

Kansainvälinen naisten rukouspäivä

4.3.2017

“Palava rukous ja peloton usko”

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Materiaalin on toimittanut kansainvälisen adventtikirkon naistyön jaosto





SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST
CHURCH

General Conference
World Headquarters



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Rakkaat sisaret:

Iloiset terveiset teille jokaiselle kansainvälisen naisten rukouspäivän merkeissä. Meillä on ilo ja etuoikeus tuoda ylistyksemme ja pyyntömme taivaalliselle Isällemme, joka kuulee ja vastaa hyvän tahtonsa mukaan.

Oletko koskaan vuodattanut sydäntäsi Jumalalle, anoen että hän puuttuu asioihin? Oletko kuiskannut syvällisen ja niin henkilökohtaisen rukouksen, ettei kenenkään muun kuin vain Jumalan on tarkoitus kuulla se? Tämän vuoden materiaalipaketti on otsikoitu ”Palava rukous ja peloton usko.”

Materiaalin kirjoittaja sanoo: ”Meidän tulee ensin tunnustaa oma avuttomuutemme ja uskoen etsiä Jumalaa. Meidän tulee uskoa, että hän on todellinen ja että vaikka hän on kaikkivaltias, hän välittää jokaisesta meistä – henkilökohtaisesti. Meidän tulee olla täysin rehellisiä Jumalan edessä, eikä yrittää salata häneltä mitään. Ja lopuksi, meidän tulee täysin alistua Jumalan tahtoon ja uskoa, että hän rakastaa meitä ja on täysin luotettava ja pitää lupauksensa”

Materiaalipaketissa on myös kahden seminaarin alustukset (toim. vain englanniksi) henkilökohtaisesta kasvusta: ”Back to Basics: A Closer Walk with God,” jossa on materiaalia henkilökohtaisessa rukouselämässä kasvamiseksi, sekä ”An Invitation to Prayer,” joka perustuu Tie Kristuksen luo -kirjan kappaleeseen ”Rukouksen etuoikeus”.

Voit valita materiaalista, mitä haluat käyttää varmistaaksesi, että rukouspäivä on täynnä iloa ja voimaa, jotka saamme vastaanottaa Jumalan läheisyydessä.

Siunausta ja iloa teille,

Heather-Dawn Small
Naistyön jaostojohtaja

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Esirukouspyyntöjä osastoista - Division Prayer Requests

We are praying for the women in the territories of Inter-European Division, South Pacific Division, and Trans-European Division.

- Pray for the spiritual growth of our women.
- Pray for unity among our women as they focus on the mission of the church.
- Pray for our women to become mobilized with hope and reach others in loving and compassionate ways.
- Pray for women who do not know God and how we can reach them.
- Pray that the Six Critical Issues (poverty, health threats, women's workload, abuse, illiteracy, lack of training), which may be barriers for many women, will be addressed to allow women to take part in the mission of the church.
- Pray for women suffering in poverty.
- Pray that women will be champions of healthy life-styles in the homes and community.
- Pray for women facing illness.
- Pray for women and their mental health.
- Pray for refugee women in all territories.
- Pray for women living in war zones and being touched by the tragedies of war.
- Pray for women who are suffering abuse.
- Pray for women who need higher education.
- Pray for women who need a job to survive.
- Pray that each woman can transform a spiritual gift into a ministry and contribute to total member involvement.
- Pray for the families of all our women.
- Pray that each woman with her family is ready for Jesus's soon return.

Inter-European Division Territory: Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Gibraltar, Holy See, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Spain, and Switzerland; comprising the Czecho-Slovakian, Franco-Belgian, North German, Romanian, South German, and Swiss Union Conferences; the Austrian, Bulgarian, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish Union of Churches Conferences.

South Pacific Division Territory: American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Norfolk Island, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna Islands; comprising the Australian, and New Zealand Pacific Union Conferences; and the Papua New Guinea, and Trans Pacific Union Missions.

Trans-European Division Territory: Aland Islands, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Faeroe Islands, Finland, Greece, Greenland, Guernsey, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Isle of Man, Jersey, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Slovenia, Svalbard and Jan Mayen Islands, Sweden, Thrayin gof e former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the southern portion of Cyprus; comprising the Adriatic, Baltic, British, Hungarian, Netherlands, Norwegian, Polish, and South-East European Union Conferences; the Danish, Finland, and Swedish Union of Churches Conferences; and the Cyprus Section, Greek Mission, and Iceland Conference.

Kirjoittajasta - About the Author

Gina Wahlen has been grateful to serve the Seventh-day Adventist Church in a variety of capacities alongside her minister husband, Dr. Clinton Wahlen, for the past 32 years. Holding a Master of Arts degree in religious communication from Andrews University, most of Gina's career has involved teaching, writing, editing and public speaking.

The couple served as missionaries for six years (1992-1998) at the Zaoski Theological Seminary in Russia, where Gina taught English language classes and Christian journalism seminars, and her husband taught Greek and New Testament courses. While in Russia, Gina co-authored a book, *True Believer*, telling the first-person story of a devout communist.

The Wahlen's served nearly five years (2003-2008) as professors at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS), located in the Philippines. They left AIAS in 2008 when Clinton was called to be an associate director at the Biblical Research Institute (BRI), located at the Adventist Church's world headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland

Since coming to the General Conference, Gina has worked as an assistant to the editor at the *Adventist Review/Adventist World* magazines, and more recently as the editor of the *Mission* quarterly magazines for the Office of Adventist Mission. She currently works as editor and media manager for the Office of the President of the General Conference.

Clinton and Gina have a grown son, Daniel, and daughter-in-law Samantha, and a grown daughter, Heather Grace.

Gina loves her family, and enjoys meeting people around the world and listening to their stories of how God is working in their lives.

Her favorite Bible verse is Jeremiah 29:11. "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope" (NKJV).

Scripture references are from NKJV unless noted.

Ehdotus jumalanpalveluksen ohjelmaksi

**Kansainvälinen naisten rukouspäivä
4.3.2017**

Alkusoitto

Yhteislaulu

Alkurukouse

Lähetystuokio

Kolehti ja rukous

Yhteislaulu

Lastenkertomus: "Keksejä, juustoa, ja appelsiinimehua"

Raamatun luku: Jeremia 29:11

*"Minulla on omat suunnitelmani teitä varten, sanoo Herra.
Minun ajatukseni ovat rauhan eivätkä tuhon ajatuksia:
minä annan teille tulevaisuuden ja toivon."*

Pastoraalirukous

Musiikkiesitys

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Loppurukous

Loppusoitto

Lastenkertomus: “Keksejä, juustoa, ja appelsiinimehua”

Kirjoittaja Gina Wahlen

Hyvää huomenta tytöt ja pojat! Kuka teistä haluaisi lähteä kävelyille perheen tai ystävien kanssa? [Anna heidän vastata kädennostolla.] Entä kuka haluaisi lähteä todella pitkälle kävelyretkelle? Minne haluaisit lähteä? [Anna kahden tai kolmen lapsen vastata lyhyesti.]

Tänään kerron teille nuoresta, pojasta ja työstä, joiden nimet ovat Clint ja Gina, ja jotka lähtivät retkelle Grand Teton -nimiseen kansallispuistoon. Tämä suuri puisto on Yhdysvalloissa Wyomingin valtiossa. Siellä on vuoria, järviä ja virtoja, ja siellä elää monenlaisia eläimiä.

Aamulla Clint ja Gina ajattelivat, että he lähtisivät vain pienelle retkelle etsimään kaunista kukkaniittyä, joista heille oli kerrottu. Heillä ei ollut mitään ruokaa tai juomaa mukanaan, mutta heistä se ei ollut mikään ongelma, koska he eivät aikoneet kulkea kovin pitkälle. Aluksi he nousivat jonkinlaista lauttaa muistuttavaan matalaan veneeseen ja seisoivat siinä soutajan ohjatessa sitä Jenny-järven toiselle rannalle. Kun he saapuivat sinne, Gina ja Clint hyppäsivät lautalta polulle, joka johtaisi kukkaniitylle.

Oli kaunis ja raikas aamu, ja lapset kuuluivat lintujen laulavan puissa. He kulkivat polkua pitkin ja ihailivat kauniita maisemia ja nauttivat ympäröivistä äänistä. Kuljettuaan noin tunnin ajan he alkoivat ihmetellä, eivätkö he jo saapuisi luvatuille kukkaniitylle. Varmaan se on jo seuraavan mutkan takana, he ajattelivat. Kului toinen tunti. Silloin aurinko oli jo noussut korkealle taivaalle ja ilma oli paljon lämpimämpi. Clintille ja Ginalle tuli jano, ja he toivoivat, että olisivat ottaneet vettä mukaansa.

