



HeartCry



June 2007

Prayer and the Evangelical Congregational Church

**(Candidates for Bishop Speak Out
About Prayers' Importance in our Structure.)**

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Evangelical
Congregational Church



Evangelism &
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Commission

Prayer Mobilization
Team

Rev. Kirk R. Marks



*Who is he who will devote himself
To be close to me?" declares the Lord.
Jeremiah 30.21b*

Though this verse in the context of Jeremiah's prophecy is addressing the issue of leadership and rule over God's restored people, this question captures what God really wants to know of EC people. Who is it in the EC church that will be devoted to being close to God? If we are to truly be a movement of God, many of us will need to answer God's call to be close to him in the intimacy of prayer. Cultivating a real, deep and transforming relationship with God happens as we seek him in prayer. As we both pour out our hearts to God and hear him as he speaks to us in the closeness of our prayer life, we find not only the comfort and strength we need, but also the guidance and direction for effectiveness in mission and ministry and holy living. There can be no doubt that great things for God's kingdom can be accomplished in the conferences, committees and congregational meetings of our denomination, but a greater thing, a more powerful thing, an intimacy with God that guides us in the Lord's work and godly living, can only come through prayer.

Rev. Kevin Leibensperger



“You do not have, because you do not ask God.”

Of all the scriptures on the subject, James 4:2 argues the case for prayer most succinctly. There are things that Almighty God is willing to do and be for His people, but only if we pray for it. As amazing as it sounds, the Lord waits for us to want what He wants. He invites us to partner with Him in fulfilling His purpose. When we pray according to His will God acts.

Only through prayer can the EC Church be all that Christ intends her to be. What we “get” out of prayer is more than answers. Prayer in fact isn’t about getting things in exchange for our requests. What is ours to have out of constant, passionate prayer is nothing less than more of God Himself. Our ongoing dialogue with our Creator builds a sense of intimacy, reality, and vitality with Him as nothing else can do. Alvin Vandergriend defines prayer as “the talking part of the most important love relationship in our lives.” Only a praying denomination can obey the Great Commandment - to love God with all their heart. We must love to pray, because we must pray to love!

Rev. David Dennis



In the Evangelical Congregational Church, we hold Passion for Christ as one of our core values. We demonstrate that passion through “our commitment to the authority of the Bible, the centrality of prayer and the pursuit of holiness.” The centrality of prayer is what we would expect of a denomination that envisions becoming “a dynamic movement of God...[with] a burning passion for God and a missionary zeal to reach the lost.” God chooses to move in response to the prayer of his people. If we, his people, are to be those who in turn are moved and empowered by God to accomplish his purposes, then prayer must be central to what we do - and who we are.

The simple fact is we need God. Individually and corporately, we desperately need to know the life giving power of the cross and resurrection of Christ. We need to know that power

not just for the sake of our personal salvation, but also for the sake of enabling us to be Christ's ambassadors to a lost and hurting world. That power, of course, is found through a vital connection with God through fellowship with him in prayer, within which he directs and challenges our motives and plans and we in turn submit and commit to his purposes.

Biblically speaking, the alternative is unthinkable. The alternative is a sterile, lifeless organizational structure that is neither passionate for God nor effective in reaching the lost – no matter how much that structure might continue to pay lip service to those ideals.

Someone has observed that prayerlessness is an indication of pride. When we fail to pray, we in essence tell God, "I don't need you." At the very least we say to the Lord, "I don't need you right now. I can handle this. I'll let you know if I get stuck." In a word, "pride." James reminds us "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." At every level of the life of the church, from the local congregation through denominational leadership, humble submission to God in prayer is the key to the grace, power and passion to be and to do all that God desires of us.

Church Prayer Coordinator Job Description

FUNCTION:

- To raise awareness of the need for a comprehensive Great Commission Prayer strategy in every class, program and ministry of the church.
- To help individuals reclaim or renew a personal passion to pray unceasingly (1 Thess. 5:17).
- To help reclaim or renew the congregation as a house of prayer with a passion for the lost (Matt. 21:13, Luke 19:10).
- To link believers in prayer for evangelism and awakening (Matt. 28:16-20, 2 Chron. 7:14).
- To facilitate training opportunities to help them accomplish these four goals.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Be identified as called of God to the ministry of prayer.
- Understand biblical prayer and be able to communicate it.
- Recognize that God makes a difference through prayer in lives, situations, and nations.
- Be able to work cooperatively with church leadership.
- Be committed to the total church program.
- Have skills in planning, organizing, and delegating with a servant leadership style.
- Be willing to attend Prayer Coordinator training.

