

Does Prayer Really Matter

by George Verwer

George Verwer emphasizes the critical importance of prayer in the life of a believer and the dangers of neglecting it.

Duration: 53:25

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 12:12, Acts 13:3, James 5:19, Jude 1:23

Topics: "Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the neglect of prayer in the Christian movement. He acknowledges the many distractions and activities that can easily take precedence over prayer. He criticizes the trend of reducing prayer time and prioritizing Bible study, highlighting the importance of both prayer and the word of God. The preacher encourages believers to saturate all their activities with prayer and emphasizes the need for a dedicated time of intercession.

Transcript

The one concern of the devil is to keep the Saints from prayer. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, prayerless religion. We could even add ourselves, prayerless conferences.

He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray. I would add to this that I believe there's no greater sign of the degenerate church than the constant laying aside of prayer. I've been to conferences, I've been with Christian leaders, I've been in huge churches, and I have constantly been amazed of how subtly Satan just takes prayer right out of the picture.

This is the thing that hit me at Bible school more than anything else. A total lack of interest, part of it a large percentage of all the students, in anything that had to do with prayer. Never forget how difficult it was to get people to come to a missionary prayer band, which usually consisted of about 20 minutes, half of which was generally requests.

And if you went to a prayer band, you were almost considered a bit of a martyr, especially if you went more than once a week. And I can remember such a large number of students complaining because we had some compulsory prayer meetings. That is probably gone by now.

It certainly goes very quickly in most places. And I don't want to take the time this morning to review the evangelical situation in regard to prayer, but young people, it is absolutely, unbelievably pitiful. We go to

church after church, we find out they have a midweek meeting.

It used to be a prayer meeting years ago. Now it's changed. It's either cut down to about 15 minutes of prayer and the rest Bible study, which is always easier because you can always get one man to take a Bible study.

There's always one egocentric brother who would be happy to teach the Bible every week, just for the sake of teaching it, much less any concern about seeing results. Because, you know, there's no virtue in just teaching the Bible. And the people who really know the Scriptures, many of them more than us, are unbelievers.

Some of them Jews who know the Old Testament line for line and line for line and who are complete unbelievers. And, of course, there are many modernists who study the Bible and textual criticism, higher criticism, know the Bible, but they're not following Christ. The Bible says the letter killeth.

The letter killeth. The Spirit bringeth life. And though we need to minister the Word, prayer, I believe, is first.

And Bounds shows in his little book how that if we have preaching without prayer, it will actually kill. He quotes Edward Payson who said, Prayer is the first thing. The second thing.

And the third thing. Necessary to a minister. Isn't that something? Pray then, my dear brother.

Pray, pray, pray. A man named Sir Thomas Buxton said, You know the value of prayer. It is precious beyond all price.

Never neglected. And yet so many places we find just that. Prayer is neglected.

And it so easily can happen to this movement. There's so many forces pushing their way in. So many things we need to learn.

So many things to do, aren't there? Even today, there's so much that we could do. There's so many films we could see. So many messages we can hear.

So many great men that we could invite in to speak to us. So many books to read. So many letters to answer.

That if the Holy Spirit left this movement, we on our own would certainly drop the praying aspect very quickly. We would probably, I know it, maintain just enough of the outward facade to be able to somewhat keep our reputation. We'd probably have some kind of afternoon prayer meeting that we'd somehow be able to twist into a social hour and enjoy wonderful times of something else together.

I've been to some amazing prayer meetings. Literally announced as prayer meetings, but when you got there, everything else but prayer seemed to be priority. So it is in many places.

Now it's all right to look off at the general situation, but the big question we need to ask this morning is about our own prayer life. Personally, if I were on OM last year and had not grown in some way in a prayer life, I would not come back on OM again. Unless somewhere a total revolution in thinking, discipline, and everything took place.

I don't know how you can exist on OM without praying, but I guess some managed to do it. Now the word prayer, we need to realize, is not an end in itself. It's not prayer as such, quote-unquote, we're talking about this morning.

We're simply talking about communion with God when we say prayer is important. Basically we're saying God is important. When we talk about spending time in prayer, we're talking about spending time with God.

How can you argue against the importance of that? To say prayer is not necessary is to say God is really not necessary. Now there's so many verses in the Bible on prayer. As you've probably heard me say, I made this study through the New Testament, I listed every single verse on prayer.