Pian heitä alkoi janottaa yhä enemmän, mutta he vain jatkoivat matkaa. Päivä tuli helteiseksi. Silloin Gina ei vain ollut hirveän janoinen vaan hänen vatsansakin alkoi murista. Hänelle tuli kova nälkä, mutta heillä ei ollut mitään syötävää, eikä ollut mitään paikkaa, mistä sitä olisi saanut. Hän toivoi todella, että olisi ottanut jotain syötävää ja juotavaa mukaan. Mitä hän nyt voisi tehdä? Yhden asian hän tiesi, mitä voisi tehdä – hän voisi rukoilla ja kertoa Jeesukselle tästä ongelmasta.

Mutta tiedätkö? Häntä epäilytti kertoa siitä Jeesukselle, koska oli hänen omaa syytään, ettei hänellä ollut ruokaa ja vettä. Mitä sinä ajattelet, voiko Gina kertoa Jeesukselle ongelmastaan, koska hän oli itse aiheuttanut ongelman? [Anna yhden tai kahden lapsen vastata lyhyesti.]

Kyllä. Hän päätti kertoa Jeesukselle ongelmastaan. *”Rakas Jeesus”, Gina rukoili kävellessään ”minä olen hyvin janoinen ja myös nälkäinen. Minun olisi pitänyt ottaa jotakin syötävää ja juotavaa mukaani, ja minä olen pahoillani, etten ottanut. Mutta auttaisitko sinä minua? Minä tiedän, että tämä ei ole nyt todella kiireellistä, mutta Raamatussa on lupaus, että sinä annat leipää ja vettä kansallesi. Lähettäisitkö vähän minullekin? Kiitos. Amen.”*

Jatkaessaan matkaa Gina oli iloinen, että hän oli rukoillut. Mutta vieläkään ei mitään tapahtunut. Ei tullut mitään lintuja taivaasta tuomaan leipää nokassaan. Ei ollut mitään pientä virtaa, josta olisi voinut juoda vettä. Ja lisäksi, eräs muu asia vaivasi hänen mieltään. Tässä vaiheessa leipä ja vesi olisivat tehneet hyvää, mutta Gina olisi halunnut jotain muutakin. Mutta hän ei kehdannut pyytää sitä Jumalalta.

Clint ja Gina kävelivät nyt hitaammin, koska oli hyvin kuuma ja he olivat janoissaan. Ginan kävellessä pieni, hiljainen ääni kehotti häntä ystävällisesti: *”Miksi et kertoisi Jumalalle, mitä sinä todella haluaisit?”*

”En minä voi sitä tehdä”, Gina ajatteli.

"Miksi et", jatkui ääni hänen sisimmässään. "Etkö tiedä, että Jumala jo tietää, mitä sinä haluat? Miksi et vain pyydä häneltä?"

"No hyvä", Gina ajatteli. "Minä pyydän sitten."

"Rakas taivaan Isä", hän rukoili. "Sinä tiedät, että minä olen hyvin nälkäinen ja janoinen. Minä olisin hyvin iloinen, jos saisin vähän leipää ja vettä. Kuitenkin, vaikka se olisi vähän hassua... niin, niin minä toivoisin myös keksejä, juustoa ja appelsiinimehua! Aamen."

"Siinä se", hän sanoi itselleen. Hän oli rehellisesti sanonut Jumalalle, mitä hänellä oli mielessään, vaikka se tuntui hänestä vähän hassulta.

Ennen pitkää Gina päätti, ettei hän halunnut enää jatkaa matkaa. Hän istui isolle kivelle puun alle ja kertoi Clintille, että hän odottaisi siinä sen aikaa, kun Clint menisi katsomaan kukkaniittyä. Gina nautti viileydestä puun varjossa, mutta sitten hän huomasi yhtäkkiä ryhmän retkeilijöitä tulevan saman puun varjoon. Onnellisina toistensa seurasta he alkoivat keskustella ja kyselivät: "Mistä sinä olet tullut?" "Oletko ensimmäistä kertaa Tetonsissa?" "Kuinka kauan olet ollut täällä?"

Sitten retkeilijät päättivät jatkaa matkaa. Nostettuaan reppuun selkäänsä he hyvästelivät ja suuntasivat polulle. Ginan katsellessa heidän peräänsä, hän huomasi, että viimeisenä polulla kulkeva epäröi, hidasteli ja sitten pysähtyi. Hän kääntyi takaisin ja palasi Ginan luo.

"Oletko nälkäinen?" hän kysyi. "Oletko janoinen? Minulla ei ole paljon, vain vähän keksejä, vähän juustoa ja appelsiinimehua. Haluaisitko jotakin?"

Gina katsoi häntä ihmeissään. Hän tuskin sai sanaa suustaan. Hän ojensi kätensä vastaanottamaan kallisarvoisia lahjoja. "Kiitos! Paljon kiitoksia!", hän sanoi.

Tiedättekö, pojat ja tytöt, Jeesus antaa meille mielellään hyviä lahjoja. Hän iloitsee siitä, kun rukoilemme. Joskus hän antaa meille, mitä me pyydämme. Joskus hän sanoo "odota", ja joskus hän sanoo "ei". Mutta mitä hän vastaakin, voimme aina tietää, että loppujen lopuksi se, mitä hän antaa, on aina meidän parhaaksemme!

Kiitos, kun kuuntelitte tarkkaavaisesti. Voitte nyt mennä hiljaa paikoillenne.



Grand Tetons

Children’s Story: “Crackers, Cheese, and Orange Juice”

Written by Gina Wahlen

Good morning, boys and girls! How many of you like to go for a walk with your family or friends? [Let them raise their hands]. And who likes to go for really long walks, like a hike? Where do you like to go hiking? [Allow two or three children to give brief answers].

Well, today’s story is about two young people, named Clint and Gina, who went for a hike in a beautiful place called The Grand Teton National Park. This big park, located in the state of Wyoming in the United States, has mountains and lakes and streams, and many different kinds of animals living there.

At the beginning of the day, Clint and Gina thought that they would go for just a little hike to find a beautiful flower meadow that someone had told them about. They didn’t have any food or water with them, but they decided that wouldn’t be a problem because they wouldn’t be walking very far. To begin their short hike, they got onto a kind of flat boat called a raft and stood there as the boatman steered the raft to the other side of Jenny Lake. Once they got to the other side of the lake, Gina and Clint hopped off the raft and onto the trail that would eventually lead them to the flower meadow.

The morning was fresh and cool, and the two could hear birds singing in the trees along the trail. They kept walking along the path, enjoying the beautiful sights and sounds along the way. After they walked for about an hour, they started wondering when they would reach the promised flower meadow. Surely it must be just around the next corner, they thought to themselves. Another hour went by, and by this time the summer sun had risen higher in the sky and the day was getting warmer—a lot warmer. And Clint and Gina were starting to get thirsty and wishing that they had some water with them.

As time went on, the two became thirstier, but they still kept walking. And the day became even warmer. By this time, Gina was not only becoming quite thirsty, but her tummy started to rumble. She was getting very hungry, too, but there was nothing to eat—nothing at all, and no place to get anything, either. Now she was really wishing that she had brought something to eat and drink, but what could she do?

Well, she knew of one thing that she could do—she could pray and tell Jesus about the problem.

But you know what? She was embarrassed to tell Jesus, because after all, it was her own fault that she didn’t have food or water. Do you think she could still tell Jesus about her problem, even though it was her own fault that got her into this mess? (Allow 1 or 2 children to respond briefly).

Yes, she decided to tell Jesus about the problem. *“Dear Jesus,”* prayed Gina as she kept walking, *“I’m very thirsty and I’m hungry, too. I wish I would have brought something to eat and drink, and I’m embarrassed that I didn’t. But, I’m wondering if you would help me? I know this isn’t really an emergency, but in the Bible there is a promise about You providing bread and water for your people, and I’m wondering if you could maybe send some to me? Thank you. Amen.”*

As she kept on walking, Gina was glad that she had prayed. But still, nothing happened. No birds came from heaven carrying bread in their beaks. There was no little stream to drink water from. And besides, there was something else that was bothering her. You see, bread and water would

have been OK, but Gina really wanted something more, but she was *much* too ashamed to ask God for it.

Clint and Gina were walking slower now, as it was very hot and they were thirsty. As Gina walked along, a still, small voice kindly suggested, *“Why don’t you just tell God what you really want?”*

“I can’t do that!” Gina thought.

“Why not?” continued the voice. *“Don’t you think He already knows what you want? Why not just ask Him?”*

“OK,” thought Gina. *“I will.”*

“Dear God,” she prayed. *“You know I’m very hungry and thirsty now. I would be happy to have some bread and some water. However, and I know this is crazy . . . but what I would really like is, well, er, what I’d really like are some crackers, some cheese, and some orange juice! Amen.”*

“There!” she said it. She had been honest with God. Even if it seemed crazy, she had told Jesus what was on her heart.

Before long, Gina decided she didn’t care about hiking anymore. Sitting down on a big rock under some trees, she told Clint she’d wait for him there while he went on to see the flower meadow.

