

Ignited: Building your own Prayer Strategy

I love prayer. Prayer that is focused. Prayer that is effective. Prayer that gets results. I would hate to pray not knowing whether what I am doing is achieving anything or not. I hate doing things that are purposeless, meaningless and unfruitful. A picture that I sometimes have when it comes to charismatic Christians in prayer (and I am one of those), is a crowd of believers caught up in the moment, shooting multiple prayers haphazardly into the sky with machine-gun type prayers, hoping that somewhere, sometime, somehow, a target or two will be hit because of the number of prayers being released. I think sometimes we are like that in our personal times of prayer. As long as we have prayed for our certain amount of predetermined time, we feel satisfied. We can tick that box. "Prayer done". And get on with the rest of our list of things.

But if I really think about it, this idea does not inspire me to pray. It leads me to believe we are more interested in appeasing our own religious consciences, ticking boxes and feeling good about our spiritual selves than actually getting results. Rather, I prefer the image of a sniper, waiting, watching and listening, hearing how to pray and what the target is, and then hitting the target bullseye! I prefer the idea of drawing up a strategic prayer schedule... for me a week is doable. For you, maybe it would be different. Dividing all my areas of responsibility or burdens up over the 7 days of the week. Ensuring I have the mind of Christ, or an idea of how He wants me to pray. And then use that. The prayer is strategic. It is relentless in terms of praying week in and week out. All the areas I need to pray for are prayed for each week. And I pray in accordance with the Word of God in the way I believe the Holy Spirit is leading me each time.

I realise in that in an army, both types of warfare are utilised. Snipers and machine gun toting soldiers. I imagine in church, it is not only the sniper-type prayer that gets results, but also the relentless type of prayer great in volume that opens doors. Jesus taught us to keep seeking, asking and knocking (Matthew 7:7-9).

However, my preference in prayer is that I have an idea of how and what to pray (the mind, heart, will of God) before opening my mouth and releasing multiple prayers into the atmosphere. I have been around Christians long enough to realise when someone is praying unprocessed or unthought through prayers. Or when someone is praying but their prayers are more a way to find God in a situation they don't understand, than praying corporately in faith. It's important to know what we are doing and how we are praying and why, when we come to God. So we don't have a situation like:

"Lord we lift up Suzie to you. And Lord we don't know if it is your will for her to be suffering like this, but Lord we ask you to heal her from her cancer. Lord we just know you hear our prayers. Lord may you show us where you are in this and why? Lord, Why? And Lord she is suffering. And Lord would you heal her. And Lord would you save her from this. And Lord we know you are sovereign and in control.... SO you must be using this for her good. Lord even if you don't heal her...

So confused. Anxious maybe? Definitely prayers of faith.

James teaches us that when our prayers are not answered it is because we ask amiss. Or we don't ask aright.

Jam 4:3 NKJV

"You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures."

Jam 5:14-15 NKJV

*"Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the **prayer of faith** will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven."*

Effective prayer is not just about making a noise. It's not just about hearing our voices petitioning anything. Effective prayer is strategic, specific, thought through, based on the Word of God and faith-filled. When we add agreement to that, these prayers become very powerful.

Mat 18:19 NKJV

"Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven."

Unfortunately, when it comes to prayer, many of us believe we do not have the time to study and find out what God's will or Word is for various situations. We think we can't hear Him or He isn't speaking. I would rather not start shooting out prayer requests regarding a situation if I don't know how He would have me pray, or don't have a biblical worldview around that area to base my prayers upon. Wouldn't it be time better used to wait on Him, or study and find out what His will is, and then ask Him to do that? Of course when we ask in line with His will, He will definitely answer that prayer. Jesus instructs us:

Joh 15:7 NKJV

"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you."

When it comes to society and praying for the various domains in society, I wonder how many of us as Christians have studied to find out what God's pattern and blueprint is for the various domains. Maybe we believe that surface level prayers will suffice. Maybe we believe that if God wants to do anything, He will do it anyway.

Or, we assume God would want what we want, that He sees things as we do, and we immediately launch into prayer for various areas, in accordance with our own understanding, blueprints and desires. God says,

Isa 55:8-9 NKJV

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts."