In this Bible, now I have a P next to every place that prayer is mentioned, and it's just incredible. And of course, if we go into the Old Testament, we find the same thing. And we also find quite a few references to prayer and fasting.

I don't know if we have any more on the literature table, but Dale Roton made a very extensive study of this thing of prayer and fasting, and he listed all the incidents of prayer and fasting in the Bible. And some of you have read that. We see that every man of God in the Scriptures was a man of prayer.

He knew the reality of prayer. We see the Lord Jesus Christ himself setting the example in prayer. Perhaps you know the reference in Luke.

Where we see an old night of prayer, verse 12 of chapter 6. And it came to pass in those days that he went out into a mountain to pray, and he continued all night in prayer to God. If the Savior wanted or needed a night of prayer, continued a night in prayer, how much more do we need to know this kind of reality in our own lives and in our own hearts? Notice in chapter 5, verse 16, Jesus is referred to here, and it says, And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and he prayed. It's obvious that that was no 15-minute prayer session.

And you will find as you go through the Gospels constant references to the prayer life of the Lord Jesus. We find him in chapter 9, verse 18. And it came to pass as he was alone praying.

His disciples were with him, and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am? Of course, we know Jesus Christ's wilderness experience of fasting and prayer. You may want to read that this morning of how the Lord Jesus went into the wilderness and was tempted. The other night we referred to the verses in Matthew about asking and receiving.

We have the same principle repeated in Luke, in chapter 11, verse 9 and 10. I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given. Seek, and ye shall find.

Knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth. He that seeketh, findeth.

And to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. What a promise! What a tremendous promise from God's Word that all of us should want to just grab hold of and believe God to make a reality in our own hearts and in our own lives. We, of course, have a terrific example in chapter 18 of the kind of praying that God wants.

We have the example of two men praying. The Pharisee, and I hope none of us will pray as this, stood and prayed, God, I thank thee that I am not as other men, extortioners, unjust adulterers, or even as this publican. The publican, the sinner, standing afar off would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

My conviction is that real prayer always begins at the sinner's place. I know that when I pray this morning, I'm going to have to start at the sinner's place. I want to tell you already this morning, I've just seen afresh my own absolute, total recklessness before God.

I've seen things in my heart, seen that I don't really want to be here at this conference, don't really want to do God's will, not really. I really love the will of George Burwer. I'd really prefer living at my own rate of speed.

I see that I don't really love people near, near as much as I should. I see so many things, and I know that I can't even begin to pray without repenting. My heart is cold.

I want to pray all day. The last thing I want to do is fast. I don't need much to eat, but I like to keep just a little down in there to keep things from speaking up.

And there's just nothing in me. We know that verse of Scripture, in the flesh dwelleth no good thing. And just praise God that we're indwelt by his Holy Spirit.

That's our only hope. And that's exactly what it says in Romans. Look at this tremendous verse on the subject of prayer, Romans chapter 8, verse 26.

Likewise, the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities. For we know not what we ought or what we should pray, for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. The Spirit of God is our only hope in prayer.

This is why waiting on God is so important. And listening to the voice of the Lord through the Spirit, through the Word. The Spirit quickens the Word.

Notice verse 27. He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. Now you and I can be very thankful that the Lord Jesus still believes in intercession, because he's interceding for us.

And I don't know all that involved, but it's very encouraging to me. And I'm convinced that we have to begin our prayer meeting at the sinner's place. Confession.

Pouring out our heart. Let the Holy Spirit just tear through our hearts. Confess things that perhaps you haven't even seen.

Areas of pride. Any man that can live a number of days without confessing pride, I really doubt how close he's walking to the Lord Jesus Christ. There's not many men of God that I have read about that weren't constantly in need of cleansing over small areas of subtle pride that come in.

Begin your prayer meeting at the sinner's place. Brokenness. Confession.

When we read verses, like the verse in Revelation, that were to be hot or cold but not lukewarm, seems to me that should just drive us immediately, almost even in examining to see if we're saved. If Billy Graham

has to state, as he recently did, that he went off to the mountains, this was just a few years back, to wait upon God and to once again have an assurance that he was saved, seems a few of us might, you know, be a little open-minded to the fact that somewhere something may have gone wrong. I'm convinced, as sure as I'm standing here, there are unsaved people in this room.