ACCOUNTABILITY

- To God first.
- Then the pastor.
- Then the church, especially the prayer coordinators in each class, program and ministry area.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Pray and lead others to pray.
- Work closely with the pastor and other church leadership to develop a Great Commission Prayer strategy.
- Set up and manage prayer activities, events, small prayer groups, and a prayer room.
- Build a prayer team ministry with other associations, state conventions, NAMB, WMU, IMB and Lifeway.
- Create and maintain a relationship with the associational prayer coordinator and church prayer coordinators in other churches.
- Enlist and train prayer coordinators in every class, program and ministry.
- Participate in the church newsletter to share prayer requests and answers to prayer, promote awareness, and communicate kingdom needs.
- Help the librarian to acquire biblical resources for church members to use in prayer.
- Facilitate local training conferences for church members.
- Participate in the budget planning process.
- Calendar all prayer events and training during the yearly planning process.
- Stay current on state, national and international prayer needs and opportunities.

The Warrior's Arsenal: resources & tools

Moving Mountains: Lessons Learned from Great Evangelical Leaders

By: Paul L. King
ISBN: 0-8007-9375-7

Warren Wiersbe, Calvin Miller, and Neil T. Anderson endorse this book. Readers are shown how to venture forth with bold yet wise faith. The sound, practical teaching and amazing life experiences of these twelve giants of faith from the past two hundred years offer new dimensions and perspectives in your walk with God.

225 pages



Touching the Invisible

By: Norman Grubb
ISBN: 87508-222-X

This short work addresses the areas of life needed to maintain unity in fellowship, to obtain guidance that is often at first hidden, and the to see to see the adventures which may be found during adversity. Chapter ten, "The Law of Spiritual Harvest," says in a few paragraphs of three pages what other authors have taken weighted chapters to write.

64 pages



The Renewed Mind

By: Larry Christensen
ISBN: 0-7642-2391-7

This work bridges the gap between who we are and who we would like to become. Based on Romans 12:2, "Do not conform to the world, but be [continue becoming] transformed by the renewing of your mind..." Christensen focuses on five areas in relation to a renewal of the thought life: Dependence on God, Facing challenges with Christ's authority, Patience, Discipline, and Prayer. Questions included for further study.

144 pages

The Power of Simple Prayer

By: Joyce Meyer
ISBN: 0-446-53196-0

Meyer states that, "...friendship with God brings boldness and clarity in prayer." Practical insight, problems associated with praying, and personal lessons learned about a prayer-based relationship with God encourages a life that every believer may experience. Writing about this matter, she uses personal and practical illustrations with quotes from other Christian leaders like Charles Spurgeon who notes that "love knocks at [God's] door until He opens." Chapter summaries and 'prayer points' are included at the end of each section for personal or small group application.

299 pages

Incense Before the Throne

Praying the Psalms

“What matters is not what we feel like praying about, but what God wants us to ask him for. Not the poverty of our own heart, but the riches of the Word of God must decide how we are to pray.” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer in *The Psalms - Prayer Book of the Bible*). The psalms are unique within the Bible. Within them we find the complete range of human emotion and need, and they offer a rich source of conversation with God. As we find within them verses and phrases which tie into our own thoughts, so too, we can find other verses which speak to us powerfully of the truth of God’s promises to us. The Psalms have been an invaluable resource to prayer in every generation and tradition.

