

NEIGHBOURHOOD NUISANCE

When it rains in Queensland, the coastal roads often get flooded and traffic cannot move. While we were living in Townsville during one of those “big wets”, some friends travelling north from Mackay to Cairns managed to get as far as Townsville and came knocking at our door asking if they could bed down at our place for the rest of the night. It was close to midnight, but of course we took them in.

“Would you like something to eat as well?” I asked. “To tell you the truth,” they said, “we haven’t eaten since noon!” “No worries,” we said, “we’ll have some food ready for you in no time.” But then I realized I hadn’t had time to do our usual grocery shopping and the fridge was empty. Not even a bread crumb in the house! So while my wife sorted out their bedding, I waded down the watery street to my neighbour Mark.

I knocked a few times, but he was sound asleep. I went around the house and called out to his upstairs bedroom window. Eventually I heard a stirring and grunting, and Mark said, “Who is it? Waddya want?” I told him my problem and asked if he could help me out with a loaf of bread, but he answered, “Sorry, mate, not tonight.” “Don’t you have any?” I asked. “We probably do, but I’m not getting up now. Once I get up, I have a hard time going back to sleep.”

“Ah, come on Mark—do it for a friend.”

“What friend?” he asked, “waking us up at midnight.”

“Please, Mark.”

“No. My wife will kill me if I come back to bed with cold feet.”

“I’ll shout louder and wake all your neighbours.”

“No!”

“I’ll give you a reduction on your tithe...?”

“No!!”

“Well, I’m not going away. Be prepared for a long, sleepless night.” One thing I can say for Mark—he knows when to give in. I got the loaf of bread and fed my hungry guests.



This sounds very much like the story Jesus told, recorded in Luke 11. His disciples once asked Him, “Lord, teach us to pray.” In reply, He taught them a basic prayer that we call the Lord’s Prayer. Then He focused on one aspect of prayer—intercession—and said:

“Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.’ Then the one inside answers, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’ I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man’s boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs.” (11:5-8)

Intercessory prayer is asking God for something on behalf of someone else. Jesus’ story tells us a few things about how intercession works:

1. It happens because someone has a need. A friend of mine in the USA sends out an email nearly every day to her network of “prayer warriors”. Each one of those prayer requests arises out of a need. Intercession is praying on behalf of someone who has a need.
2. It happens because someone is concerned enough to pray. Intercessors are a special brand of people who are moved to cry to God out of concern for other people’s needs. The man who goes down the street at midnight and puts his friendship with his neighbour at risk, does so because he cares about his guest going to bed hungry. He is not asking anything for himself. Intercessory prayer is totally unselfish—it arises out of the needs of others.
3. It happens because the intercessor feels helpless in the face of those needs. The man in the story came to his neighbour with the simple plea: “I don’t have anything to give my guest.” Lord, my brother has a need, and I don’t have the answer for him. Every intercessor has a heart-felt desire to see people helped, but doesn’t have the means to help.

4. Intercession happens because the intercessor believes that God does have the means, that He in fact has infinite resources and almighty power and that nothing is too difficult for Him. “I don’t have what is needed, but Another does, and He will give whatever it takes”—that is the thinking of an intercessor. She or he stands between the need and the source of supply. “God,” the intercessor prays, “this person’s problem is beyond my resources, but not beyond yours, for you have a pantry full of whatever is needed.” This person fully believes that “prayer moves the arm that moves the world.”

5. The intercessor is shamelessly persistent. That’s what the Greek word means. The NIV translates it as “boldness”, but the NASB has it as “shamelessness”. The man in the story keeps on banging at the door until he sees a result. Not that God is unwilling and needs persuading. The story is really one of contrast. Verse 12 says, “If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” Even fathers are evil and selfish, but God is only good; so “how much more” readily will He give to those who ask for help, especially on behalf of someone else.

But still, there is need for persistence. One reason lies hidden in the real meaning of verse 9. It should read: “Keep on asking and you will keep on receiving; keep on seeking and you will keep on finding; keep on knocking and you will keep on opening doors.”

There is another reason why we must persist in asking. God’s is not the only hand reaching out across the void. The hand of the enemy will do all it can to hinder the answer to our prayers for needy people. We are given insight into this in the incident recorded in Daniel 10. There the curtain is drawn aside to show us that God can’t always bring the desired result immediately because of opposition from Satan. Daniel prayed for three weeks that the king of Persia would fulfil God’s plan to let the Jews return to their homeland. But “a great war” (v1) was happening behind the veil of human sight. At last an angel appeared to Daniel and explained: “Since the first day that you set your mind to... humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom [the evil angel appointed to influence the king against God’s will] resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes [appointed to protect God’s people—see Dan 12:1], came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.” Daniel’s persistence in intercessory prayer was vital to the outcome of this unseen battle.