It's happened every year. And if you have that problem, something that needs to be searched out, maybe today is the day God wants to give you a greater assurance of your own salvation. There's no reason you shouldn't have that full assurance.

God's promises are clear. Holy Spirit praying through us, taking the sinner's place, entering into a closed walk with the Lord Jesus Christ. I don't know why we miss the priority of prayer when there's so many verses about it, really.

It's a very strange thing, especially when we have the Book of Acts and all the emphasis on prayer there. There's hardly time to go into it. But you know some of the great prayer meetings, some of the jail prayer meetings, when Paul and Silas were in prison, and when Peter was in prison, in Verse 12, Verse 5, Peter, therefore, was kept in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

And it's obvious these people were in a day of prayer. This is no 15-minute make-up prayer meeting. Verse 12, God released Peter, as you know, through a miracle, in answer to prayer, because it says right there in Verse 5, therefore he was in prison, but, one of the biggest buts in the Bible, but prayer was made.

Verse 12, when he had considered the thing, he came to the house and married the mother of John, whose third name was Mark, where many were together praying. Not preaching, not discussing, not socializing, praying. Why don't we have that today? And the big attack on your group, your team, when you leave here, will be prayer.

Your old George Brower won't be around. He'll be one thing. You have to listen to me once in a while here.

This is why I speak, because I never get to see you again. I leave you. Maybe it's too blunt, but I want to get my two bits in before I run.

I'm so burdened. And I speak in these evening meetings out of burden. And if I don't release this burden that God puts on my heart, I don't know what will happen to me.

But I'll be leaving. I won't be coming around and check up. You had your night of prayer this week? Having your daily devotions? And all these other things? We've had people even get to the stage where they wonder why we have to have daily prayer together.

What kind of a bondage is that? Absolutely ridiculous. Daily prayer together. If some of us were really in tune with God, it would not be a matter of meeting once a day for group devotion.

We'd be meeting several times a day. I praised God when I got to Zollington and discovered they had some other prayer going on beside their daily devotions. It's a great blessing.

After breakfast, just spontaneously, some were gathering together. And oh, what a blessing that was. And I just, I just see Satan's assault on the team will be the undermining of prayer life.

And of course, he'll individually try to keep you out of the pyramid. And then he has a whole series of steps once he gets that. We don't have the time to go through all these verses in the book of Acts.

But we notice in chapter 13, a very important verse. Verse 3. Now, this was a big decision. Paul and Barnabas were called by the Spirit of God to move out from Antioch.

Verse 2 first, we'll read that. They ministered to the Lord. Isn't that something? Notice.

A very key little word. They ministered to the Lord. And I've seen in my life that much of my ministry has been to the house, not to the Lord.

Even in preaching and in teaching, the ministry can be to the house, to God's people. And we sense people are in front of us and people are listening. And what we say is going to make a difference in their lives.

But it's something else quite distinct when we come to a place in our ministry where we minister to the Lord. And as we minister, we're conscious more of the Lord than of the people. That's very hard.

I know very little about it. Then we read here, And they ministered to the Lord and fasted. And the Holy Ghost said, Imagine.

The Holy Ghost said, Now, in some ways, we are in this kind of a situation. Some are. I believe, actually, O.M. fits more into that which comes before this kind of situation.

Training and all the rest. The kind of situation that Timothy would have found when he first met Paul. But this word is very, very clear.

And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. Things like that should drive every doubt out of our mind concerning the necessity for prayer and fasting. Now, we find the same thing when elders were appointed in the church or in every church.

Verse 23 of chapter 14. When they had ordained them elders in every church and had prayed, notice, with fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom they believed. No wonder later on it says he had an open door of faith unto the Gentiles.

There are a lot of other open doors. And I believe it was because of prayer. And right on through the book of Acts, we find them praying there in Acts 16, 25.

At midnight, Paul and Silas prayed, sang praises. What a terrible thing, not getting their proper sleep. These men, they certainly didn't know how to take care of their bodies.

I know some on O.M. that want nothing to do with night of prayer. They say, well, if we pray in the night, we can't operate properly in the morning. I want to tell you, if we prayed more in the night, we'd have more fire in the morning.