Gina was enjoying the cool shade of the trees when suddenly she noticed a group of backpackers coming to join her under the shady trees. Happy for their company, Gina and the backpackers talked for a little while, asking each other questions: *“Where are you from?”* *“Is this your first time visiting the Tetons?”* *“How long have you been here?”*

Before long, the little group of backpackers decided it was time for them to leave. Putting their packs on, they said goodbye and headed down the trail. As Gina watched them, she noticed that all of a sudden the last backpacker on the trail hesitated, and then stopped. Turning around, he quickly walked back to where Gina was sitting.

“Are you hungry?” he asked. *“Are you thirsty? I don’t have much—just some crackers, some cheese, and some orange juice. Would you like some?”*

Gina’s eyes went wide open. Hardly able to speak, she held out her hands to receive the precious gifts as she whispered, *“Thank you! Thank you so much!”*

You know boys and girls, Jesus loves to give us good gifts. He loves to hear us pray to Him.

Sometimes He gives us what we ask for, sometimes He says *“wait,”* and sometimes he says *“no.”*

But whatever His answer, we can always know that in the end, it is *always* for the best!

Thank you for listening so attentively. You can quietly go back to your seats now.

Grand Tetons



Saarna: Palava rukous ja peloton usko

Kirjoittaja Gina Wahlen

”Minulla on omat suunnitelmani teitä varten, sanoo Herra. Minun ajatukseni ovat rauhan eivätkä tuhon ajatuksia: minä annan teille tulevaisuuden ja toivon.”

Jer. 29:11.

Hyvää huomenta ja onnellista sapattia! Mikä ilo meillä onkaan tänään avata Jumalan sanaa yhdessä ja keskittyä ajattelemaan rukouksen ihmeellistä etuoikeutta. Teemamme on ”Palava rukous ja peloton usko” ja aloitamme hiljattain tapahtuneella tosikertomuksella, joka kertoo uskollisesta Kigalissa Ruandassa elävästä äidistä.

Kertomus Ruandasta

Aziza oli epätoivoinen. Pahat henget olivat ottaneet hallintaansa hänen yksitoistavuotiaan poikansa Modernen, ja näytti siltä, että Aziza ei voinut tehdä mitään estääkseen hirveän tuhon, jota ne aiheuttivat hänen poikansa elämässä.

Joskus demonit nostivat Modernen ylös kattoon ja sitten pudottivat hänet lattialle. Toisen kerran ne löivät häntä, kunnes hän oli mustan ja sinisen kirjava. Pahat henget saivat Modernen syyttämään suustaan hirveää puhetta ja sitten jättivät hänet nyyhkyttämään hetkeksi.

Aziza oli yrittänyt parhaansa – vienyt poikansa sairaalaan ja luonnonparantajalle. Hän oli yrittänyt erilaisia suositeltuja parannuskeinoja, mutta mikään ei ollut auttanut. Varhain eräänä aamuna hän oli niin epätoivoinen, että hän jopa yritti noudattaa paholaisen neuvoa.

Tuolloin pahat henget olivat valvottaneet Modernea useita päiviä ja öitä. Yrittäessään epätoivoisesti saada poikansa nukkumaan Aziza kuunteli paholaisen Modernen kautta antamaa neuvoa: ”Yhdellä ehdolla minä nukun: Jos polvistut eteeni ja palvot minua 30 minuutin ajan jumalana, sitten minä menen nukkumaan.”

Epätoivoissaan Aziza oli polvistuneena Modernen edessä noin 10 minuutin ajan, mutta sitten hän tuli järkiinsä. ”Mitä minä teenkään, polvistun poikani eteen?” hän ajatteli. ”Onko hän minun jumalani? Minähän todellisuudessa polvistun Saatanan edessä sen sijaan että palvoisin Jeesusta, Vapahtajaani!”

Hän sanoi päättävästi: ”Minä aion nousta ylös. Minä nousen ylös! Minä en enää polvistu eteesi!”

Kun Aziza ei enää koskaan polvistunut poikansa edessä, vaan vietti paljon aikaa polvillaan rukoillen Jumalaa vapauttamaan poikansa.

”Minä aloin oppia tuntemaan Jumalaa paremmin”, hän sanoi myöhemmin. ”Minulla oli tapana ajatella, että vain toiset voivat rukoilla, mutta opin tietämään, että minulla on oma suu ja että voin puhua Jumalalle, ja hän kuulee minua. Voin rukoilla omasta puolestani ja lapseni puolesta.”

Kun Azizan rukouselämä syveni, hän pyysi Jumalaa antamaan hänelle anteeksi ja puhdistamaan hänet hänen kaikista synneistään. Hän päätti myös paastota kolme päivää ja rukoilla.

”Jumala, minä haluan päästä lähemmäksi sinua”, hän rukoili. ”Haluan olla niin lähellä sinua kuin vain voin kuvitella! Nämä voimat, jotka vaikuttavat pojassani, eivät ole sinusta. Ne ovat Saatanan voimia. Minä toivon, että ne loppuvat. Haluan, että poikani on oma todellinen poikani.”

Aziza jatkoi uskollisesti rukoilemista ja uskoi, että Jumala vastaisi hänen rukouksiinsa, ja hän ylisti Jumalaa siitä, että hänen poikansa olisi lopulta vapaa!

Moderne, joka nyt on teini-ikäinen, uskoo vahvasti rukoukseen ja kertoo usein toisille, miten Jumala vastasi hänen äitinsä rukoukseen hän vapauttamiseksi.

Entä sinä?

Miten on sinun laitasi? Oletko sinä Azizan tavoin vuodattanut sydämesi Jumalalle ja pyytänyt häntä puuttumaan asioihisi? Oletko kuiskannut hänelle niin syvällisen ja henkilökohtaisen rukouksen, ettei kenenkään muun kuin vain Jumalan on tarkoitus kuulla se?

Raamattu antaa meille välähdyksiä sellaisista sydäimestä kumpuavista, määrätietoista ja palavista rukouksista, jotka ulottuvat meidän päiviimme asti esimerkkeinä rukouksen mahtavasta etuoikeudesta.

Ensimmäisessä Samuelin kirjassa tapaamme Hanna-nimisen naisen, joka eli sellaisessa asemassa, johon me emme varmaan omasta valinnastamme haluaisi joutua.

Luvussa 1 jakeissa 2 ja 3 sanotaan, että hänen miehellään ”Elkanalla oli kaksi vaimoa. Toisen nimi oli Hanna, toisen Peninna. Peninnalla oli lapsia, mutta Hanna oli lapseton.”

Vaikka Hanna ja Elkana halusivat lapsia, jostakin syystä tuo toive ei toteutunut. Koska Elkana halusi säilyttää sukunsa jatkumisen, hän otti toisen vaimon, Peninnan, joka oli hedelmällinen.

Onnetonta perhe-elämää

”Lapsia kyllä tuli, mutta Jumalan pyhän asetuksen ilo ja kauneus oli poissa ja perheen rauha mennyttä” kirjoittaa Ellen G. White (kirjassa *Alfa ja omega 2*, s. 161) ja jatkaa: ”Peninna – – oli ahdasmielinen ja käytökseltään ylpeä ja röyhkeä. Hannalla ei näyttänyt olevan mitään toivoa, ja elämä tuntui raskaalta. Mutta hän ei valitellut vaivojaan vaan kesti ne nöyrästi kärsien.”

Tapansa mukaan Elkana vei perheensä joka vuosi Siiloon, jossa oli pyhäkkö. He menivät palvelemaan Jumalaa ja uhraamaan erityisinä israelilaisten juhla-aikoina. Näissä tilanteissa Peninnan kiusanteko tuntui Hannasta ylivoimaiselta.

Peninna väitti, että hän oli selvästi Jumalan siunaama, kun hänellä oli niin monta lasta. Hän ”pilkkasi Hannaa väittäen hänen lapsettomuuttaan selväksi merkiksi Jumalan epäsuosiosta.” (s. 161.) Tämä sydäntä särkevä tilanne jatkui vuodesta toiseen, kunnes Hanna ei enää kestänyt sitä ja hän lähti pois juhlasta itkien hillittömästi.

Vain Jumala voi ratkaista ongelman

Vaikka Hannan puoliso Elkana yritti lohduttaa häntä, Hanna tiesi, että vain Jumalalla oli ratkaisu tähän tilanteeseen. Hanna halusi olla niin lähellä Jumalaa kuin mahdollista, ja siksi hän meni pyhäkköön. Tämä oli se pyhäkkö, joka israelilaisilla oli ollut heidän erämaavaelluksensa aikana. Tässä ilmestysmajassa oli Liiton arkki, ja se oli paikka, jossa Jumala oli läsnä.

Asettuen lähelle temppelin sisäänkäyntiä Hanna vuodatti hiljaisesti vuosia kestäneen murheensa Jumalalle. Kuvittele hänen syvää sydänsuruaan, tyhjiä käsiään ja lujaa uskoaan, kun hän vetoaa Jumalaan, joka ei koskaan väsy kuuntelemaan. Unohtaen ympärillään olevat Hanna rukoilee hiljaa hänen huultensa liikkuesssa.

