to be a quotation dictionary and becomes instead “wonderful words of life” that lead us to the Word of Life.

Meditation upon Scripture centers on internalizing and personalizing the passage.

We can spend a whole week on a single text in order for it to take root in us, rather than rushing through scripture.

The most basic way to meditate upon the text of scripture is through the imagination which is deeply rooted in our senses.

As we come to the text of Scripture, we are desiring to see, to hear, to touch the biblical narrative; we begin to enter the storey and make it our own.

Jesus taught in parables which make a constant appeal to the imagination.

The imagination helps to anchor our thoughts and center our attention and brings emotions into the equation so we come to God with both mind and heart.

In Christian meditation, we week to live the experience of Scripture.

In Meditative Prayer, God is always addressing our will; Christ confronts us and asks us to choose.
:: Meditative Prayer is prayerful reading of the scripture, also known as “lectio divina”, ie divine reading where the mind descends into the heart.

:: The Holy Scripture is the first and purest source for lectio divina and great devotional writings can also be used.
   ○ The Life of Moses – Gregory of Nyssa
   ○ Confessions – Saint Augustine
   ○ The Little Flower of St. Francis – Saint Francis
   ○ Revelation of Divine Love – Juliana of Norwich
   ○ The Imitation of Christ – Thomas a Kempis
   ○ Journal – John Woolman

:: Stories of the saints through the ages help us to learn how great Christians walked with God and how we can follow their lead.

:: In Meditative Prayer, God addresses us personally.
Chapter 14 Contemplative Prayer

:: O my divine Master, teach me this mute language which says so many things. – Jean-Nicholas Grou

:: Contemplative Prayer immerses us into the silence of God.

:: “Those who delight in a multitude of words, even though they say admirable things, are empty within.” – Isaac of Nineveh

:: Contemplative Prayer can free us from our addiction to words.

:: Progress in intimacy with God means progress toward silence.

:: Contemplative prayer is not for the novice as we are not all equally ready to listen to “God’s speech in his wondrous, terrible, gentle, loving, all-embracing silence.”

:: Contemplative prayer is for those who have exercised their spiritual muscles a bit and know something about the landscape of the spirit. Indicators of a maturing faith, progress in these areas, include:
  ○ A continuing hunger for intimacy with God
  ○ An ability to forgive others at great personal cost
  ○ A living sense that God alone can satisfy the longings of human heart
  ○ A deep satisfaction in prayer
  ○ A realistic assessment of personal abilities and shortcomings
  ○ A freedom from boasting about spiritual accomplishments
  ○ A demonstrated ability to live out the demands of life patiently and wisely

:: Questions of examination of a maturing faith include:
  ○ Am I becoming less afraid of being known and owned by God?
  ○ Is prayer developing in me as a welcome discipline?
  ○ Am I learning to move beyond personal offense and freely forgive those who have wronged me?

:: Practice prayers of spiritual protection before silent contemplation of God due to entering deeply into the spiritual realm.
What is this “soul-rapturing exercise of heavenly contemplation”?  
- “Dreaming of heaven”  
- “The Gaze of God”  
- “The Prayer of Reality”  
- Loving attentiveness to God  
- An experience of the heart, not the head  
- A deep experienced sense of God  
- Inner hearing

The goal of Contemplative Prayer is union with God, united in the vision and contemplation of Him to whom we pray; pure relationship where we see “nothing”.

Union with God brings about full personhood where we become all that God created us to be.

How do we attain this union with God?  
- Love of God  
- Purity of heart

As love has its perfect way it leads to purity of heart.

Purity of heart causes us to will one thing which is the good which is God.

There are three basic steps to Contemplative Prayer:  
1. Recollection; centering prayer; prayer of presence; centering down  
2. Prayer of the Quiet; listening stillness; beholding the Lord  
3. Spiritual ecstasy; a work that God does upon us

We must have a teachable spirit so that when God reveals truth to us it doesn’t harden our hearts.
Chapter 15 Praying the Ordinary

:: Transformation and intimacy both cry out for ministry which must flow out of abundance.

:: “A reservoir waits until it is filled before overflowing, and thus communicates, without loss to itself, its superabundant water.” – Bernard of Clairvaux

:: We need to be reservoirs.