So keep asking and you will keep receiving. Keep shouting under God’s window and He will keep on throwing loaves of bread into your upstretched hands. Keep knocking on His door for your friend in need, and He will keep opening doors of opportunity for your friend’s needs to be met.

- Garth Bainbridge
Ministerial Association Secretary
Greater Sydney Conference



PRAYER MINISTRIES

South Pacific Division of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church

Resources on offer

Christian Meditation Brochure

How to meditate on the Word, on God, on Scripture,
On the Testimonies

Email Prayer Chain

Be part of the Tuesday email connection with
Prayer requests

Open Doors

A global ministry that responds to the needs of persecuted
Christians in 45 nations

Prayer for Schools booklet

Guidelines on how to begin a Prayer ministry for your school

Prayer Journal

Prayer journal for adults, for children

Prayer Pack (\$7.00)

For suggestions, how to start, resources

Uplink

Quarterly newsletter with suggestions, stories, inspiration

For more information or details on any of the above items, please
send your name and address by email to :

ernajohnson@adventist.org.au

Or malbert@adventist.org.au



How can we pray:

All of us have heard people of great spiritual-renown address their prayers in many ways from the lofty, pious, excessive effusiveness to the really improper “Dear Jesus.” I say improper because it is quite clear in the words of Jesus that we are to address God as Father and make our prayers in Jesus’ name (through him, not to him).

We may want to express our awe and wonder of his holiness and greatness in such a manner as: “Oh most Holy One; God of the Universe; Dear Heavenly Father.” Note that the family term Father is used here. Our assurance that God the Father hears our prayers is in the words of Jesus himself in Matthew 18:19, 20.

There is always one more present when praying is going on because Jesus is there. Even if we feel that we are too weak and sinful for the Father to hear us (and we shouldn’t), we can rest assured that Jesus is there taking our prayer to the Father.

Taken from
“Learning to Pray” pg 15.

Prayer Connection is here!

Imagine people becoming Seventh-day Adventists because we have taught them how to pray!
Imagine people becoming Seventh-day Adventists because they have seen how prayer and spiritual life is connected to the doctrines of the church!
Imagine people becoming Seventh-day Adventists because you have become their friend and partner in prayer!



But that is not the way people usually becomes Adventists, is it? No, but thanks to the Prayer Connection project that is now a genuine possibility. Developed over the last three years and tested in Tamavua Church in Suva, Fiji, it is now ready for general use by the churches. And it may very well be the project your church longs to implement. From my many week-ends of prayer seminars around Australia and New Zealand over the last years, I am convinced that for some, this project may be the means for genuine spiritual revival in our outreach to the world.

The plan consists of three steps: (1) visit and pray with and for other people; (2) a study in biblical praying; (3) a harvesting campaign. The plan is flexible, and you can adapt it to specific needs and your specific environment.

The plan combines the emphasis on spiritual life and prayer with two other major areas of our Adventist life: doctrine/Bible study and outreach/evangelism. None of these is able to thrive and grow without the others.

The Bible study contains a set of 25 studies. They are simple with not more than 7-9 biblical texts for each study. Through these studies people will learn about biblical prayers and receive practical advice on praying. The studies open the eyes to God as a person. First of all, people get to know who He is, and what He is like. But as people go through these studies, they are also introduced to all the foundational as well as the distinct doctrines of the Christian and the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The full package comes with a trainee folder for church members who actively take part in the program, and with training week-ends for churches who prepare for Prayer Connection. But the Bible lessons may be used as an entity in itself.

These lessons are now ready to be used, and we are also working to put them on the internet. Don't miss out on the opportunity. Speak with your pastor and/or send an email to ckingston@adventist.org.au or to ppetersen@adventist.org.au and get a sample of the lessons to have a look at and place an order.

2 Picture captions:

1. Baptismal candidates at the end of the Prayer Connection harvesting campaign in Suva, 2007.
2. Pastor Tabua is ready for a baptism as a follow up of the campaign.

Message from: Eddie Erika Prayer Ministries Director, Victorian Conference

'Dear Friends,
While studying the last gospel of John, the Revelation of Christ, one concept excited me so much I thought I'd share it with you.

John was reporting what he saw in heaven. The 4 Living Creatures and the Twenty-four elders all had golden bowls full of incense, "which are the prayers of the saints." (Rev. 5:8). And again John (Rev. 8:3) saw an angel, "who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of the saints, on the golden altar before the throne!" (emphasis mine).

While these scenes have been somewhat veiled in the past, surely these are meant to be revealed to those who are passionate about understanding the Revelation of Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:1).



– Paul Petersen, Field Secretary, SPD

Ranko Stefanovic, in his book with the same title said, "The context of chapter 5 strongly suggests that another concept is involved here, however. 'Sealing' in Daniel and Revelation signifies that God's revelation could be 'stored' until the appointed time due to people's unfaithfulness and unreadiness to pay heed to it." (pg. 202).