Mutta siellä oli joku, joka tarkkaili häntä. Eeli, ylipappi, oletti, että tämä nainen oli ilmeisesti juonut alkoholia, ja moitti häntä: ”Kuinka kauan aiot viipyä täällä juopuneena? Mene selviämään humalastasi!” (1. Sam. 1: 14.)

Hanna vastasi ylipapille ja selitti: ”Ei, herra, en ole juonut viiniä enkä väkijuomaa. Minä olen onneton nainen ja vuodatin sydämeni Jumalalle. Älä pidä palvelijaasi kelvottomana naisena, vain suuren suruni ja huoleni takia minä rukoilin näin kauan.” (jakeet 15, 16.)

Syvästi liikuttuneena Eeli vastasi: ”Mene rauhassa. Israelin Jumala antakoon sinulle, mitä häneltä pyysit.” (jake 17.)

Siunaus palaa

Me varmaan muistamme kertomuksen lopun. Hanna palaa kotiin Elkanan kanssa. Siellä Hanna tulee raskaaksi ja synnyttää pojan, Samuelin, jonka Hanna pyhittää Herralle. Kun lapsi on vieroitettu, Hanna palaa Siiloon pyhäkköön, mutta tällä kertaa lapsen kanssa.

Onnellisena hän ilmoittaa Eelille: ”Herrani, niin totta kuin elät, minä olen se nainen, joka viipyi pitkään luonasi rukoilemassa Jumalaa. Tätä poikaa minä rukoilin itselleni, ja Herra antoi minulle, mitä pyysin. Nyt minä luovutan hänet Herralle. Olkoon hän Herran oma koko elämänsä ajan.” (jakeet 26–28.) Sitten jälleen kerran näemme Hannan rukoilemassa - esittämässä Herralle kaunista, innoitettua kiitosrukousta:

”Sydämeni riemuitsee Herrasta,
Herra nostaa minun pääni pystyyn.
Minä voin rohkeasti vastata vihollisilleni,
sinun avustasi minä iloitsen.
Vain Herra on pyhä, ei ole toista,
meidän Jumalamme yksin on luja kallio.” (1. Sam. 2:1, 2.)

Hannan rukous jatkuu toisen luvun kymmenessä alkujakeessa, ja ne kannattaa lukea ja mietiskellä niitä.

Kaksi naista, kaksi kertomusta

Tänä aamuna olemme tutustuneet kahden naisen, Azizan ja Hannan, kokemuksiin. Kaksi naista, joita aika, kulttuuri, kieli, maantiede ja moni muukin asia erottavat toisistaan, mutta joita kuitenkin yhdistää palava rukous ja peloton usko.

Kuinka on sinun rukouselämäsi laita? Onko sinulla aktiivinen, elävä yhteys Jumalaan, vai ovatko sinun rukouksesi etäisiä, muodollisia, toistavia? Mitä me voimme oppia tehokkaasta rukouksesta, näiden kahden esimerkin avulla? Haluaisin mainita vain neljä avainkohtaa:

1. Naiset ymmärsivät avuttomuutensa ja elivät uskonsa varassa.

Sekä Hanna että Aziza tajusivat, että he eivät itse voineet tehdä mitään. He olivat voimattomia muuttamaan tilannettaan. Kuitenkaan he eivät pelänneet rukoilla rohkeasti, henkilökohtaisesti ja rehellisesti. Heidän rukouksensa muistuttivat Daavidin rukousta psalmissa 40 alkaen jakeesta 12:

”Herra, ethän ota minulta pois armoasi!
Sinun hyvyytesi ja uskollisuutesi
varjelkoon minua aina.
Onnettomuudet saartavat minut,
niitä on lukematon määrä! – –
Herra, ole armollinen, pelasta minut!
Herra riennä avukseni! – –
Minä olen köyhä ja avuton,
mutta sinä, Herra, pidät minusta huolen.
Sinä olet apuni ja pelastajani.
Jumalani, älä viivy!”

2. He uskoivat, että Jumala on todellinen ja vaikka hän on kaikkivaltias, hän on myös kiinnostunut heistä henkilökohtaisesti.

Kirjeessä heprealaisille sanotaan, että ”ilman uskoa ei kuitenkaan kukaan ole Jumalan mielen mukainen. Sen, joka astuu Jumalan eteen, täytyy uskoa, että Jumala on olemassa ja että hän kerran palkitsee ne, jotka etsivät häntä.” (II:6.)

Vaikka maapallon nykyisistä n. kahdeksasta miljardista ihmisestä tämä voi vaikuttaa mielikuvitukselliselta, jotkut ovat kuitenkin löytäneet henkilökohtaisen suhteen Jumalaan. He ovat löytäneet sen rukouksen ja hänen sanansa, Raamatun, tutkimisen kautta, ja tietävät, että hän on todella syntisten ystävä ja pelastuksen kallio. He voivat huudahtaa Daavidin tavoin:

”Herra elää!
Kiitetty olkoon minun kallioni
ja ylistetty minun pelastukseni Jumala.” (Ps. 18:47, VKR.)

3. He olivat täysin rehellisiä Jumalan edessä, eivätkä salanneet mitään.

Kuten kuulumme lastenkertomuksesta tänä aamuna, on olennaisen tärkeää, että olemme rehellisiä Jumalan edessä. Jos olemme rehellisiä, myönnämme, että emme voi salata Jumalalta mitään, joten voimme hyvin kertoa hänelle kaiken, mitä on sydämessämme.

Katumuspsalmissaan 51 Daavid muistuttaa meitä, että ”totuutta sinä tahdot salatuimpaan saakka, ja sisimmässäni sinä ilmoitat minulle viisauden” (jae 8, VKR.) Vastakohtana ovat ne, joista luemme Psalmassa 52: ”Katso, siinä on mies, joka ei pitänyt Jumalaa turvanansa, vaan luotti suureen rikkauteensa ja röyhkeili häijyydessänsä.” (jae 9 VKR.)

Vain jos olemme rehellisiä Jumalan edessä, emmekä kätke häneltä mitään, hän voi tavoittaa meidät ”salatuimpaan saakka” ja auttaa meitä tuntemaan hänen viisautensa.

4. He olivat täysin antautuneita Jumalalle.

Tunnustaen syntinsä nämä naiset avasivat koko elämänsä Jumalalle, eivät pidättäneet mitään, eivät sitäkään, mikä oli heille rakkainta.

Antautuminen osoittaa luottamusta. Se on myöntämistä Jumalalle, että hän tietää, mikä on parasta. Kun esitämme pyyntöme hänelle, luotamme siihen, että se minkä hän tekee, on parasta. Tämä on ainoa keino löytää todellinen rauha.

Tämä viimeinen kohta herättää vaikean kysymyksen, joka monien mielessä herää: Entä tilanne, jolloin olen vuodattanut sydämeni Jumalalle palavasti ja rehellisesti ja uskonut, että hän kuulee ja vastaa, ja kuitenkin seurauksena on vain hiljaisuus – tai asiat näyttävät menevän huonompaan suuntaan?

Tai entä, jos olen rukoillut hartaasti, että rakas läheiseni parantuisi, mutta hän kuoleekin? Tai kun olen rukoillut uskollisesti päivien, viikkojen, kuukausien jopa vuosien ajan jonkin asian puolesta, mutta mikään ei näytä muuttuvan? Mitä sitten voisin tehdä?

Paras esimerkkimme luonnollisesti on Jeesus, joka opetti sekä neuvomalla (katso Matt. 6:9–13), että esimerkillään (katso Mark. 1:35) opetuslapsiaan rukoilemaan. Koko maanpäällisen elämänsä aikana Jeesus oli jatkuvasti yhteydessä taivaalliseen Isäänsä rukouksessa. Kirjassa *Suuren Lääkärin seuraajana* kerrotaan: ”Vapahtajan elämä maan päällä oli elämää luonnossa ja Jumalan yhteydessä. Tässä hän paljasti meille voimallisen elämän salaisuuden.” (s. 35.)

Jeesuksella oli tapana rukoilla kaikissa elämän tilanteissa, ja siitä hän sai voimaa ja luottamusta esittää Getsemanen puutarhassa tuon rukouksen, jossa hän täydellisesti antautui Jumalan tahtoon: ”Isä, jos se on mahdollista, niin menköön tämä malja minun ohitseni. Mutta ei niin kuin minä tahdon, vaan niin kuin sinä.” (Matt. 26:39.)

Kun rukoilemme, meidän tulee muistaa, että Jumala näkee, mitä me emme voi nähdä. Meidän tulee uskoa Häntä, joka sanoi:

”Unohtaako äiti rintalapsensa,
unohtaisiko hoivata kohtunsa hedelmää?
Vaikka hän unohtaisikin,
minä en sinua unohda.
Käsieni ihoon minä olen sinut piirtänyt” (Jes. 49:15, 16).