If my prayers remain the same year in and year out and I don't grow or go deeper in the Word in the subjects of my passion with my prayers, then I am stagnating. Each one of us is called to prayer, maybe not the same domains, areas, topics or depths, but all of us should be committed to developing a prayer strategy for ourselves and growing in prayer in these areas.

The Dominion Mandate

Gen 1:27-28

So, God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

This is what is commonly known as the dominion mandate, or the cultural mandate. God gave us authority over the earth. This is why we need to pray and ask Him to intervene and help us.

"And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress (to work, to serve, to tend) it and to keep it (to hedge about, to guard, to protect, to watch as a watchman)."

Dress – 'âbad (aw-bad): to work (in any sense); by implication to serve,

Keep - shâmar (shaw-mar'): A primitive root; properly to hedge about (as with thorns), that is, guard; generally to protect, attend to, etc.: - beware, be circumspect, take heed, keep, mark, look narrowly, observe, preserve, regard, reserve, save, watch (-man).

There have been many people that have taught on the different domains or mountains, or spheres of influence. Some of the domains include:

1. Family
2. Education
3. Church
4. Government
5. Business & Economics (including agriculture)
6. Health, Science and Technology
7. Media & Communication
8. Arts, Entertainment and Sports

Each of us have been assigned a garden/gardens to have responsibility in or over. We may not have heard a divine call, or had angels give us the call, heard a voice, etc., but we have to look at where we find ourselves in life and assume that God has us there.

When we pray, it is important that we pray the mind of God, the Word of God, His will. It is important that we have His view, His blueprint for whatever we are praying. This is of course for effective prayer that gets results. There is no point praying our own mind and will if it is not aligned to the mind and will of God. So, it is important that we seek out what His will is for the areas we are praying for.

As we reflect on the list above, maybe we find that there are 2 or 3 of those domains in particular that we tend to pray for, or we have a heart for. I have done a series on praying for the different domains. It's a series of 5 messages, the pdfs and audios and videos are available, please make use of that. I cover an outline of a biblical view of the domain and the messages will help start you off in the right direction in terms of praying for these domains. The series was entitled Praying with Purpose. It is on our website: <http://gochurch.co.za/sermon-series/prayer/>

Now, maybe those broad domains don't really burden you. Maybe you can't relate to that. Well, I have good news for you. Wherever you find yourself in life, that is what

God wants you to pray for. We need to decide to be faithful with what is currently in our hands, trusting that as we pray, He will have His way. We can assume that one of the reasons we are where we are is to tend (serve or work) and keep (watch... pray).

What is your garden? What are the areas you should be praying into?

A Call to Prayer for Every Believer

Jer 29:1-14

"This is the text of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders among the exiles and to the priests, the prophets and all the other people Nebuchadnezzar had carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. (This was after King Jehoiachin and the queen mother, the court officials and the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the skilled workers and the artisans had gone into exile from Jerusalem.) He entrusted the letter to Elasah son of Shaphan and to Gemariah son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to King Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon. It said: This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." Yes, this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them," declares the LORD. This is what the LORD says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile."

In effect, where you are, your geographical location, province, region and nation, where you live, the municipality and leaders, your area of work or calling, the leaders and your coworkers, where you live, your household, family, those who work for you and with you, the schools you kids go to, the educators, and workers, pray for the

peace and prosperity of these. And so forth. In their prosperity and peace, you will have prosperity and peace.

An easy way of identifying your spheres to pray over would be to ask yourself, “what areas do I have natural responsibility over?”. You will be required to give an account to God for your faithfulness in these areas. If you have natural responsibility over them, I am sure you want them to prosper and succeed and be safe. So, I am sure you would like God’s assistance, wisdom, guidance, provision and protection.

