

- I. Prayer and Intercession is as easy as B.R.E.A.T.H.I.N.G 😊 When we understand the power and the joy of prayer it will become easier for us to do it in a sustainable way. There are so many things that come to our minds as we approach the subject of prayer and some of those things are not positive. I hope to excite you as you embark upon making prayer a regular part of your life as leaders. I have developed an acronym that may help us to remember the significance and value of prayer.

II. B.R.E.A.T.H.I.N.G

B-Boldness: *Prayer requires faith and boldness. We are to come to God's throne with confidence that he enjoys us, wants us, there hears us and desires to move on our campus.*

Jesus made a way for us to come close, because Jesus desires nearness to His people. This is our confidence as we pray. It is extremely difficult to pray to a God who doesn't like or enjoy you. We have to settle in our hearts that God likes us and enjoys our presence just as much as we enjoy His.

- John 17:24
- Ps. 34:15-16
- Ps.65:4
- Hebrews 10:18-23
- Ephesians: 3:12

R-Responsive: *Prayer is a response that is born of revelation. When we gain understanding of who Christ is and what He desires, it will be natural for us to pray.*

The lack of prayer in my life is usually a byproduct of the lack of revelation in my life. When we look at Christ and His plans throughout scripture and then turn and look at the world around us, we will begin to be burdened at the immense gap between who He is, what He deserves and what He desires and the reality around us everyday. In fact, "Intercession" actually means to stand in the gap.

- Isaiah 6:1
- Job 42:5
- Ephesians 1:17-19

God desires to release Justice on the earth and He has told us of the primary way He will do that: Night and Day Prayer...this is what Jesus said would cause the Father to release justice on earth.

- Isaiah 59:16
- Luke 18:1-9

E-Experiential: *Prayer is an intimate and experiential conversation with a real man named Jesus. It is not Jesus who is boring and stoic; but rather our own hearts, which are often dull and disconnected from how fascinating and enjoyable He is.*

One of the glorious things about intercession is the invitation to feel what God feels about a person, a situation, a city or a nation. We do not have to approach intercession as a stoic

mechanical exercise, because that is not what it is. Prayer was never meant to be a task that we do out of compulsion and religiosity, prayer was meant to be our life and delight.

Humanity was made to partner with God, feel His emotions and respond. He is aware of all people at all times. He feels their pains, joys, sorrows, frustrations, fears and desires. He is connected to and knows every individual on the entire globe. He formed and fashioned every single one of us and He has the answer to every question and pondering. Part of the way we can be effective as Christian leaders is by taking time to ask Jesus what He thinks and feels about the world and the people around us. We can then respond in the practical arena with our time, our gifting and our resources however He asks us to. God wants to share His emotions with us.

- 1 Cor. 2:9-12
- Isaiah 22:4
- Luke 19:41
- Mark 8:2-6
- Acts 13:2

A-Authentic: *Prayer is the most powerful and effective tool we have been given as believers. It **really** moves God, it **really** moves angels and demons and it **really** accomplishes things on earth. Prayer is not pointless; prayer is powerful.*

We have made the term *spiritual* synonymous with the term *ethereal* but that is not the way the bible speaks of spiritual things. This error, subtle as it may be, has drastic consequences. Because of the subtle prevalence of Platonism in western thought and even western Christianity, most of the time when we think of heaven we do not view it as a tangible, physical, or substantial place. This false view of reality affects the way we think about spiritual things and consequentially alters the way we perceive prayer. If we don't think rightly about heaven, we won't think about it at all and if we don't think rightly about prayer, we will not do it often.

Heaven is a spiritual place, but spiritual does not mean *immaterial*, it means *invisible*. The spiritual realm is the realm of the unseen, not the realm of the unreal. When we pray, we are not speaking aimless words into the air, we are speaking words that ascend to a real man on a real throne in a real place called heaven. He hears those prayers and commissions real angels to do His bidding. We can not always see this process but it is happening and we must inform our intellect and our imagination with the biblical snapshots that we are given throughout the bible.

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| • Daniel 9:20-22 | • Acts 10:30 |
| • Daniel 10:12-13 | • Revelation 8:4-5 |

T-Two-Way Dialogue: *The most effective prayers come from the place of intimate friendship with Jesus.*

In John 15:15, Jesus tells the disciples that they are His friends because He tells them the deepest things in His heart. We have been invited into more than just petitioning Jesus for things, we have been invited into a dialogue: where He speaks and moves our hearts and we speak and move His (John 11:17-35). There are secret things and emotions Jesus shares with His closest friends (Matt. 26:36) and He has invited everyone who is hungry into this realm of prayer (Jeremiah 33:3).

