

Wings of Prayer



Luke 11:9-10

So here is what I say to you. Ask, and it will be given to you. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. Everyone who asks will receive. He who searches will find. And the door will be opened to the one who knocks.

John 16:23

When that day comes, you will no longer ask me for anything. What I'm about to tell you is true. My Father will give you anything you ask for in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask, and you will receive what you ask for. Then your joy will be complete.

Phillips Brooks (1835-1893)

Pray not for crutches but for wings.

A congregational project by the Spirituality Group
of Rideau Park United Church

May 2006

There are many ways of praying and many kinds of prayer. When we come to God with a request for another or when we pray with the hope and desire that another will be helped, this is intercessory prayer.

In our Sunday services we pray for the world, for places of strife or need, for individuals who we know who are ill or grieving or burdened. These are prayers of intercession. In our private prayers too, we can bring our concern for others to God in prayer.

Intercessory prayer is beneficial in a number of ways. It is an expression of love for the one who we bring to God in prayer. It is an act of faith as we bring prayer to God, anticipating that God will respond to our prayers in love. Praying for others also draws us out of ourselves and our own concerns and opens us to the needs of the world and to the lives of others. In a profound sense, prayers of intercession connect us to God, to the world and to one another.

Nicky Gumbel, who created the Alpha study program, encourages us not only to pray for others but also to record our prayers in a journal. He then suggests that we look back over time to see how our prayers have been answered. In his experience, this practice helps us to discover that, over the course of time, our prayers for others are answered, sometimes in unexpected ways.

We can pray for others using words, making requests of God. We can also pray for others without using words. A Quaker prayer requires the one praying to picture the one prayed for being surrounded by the healing light of God; we simply hold the one we are praying for in the light of God's presence.

To his followers Jesus says: *So I say to you: ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.* (Luke 11)

We are called to ask, to seek, to pray. In intercessory prayer, in love and in faith, we ask for what others need to be given by God.

It is not that prayer changes God, or awakens in him purposes of love and compassion that he has not already felt. No, it changes us, and therein lies its glory and its purpose.

Hannah Hurnard (1905-1990)

More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

Never wait for fitter time or place to talk to him. To wait till you go to church or to your room is to make him wait. He will listen as you walk.

George MacDonald (1824-1905)

Our prayers and God's mercy are like two buckets in a well; while the one ascends the other descends.

Mark Hopkins (1802-1887)

Perhaps the most astonishing characteristic of Jesus' praying is that when he prayed for others, he never concluded by saying, "If it be thy will." Nor did the apostles or prophets when they were praying for others. They obviously believed that they knew what the will of God was before they prayed the prayer of faith. They were so immersed in the milieu of the Holy Spirit that when they encountered a specific situation, they knew what should be done. Their praying was so positive that it often took the form of a direct, authoritative command.

Richard J. Foster (1942-)

Prayer...the very highest energy of which the mind is capable.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834)

Prayer and helplessness are inseparable. Only he who is helpless can truly pray. Your helplessness is your best prayer. It calls from your heart to the heart of God with greater effect than all your uttered pleas.

Ole Hallesby

Prayer begins by talking to God, but it ends by listening to him.
In the face of Absolute Truth, silence is the soul's language.

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen (1895-1979)

Prayer enlarges the heart until it is capable of containing God's
gift of himself.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Prayer is exhaling the spirit of man and inhaling the spirit of God.

Edwin Keith

Prayer is not just informing God of our needs, for he already
knows them. God does not show himself equally to all creatures.
This does not mean that he has favourites, that he decides to help
some and to abandon others, but the difference occurs because it is
impossible for him to manifest himself to certain hearts under the
conditions they set up. The sunlight plays no favourites, but its
reflection is very different on a lake and on a swamp.

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen (1895-1979)

Prayer provides power, poise, peace, and purpose.

The night is given us to take breath, to pray, to drink deep at the
fountain of power. The day, to use the strength which has been
given us, to go forth to work with it till the evening.

Florence Nightingale (1820-1910)

When the outlook is bad, try the uplook.

You will find in your "closet of prayer" what you frequently lose
when you are out in the world. The more you visit it, the more you
will want to return. If you are faithful to your secret place, it will
become your closest friend and bring you much comfort. The tears
shed there bring cleansing.

Thomas à Kempis (c. 1380-1471)

Certain thoughts are prayers. There are moments when, whatever be the attitude of the body, the soul is on its knees.