Identifying your burdens:

A. Long term Burdens:

1. Natural responsibilities

- you’re a parent: your children
- you’re a spouse: your marriage and home
- you’re a believer: the church (body of Christ)
- you’re a bible-believing Christian: your church leaders
- You live in a nation: the nation and its leaders
- You live in a suburb in a city: the suburb, its municipality; the city; its leaders
- You share a household: your household
- Salvation of family members

2. Assigned responsibilities

(divinely given, may be linked to a call)

- A domain or an aspect of a domain, for example
 - the institution of marriage:
 - education system and its curriculae:
 - abortion
 - euthanasia
 - for William Wilberforce it would have been the abolition of slavery
 - media
 - legislature, watching over the gates of this domain

- A particular group of people
 - abandoned babies
 - orphans
 - widows
 - underprivileged or needy
 - leaders
 - foreigners
 - believers
 - church leaders
 - children
 - women
 - single women

A burden is often linked to a call.

B. Current burdens:

- you're a church leader: the section you lead
- you're a pastor: your church

Watch over the souls in your congregation:

Heb 13:17 NKJV

"Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you."

- you're an entrepreneur: the sector you service
- you're a leader: those you lead
- you work for an organization or corporate: your employer
- you work for an individual: your employer

If you take some time, just reflect and make a list of the areas and scopes of your prayer burdens.

If I look at scripture, when Paul writes, He writes to a specific audience and has a specific message.

1 Co 1:2 NLT

"I am writing to God's church in Corinth, to you who have been called by God to be His own holy people. He made you holy by means of Christ Jesus, just as He did for all people everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours."

He continues with a specific message for them. We see this is in his other letters too.

In the same way when we pray, we must know the content of what we are praying and for whom we are praying. Specificity. It assists us to have faith for that.

Jesus modelled this:

Joh 17:9 NLT

"My prayer is not for the world, but for those You have given Me, because they belong to You."

He prayed for His disciples for various things, unity, joy, protection and so forth, and then went on to pray:

Joh 17:20-21 NLT

"I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in Me through their message. I pray that they will all be one, just as You and I are one—as You are in Me, Father, and I am in You. And may they be in Us so that the world will believe You sent Me."

He was clear who He was praying for and what He was praying. He wasn't confused. It wasn't a multiple-choice exam for God in heaven 😊.

For example, say I am praying for marriages. I will be specific in terms of whether it is my marriage, the marriages in our church, the marriages in the church in SA, the marriages of church leaders, or marriage as an institution. Being specific helps me to apply faith in that area. If I don't have the faith for a really big request, I make it a bit smaller so I can have faith for it.

How should you pray?

Kingdom of God in every area of life.

Mat 6:9-10 NKJV

"In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

- What is His Kingdom? The rule and reign of the Lord. His will. His way.
- He does want His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. Jesus said so. He doesn't just want us to hide as Christians and wait till heaven to enjoy the benefits of His Kingdom. He wants us to pray for the here and now, for the gardens, areas, domains we are planted in... for His Kingdom to come and His will to be done.

What does the Bible say about the domain you want to pray into? What is God's will for that domain? What is a biblical worldview of that domain? That's what you pray. That's the blueprint you have in mind when you pray.

For example, say I want to pray for my family, or the families in our church. I will get out my notes on a biblical worldview of family. Or I will search the scriptures in terms of how wives and husbands and children should relate in a family setting. Or you can go to the website and download the notes from the Praying with Purpose Series and begin to pray using those notes.

My case study for today -

Family: Relationships & Authority

Name, nature and attributes of God:

The name and nature of God that is revealed in and through this domain is Heavenly Father. The term Father carries with it connotations of source, author, originator, provider, sustainer, protector, nourisher. Family is the entity that God designed in order that each one of us experience this aspect of His nature personally. Some of the aspects of God that we should experience in family include love, adoption, acceptance, provision, nurture, protection, discipline, understanding relationships and submission to authority.

Mt 6:26

Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

Rom 8:15

For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

The purpose of the family domain:

To provide a safe, loving, nurturing environment for growth, emotional security, and passing on of biblical values and education for the next generation. It is important to understand that our children learn more from who we are and what we do than what we say. Our lifestyles, what we value as expressed in our day-to-day lives, how we relate to one another as husband and wife, will be absorbed. After this, what we teach and instruct them becomes important.