Pointers for Prayer: Depending upon your needs, you may find some of these verses helpful in your prayer time:

- When you want to praise God: Psalm 92:1,2; Psalm 100; Psalm 150
- When times are hard: Psalm 138: 7,8; Psalm 94:17-19; Psalm 18:1,2
- When your integrity is tested: Psalm 1:1-3; Psalm 119:9,11,104,105; Psalm 25: 10,21
- When you want God’s protection: Psalm 27: 4-8; Psalm 91:1-16
- When you are tempted to hit back: Psalm 37:7-9
- When you want God’s guidance: Psalm 32:8; Psalm 27:1,14
- When you need to be reminded of your dependence on God: Psalm 105: 3,4



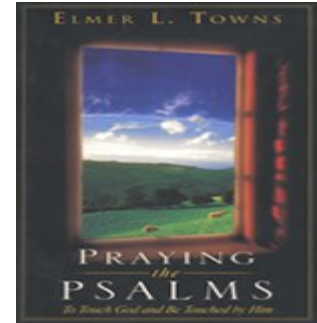
The Psalms are not only the revealed Word of God, but are the words that God has indicated that He likes to hear from us.

Thomas Morton

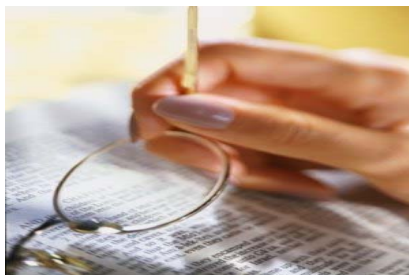
Praying the Psalms

by Elmer Towns

Description: The Psalms are about passion, and you should feel passionately when you read them. The Psalmist poured out his soul to God concerning the things that deeply moved him. As you read the Psalms, you are taking a peak into his heart. As you do you will cry when he weeps, shout when he rejoices, burn when he gets angry and fall on your face when he worships God. Praying the Psalms is a wonderful way to meet God every day in your private devotions. You cannot get closer to God than when you pray the Scriptures, since the book of Psalms reflects the heart of God. Therefore, you will get close to His heart when you pray the Psalms.



Praying the Psalms carefully shapes the Psalms into personal prayer enabling you to identify with the Psalmist as he prayed. Dr. Towns delicately presents the Psalms as a living language that will move you from your feet to your knees.



How do you begin to use the Psalms in Prayer?

1. Begin in the Morning
2. Select one Psalm
3. Recite is aloud
4. Read it a second time meditatively
5. Read it a 3rd time stopping after each verse and praying the meaning from your heart to the Lord.

Tidbits on Prayer : Spiritual Summer Fun for the Family!

A Summer You'll Never Forget



Ten Ways to Build a Season of Great Memories for Your Whole Family

Ah, summer is coming. For most households, this lighthearted season features more free time than any other period of the year. It's an opportunity to break free, wind down, catch up, relax, savor, enjoy, stretch out – and grow. Merely hearing the word summer brings thoughts of respite, fun and rejuvenation to mind, just as our Creator had planned.

***Psalm 74:17 says: It was You who made all the boundaries of the earth;
You made both summer and winter.***

Here are 10 Ideas to get your family laughing, bonding and revitalizing their hearts and bodies together while building memories and developing spiritually this summer.



Love your neighbor

Give your kinds – and yourself – a chance to serve others. How? Perhaps you could ask to clean the yard of an elderly couple in your neighborhood. Or paint a physically handicapped neighbor's garage. Or provide a meal for a shut-in. Baby-sit a single mom's young kids for an evening. Or host a backyard Bible club. Ask God for guidance and thank Him for healthy bodies, nice weather and the opportunity to assist those in need.

Sidewalk art gallery

Find some child-sized chalk and let your children decorate the sidewalk. Invite other kids on the block to help you create a sidewalk art museum. Throw in some refreshments, take plenty of photos and make an afternoon of it. Share the photos with everyone afterwards. It'll be an event your kids will long remember.

The great outdoors

Enjoy God's creation as a family. Visit a forest preserve. Go hiking, bicycling, canoeing, rafting or swimming. Play games in a park. When you're finished, pray as a family to thank the Lord for all He has created.



The need to read

Summer is a great time to read together. Handle this however you'd like. You could read for a few minutes each night before the kids go to bed or for an hour once a week while lying under the stars. Pick out an age-appropriate book that everyone will enjoy, preferably classic fiction. (One suggestion: *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis)

Camping in “Backyard National Park”

Pitch a tent or pop up the camper and enjoy a night under the stars in your backyard or driveway. Your kids will get to sleep outside, and you'll have the comforts of home a few feet away. Tell campfire stories, play games, roast marshmallows, sing songs...and have a memory-building blast a no cost to your family.