We'd have to do less work. And too many times we try to make up with physical work and organization that which we're missing in prayer. And I have miraculously experienced many times in praying unto the night that God gives renewed strength in the morning.

Is he not the author of strength? And though I don't believe that every new recruit on O.M. and people that are just learning how to pray should engage in all kinds of things that are beyond them and presume they're going to get special strength, but certainly some of you have been around a few years and it's about time you got out of spiritual kindergarten in the area of prayer and began to know the reality of what

it's all about. And I'm speaking to myself. Anyway, in the middle of the night, we find Paul and Silas praying.

You say, well, look at the situation they're in. If I got in a situation like that, I'd pray too. Well, I believe in some ways our situation is just as bad.

Maybe not for us, but we know other brethren, other brethren who are in prison, don't we? Watchman, he's in prison. And hundreds and thousands of others like him in Cuba, in the communist countries, in China, they're in prison. And the other situation, we find the whole church praying because Peter's in prison.

Now we find Paul praying because he's in prison. Though it doesn't tell us, certainly there must have been other people praying as well. And of course, again, the miraculous took place.

And God released him. And souls were saved. The jailer and his whole house.

And it's recorded for us to learn something from. Going on from the book of Acts, we go into the epistles and we find so many verses. One that hits me immediately is the one in Timothy in chapter 2, in 1 Timothy chapter 2. Going on from the book of Acts, we go into the epistles and we find so many verses.

One that hits me immediately is the one in Timothy in chapter 2, in 1 Timothy chapter 2. I exhort therefore that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, giving of thanks be made for all men. People say, well, why do we need so much time for prayer? Well, I want to see you fulfill that verse without taking a little time. Because when I read that I'm to start praying and interceding and giving thanks for all men, for kings, how long would it take you to pray for all the kings and leaders of the entire world? You're hardly going to do that in a 15-minute session.

Most of us don't even know the leaders of the world. I'd love to give an exam and see how many know the leaders even of the countries they're working in. There is incredible ignorance in O.M. in some of these areas.

We've met people in India who didn't even know who Indira Gandhi was, and some of the other famous people. And I've been guilty of this at times as well. There's a number of O.M. countries that I couldn't tell you who the leader is.

So I have to do a little studying myself if I'm going to get literal about this verse. For kings, all that are in authority, we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty. So here's a first of all command.

First of all, let prayer remain. Prayer isn't just asking. It involves confession.

We've already talked about it. It involves giving of thanks. Oh, how much we have to thank God for.

If you find it hard going today, why don't you take out your notebook and begin to list things you can thank God for. Fill up a page. If you can't fill up a page, things to thank God for, you really are spiritually short-sighted.

On and on we go through the epistles. We constantly find these exhortations. Right there in chapter 4 of Timothy, verse 5, speaks about giving thanks.

Goes on to say, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. Our activities, everything we do, should be saturated and sanctified by prayer. Now, I'm not going to read any more verses.

Oh, I hope that somehow the Holy Spirit of God will interpret to you the need for prayer. Immediately someone says, well, prayer is hard for me. To be very honest, I find it extremely difficult to even attend these afternoon prayer meetings.

My mind wanders. I don't know what to pray about. I don't feel as if God has answered.

Many times I don't even sense his presence. And a long, long list of things along this line. Now, you and I have been brainwashed by the world.

We have been brainwashed by an activist Western culture. And the philosophy of prayer is completely diametrically opposed to the philosophy of Western activism. Because you're used to being active in one way or the other, it, of course, will be difficult to sit down and to simply enjoy and know the presence of God.

But simply because something is hard and difficult and opposite to your general way of living and nature should never cause us to give up. Young people, the very fact that you find it hard should be the greatest challenge for you to see victory. I find prayer hard.

Today, I think that I would find it easier in many ways to go down into the streets of London and give out tracts, especially if I could have a snack in the middle of the day. But simply because you find prayer difficult does not mean prayer is not for you. People actually come to the place where they say, well, the ministry of prayer really isn't my ministry.

When you say that, what you're really saying, whether you believe it or not, is that the ministry of living the Christian life really isn't my ministry. Because the Christian life is totally impossible without prayer. Now, it's true God is very merciful.