Some scriptures that help us to understand the nature and purpose of this domain:

Isa 40:11

*He will feed His flock like a shepherd;
He will gather the lambs with His arm,
And carry them in His bosom,
And gently lead those who are with young.*

1 John 4:8

He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

Deut 5:16

Honour your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you.

Deut 6:6-9

“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Prov 22:6

*Train up a child in the way he should go,
And when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

Prov 22:15

*Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child;
The rod of correction will drive it far from him.*

A healthy marriage forms the foundation for a healthy environment in the home. Healthy marriages are the bedrocks of a healthy society.

Marriage

The over-arching, far-reaching thinking that I need to have, you need to have, every bible-believing Christian needs to have, is that I am not my own, my life is not my own, my time is not my own, my marriage is not my own, my children are not mine to own, and my husband is not mine to own. I am a steward of all of these things. This means that I treat them with respect and fear of the Lord. It means that I live with them and relate to them in such a manner as would be acceptable being fully aware that I will have to give an account to the Lord regarding these things one day.

1 Cor 6:19-20

"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

Gal 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ [in Him I have shared His crucifixion]; it is no longer I who live, but Christ (the Messiah) lives in me; and the life I now live in the body I live by faith in (by adherence to and reliance on and complete trust in) the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

1 Cor 7:4

The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

Husband. Wife. Marriage.

Whenever I borrow something from someone, or am using something that is not mine, I make sure that I use it how it is meant to be used. I never want to use something of someone else's and break it. I tend to be more disciplined around the instruction manual. I read the instructions pertinent to my use of it and try and comply. Now within the context of this thing called marriage, husband and wife, it is not my own idea or creation. It does not belong to me. One day I will give an account of my role and faithfulness with what God apportioned me. So. I need to check the instruction manual and try and comply as best I can.

Woman as *Ezer*:

Gen 2:18

"And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."

Ezer: Help meet; strong helper; helper comparable

'êzer (ay'-zer) From *aid*: - help.

The meaning of ezer, however, was diminished when translators rendered it "helpmeet" and restricted it to marriage.

Scholars noted that 16 of the 21 occurrences of the word ezer in the OT is when the word is used to refer to God as Israel's helper in times of trouble. The translation of Gen. 2:18 was upgraded to strong helper. Further research indicated that ezer is a powerful military Hebrew word whose significance we have barely begun to unpack.

Of the 21 occurrences of the word ezer in the OT:

- two for women
- sixteen for God
- three for military powers.

The 16 references to God: powerful military language permeates every passage. God is the helper, deliverer, shield, and sword of his people. In battle he is more trustworthy than chariots and horses. He personally stands on sentry duty, guarding his own from their enemies. His strong arm overthrows all their foes.

If we look at the verb form of the word, ezer ("to rescue or save"), it appears approx 80 times in OT. It "generally indicates military assistance."

In 19 of the 21 times that ezer appears in the Bible, and in nearly 100 percent of the uses of the verb form, there is an overwhelming military connotation. But for some strange reason, when the same word refers to a woman, we end up talking about making babies, submission, and cleaning house. Considering the evidence, it makes sense that this military imagery would carry over to the woman too.

The military language associated with the word ezer ties the same bold imagery to the strong helper.

The ezer is a warrior, and this has far-reaching implications for women, not only in marriage, but in every relationship, season, and walk of life.

With this in mind, let's look at God's instructions to the brave people:

1. Submit Yourself to Your Own Husband

Eph 5:22

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

Eph 5:23

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body.

Eph 5:24

Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

- You submit yourself
- To your own husband. Only one. Not all men. Not someone else's husband. Your own husband.
- As unto the Lord (deals with attitude ne?).

Submit yourselves hupotassō:

Thayer Definition:

- 1) to arrange under, to subordinate
- 2) to subject, put in subjection
- 3) to subject one's self, obey
- 4) to submit to one's control
- 5) to yield to one's admonition or advice
- 6) to obey, be subject

Part of Speech: verb

2. Comfort and encourage your own husband:

Prov 31:12

She comforts, encourages, and does him only good as long as there is life within her.

3. Be Affectionate towards your own Husband

1 Cor 7:3

Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.