:: “Do ordinary things with the perception of their enormous value.” – Teilhard de Chardin

:: We tend to segregate out a small corner of pious activities and then can make no spiritual sense out of the rest of our lives; “5 percent spirituality”

:: Pray the Ordinary in three ways:
  ○ turning ordinary experiences in life into prayer
  ○ seeing God in the ordinary experiences of life
  ○ praying throughout the ordinary experiences in life

:: We need to understand the sanctity of the ordinary.

:: The discovery of God lies in the daily and the ordinary; we find God in the routines of home and shop.

:: We need to have an “unspeakable reverence for the holiness of created things.”

:: Prayer is not another duty to add to an already busy schedule; our work becomes prayer, it is prayer in action.

:: We pray by offering our work up to God.

:: “A prayer makes sense only if it is lived.” – Anthony Bloom

:: The work of our hands and of our minds is acted out prayer, a love offering to the living God.

:: We find God the most in mundane jobs because God values the ordinary.
One of the clearest signs of the grace of God upon us is when the results of our labor are far in excess of the amount of work we do.

Part of the bliss of heaven will be joyous, creative, productive work.

"Every action performed in the sight of God because it is the will of God, and in the manner that God wills, is a prayer and indeed a better prayer than could be made in words at such times." – Jean-Nicholas Grou

"Everything that one turns in the direction of God is prayer." – Ignatius of Loyola

Even waiting is part of ordinary time.

Praying the Ordinary is praying throughout the ordinary experiences in life including the context of the family.

Families can have gathering times of Bible reading and prayer, blessing prayers, thank-you prayers, praying over children as they sleep.
Chapter 16 Petitionary Prayer

:: “Whether we like it or not, asking is the rule of the Kingdom.” – C.H. Spurgeon

:: When asking for ourselves, it is a petition; when asking for others it is intercession.

:: False spirituality is when we believe that adoration and contemplation are more enlightening than prayers of asking.

:: Petitionary prayer is primary because it shows our dependence on God.

:: The Lord’s Prayer is mainly a petitionary prayer.

:: Through petition, we bring our daily needs to God.

:: Two of the most common problems with petitionary prayer:
  ○ Why should we ask God for things He already knows?
  ○ Why should I bother God with my little needs?

:: Love loves to be told what it already knows.

:: Whatever is important to us is important to God so we should share our deepest needs.

:: “Unanswered prayer” solutions:
  ○ Can be the truest answer to our truest prayer
  ○ We ask for things that are not in our best interest
  ○ We are not prepared for what we have asked
  ○ Our prayers really are answered but we lack the eyes to see it
  ○ Sin hinders our prayers

:: The Lord’s Prayer is a total prayer including adoration and petition to give, forgive and deliver.

:: God welcomes our asking for little things.

:: We are forgiven as we forgive.

:: What is forgiveness?
○ Does not mean we will cease to hurt
○ Does not mean that we forget
○ Not pretending that the offense did not really matter
○ The offense no longer controls our behavior
○ A miracle of grace whereby the offense no longer separates
○ A release of our offenders, inviting them back into the circle of fellowship

:: The only time God tries us is when there is something in our hearts that needs revealing.

:: We want to be progressing in the realms of transformation with no hidden sins so that God will not be forced to put us to the test.

:: Jesus urges us to pray for the rescue not from evil in a generic sense but from the evil one, so that we will not give into temptation to do evil deeds.

:: Without Petitionary Prayer, we live a truncated prayer life.
Chapter 17 Intercessory Prayer

:: “Intercessory Prayer is the purifying bath into which the individual and the fellowship must enter every day.” – Dietrich Bonhoeffer

:: If we truly love people, this will lead us to pray for them.

:: Moving from petitionary prayer to intercessory prayer shifts our center of gravity from our own needs to the needs of others.

:: We can make a difference for the kingdom of God if we will learn to pray on the behalf of others which is a sacred obligation and a precious privilege.

:: We are not left alone in our intercessory prayer, Jesus is at the Father’s right hand always interceding for us as our Eternal Intercessor.

:: Jesus opens the door and grants us access into the heavenlies.

:: We pray in Jesus’ name, by the authority given us by Him, with the full assurance of the great work that He accomplished by His life, death and resurrection.

:: To pray in the name of Jesus means that we are praying in accord with the way and nature of Christ.

:: We pray in conformity to Jesus’ nature by abiding in Him in order to develop a familiar friendship and to know His voice.

:: Initially, intercessory prayer results may be slow and uneven.

:: We may be inclined to pray once and then give up and go on to other matters however we need to be persistent and persevere in prayer.

:: Supplication means to ask with earnestness, with intensity, with perseverance.