Saamme uskoa, että meidän Vapahtajamme ei ole unohtanut meitä, vaikka nykyiset olosuhteemme saattaisivat näyttää kuinka synkiltä tahansa tai vaikka joutuisimme odottamaan kauankin vastausta rukouksiimme.

Klassikkokirjassa *Tie Kristuksen luo* on suurenmoinen rohkaiseva kappale luvussa ”Rukouksen etuoikeus”:

”Ongelmamme vain lisääntyvät ja syvenevät, jos syrjäytämme uskon ja keskitymme epäilyihimme ja pelkoihimme tai yritämme korjata tilanteen inhimillisellä viisaudella. Menkäämme Jumalan luo avuttomina ja täysin hänestä riippuvaisina, jollaisia me olemmekin. Kertokaamme nöyrästi ja

luottavaisesti tarpeemme hänelle, joka tietää kaiken ja näkee kaiken ja joka hallitsee maailmaa tahdolla ja sanallaan. Hän voi ja haluaa auttaa meitä hädässämme ja antaa valon syttyä sydämissämme.

Vilpittömän rukouksen kautta pääsemme yhteyteen äärettömän kanssa. Meillä ei rukoillessamme välttämättä ole mitään erityistä todistetta siitä, että Lunastajamme kasvot olisivat myötätuntoisina ja rakastavina kääntyneet puoleemme, mutta näin se kuitenkin on. Emme ehkä tunne hänen kirjaimellista kosketustaan, mutta hänen kätensä on päällämme rakastavana ja hellän myötätuntoisena.” (*Tie Kristuksen luo, v. 2010 painos, s. 94, 95.*)

Siispä, kuinka voimme Hannan ja Azizan ja monien muiden uskonsankareiden tavoin rukoilla uskossa palavasti ja pelotta?

Meidän tulee ensin tunnustaa oma avuttomuutemme ja uskoen etsiä Jumalaa. Meidän tulee uskoa, että hän on todellinen ja että vaikka hän on kaikkivaltias, hän välittää jokaisesta meistä – henkilökohtaisesti. Meidän tulee olla täysin rehellisiä Jumalan edessä, eikä yrittää salata häneltä mitään. Ja lopuksi, meidän tulee täysin alistua Jumalan tahtoon ja uskoa, että hän rakastaa meitä ja on täysin luotettava ja pitää lupauksensa, jonka löydämme Jeremian kirjasta: ”Minulla on omat suunnitelmani teitä varten, sanoo Herra. Minun ajatukseni ovat rauhan eivätkä tuhon ajatuksia: minä annan teille tulevaisuuden ja toivon.” (29:11.)

Kun ajattelemme suurenmoista rukouksen lahjaa, jonka Jumala on antanut meille, astukaamme rohkeasti ”armon valtaistuimen eteen, jotta saisimme armoa ja laupeutta, löytäisimme avun silloin kun sitä tarvitsemme”. (Hepr. 4:16.)

Nouskaamme lopuksi laulamaan laulu ”Kuinka suurta onkaan Jeesus” Seurakunta laulaa - kirjasta numero 263.

Sermon: Passionate Prayers and Fearless Faith

Written by Gina Wahlen

“For I know the thoughts I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

Jeremiah 29:11, NKJV

Good morning and happy Sabbath! What a joy is ours today as we open God’s Word together and focus on the amazing privilege of prayer. The theme of our focus is “Passionate Prayers and Fearless Faith,” and we will begin with a recent and true story coming from a devoted mother living in Kigali, Rwanda.

A Story from Rwanda

Aziza was desperate. Demons had taken control of her eleven-year-old son, Moderne (pronounced mo-DARE-na), and it seemed there was nothing Aziza could do to stop the terrible havoc they were wreaking in her son’s life.

Sometimes the demons lifted Moderne high up to the ceiling and then dropped him to the floor. Other times they beat him until he was black and blue. The demons spewed horrible words out of Moderne’s mouth and then left him to sob during a moment of respite.

Aziza had tried everything—taking her son to the hospital, then to a natural healer. She tried various recommended remedies, but nothing worked. Early one morning she was so desperate that she even tried following the devil’s advice.

At this point, the demons had kept Moderne awake for multiple days and nights. Frantically wanting her son to be able to sleep, Aziza listened as the demons said through Moderne, “I will sleep on one condition—if you kneel down in front of me for 30 minutes and worship me as a god. Then, I will go to sleep.”

Desperate, Aziza knelt in front of Moderne for about 10 minutes before coming to her senses. *“What am I doing, kneeling in front of my son?”* she thought. *“Is he a god? I’m actually kneeling in front of Satan, instead of Jesus, my Savior!”*

Determined, she told herself, *“I’m going to stand up. I will stand up! I will not kneel in front of you again!”*

While Aziza never again knelt in front of her son, she did spend much time on her knees, pleading with God to deliver him.

“I started to learn who God is,” she said later. “I used to think that only others could pray, but I learned that I have my own mouth, and I can talk to God and He will hear me. I can pray for myself, and for my child.”

As Aziza’s prayer journey deepened, she asked God to forgive her and to cleanse her from all of her sins. She also decided to fast for three days and pray.

“God, I want to be closer to You,” she prayed. “I want to be closer to You than I can imagine! This power that is in my son isn’t from You. These are satanic powers. I want these powers to end. I want him to be my real son.”

Aziza continued to faithfully pray, believing that God would answer her prayers, and praise God her son was finally freed!

Moderne, who is now a teen, is a strong believer in prayer and frequently shares how God answered his mother’s prayers to deliver him from Satan’s power.

What about You?

What about you? Have you ever, like Aziza, poured your heart out to God, pleading with Him for His direct intervention? Have you whispered the kind of prayer that is so deep and so personal that no one but God Himself was meant to hear?

The Bible gives us glimpses into such heartfelt prayers that carry purpose and passion, echoing down to us today as examples of the wonderful privilege of prayer.

In the book of First Samuel, we meet Hannah, a woman living in a situation that I’m sure no one would choose to be in.

In chapter 1, verses 2 and 3, we read that her husband, Elkanah, “had two wives: the name of one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah [pronounced pa-NEE-na]. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.”

Although Hannah and Elkanah longed to have children, for some reason that blessing did not come. So in an effort to preserve his name, Elkanah took a second wife—Peninnah, who was able to deliver abundantly.

Unhappy Home

“Sons and daughters were added to the household; but the joy and beauty of God’s sacred institution had been marred and the peace of the family was broken,” writes Ellen G. White in *Patriarchs and Prophets*.

“Peninnah . . . was jealous and narrow-minded, and she bore herself with pride and insolence. To Hannah, hope seemed crushed and life a weary burden; yet she met the trial with uncomplaining meekness” (p. 569).

As was their custom, each year Elkanah took his family to Shiloh, the place where the Sanctuary was, to worship and sacrifice during the special gatherings of the Israelites. It was during these times that Peninnah’s taunting was practically unbearable for Hannah.

Pointing out that she was obviously blessed by God by having so many children, Peninnah “taunted Hannah with her childless state as evidence of the Lord’s displeasure” (p. 570).

This heartbreaking scenario happened year after year, until Hannah could no longer bear it and she left the feast, weeping uncontrollably.

Only God Could Solve

While her husband, Elkanah, tried to comfort her, Hannah knew that only God could solve her situation. Wanting to be as close to Him as possible, she made her way to where the sanctuary was

located. This was the very sanctuary that had been with the children of Israel throughout their journey of forty years in the wilderness. This tabernacle contained the Ark of the Covenant and was the very place where God's presence dwelled.

Drawing close to the entrance of this holy place, Hannah silently poured out her years of grief and sorrow to God. Imagine the heaviness in her heart, the emptiness of her arms, and yet the strength of her faith as she pleads with the One who never grows weary. Oblivious to those around her, Hannah's lips moved as her silent words ascended in prayer.

But there was someone who was watching her. Eli, the high priest, convinced that this was a woman who had obviously been drinking alcohol, rebuked her: "How long will you be drunk? Put your wine away from you!" we read in verse 14 of First Samuel, chapter one.

Answering him, Hannah explains in verses 15 and 16: "No, my lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor intoxicating drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Do not consider your maidservant a wicked woman, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief I have spoken until now."

Deeply touched, Eli responds, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition which you have asked of Him" (vs. 17).

A Blessing Returns

Of course, we know the rest of the story. Hannah returns home with Elkanah, where she conceives and gives birth to a baby boy—Samuel—whom she dedicates to the Lord. After the child is weaned, we see Hannah again returning to the Sanctuary in Shiloh, but this time with her child.

With happiness and joy she announces to Eli, "O my lord! As your soul lives . . . I am the woman who stood by you here, praying to the Lord. For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition which I asked of Him. Therefore I also have lent him to the Lord; as long as he lives he shall be lent to the Lord" (vss. 26-28).