And I'm sure there are some people who get through the Christian life with a minimum amount of prayer. And God is very sovereign. I'm not saying you can never meet a mature Christian who doesn't spend nights in prayer or afternoons in prayer.

But if that person, by the mercy of God, has come to maturity without that, what could he do with it? And you can see how Satan would attack a mature believer who knows how to pray and keep him off his knees because he's dangerous when he gets in that position. So Satan's attack upon us to keep us from the prayer line doesn't end when we become mature in Christ. It becomes even more fervent.

And Satan will try to hit even harder the man of God to get him to go backwards in this area. When we think of the command of Jesus that's repeated in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, if any man come after me, what? Let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. And that's often just what it takes to enter into prayer.

You've got to deny yourself. You've got to deny things you like. You've got to deny the way you would like to spend your time.

Take up your cross, follow him in prayer, in intercession. And, of course, it indicates that it's not going to be easy. Some of us today will find it very difficult.

Our minds will wander. We'll feel empty. We'll feel barren.

We'll think, well, I've prayed this prayer already all year and I've had no answer. Why pray it again today? And we fail to realize just how much perseverance is an intricate part of prayer. We have that tremendous, challenging story of a man knocking in the night, asking for loaves.

He says, go away, I'm in bed, don't bother me. Bang, bang, bang, he knocks again. Finally, the man gets up and gives him bread.

And then we're told to do likewise. What a challenge. And I admit, some of the things that I've got from the Lord, it's been sheer, continual banging.

Not that he isn't ready to hear very quickly, but he loves to put us to the test. He loves to see if what we're praying for is a passing fancy or a deep burden of soul born of the Spirit. And I believe this ship is a deep burden of the soul.

But perhaps the Lord is holding it back to see how many of us really are ready to persevere and pray this ship into being. It should be one of our big targets today in prayer. If there's anything that will bring that ship in, it's a day of prayer.

Many days of prayer. We've had them. We've had them for years.

Many people would have given up by now. In fact, if it wasn't perhaps for a few stubborn individuals who do really believe the God of the impossible, O.M. would have given up on the ship project many years ago. We believe as we persevere, as we press continually, showing God it's not a passing fancy, paying the price as we move along, various obstacles are put in the way, we have to pray through them.

Some things will never be answered until you pray obstacles out of the way that are set between us and that thing. I've been praying for a large gift for work in India for a long time. The Lord has continued to give tokens of His grace.

He's kept the work going in a miraculous way. But I've yet to see the gift that I'm praying for, which is anywhere from \$15,000 or not. Anything beneath that I don't think would be in the category that I'm praying for.

And I've got a lot of reasons to be discouraged about that, but I just refuse. I just know it's coming. I've been telling people about it for months.

Though it's impossible, we don't know where, how, what, we know it's going to come. Perseverance. I believe.

That's it. Yesterday a young man who was lost drove by this factory. I've been praying for this fellow for four... Well, I've been praying for him since 1962.

He was the one who first put my meetings in England. He almost became the director of this work in England. But his wife didn't like the work too much and they chose to go on another work and that folded up and ever since then they've just been doing all kinds of things.

They're back here now. It's been a difficult road. I haven't seen him for four years.

I've heard from different people that they're probably really not too keen to see me and this and that. But I've continued to pray for this person. Continued to believe that something was going to happen.

Yesterday he was driving ten miles from here and he got lost. Missed the turn. So he tried another direction and he missed the turn again.

So he didn't know what way to do it. He said, well, I'll go through Sidcup or go through Orpington headed south. And it just came into his mind, oh, well, I might as well drive through Orpington.

And he drove down this road and as he was driving he looked to the left and he saw OM. Couldn't believe it. It must be a builder's conference.

It registered in his mind September. He knows all too well what OM does in September. He drove down the road and he came back.

And God united my heart with his last night in a very deep and real way. He'll be back with his wife and family to visit us. Five years, I haven't even seen him.

I want to tell you persevering prayer is one of the most important things in spiritual warfare. When God puts a man on your heart don't give up. Don't give up.

Keep praying. Keep believing. Last week I wrote in the middle of all this more than 30 letters to people who I haven't seen in many years.

Just had this great burden upon my heart. I'm not sure when it was. I think it must have been Sunday afternoon.