4. Guard your Heart and Mouth

Mt 12:34-37

Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Ps 141:3

Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips.

Jam 1:26

If anyone thinks himself to be religious (piously observant of the external duties of his faith) and does not bridle his tongue but deludes his own heart, this person's religious service is worthless (futile, barren).

Prov 31:26

She opens her mouth in skilful and godly Wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness [giving counsel and instruction].

5. Adorn Yourself

1 Pet 3:3-5

Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel— rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle (humble) and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands...

Does not exclude outward adornment. Includes it. And goes so far as to emphasize the adornment of the hidden person of the heart: with gentleness and a quiet spirit.

Some Instructions For Husbands (Eph 5:25-29)

1. Love Your Wife

Eph 5:25

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

Love - agapaō (*ag-ap-ah'-o*)

Strong's:

Perhaps from ἄγαν *agan* (*much*; or compare); to *love* (in a social or moral sense): - (be-) love (-ed).

Thayer's:

1) of persons

1a) to welcome, to entertain, to be fond of, to love dearly

2) of things

2a) to be well pleased, to be contented at or with a thing

Love (Noun and Verb)

A. Verbs.

1. agapao and the corresponding noun agape

"Love can be known only from the actions it prompts. God's love is seen in the gift of His Son, 1Jn 4:9, 1Jn 4:10. But obviously this is not the love of complacency, or affection, that is, it was not drawn out by any excellency in its objects, Rom 5:8. It was an exercise of the divine will in deliberate choice, made without assignable cause save that which lies in the nature of God Himself, Cf. Deu 7:7, Deu 7:8.

"Love had its perfect expression among men in the Lord Jesus Christ, 2Co 5:14; Eph 2:4; Eph 3:19; Eph 5:2; Christian love is the fruit of His Spirit in the Christian, Gal 5:22.

"Christian love has God for its primary object, and expresses itself first of all in implicit obedience to His commandments, Joh 14:15, Joh 14:21, Joh 14:23; Joh 15:10; 1Jn 2:5; 1Jn 5:3; 2Jn 1:6. Selfwill, that is, self-pleasing, is the negation of love to God.

"Christian love, whether exercised toward the brethren, or toward men generally, is not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered. Love seeks the welfare of all, Rom 15:2, and works no ill to any, Rom 13:8-10; love seeks opportunity to do good to 'all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith,' Gal 6:10. See further 1 Corinthians 13 and Col 3:12-14."*

* From Notes on Thessalonians, by Hogg and Vine, p. 105.

In respect of agapao as used of God, it expresses the deep and constant "love" and interest of a perfect Being towards entirely unworthy objects, producing and fostering a reverential "love" in them towards the Giver, and a practical "love" towards those who are partakers of the same, and a desire to help others to seek the Giver. See *BELOVED*.

2. Sanctify and Cleanse Your Wife

Eph 5:26 *That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,*

Sanctify - hagiozō (*hag-ee-ad'-zo*)

Thayer Definition:

- 1) to render or acknowledge, or to be venerable or hallow
- 2) to separate from profane things and dedicate to God
 - 2a) consecrate things to God
 - 2b) dedicate people to God
- 3) to purify
 - 3a) to cleanse externally
 - 3b) to purify by expiation: free from the guilt of sin
 - 3c) to purify internally by renewing of the soul

Do you wash her with the Word of God? Do you encourage her with the Truth of God's Word? Do you cultivate her with the Word? DO you remind her of God's promises to her and for her life?

Strong's:

From; to *make holy*, that is, (ceremonially) *purify* or *consecrate*; (mentally) to *venerate*: - hallow, be holy, sanctify.

Cleanse - katharizō (*kath-ar-id'-zo*)

Strong's:

From; to *cleanse* (literally or figuratively): - (make) clean (-se), purge, purify.

What do you call her? What do you say to her? How do you speak to her? Jesus taught us that we are defiled by what comes out of our mouths. We can also defile the hearers with what we allow to come out of our mouths.

Mt 15:18

But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man.

3. Facilitate for Your Wife to Present her beautified, holy self to you**Eph 5:27**

That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but-that it should be holy and without blemish.