My point is

- that our prayers are never wasted.
- that through our prayers we participate in God's plans to reveal Himself to the world!

I hope this will encourage you to continue to intercede for others that God's will be revealed to them and for them'.



'Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart'.

Psalm 37: 4

SQLD Prayer and Spirituality Conference

“Growing and Praying Together”

Early in May 2009 was a transformational weekend of great significance. The Growing and Praying Together Conference was an unhurried experiential time to connect with new friends and to experience God’s presence.

International guests Jerry and Janet Page transparently drew attendees to God’s presence by their powerful testimony and encouraged all to an experience in prayer with Jesus. As President of the Central California Conference Jerry’s role is guided by his engagement with God in prayer as he leads his team to exciting things. His wife Janet, the Prayer and Women’s Ministry leader for the Conference, also lives out her life daily in Jesus. The testimony of their walk with the Lord was inspirational!

Workshops exploring the many aspects of pray and devotional life to our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ took place. Titles such as How to develop a Pray Ministry in your Church; Prayer and Praise in Private and Public Worship; Meeting God in the Bible; What has prayer to do with Doctrine; New Dial-a-Prayer: Community Service and Church Ministry; If you’re not a Prayer warrior; and Preparing your Kids for life – Spiritually were all offered to the 200 participants.

Personally, I have many memories of the weekend that shaped my overall experience. Powerful was Pastor Eddie Erika’s statement, “I was diagnosed with cancer and told I had a few weeks to live”? That of course was many years ago – Praise God! Equally, I will never forget how I felt as Janet Page shared how she struggled to pull her dead Pastor husband from the pool after only 5 years of marriage. God moved upon Janet in a powerful expression of how he longs for us to trust him with our hopes and dreams.

I was blessed by Pastor Paul Peterson’s transparency when he said, “As an academic I find it hard to believe in miracles and the supernatural manifestations of God...but I just continue to trust Him”. We all struggle with that at times! Each speaker seemed to contribute something that God was building in each of us. Pastor John Gate and his deep experience with God washed over all as he reminded us “really we are only beggars offering bread to others beggars.”



Musically the weekend was filled with anointed praise and worship from the Southpine Church team and the Filipino Adventist Harmony.

As a result of the weekend SQLD now has a Prayer Network team and website where members share their requests and answers, support each other in prayer, pray for the Conference and its officers, treasury staff, missing members, sisterhood of churches, youth directors, aged-care facilities, and departmental staff.

A set of six DVD’s are available for \$15 and contain 5 x 1hr presentations by the Pages, and an in-depth interview with the Pages facilitated by Conference President, Dr Neil Watts, and a 15 minute praise and worship time conducted by Southpine Adventist Church. Please address all enquires to: colinrenfrew@adventist.org.au

* *– Colin Renfrew
Director & Prayer Coordinator
SQLD Conference*

* Small THOUGHTS... *

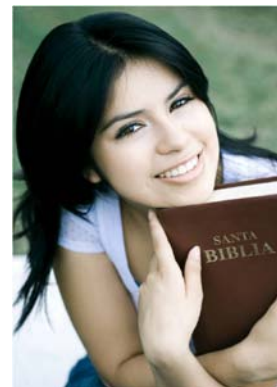
Patience: is the state of endurance under difficult circumstances, which can mean persevering in the face of provocation without becoming annoyed or upset, or exhibiting forbearance when under strain, especially when faced with long-term difficulties, it is also used to refer to the character trait of being steadfast.

-- Wikipedia Encyclopaedia definition--



‘Believers are not to rest in suppositions and ill-defined ideas of what constitutes truth. Their faith must be firmly founded upon the Word of God.’

* ~ Ellen White



PRAYER CALENDAR

Sep 5 – 12	Week of Prayer SDA
Sep 6	Father’s Day
Sep 6 – 12	National Child Protection Week
Sep 7 – 12	World Suicide Prevention Week
Sep 8	World Literacy Day UN
Sep 9	FAS Day – 9.09am (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome)
Sep 21	World Day of Peace
Oct 2	International Day of Non-violence
Oct 10	World Mental Health Day
Oct 15	World Rural Women’s Day
Oct 17	World Poverty Day
Oct 22	Pink Ribbon Day
Nov 16	International Day of Tolerance
Nov 19	World Day of Prevention of Child Abuse
Nov 20	Universal World Children’s Day
Nov 25	International Day - Elimination of Violence against Women
Nov 25	White Ribbon Day (National)

‘ You may feel the deficiency of your character and the smallness of your ability in comparison with the greatness of the work. But if you had the greatest intellect ever given to man, it would not be sufficient for your work. “Without Me ye can do nothing,” says the Lord and Saviour. John 15:5. The result of all we do rests in the hand of God. Whatever may beride, lay hold upon Him with steady, persevering confidence.’

~ Help in Daily Living, pg 60.

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