:: Fortitude, courageous staying power is foundational to real effectiveness in Intercessory Prayer.
When enough faith, hope, and love are found in any given community, the blessings are multiplied for then organized, corporate intercessory prayer is possible.

We want our churches to become houses of prayer!

One way to begin intercession it to pray for our enemies then leaders, the needy, friends and loved ones.

Another way to pray intercession is:

- Wait quietly until individuals or situations spontaneously rise to our awareness
- Offer these to God and listen
- Speak forth what seems most appropriate
- Invite the Spirit to pray through us
- Jot down brief notes which, over time, holds the key to a person’s need

None of us is to shoulder the burden of prayer for everyone and everything.
Chapter 18 Healing Prayer

:: Healing prayer is part of the normal Christian life.

:: Redemption that is in Jesus it total and involves every aspect of the person-body, soul, will, mind, emotions and spirit.

:: God uses a variety of means to bring forth health and well-being in His people.

:: The physician of the mind, body and spirit used to be one person.

:: There are times when God calls us to rely upon prayer alone for healing but this is the exception and not the rule.

:: Always relying on prayer alone for healing and refusing to use medical means is a gesture of spiritual pride.

:: Medical treatment and healing prayer are both gifts from God.

:: The healing ministry of Jesus is intended for the total person.

:: The principle of progression should be used with healing prayer.

:: We don’t know why some people are healed and others are not, but some ideas are:
  o Faulty diagnosis
  o Neglect natural means
  o Faith and compassion are not fully developed in us
  o We have unconfessed sin our lives

:: Healing prayer is incredibly simple and complex at the same time.

:: We should never tell the person we are praying for that the lack of healing is their fault.

:: Always show compassion for those we pray for healing.

:: Laying on of hands, per Scripture, is used for:
  o Tribal blessing
  o Baptism of the Holy Spirit
○ Impartation of Spiritual gifts
○ Healing Prayer

Laying on of hands is an act of obedience that quickens our faith and gives God the opportunity to heal.

Four straightforward steps to healing prayer are:
○ Listen
○ Ask
○ Believe
○ Give thanks
Chapter 19 Prayer of Suffering

:: “It’s the prayer of agony that saves the world.” – St. Mary of Jesus

:: The Prayer of Suffering is totally others centered, we leave behind our needs and wants.

:: We give to God the various difficulties and trials that we face, asking Him to use them redemptively.

:: We are invited to share in the sufferings of Christ, therefore we rejoice in our sufferings.

:: There is a kind of suffering that has purpose and meaning and enriches the lives of others and brings healing to the world.

:: In redemptive suffering, we stand with people in their sin and their sorrow.

:: Our hearts are enlarged to receive and accept all people.

:: Joy, not misery, is the compelling energy behind redemptive suffering and God is using us for the greater good of all.

:: God takes our suffering and uses it for something beautiful, something far beyond anything we can imagine.

:: Instead of asking “why is there suffering in the world?” we should ask “how can I enter into the suffering that is in the world in a way that is redemptive and healing?”.

:: The Prayer of Suffering is the conscious shouldering of the sins and sorrows of others in order that they may be healed and given new life.

:: The passive side of the Prayer of Suffering involves the many trials that come into the course of our daily lives.

:: God mysteriously takes our sorrows and uses them to heal the world.
:: The active side of the Prayer of Suffering involves those times when we voluntarily take into ourselves the griefs and sorrows of others in order to set them free.

:: The Prayer of Suffering stands out when we are given the grace to repent on behalf of others, especially our enemies, forgiving them and setting them free.

:: Intense interaction with God is not anger or complaining or whining, it is “a continuous violent action of the spirit as it is lifted up to God.”

:: Fasting is one expression of our struggle, our seriousness and our intensity.
“God has instituted prayer so as to confer upon his creatures the dignity of being causes.” – Blaise Pascal

Authoritative Prayer is calling forth the will of the Father upon the earth as we are speaking for God.

We are using the authority of God to command something done.

Authoritative Prayer is a different category of prayer that God uses to invade enemy territory and establish his kingdom.

God is saying, “Stop praying to me and start exercising the authority I have given you!”

Authoritative Prayer is taking control of the situation.

Authoritative Prayer has been abused and misused and can be very dangerous if we don’t have a clear understanding of the compassion of Christ.

Authoritative Prayer needs compassion to keep it from becoming destructive.

Discernment and prudence give Authoritative Prayer balance and direction.