Víctor Hugo (1802-1885)

As artists give themselves to their models, and poets to their classical pursuits, so must we addict ourselves to prayer.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)

Beware in your prayer, above everything, of limiting God, not only by unbelief, but by fancying that you know what he can do.

Andrew Murray (1828-1917)

Do not let it be imagined that one must remain silent about one's feelings of rebellion in order to enter into dialogue with God. Quite the opposite is the truth: it is precisely when one expresses them that a dialogue of truth begins.

Paul Tournier (1898-1986)

Be not forgetful of prayer. Every time you pray, if your prayer is sincere, there will be new feeling and new meaning in it, which will give you fresh courage, and you will understand that prayer is an education.

Fyodor Mikhaylovich Dostoyevski (1821-1881)

As it is the business of tailors to make clothes and of cobblers to mend shoes, so it is the business of Christians to pray.

Martín Luther (1483-1546)

Be yourself. Be natural before God. Do not pretend to emotions you do not feel. Tell him whatever is on your heart and mind with whatever words are most natural to you. You do not have to speak to him in "religious" language about "spiritual" matters only...speak as naturally and as easily as you would to a friend, since God is just that...This natural expression of yourself at the outset is the guarantee that you can go on to a creative, free, and mature relationship with God.

John B. Coburn

As a physician, I have seen men, after all other therapy had failed,
lifted out of disease and melancholy by the serene effort of prayer.
Alexis Carrel (1873-1944)

Don't ask God for what you think is good; ask God for what God
thinks is good for you.

Every Christian needs a half hour of prayer each day, except when
he is busy, then he needs an hour.
St. Francis of Sales (1567-1622)

God never ceases to speak to us, but the noise of the world without
and the tumult of our passions within bewilder us and prevent us
from listening to him.
François Fenelon (1651-1715)

I know not by what methods rare,
But this I know: God answers prayer.
I know not if the blessing sought
Will come in just the guise I thought.
I leave my prayer to him alone
Whose will is wiser than my own.

Eliza M. Hickok

If you pray for another, you will be helped yourself.
Jewish Proverb

Is not prayer precisely of itself peace, silence, strength, since it is a
way of being with God?
Jacques Ellul

Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?
Corrie Ten Boom (1892-1983)

The potency of prayer hath subdued the strength of fire; it has bridled the rage of lions, hushed anarchy to rest, extinguished wars, appeased the elements, expelled demons, burst the chains of death, expanded the gates of heaven, assuaged diseases, repelled frauds, rescued cities from destruction, stayed the sun in its course, and arrested the progress of the thunderbolt. Prayer is an all-efficient panoply, a treasure undiminished, a mine which is never exhausted, a sky unobscured by clouds, a heaven unruffled by the storm. It is the root, the fountain, the mother of a thousand blessings.

Saint John Chrysostom (c. 347-407)

The world is full of faces, black with anger, green with envy, and red with shame, which could be made radiantly white with holiness and spirituality aglow by the transfiguring power of prayer.

Samuel Henry Price

To clasp the hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world.

Karl Barth (1886-1968)

Trying to be perfect means trying to do your particular best, with the particular graces God has given you. You cannot pray like Saint Teresa anymore than you can sing like Caruso, but how foolish if for that reason you give up trying to pray at all. What God asks of you is that you would do your best, not Saint Teresa's best.

Gerald Vann (1906-1963)

We are slaves to our gadgets, puppets of our power, and prisoners of our security. The theme of our generation is: "Get more, know more, and do more," instead of "Pray more, be more, and serve more."

Billy Graham

Prayer is God's psychotherapy for God's children.

Raphael Simon

Christ has no body now on earth but yours
no hands but yours
no feet but yours,
Yours are the eyes through which he is to look out
Christ's compassion to the world
Yours are the feet with which he is to go about
doing good;
Yours are the feet with which he is to bless men now.

Teresa of Avila

We do not always recognize the power our prayers can have. We won a spectacular victory over injustice, oppression, and evil in South Africa. But that victory would have been quite out of the question without the support, the love, and the prayers of so many in South Africa and around the world. I often thought of the people who said they prayed every day for us, and in the middle of a restless night I would remember that someone in Arizona was praying for us and that would give me strength. Perhaps you are praying in your home for someone who is imprisoned or tortured and your prayers enter his heart and transform his suffering—or enter the heart of his jailer. I try to pray each day for a list of those in need by name. I have no doubt that our prayers make a difference.

Desmond Tutu - God has a Dream