Then once again we see Hannah turning to the Lord in prayer—this time with beautiful, inspired words of thanksgiving recorded in First Samuel, chapter 2, verses 1 and 2. Reading from the New Living Translation:

"My heart rejoices in the Lord!
The Lord has made me strong.
Now I have an answer for my enemies;
I rejoice because you rescued me.
No one is holy like the Lord!
There is no one besides you;
there is no Rock like our God" (NLT).

Hannah's prayer continues through the first ten verses of chapter 2 and is well worth reading and contemplating.

Two Women — Two Stories

But this morning, we have looked at the stories of two women—Aziza and Hannah. Two women separated by time, culture, language, geography, and more, yet bound together by their passionate prayers and their fearless faith.

How is your prayer life? Do you have an active, vibrant connection with God, or are your prayers more distant, formal, and repetitive? What can we learn from these two examples about praying effectively? I would like to mention just four key points:

1. They recognized their helplessness and reached out in faith.

Both Hannah and Aziza realized that of themselves, they could do nothing. They were powerless to change their situations. Nevertheless, they were not afraid to pray boldly, personally, and honestly. Their prayers were similar to David, as recorded in Psalm 40, beginning in verse 11:

“Do not withhold Your tender mercies from me, O Lord;
Let Your lovingkindness and Your truth continually preserve me.
For innumerable evils have surrounded me;

...

Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me;
O Lord, make haste to help me!

...

I *am* poor and needy;
Yet the Lord thinks upon me.
You *are* my help and my deliverer;
Do not delay, O my God.

2. They believed that God was real, and although omnipotent, He was also personally interested in them.

Hebrews 11:6 tells us that “without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

While this may seem a stretch of the imagination for some of the eight billion people living on the earth today, others who have come to develop a personal relationship with God through time in prayer and studying His Word, the Bible, know that He is indeed a friend to sinners and a rock of salvation. They can exclaim with David,

“The Lord lives!
Blessed *be* my Rock!
Let God be exalted,
The Rock of my salvation!” (Psalm 44:47).

3. They were completely honest with God, hiding nothing.

As we heard in our children's story this morning, it is essential that we are honest with God. After all, if we are honest with ourselves, we will admit that there is nothing we can truly hide from Him anyway, so we might as well share with Him everything that is on our hearts.

In his Psalm of Repentance (Psalm 51), David reminds us that God desires "truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom" (vs. 6). This is in contrast to those who we read about in Psalm 52: "Here is the man who did not make God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness" (vs. 7).

It is only as we are honest with God, not trying to fool Him in any way, that He can reach us in "the hidden part" to help us know *His* wisdom.

4. They were fully surrendered to God.

Confessing their sins, these women opened every part of their lives to God, withholding nothing—not even that which was most dear to them.

Surrender is an act of trust. It is acknowledging to God that He knows what is best and that while we make our requests known to Him, we trust Him to do what is best. This is the only way that we can find true peace.

This last point brings up a difficult question that many face regarding prayer: What about situations where I have poured my heart to God earnestly and honestly, believing that He will hear and respond, and yet there appears to be only silence—or things seem to get worse?

What about when I have prayed earnestly that my loved one will be healed, but he or she dies anyway? Or when I have faithfully prayed for days, weeks, months, even years regarding a situation, but nothing seems to have changed? What do I do then?

Our best example, of course, is Jesus, who taught His disciples to pray, both by word (see Matthew 6:9-13), and by example (see Mark 1:35). Throughout His life on Earth, Jesus was constantly in touch with His Heavenly Father through prayer. In the book, *Ministry of Healing*, we read that "The Saviour's life on earth was a life of communion with nature and with God. In this communion He revealed for us the secret of a life of power" (p. 51).

Developing the habit of prayer throughout His life helped to give Jesus the strength and trust to pray that prayer of complete submission while in the Garden of Gethsemane. Three times He prayed: "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39).

As we pray, we must remember that God sees what we cannot. We must believe the One who said:

"Can a woman forget her nursing child,
And not have compassion on the son of her womb?
Surely they may forget,
Yet I will not forget you.

See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands (Isaiah 49:15,16).

Let's believe that our Savior has not forgotten us, no matter how dark our current circumstances may be, or how long we wait for an answer to our prayers.

In the classic book, *Steps to Christ*, we find a wonderfully encouraging passage from the chapter titled, "The Privilege of Prayer." The author writes:

If we take counsel with our doubts and fears, or try to solve everything that we cannot see clearly, before we have faith, perplexities will only increase and deepen. But if we come to God, feeling helpless and dependent, as we really are, and in humble, trusting faith make known our wants to Him whose knowledge is infinite, who sees everything in creation, and who governs everything by His will and word, He can and will attend to our cry, and will let light shine into our hearts. Through sincere prayer we are brought into connection with the mind of the Infinite. We may have no remarkable evidence at the time that the face of our Redeemer is bending over us in compassion and love, but this is even so. We may not feel His visible touch, but His hand is upon us in love and pitying tenderness" (p. 96).

So, how can we, like Hannah and Aziza, and countless other heroes of faith, pray passionate prayers with fearless faith?

We must first recognize our own helplessness and reach out to God in faith. We must believe that He is real, and though omnipotent, deeply cares about each one of us—personally. We must be completely honest with God, not trying to hide anything from Him. And finally, we must be fully surrendered to God, believing that He loves us, is fully trustworthy, and will keep His promise found in Jeremiah 29, verse 11:

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."

As we think about the amazing gift of prayer that God has given to us, let's come boldly to the throne of grace, "that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

For our closing hymn, let's rise and sing "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," hymn number 499.

—The End—

Seminar: Back to Basics: A close walk with God

A personal growth seminar

Written by Bonita Joyner Shields

“. . . I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.”
John 14:20, NLT

What are Personal Devotions?

We often think of personal devotions as something we “do.” However, we could more accurately describe personal devotions as the time we spend with God each day because we love Him and are devoted to Him.

But one may ask, “Isn’t spending time with God in Sabbath School and a worship service on Sabbath enough?” Not if we want to know God personally and intimately.

Finding Time

Most women find that their plates are not only full, they are overflowing. How can they fit one more thing onto their “To Do” list?

However, we spend time on what we consider most important; that’s the way we are. Relationships are no exception. For relationships to grow strong, we must invest time in them—quantity as well as quality.

Unfortunately, we women often place unrealistic expectations on ourselves, and sometimes get caught up in an “all-or-nothing” mentality. But this call to invest time in our relationship with the Lord is *not* a call to perfection, such as “I must spend a certain amount of time with the Lord or it’s not good enough.”

It *is* a call to make our relationship with the Lord a top priority in our lives. Because every woman’s life is unique, carving out time for this relationship will require creativity as well as a commitment to *expect progress, not perfection*.

Close and Personal

When we commit to placing God at the center of our lives, we will find it helpful to use certain tools to aid and support us in cultivating the most important relationship in our lives!

Tool #1: Solitude

Solitude is useful for at least two reasons. First, solitude removes the distractions that threaten to drown out the voice of God speaking to us.

The book *9 Creative Ways to Find and Spend Time with God* reminds us that solitude can be found at home in a favorite chair, in your car as you drive to work, as you run in the quiet hours of dawn, or even at a local retreat center.

Second, solitude helps us to recognize and rely more on hearing God's voice than on responding to the voices of others. Thus, when we emerge from our solitude into the hustle and bustle of our lives, we can more effectively respond to others with the love and grace that we have experienced during our time with the Lord.

Tool #2: Study

We trust our friends and family because we have spent time with them, and we know their characters enough to believe that they are worthy of our faith. Faith is defined in Scripture as "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." It is based on the knowledge of the one Who offers us that assurance and conviction. God's Word reveals Who God is and why we can trust Him.

Spending time in God's Word offers us a constant reminder of Who He is, Whose we are, and how we are to live within that godly identity. Remember, too, that nature has been called "God's Second Book." Thus, spending time "studying" nature also offers us glimpses of God's character as well as opportunities to hear Him speak.

Keep a devotional journal. It can be a very useful tool for remembering how things touched you and for reflecting further or at a later date. A dedicated notebook and pen or pencil are useful for this and should be kept with your devotion Bible.

Tool #3: Prayer

We can easily fall into the habit of "praying" to God only when we have a request. However, when we remember that the purpose of prayer is to *know* God, prayer takes on an entirely new meaning. Instead of merely checking in occasionally to "pray" for Aunt Mary's cancer or Johnny's math test—which are important to pray for—we desire to be in conversation with God about *everything* in our lives! By talking with Him, listening to Him, and beholding Him, we become changed.

Tool #4: Journaling

Keeping a prayer journal doesn't have to be another thing on our To-Do List to give us guilt! And it doesn't have to be used daily. Keep a journal next to your Bible and devotional reading material,

and write when you feel as if you want to talk to the Lord in a different manner. Often, our hands will write what our mouths cannot speak. Are you struggling with an issue? Write. Are you joyful and full of praise? Write. Did the Word of the Lord speak so clearly to you that you have to remember it? Write. It can become a Book of Life for you to read, renewing your spirit.