On top. Just write to people who we just haven't heard from and some people who we know are backslidden and away from God. And just encourage them.

And pray. Oh may God give us this burden today. May we just sit before God and say Lord, bring to my mind people that I've forgotten to pray for.

Write them down on paper. Determine to drop them a line sometime later on. Snatch them from the pit.

Notice that verse. I think it's in Jude. Great challenge along this line.

Verse 23, another is saved with fear pulling him out of the fire hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. And this links in my mind to that other verse where it says he that saves a man from the error of his ways. What is it? Book of James.

I think it's the last chapter, isn't it? James, the last chapter. Chapter 5, verse 19. This is it.

Brethren, if any of you do error from the truth and one converted, let him know that he which converted the sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins. Through prayer we can have that ministry. Persevering prayer.

So as we come to prayer today, let us not be concerned or overly concerned that we don't feel like praying. Or that our emotions aren't tingling with some kind of spiritual supersuddence. Let's be there ourselves.

Let's take up the cross and let's follow Christ in his life of prayer into the wilderness. Believing, trusting, praying. What are some things you can do? Most of us have to admit that we aren't exactly deep in the Lord just to pray all day.

Probably will not be possible in a sense of just waiting before God all day. So vary your time with God. Jonathan gave some good practical instructions the other night.

He was just talking to a few of us. Spend some time reading the Psalms. Just praising the Lord.

Have your own worship service. Sing a hymn in your heart. Take your little songs of victory with you.

And sing a hymn or two. Praise the Lord. Read some Psalms.

And just spend time in praise and worship and confession as we've already mentioned. Then you may want to take something boiling hot like gems from Tozen. Let that stir your soul.

Read it until you just are absolutely challenged. And then pray it, pray it off. And go back and read some more.

Take a copy of Power Through Prayer. There's some on the table there. You can have them free while they last.

If you really want to use them. If you already have some, book, don't take because there's not that many. Though these are actually for free distribution.

And read a few of these quotes. Or some other book on prayer. Maybe go to the library and see if there's something on prayer.

And after you do that, then spend some time in prayer on what the Lord has spoken to you about. Then maybe take the New Testament and read some passages and pray for a while. Then memorize some verses.

Why don't we all decide we're going to memorize at least two verses on prayer. That will take some time. The Word of God, as you memorize it, will build up faith in your heart and will encourage you.

Faith comes by hearing, hearing by the Word of God. Memorize some of these promises on the subject of prayer. And then after that, spend some time in intercession.

Praying for various people. Take some of the prayer challenge material off the table there. Take your pictures of those Indian brothers.

Take your map of the world. How you could have gone this far in O.M. and still not have some kind of map of the world? If you don't, put a requisition in and get one. You all need a map of the world.

You can come in here. Wouldn't bother me if ten people sat around here weeping over that map, to the least. Spend some time.

Why don't you pray for all those countries on that state of the world chart. There's some of those around somewhere. Pray about this terrible situation.

Not alone worth a day of prayer, to me. Now, in intercession, you must put yourself in the place of those people. That's why fasting is important.

Pray for your enemy. It's easy to pray for your fellow countrymen. But the Word of God, the revolutionary book that you and I believe, teaches us to pray for your enemy.

It's nothing for your beloved brethren from the Arab world to pray for your refugees from Jordan. But it's quite another thing to, in travail and in love and brokenness before God, pray for Jews in Israel. It's one thing for us Americans to pray for fellow countrymen suffering in Vietnam.

It's another thing to pray for North Vietnamese, for blessings in Hanoi, and for Chinese communists. That's real Christianity. So put your enemies on the list and pray fervently.

Not calling down curses upon them, but asking God to bless, to save some of them through all the impossibility of the situation. Let's pray for these things we've been challenged about in Africa. It's true intercession is hard.

It's difficult for us in this easy environment. Looks like we have another nice day to get into the burden of 500 slaughtered people in Amnabar. By faith, God can enable you that when you're fasting, you can do it a little bit easier than when you're feasting.

Oh, may we really have time of intercession. And if you carry out those things, you'll discover before you know it, the morning is gone. You've been in the Word, you've been in some challenging books, you've memorized a verse or two, you've had a worship service, a Thanksgiving service, and in time of intercession, and pretty soon, it'll be two o'clock and we'll be back here again.