4. Nourish, Cherish and Love Her as Your Own Body**Eph 5:28-29 NKJV**

"So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church."

5. Render her the Affection due to her**1 Cor 7:3**

Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.

1 Cor 7:5

Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. But I say this as a concession, not as a commandment.

6. Honour Her

1 Pet 3:7

*Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving **honour** to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.*

Parenting

The family is the primary place where God desires children to learn about unconditional love, security and the Father heart of God:

1 John 4:8

He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

Ps 131:2

*Surely, I have calmed and quieted my soul,
Like a weaned child with his mother;
Like a weaned child is my soul within me.*

The family is where God desires that children learn about honouring authority:

God desires children to experience discipline in the loving context of family:

Prov 22:15

*Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child;
The rod of correction will drive it far from him.*

God is a multi-generational God. He desires that biblical values, ethics and moral code and framework be passed down from generation to generation. Our children should be stronger than us and go further than us. They should in effect stand on our shoulders. A problem that we see in scripture is that many of us are faithful with the call of God on their lives but are not faithful to pass on what God has entrusted to them, to their children.

For example, Judges chapters 1-7; Eli's sons; Samuel's sons, to name a few.

Some prayer items:

- Understanding and carrying the Father heart of God.
- Fathers:
 - In our own families.

- In the church and body of Christ.
- Father to arise in the body of Christ and the nations.
- Marriages -
 - General:
 - No weapon formed against them will prosper (*Is. 54:17*).
 - God will be wall of fire around and glory within (*Zech. 2:5*).
 - Marriage bed held in honour (*Heb. 13:4; Mt. 5:28*).
 - Wives:
 - Would be the best “ever” or Helper for her husband (*Gen. 2:18*).
 - Submit to own husband (*Eph. 5:22-24*).
 - Comfort and encourage own husband (*Prov. 31:12*).
 - Be affectionate towards own husband (*1 Cor. 7:3*).
 - Guard heart and mouth (*Mt. 12:34-37 & 6:21; Ps 141:3; Prov. 31:26; Jn. 7:38*).
 - Adorn self (*1 Pet. 3:3-5; Prov. 21:19*).
 - Husbands:
 - Love wife (*Eph. 5:25-29*).
 - Sanctify and cleanse wife (*Eph. 5:26*).
 - Facilitate for wife to present her beautified, holy self to him (*Eph. 5:27*).
 - Nourish, cherish and love wife as own body (*Eph. 5:28-29*).
 - Render wife the affection due her (*1 Cor. 7:3,5*).
 - Honour wife (*1 Pet. 3:7*).
 - Father children.
 - Provide for family.
- Parents:
 - Love.
 - Wisdom to parent, teach, disciple, train, lead, love, nurture and so forth (*1 Tim. 2:4-5*).
 - Eyes to see.
- Children:
 - Would experience Godly love, acceptance, nurturing, safety, security, training and discipleship.

So you take each of the areas that the Holy Spirit shows you you have responsibility in to pray, you make a list of them. You assign topics to weekdays and draw up your strategic prayer schedule. Then I encourage you to dig deeper and become a true growing disciple in those areas. Seek out God’s blueprint and pattern for those areas based on the Word. And use that to pray specific and God-breathed prayers over those areas.

An example of a prayer strategy – the general one that my husband and I use for our evening prayer:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Prayer topic:	Our Marriage	Children and descendants	Family and extended family	Our destiny, ministry and calling	Friends	The nation; topical national issues; national leaders	Church leaders; the church.

In so many places in the bible, we are instructed to rely on God and His wisdom and guidance, to trust in Him, to not judge by the sight of our eyes nor by the hearing of our ears nor our own limited natural understanding, but rather to trust in Him with all our hearts. We cannot remove prayer from this. We simply cannot expect to walk in the fulness of what He has for us in our various areas of influence, without prayer. Without strategic prayer. How can I live and be faithful to pray effective, specific prayers in the areas He has placed me in if I don’t seek a biblical worldview of these areas? How can I expect God to come through in my world, if I don’t pray? Let us not be those to whom the scripture says, “you have not because you ask not, and you ask amiss...”