Tool #5: Spontaneity

While it's helpful to dedicate a specific time and place for your time with the Lord, by no means does this have to put boundaries on how you express your love to your Beloved! Read, write in your journal, talk, sing, write a love poem, sit still and listen to the sound of silence, walk, run, observe nature, listen to Him speak through your baby's breath—the options are endless. I think God loves spontaneity!

Creativity for spiritual growth

The following ideas have been collected from 12 women who value their relationship with God. You might enjoy trying a few.

1. **SERVING:** The spiritual discipline of service brings me close to God in a special way. I experience such joy driving home after a pet therapy session with troubled teens and my dog, Elke, because of the healing that our relationship brings to these teens. I continually marvel at the relationship between nature and humans that God established at Creation.—*Lyndelle, wife, editor*
2. **PRAISING:** My desire has been to have more power in prayer. Thus, I began praising God throughout the day for the artistic branches of the bare tree limbs against a bright blue sky in winter, for family and friends, for the birds, for beautiful sunsets—the list could go on. When we praise God, we are more likely to commend others. As a result they may also praise their friends, creating an inspiring circle.—*Myrna, wife, mother, retired editor*
3. **PRAYING:** I read Scripture and then I pray. Is it praying? I think so. Maybe not traditional praying on my knees with my eyes shut, but it is definitely talking to God as a Friend. I share things with Him, and I let the words of His Book sink into my soul. Sometimes my prayers seem routine or like a laundry list of requests, so I write poems to Him.—*Connie, wife, mother, television producer*
4. **LISTENING:** I have a 40-minute commute to work each way, so I spend time singing in the car, praying aloud, and listening to spiritual music and books on CDs.—*Leslie, wife, administrative assistant*
5. **JOURNALING:** I keep a journal. I talk over spiritual things with people around me to help keep me accountable. I also try to verbalize what I've read or experienced; that helps to clarify and solidify it for me.—*Melissa, daughter, sister, high school senior*

6. **TALKING:** I like to remember that if I liken my prayers to God to talking with a friend, then I shouldn't or don't need to limit my conversations with Him to a certain time or place. I want to remain open and with an attitude that I can talk to God any place, any time, and about anything.—*Bonnie, wife, mother, nursing administrator*

7. **WALKING:** One thing that makes my devotional time really cool is to go for a walk or run in the early morning when no one else is stirring. Springtime, when the birds are singing and the flowers are blooming, makes this an extra special prayer time for me.—*Cindy, wife, mother, small business owner*

8. **READING:** I like to dedicate my first waking moments to reading my devotional and Sabbath school lesson quarterly. I feel that God puts me first, so I want to put Him first. The exception is on Friday evening, when I do the reverse and close my hectic workweek by reading my devotional and quarterly last thing before I turn off the lights.—*Maria, daughter, legal assistant*

9. **REFLECTING:** I like to have a special place in my home to meet with God (although with a houseful of guests, I take whatever space I can find!). I also like to have beauty surrounding me: a candle, flowers, baskets for my books, a window to look out. All of these remind me that God is the author of life and beauty.—*Bonita, wife, editor*

Spiritual Makeover

God's Word contains many promises of the benefits of a life of faithfulness to Him.

1. "For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:11, NLT).
2. "For your Creator will be your husband; the Lord of Heaven's Armies is his name! He is your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of all the earth" (Isaiah 54:5, NLT).
3. "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30, NLT).
4. "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect" (Romans 12:2, NLT).
5. "But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!" (Galatians 5:22, NLT).

Pass it on

As we embrace God's promises and allow Him to make us over into His image, a natural result of that transformation is the desire to share with others what He has done and is doing in our lives. One of the best ways to do that is to join hands and seek to find ways to impact other women for God's kingdom.

Ministry ideas

- 1. Take one of the relational tools** and make that the topic of a women's breakfast. Make special invitations and encourage friends to use them to invite their neighbors.
- 2. Ask God to reveal to you** how you can minister to and nurture other women in your congregation. One possibility is to survey the women in your church to determine how they would like to grow in their spiritual journeys. Then start a ministry to equip them. For example, if a large number of women in your congregation feel the need to be more equipped in the spiritual guidance of their children, organize a group that will encourage and equip them for this task.
- 3. Plan a spiritual retreat.** Incorporating one or more of the relational tools, start with a one-day retreat. Then plan a slightly longer retreat as women get accustomed to taking this special time corporately to be with the Lord and each other.
- 4. Plan a special "Day away with God."** This one-day retreat will create a great spiritual growth opportunity for you and other women in the church. Choose a theme for the day, begin with a time for worship, and provide insights related to the theme. During the day, allow time for the ladies to enjoy time alone in prayer and spiritual reflection. After lunch together, offers a hands-on activity. This will help the women to open their hearts and listen to God's voice. Conclude with worship.

*"As often as possible, Jesus withdrew to out-of-the-way places for prayer."
Luke 5:16, The Message*

—The End—

Seminar: An Invitation to Prayer

A personal Growth Seminar

The 125th anniversary of Ellen G. White's *Steps to Christ* is being commemorated in 2017. This seminar is based on the chapter titled, "The Privilege of Prayer."

"Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."

Jeremiah 29:12, 13, ESV

Introduction

Prayer is a key element in revival and reformation. Have you ever contemplated your prayer life? Have you ever examined it and wished you could have deeper communication with God? Have there been times when you felt as though your prayers were just hitting the ceiling? Have you wondered whether there was any power in your prayers?

Let us look at what prayer is, what God wants it to be, and how it can become the foundation of our spiritual life. Ellen White shares inspiring insights on the power, the gift, and the blessings of communication with our heavenly Father in the chapter "The Privilege of Prayer" of her book *Steps to Christ*.

Opening Your Heart to God

"Through nature and revelation, through His providence, and by the influence of His Spirit, God speaks to us. But these are not enough; we need also to pour out our hearts to Him. In order to have spiritual life and energy, we must have actual intercourse with our heavenly Father. Our minds may be drawn out toward Him; we may meditate upon His works, His mercies, His blessings; but this is not, in the fullest sense, communing with Him. In order to commune with God, we must have something to say to Him concerning our actual life.

"Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him.

"When Jesus was upon the earth, He taught His disciples how to pray. He directed them to present their daily needs before God, and to cast all their care upon Him. And the assurance He gave them that their petitions should be heard, is assurance also to us" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 93).

"Jesus Himself, while He dwelt among men, was often in prayer. Our Saviour identified Himself with our needs and weakness, in that He became a suppliant, a petitioner, seeking from His Father fresh supplies of strength, that He might come forth braced for duty and trial. He is our example in all things. . . .

"Without unceasing prayer and diligent watching we are in danger of growing careless and of deviating from the right path. The adversary seeks continually to obstruct the way to the mercy seat, that we may not by earnest supplication and faith obtain grace and power to resist temptation" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 94).

Prayer Conditions

“There are certain conditions upon which we may expect that God will hear and answer our prayers.”

1. *Recognize your need*

“One of the first of these is that we feel our need of help from Him. (Emphasis added.) He has promised, *‘I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.’* Isaiah 44:3. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who long after God, may be sure that they will be filled. The heart must be open to the Spirit's influence, or God's blessing cannot be received.

“Our great need is itself an argument and pleads most eloquently in our behalf. But the Lord is to be sought unto to do these things for us. He says, *‘Ask, and it shall be given you.’* And *‘He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?’* Matthew 7:7; Romans 8:32.

“If we regard iniquity in our hearts, if we cling to any known sin, the Lord will not hear us; but the prayer of the penitent, contrite soul is always accepted. When all known wrongs are righted, we may believe that God will answer our petitions. Our own merit will never commend us to the favor of God; it is the worthiness of Jesus that will save us, His blood that will cleanse us; yet we have a work to do in complying with the conditions of acceptance” (*Steps to Christ*, p. 95).

►**Exercise:** On a piece of paper write down your deepest desire that you ask of God today. Tell Him about it and pray for help.

2. *Have faith*

“Another element of prevailing prayer is faith. (Emphasis added.) *‘He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.’* Hebrews 11:6. Jesus said to His disciples, *‘What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.’* Mark 11:24. Do we take Him at His word?

“The assurance is broad and unlimited, and He is faithful who has promised. When we do not receive the very things we asked for, at the time we ask, we are still to believe that the Lord hears and that He will answer our prayers. We are so erring and short-sighted that we sometimes ask for things that would not be a blessing to us, and our heavenly Father in love answers our prayers by giving us that which will be for our highest good—that which we ourselves would desire if with vision divinely enlightened we could see all things as they really are. When our prayers seem not to be answered, we are to cling to the promise; for the time of answering will surely come, and we shall receive the blessing we need most.