Now, this morning, we're going to spend half our time together. But this afternoon, most of the time, you'll be completely free. I want you to go to prayer now as a group.

And through this time of praying as a group, you will hear someone else pray for something. Jot it down. It doesn't hurt to... You're not breaking some rule in the middle of someone's prayer to just open your eyes and jot something down.

Well to those who run around peeping at the prayer meetings anyway. It's interesting that some would like to just run around and watch everybody. Now, I'm not against praying with your eyes open because I don't find many verses about keeping them shut.

But why don't you look at the sky and the ceiling of the mass? And I just... It's very hard to me to believe a person is really involved in prayer when he's sort of spying around to see who's speaking, especially when it's a girl who's praying and suddenly several boys pop up and... There's some men that evaluate the girl they're going to marry by how she prays. They hear a girl praying in a terrific prayer and they desperately got to find out who it is. Well, I'm not sure really that that can be included on any biblical basis in a prayer meeting.

Of course, there's many ways to do it. Somebody walks into the room and all of a sudden some brethren get a deep travail of soul as if they have to put their hands over their head. And I've done it.

Then all of a sudden a little crack appears. All these things tend to draw us away from what we're aiming at, the Lord. And many times in a prayer meeting we will have to constantly put our minds back to the

Lord.

Now, I have a quotation on this that I really must read because it is a great help. Actually, I don't need to read it. I'll just paraphrase it because it's very long.

But this man of God, Nius Gambai, stated that even if all we've done in prayer is constantly had to bring our mind back to the Lord, he goes on to say it's worth it. If in a prayer meeting all you've done for one hour is constantly battled and brought your mind back to the Lord, the very fact that you've brought your mind back to him 15 times is worth it. And it will do something for your own soul.

So don't get overly upset if your mind wanders. Keep bringing it back. If it wanders, keep bringing it back.

The less it wanders, the better. One thing I do is in a definite, disciplined way determine I'm going to follow that person as he prays and I'm going to let my heart agree with him. Now this takes discipline.

You have to fix yourself on the one who's leading in prayer. And I have to say amen in my heart at least. And every couple of sentences I analyze it to see if I can say amen and then I say amen myself.

It means so be it. That's what it means. Make it true Lord.

Bring it to pass. And you will find this will help you to concentrate when someone else is leading in prayer. When you go out praying privately, pray out loud.

Or pray at least at a whisper. It's much harder for your mind to wander when your lips are running along praying. Those of you who just try to pray silently completely will probably end up asleep.

Because that's so easy to happen. Especially if you haven't had much sleep. But walking around praying out loud it is rather difficult to fall asleep.

Mind you I've done it. But learn to pray out loud. Another thing you can do that will help help a lot is to change your position.

Kneel for some time. Stand for a time. Lay prostrate on your stomach for some time if you're alone.

It's strange when you're not. I wouldn't stay there long. That's a very ideal sleeping position.

But change your position. And this afternoon you can go into the woods and have what we call a prayer walk. As you're walking along pray.

And God will bless you as you do that. Well our time has passed. We want to go to prayer and so much more could be said.

So let us remember God is going to meet us today. Mary McChane said this. Study universal holiness of life.

Your whole usefulness depends on this. For your sermons last but an hour or two. Your life preaches all week.

If Satan can only make a covetous minister a lover of praise of pleasure or a good eating he has ruined his ministry. Give yourself to prayer. Get your text your thoughts your words from God.

Luther spent the best three hours of his day in prayer. William Penn or George Fox said this. But above all he excelled in prayer speaking of George Fox.

The inwardness and weight of his spirit the reverence and solemnity of his address and behavior and the fewness and the fullness of his words have often struck even strangers with admiration as they used to reach others with consolation. The most awful living reverent frame I have ever felt or beheld I must say was his prayer. And truly it was a testimony.

He knew and lived nearer to the Lord than any other man for they that know him most will see most reason to approach him with reverence and with fear. Let's pray. Father we can read many more quotes we can look at many more Bible verses but the hour has come to pray.

Lead us Lord as we pray together. Then as we divide up. We may note power in prayer this morning through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/21/SID21131.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/george-verwer/does-prayer-really-matter/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net