

January 2, 2024 Allegheny West Letter to Prayer Point People



God has been working on my persistence in prayer. I love it when the Lord seems to come at me from all angles when He is carving something important into my heart. I'd like to share a few of those lessons He is teaching me about persistent prayer for this New Year of 2024.

Never Get Weary of Calling on Christ!

2 Chronicles 14:11 "Asa cried out to the Lord his God and said, "Lord, it is nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power; help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on You and in Your Name we go."

In *The Power of Praying for Your Adult Children*, Stormie Omartian encourages us to intercede for those we love. "An intercessor prays for someone and makes it possible for that person to have a greater ability to respond to God....No one else will ever intercede for your adult children with the fervency and consistency that you will." We can transition that to other deep-hearted loves in our life. No one else will ever intercede for our (church family, colleagues at work, spouse, best friends) like we can intercede). Our love holds us to prayer like glue!

Pray for the Long Term in Perseverance

Our Sunday School Class is studying *The Essential Guide to Prayer*, by Dutch Sheets. Dutch reminds us of all the fathers of our faith who waited, waited, waited for answers to prayer. Elijah prayed seven times before the rain appeared, Abraham waited for 25 years before Sara gave birth to promised Isaac, Joseph spent years in slavery and prison, before his release and rise to influence, Moses and the Israelites took a 40 year detour before coming to the edge of the Promised land, Job suffered with unspeakable torment, with the unhelpful comfort of nagging friends for days before release and restoration, David waited for years after the anointing by Samuel, amid attempts on his life by Saul before he became king, Daniel prayed for 21 days before the spiritual warfare abated for his answer.

Why the wait? Sheets suggests four reasons:

1) God's perfect moment comes "in the fulness of time." In the mean time, "The testing of your faith produces endurance." James 1:3

2) God is working in the one who prays. God is working in us as we wait, building character, teaching truth that can be accomplished in no other way. "Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary." Galatians 6:9

3) God is moving in others in the wait. George Mueller prayed for a friend for 63 years, only for that gentleman to accept the Lord at the foot of Mueller's grave. God's wooing of the human heart can be a long extending of love. The prophet Hosea's wife cheated on him repeatedly, but as a living example of God's long-suffering love, Hosea just as repeatedly forgives and takes her back.

But...in the meantime God (and we) love and pray while we wait, because,

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39 NIV)

4) Our intercession is releasing the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome the powers of darkness. We are in spiritual warfare when we pray. When the angel came to Daniel after 23 days of intense prayer, the angel gave Daniel the "behind the scenes story." "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian Kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me..." Daniel 10: 12-13

The angel addresses Daniel in different ways in various translations, "You who are highly esteemed" (NIV) "You who are highly valued." (NET) The New Living Translation and the Berean Standard translation, both use the word "precious" when describing how God feels about Daniel. "Daniel, you are very precious to God." (NLT). I want God to find me precious, on my knees in persistent prayer.

In other words, we need to remember the acronym coined by Jurgen Metthesius in his book by the same title, **PUSH: Pray Until Something Happens**, Divine Principles for Praying with Confidence, Discerning God's Will, and Blessing Others.

Sharpen Each Other in the Waiting

Proverbs 27:17 "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another."

Maxie Dunham, in **Saints Alive** reminds us "One of our most important spiritual disciplines is what John Wesley designated 'Christian Conferencing.'" This is a discipline Wesley encouraged to build each other up spiritually, share needs, and minister to each other.

Dietric, Bonhoeffer, a martyr for the Christian faith during the Nazi occupation, shared, "Where Christians live together the time must inevitably come when in some crisis one person will have to declare God's Word and will to another."

Emmaus walks encourage accountability. I went on an Emmaus walk in the 90's and my accountability group is still going strong! They are the ones I call when I need prayer and need to know someone is REALLY praying!

Look Forward, Anticipate God's Hand to Move!

Dennis Kinlaw (Dec 11 *This Day with the Master*) “We need to think in terms of God being present with His activity, and we should expect Him to work in our lives. Anticipate God’s action.” My mistake in too much of my life has been to simply look back and give God thanks for what I can see He has done instead of living in anticipation of what He is going to do.” “Unfortunately, the Western church is spiritually bankrupt and largely apostate, so all we see is the death around us. But God is at work in the world, and the opportunities are everywhere. The devil wants us to be blind, so we won’t take part in the greatest move of the Gospel ever.”

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Serving Him with you,

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