Just say no to TV

Did you know that a TV is on for nearly eight hours a day in the average U.S. home? That's time your family is NOT talking, relating, relationship building or interacting – and it's lost forever. Why not take a one-week hiatus from TV viewing? Better yet, how about a month? Consider extending the ban to include the internet, stereo, I-Pod and video games. You'll notice the benefits immediately: more time together, better interaction, more energy, healthier eating habits, more exercise, more work accomplished and thriving relationships with God.



Take me out to the ballgame

Does your family enjoy sports? You don't have to spend a proverbial arm and a leg at a major professional sport event to watch a game together. Does a minor league baseball team play in your area? Soccer? Maybe a sibling, cousin or nephew is on a baseball, softball, soccer or swimming squad.

Enjoy nature

Go on a family nature walk. Bring along sketchbooks or a camera to capture signs of God's handiwork. Take paper sacks or storage bags with you. Tell family members to collect whatever strikes them as interesting. (Just warn the toddlers: no animals!) Have a “show and tell” session afterwards. Create a summertime collage bearing all the drawings and photos from your journey. Thank the Lord for new life and the beauty of His creation.

Get away from it all

some families' incomes don't leave room for vacations or even weekend getaways. But escaping your home to spend time in another state or area is a valuable experience for your kids and you. Family bonding grows exponentially more effective when you can disappear from the distractions of your house for at least a couple of days. Pray for God's wisdom and guidance and seek out inexpensive alternatives. Staying with relatives, camping and finding cheap lodging are just a few ideas.



Be creative

You can do countless activities together as a family right at home or in your neighborhood. Just sit down and brainstorm as a group. Within 10 minutes, you'll have at least 10 ideas. Spin a story, act out Bible stories, plant a garden, host a picnic – possibilities abound. The key is to get going. Summer only comes around once a year.

Praying for our Summer Camp Programs

Rock River - Camp ECCO - Twin Pines



June 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 RR High School Leadership Camp July 1-7	2 RR Sr. High Camp Grades 9-12 July 8-14
3 RR Intermediate Camp Grades 6-8 July 15-21	4 RR Jr Camp Grades 4-6 July 22-28	5 RR Primary Camp Grades 2-3 July 29-31	6 ECCO Sr. Camp Grades 8-12 July 8-14	7 ECCO Intermediate Camp Grades 5-7 July 15-21	8 ECCO Jr. Camp Grades 2-4 July 22-28	9 Twin Pines Adventure Camp Grades 2-5 July 1-8, 8-14, 15-21
10 Twin Pines Coed Hoops Camps Grades 5-8 July 22-28, Aug 12-18	11 Twin Pines Dads 'n' Lads Camp July 15-17	12 Twin Pines Equipped to GO! Camp Grades 7-12 Sharing your Faith Aug. 5-11	13 Twin Pines Family Frolic Camp June 24-30	14 Twin Pines Flyin' High Camp Grades 5-8 July 29-Aug. 4 Aug. 5-11	15 Twin Pines Getting' It Together Camp Grades 9-12 July 22-28	16 Twin Pines Kickin' Dust Camps Coed Soccer Camps Grades 7-9 June 24-30, Grades 3-6 July 1-7
17 Twin Pines Lotsa Love Camps Mentally, Developmentally, and/or Physically Challenged Campers July 8-14; Aug. 12-18	18 Twin Pines Martial Arts Camp Grades 2-5 July 8-14	19 Twin Pines Moms 'n' Gals Camp July 18-21	20 Twin Pines My First Camp July 18-21	21 Twin Pines On the Edge Camp For campers who do not want to rough it Grades 9-12 June 24-30 Grades 5-8 July 1-7	22 Twin Pines Rough 'n' Ready Camps Wilderness Camping program Grades 2-5 July 22-28 Grades 5-18 July 29-Aug 4	23 Twin Pines Seasoned Saints Camp Adults of all ages June 17-23
24 Pray for our new campers who have never been away from home before.	25 Pray for our staff workers as they work with our young people.	26 Pray for safety throughout the camping season.	27 Pray for great weather.	28 Pray for the salvation of many campers.	29 Pray for rededication of many lives to the Lord.	30 Pray for financial help for the children that cannot afford to come to camp.