Discernment is the divine ability to see what is actually going on and to know what needs to be done in a situation.

The best way to learn discernment is to be around those who move in this realm.

People with discernment are the ones who are sought out when help or guidance is needed.

Prudence is practical common sense, taking the trouble to think out what you are doing and what is likely to come of it – like a chess game.

We must be confident to speak the authoritative word when it is right and good.
This ministry of power is NOT just for a select few, but for all Christians.

Simple counsels related to Authoritative Prayer include:
- Not every stomach pain is an attack from the devil
- We do not have to put on some special voice or jump up and down to function in this realm
- We can draw upon special resources such as anointing from the Holy Spirit, angels of God assigned to us
- Deal firmly and decisively with evil
- Remain gentle and compassionate with the individual
- Not a substitute for disciplined living
- Stay connected with others for accountability and support
- Be bold in the boldness of God with profound humility of spirit

Authoritative Prayer brings the resources of heaven to bear upon a particular matter on earth as “downward prayer”.

Authoritative Prayer is focused primarily upon coming against the principalities and powers of this present darkness.

Authoritative Prayer engages us in the warfare of the Spirit against the kingdom of darkness.

The kingdom of darkness goes into full retreat when we take up the full weapons of our warfare.

Spiritual warfare is not something we talk about; it is something we do by:
- Breaking all the destructive vows both conscious and unconscious over the lives of people
- Speaking the word of authority that breaks generational curses

We break vows and curses by taking authority over sickness which is an enemy by speaking balance into neurotic personalities, rebuking fevers, call for wholeness and well-being.

We command fears of all kinds to leave and stand against evil thoughts and suspicions; bind spirits of anger, jealousy and gossip and release spirit of forgiveness and love and faith.

We firmly demand that demons leave since we are in charge and they are not.

We come against all social evil and institutional injustice.
Prayer – Finding the Heart’s True Home  
by Richard Foster  

Chapter 21 Radical Prayer

:: “To clasp the hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world.” – Karl Barth

:: Radical Prayer goes to the root, the heart, the center in order to totally transform people, institutions and societies.

:: Radical Prayer is prophetic.

:: Prophets are being raised up who are calling people forth into fresh, bold expressions of faithfulness and obedience.

:: Prophets can be anyone, including children.

:: Prophets envision a new future, a future of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

:: Prophets speak forth God’s truth, His heart and His plans for His people.

:: The prophetic message envisions a radical way of living and a radical way of praying.

:: The true prophetic message always calls us to a spiritual defiance of the world as it now is as a spiritual underground resistance movement.

:: When we speak the truth, pray for our enemies, refuse to cooperate with injustice, the powerful effect is pulling down strongholds and bringing forth the righteous and peaceable kingdom of Jesus.

:: The true prophetic message always calls us to social holiness where all people are precious and valued in the kingdom of God.

:: By our prayers and our words we liberate people and point them to Jesus.

:: We know the darkness is leaving and the dawn is coming when we can see another person and know that this is our brother or our sister; otherwise no matter what time it is, it is still dark.
:: The true prophetic message calls us to stretch our arms out wide and embrace the whole world.

:: God has placed into our hands the destiny of the world, and by means of our prayers we hold back the divine wrath.

:: We must pray and work for the nations and the transformation of the world, for the kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven.

   Start by focusing on one nation and prayerfully discerning what kind of nation it should be

   Narrow our prayers to those who make the decisions that can change the course of a nation toward rightness

   Repent for the sins of the world, beginning for our own country

:: When we do these things, we love others for God’s sake and not our own and we are given a boundless compassion for all peoples.

:: The true prophetic message always calls us to Christians community.

:: The church is gathering into new forms, new arrangements.

:: Christian community is taking the form of four primary expressions: Institutional, Communal, Personal spiritual mentoring, Small group spiritual formation.

:: In many places all four expressions will function together.

:: In the existing institutional structure it is a crucial issue to determine how prophetic ministry will function.

:: Communal life is the most intensive expression of Christian community where resources are pooled together to have a closer fellowship and sharing with one another.

:: Spiritual mentors are people gifted in discernment, wisdom and knowledge who help people see the footprints of God in their lives and urge them to move in directions they might not go otherwise.

:: Small group spiritual formation provides nurture and accountability to help each other become better disciples of Jesus.

:: The true prophetic message always calls us to that dynamic love of God and love of neighbor that are at the heart of the Gospel.