“But to claim that prayer will always be answered in the very way and for the particular thing that we desire, is presumption. God is too wise to err, and too good to withhold any good thing from them that walk uprightly. (Emphasis added.) Then do not fear to trust Him, even though you do not see the immediate answer to your prayers. Rely upon His sure promise, *‘Ask, and it shall be given you.’*

“If we take counsel with our doubts and fears, or try to solve everything that we cannot see clearly, before we have faith, perplexities will only increase and deepen. But if we come to God, feeling helpless and dependent, as we really are, and in humble, trusting faith make known our wants to Him whose knowledge is infinite, who sees everything in creation, and who governs everything by His will and word, He can and will attend to our cry, and will let light shine into our hearts. Through sincere prayer we are brought into connection with the mind of the Infinite. We may have no remarkable evidence at the time that the face of our Redeemer is bending over us in compassion and love, but this is even so. We may not feel His visible touch, but His hand is upon us in love and pitying tenderness” (*Steps to Christ*, p. 96).

“When we come to ask mercy and blessing from God we should have a spirit of love and forgiveness in our own hearts. How can we pray, *‘Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,’ and yet indulge an unforgiving spirit? Matthew 6:12.* If we expect our own prayers to be heard we must forgive others in the same manner and to the same extent as we hope to be forgiven” (*Steps to Christ*, p. 97).

►**Exercise:** Think about three impossible situations in your life. Write them down and ask God in faith, believing He will help you.

3. *Persevere*

“Perseverance in prayer has been made a condition of receiving. We must pray always if we would grow in faith and experience. We are to be *‘instant in prayer,’ to ‘continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.’* Romans 12:12; Colossians 4:2. Peter exhorts believers to be *‘sober, and watch unto prayer.’* 1 Peter 4:7. Paul directs, *‘In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.’* Philippians 4:6. *‘But ye, beloved,’* says Jude, *‘praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God.’* Jude 20, 21. Unceasing prayer is the unbroken union of the soul with God, so that life from God flows into our life; and from our life, purity and holiness flow back to God” (*Steps to Christ*, p. 97).

►**Exercise:** Think about three positive things that can help you to persevere in prayer. Share with a friend, and ask God to empower you to succeed.

4. *Be diligent*

“There is necessity for diligence in prayer. Let nothing hinder you. Make every effort to keep open the communion between Jesus and your own soul. Seek every opportunity to go where prayer is wont to be made. Those who are really seeking for communion with God will be seen in the prayer meeting, faithful to do their duty and earnest and anxious to reap all the benefits they can gain. They will improve every opportunity of placing themselves where they can receive the rays of light from heaven.

“We should pray in the family circle, and above all we must not neglect secret prayer, for this is the life of the soul. It is impossible for the soul to flourish while prayer is neglected. Family or public prayer alone is not sufficient. In solitude let the soul be laid open to the inspecting eye of

God. Secret prayer is to be heard only by the prayer-hearing God. No curious ear is to receive the burden of such petitions. In secret prayer the soul is free from surrounding influences, free from excitement. Calmly, yet fervently, will it reach out after God. Sweet and abiding will be the influence emanating from Him who seeth in secret, whose ear is open to hear the prayer arising from the heart. By calm, simple faith the soul holds communion with God and gathers to itself rays of divine light to strengthen and sustain it in the conflict with Satan. God is our tower of strength" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 98).

►**Exercise:** Define what diligence is and how it can be applied to your prayer life as you grow in your spiritual journey.

The Promise

"Let the soul be drawn out and upward, that God may grant us a breath of the heavenly atmosphere. We may keep so near to God that in every unexpected trial our thoughts will turn to Him as naturally as the flower turns to the sun" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 99).

"Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. *'The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.'* James 5:11. His heart of love is touched by our sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. *'He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.'* Psalm 147:3. The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son.

"Jesus said, *'Ye shall ask in My name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father Himself loveth you.'* *'I have chosen you: . . . that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you.'* John 16:26, 27; 15:16. But to pray in the name of Jesus is something more than a mere mention of that name at the beginning and the ending of a prayer. It is to pray in the mind and spirit of Jesus, while we believe His promises, rely upon His grace, and work His works" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 100).

"If we would but think of God as often as we have evidence of His care for us we should keep Him ever in our thoughts and should delight to talk of Him and to praise Him. We talk of temporal things because we have an interest in them. We talk of our friends because we love them; our joys and our sorrows are bound up with them. Yet we have infinitely greater reason to love God than to love our earthly friends; it should be the most natural thing in the world to make Him first in all our thoughts, to talk of His goodness and tell of His power. The rich gifts He has bestowed upon us were not intended to absorb our thoughts and love so much that we should have nothing to give to God; they are constantly to remind us of Him and to bind us in bonds of love and gratitude to our heavenly Benefactor. We dwell too near the lowlands of earth. Let us

raise our eyes to the open door of the sanctuary above, where the light of the glory of God shines in the face of Christ, who *'is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him.'* Hebrews 7:25.

"We need to praise God more 'for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men.' Psalm 107:8. Our devotional exercises should not consist wholly in asking and receiving. Let us not be always thinking of our wants and never of the benefits we receive. We do not pray any too much, but we are too sparing of giving thanks. We are the constant recipients of God's mercies, and yet how little gratitude we express, how little we praise Him for what He has done for us" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 102).

"The soul may ascend nearer heaven on the wings of praise. God is worshiped with song and music in the courts above, and as we express our gratitude we are approximating to the worship of the heavenly hosts. 'Whoso offereth praise glorifieth' God. Psalm 50:23. Let us with reverent joy come before our Creator, with 'thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.' Isaiah 51:3" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 104).

Improving Spiritual Communication

For a few hardy prayer warriors, talking with God is as easy as breathing; it happens almost effortlessly. When you ask them how they do it, they simply shrug and reply, "I just pray." But many of us need help to improve our way of talking with God. With that in mind, here are some practical guidelines that might make your time with the Lord more fruitful. Not all of the suggestions will apply to your particular situation, but if you begin by incorporating a few of them, I'm confident your prayer life will improve.

1. **Choose a specific place to pray away from distractions** so you can concentrate. Ringing phones and crying children will sabotage your "quiet time" before it gets started.
2. **Pray at the same time every day**, if at all possible. Make it part of your regular routine and it will become habit. Write it into your schedule, and then treat it just like a daily appointment.
3. **Pray out loud.** Many people can pray under their breath or in their minds for long periods and still maintain intensity, but for most of us this method is a quick ticket to dreamland. When we pray out loud, we have to form intelligent sentences. We have to concentrate more on what we're praying about.
4. **Keep a note pad handy** so you can jot down ideas that come to mind while you're before the Lord. Sometimes you'll get great ideas totally unrelated to what you've been praying about. If you jot them down, you can quickly get back to the topic at hand without being sidetracked.
5. **Make a list to keep track of your prayer needs.** This can be done several ways. Prayer needs can be listed by category, such as "Church," "Family," or "Unsaved friends." Or they may be listed by the days of the week. Each day you pray for a different set of needs. You may want to include prayer every day for a different segment of society that influences on the direction of our nation. These categories might include 1) the church and religion, 2) the family and the home, 3)

the media, 4) government, 5) education, 6) business and commerce, and 7) the arts and entertainment.

6. **Redeem time for praying out of unused corners of your schedule.** Those who have to drive to work can use the time talking with the Lord. Busy homemakers can combine prayer with housework, especially if the task doesn't require a lot of concentration.

7. **Change the pace** during your prayer time. Include praise, thanksgiving and singing as well as petition. Spend some of your time reflecting on the Scripture, meditating on it and digesting its meaning.

8. **Keep a prayer journal.** Here are two variations of this idea. The first is to keep track of what you prayed for and when you prayed for it. Leave a space to jot down the answer when it comes. This will help you to keep alert to God's answer so you can thank Him. Sometimes prayer answers come in the back door; you don't want them to slip past you. The second variation is to write an entire prayer in your journal. Make it a personal letter to the Lord on a daily basis. Just write "Dear Lord" instead of "Dear Diary."

9. **Pray with someone else.** Though some prayers can be said only in solitude, there will be times when you'll want to join hearts with another person in prayer. If you commit to meeting on a regular basis, this can help build consistency. Such prayer partnerships can become powerful and life-changing.

10. **Pray one-sentence prayers.** If the thought of laboring over a topic wears you out, pray short, sincere prayers instead. A sentence or two may be all that's needed to exhaust the topic for you for the time being. If so, just move on to the next item without feeling guilty for your brevity.

Conclusion

Sister White reminds us, "We cannot depend upon form or external machinery. What we need is the quickening influence of the Holy Spirit of God. 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.'

"Pray without ceasing, and watch by working in accordance with your prayers. As you pray, believe, trust in God. It is the time of the latter rain, when the Lord will give largely of his Spirit. Be fervent in prayer, and watch in the Spirit" (*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 512).

Closing Prayer

"Let your prayer be, 'Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee.' This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 70).