- Genesis 18:7
- Psalm 25:14
- Amos 3:7
- John 16:7
- 1 Cor. 2:16

H-Humility: *Prayer is difficult for us because it requires the utmost humility.*

When we are asked to pray to a God whom we can't see with our natural eyes and who already knows what we are going to say our pride gets agitated. "What's the point?" we ask. We bleakly ask Him do things, which may or materialize before us or happen in our lifetime and then close with amen, all while feeling a little bit ashamed that we wonder if it actually worked.

Prayer is the absolute "weakest" thing we can do and that is why it is the most powerful. It is mind numbing to think that this is the way God chooses to run His Kingdom but that is only because we are often disconnected to the value and effectiveness of boring, bleak and weak prayers. God perfects strength in our weakness. There is no power in our accent or our volume, there is power in one Name only and He has commanded us to ask, seek and knock in this Name and it will be done.

Prayer is so simple that anyone can do it and that is precisely why most people do not see the value of it. We don't like to not be able to measure our impact, and we certainly do not like to be weak. This is why for some, prayer seems unproductive and boring, "why would we pray all day when we could actually do something?" Or "lets pray before we exert our efforts to really get something done." Yet as we begin to study God's word and how He has set up the way we relate to Him, we will begin to gain much perspective on prayer and see it as the *most important* way to get things done.

- Matt. 7:7-8
- 2 Cor. 12:9
- Is. 57: 15
- Is. 66:2
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I-Inheritance Forever: *Prayer is not a means to and end, prayer is the end. We will engage in dialogue with God forever. One billion years from now, we will be still be praying and worshipping. **'Missions exists because worship does not.'***

At the end of this age, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess to the identity and worth of Jesus. At that point the need for evangelism and missions will cease but prayer and worship will go on forever. Finally the Kingdom will be on earth as it is in Heaven where the worship never ceases (Rev. 5:8). This is because prayer is talking to an eternal God and worship is responding to Him. Because His beauty is unending so shall be the worship and because His personality is infinite so shall be the prayers of His saints.

Before His crucifixion Jesus asked the Father for a companion that would be with Him where He is and this implies that we would be in eternal partnership with Him. We know where Jesus is at present but the question is what is He doing? Intercession is what Jesus has chosen to do eternally as the Great High Priest and this is how He will rule the nations forever and we as His bride, have been made one with Him. God has set up His Kingdom this way because that is the way He operates within the Trinity. In the beginning the Holy Spirit was hovering over the face of the deep but He did

not create until the words: "Let there be!" The Father had the plan, the Spirit had the power and the Son spoke, the three Persons within the one Godhead acting in perfect unity. This was an act of intercession.

- Gen. 1:1-3
- John 17:24
- Rom. 8:26,27
- Heb. 7:25
- Zech. 6:13
- Ps. 110:4

N-Not An Option: *Prayer is our only option because it is the only thing that truly works!*

The Holy Spirit alone produces change, convicts and saves and He moves as we ask in the name of Jesus. Every major move of the Spirit, every major transition in scripture happens only in response to prayer. If we want to see God move on our campus and in our hearts and families, we must be a people of prayer and we must be convinced that we don't have another option. This is how God has chosen to run His kingdom because it keeps us connected to Him and in touch with our inability apart from Him.

- The Exodus: Exodus 2:23 / Acts 7:32
- The First Coming of Jesus: Luke 2:25-38
- The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit and Initiation of the Great Commission: Acts 2
- The Second Coming of Jesus: Isaiah 42:10-17; Luke 18:7, 8; 2 Peter 3:11 12; Revelation 6:9, 22:17

G-Gift: We have been given such a privileged position to stand before the God of the whole earth and ask Him to move in and around us. This is the most precious gift we could have been given. God did not save us to be His workforce; He has the angels for that. He saved us for relationship and partnership. Prayer is a glorious gift that we can take advantage of at all times because the One to whom we speak is not only residing in the Heavenly temple upon a throne right now, but He also resides within us. Let us come to commune with Him and begin pray the prayers that are on His heart for our friends, family and the world around us.