

How to Pray for extended hours (Part 2)

Last week we began to discuss the concept of having extended times of prayer. I shared with you that the starting point is facing yourself. This involves self-assessment and having a sober view of your prayer life. I also mentioned the importance of being absolutely persuaded that prayer makes a difference. I went on to describe how prayer is often a discipline initially but then later becomes a great delight. We examined how extended hours of prayer should not be seen as weird or extreme as we looked at a few examples in scripture. I ended by sharing a couple of accounts to inspire us from church history, specifically Count Zinzendorf and David Brainerd. Today we will continue with this theme as I share with you 10 more ingredients that will help you to extend your prayer times.

7. Set-up exclusive daily appointments with God

Make appointments with God. Start off your day with God in prayer. I used to think it was acceptable to just have a prayer life where I talk to God throughout the day but never set aside time for Him and him alone. Make sure that you have exclusive time with God where you are not disturbed.

Mt 6:5 – 8 “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

This exclusive time with God means that you must be firm when it comes to distractions. Switch off your phone, the sky won't fall. Pick the best time of the day for this. If you have wondering thoughts or remember something you need to do then write it down. This is why it is useful to have writing tools.

8. Be creative in finding pockets of time to pray

Once you have these exclusive times with God as a foundation you can then trust God for pockets of time throughout the day. Your praying does not have to be limited to a single time during the course of the day. There are many pockets of potential prayer times we can have throughout the day. For example, we know that Daniel prayed three times a day. He continued doing this despite persecution. David appears to have also done so. *Ps 55:16-17 As for me, I call to God, and the Lord saves me. 17 Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice.* In addition to your early morning prayer time, here are some spaces that you can use for prayer:

- Nursing mothers feeding a baby
- Whilst you are putting a baby to sleep (Susanna Wesley is a great example of a praying mother who taught her sons how to pray).
- Praying in the Spirit when travelling long distances
- Waiting in a queue
- Waiting for your children to start a match (You dropped them off, but they first spend 45 minutes warming up).
- Going for a prayer walk
- Whilst washing dishes

- Whilst at a carwash waiting for your vehicle

Brother Lawrence

Lawrence was a monk who washed dishes and cooked meals, and tried to pray without ceasing. He became so famous for his habit that someone interviewed him, and published a little book called, *The Practice of the Presence of God*. The book hasn't been out of print in over 300 years, with over 20 million copies in English alone.

Lawrence believed it was easy to be close to God in prayer – if you didn't wander far from Him during the rest of the day. I discovered Lawrence's home after many months of research, and the impact of his simple prayer philosophy has helped me – and millions of people – to constantly commune with Christ.

9. Pray in the Spirit

There are a lot of activities throughout the day that are fairly mindless, and prayer can be done whilst doing these things. Praying in the Spirit is particularly useful during these times. *1 Cor 14:14-15 14For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. 15What then shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind. I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind....*

Rom 8:26-27 26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know how we ought to pray, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans too deep for words. 27And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God....

I remember a friend sharing with me how he was in traffic in Lagos, Nigeria and found himself driving alongside a well-known pastor. He said for 3 hours in traffic next to this man he noticed that he was praying in tongues throughout that time. Make use of that time in traffic.

When you show God your desire to pray, He helps you to find the space and time.

10. Schedule space and time for corporate prayer meetings

More recently I have begun to include the corporate prayer time when I am adding up the time spent in prayer. On days when I have intended to pray for six hours, it helps me to know that there are two church prayer meetings I can attend. On days like Monday where I pray for at least 3 hours but attend two prayer meetings, I only need to pray by myself for an hour. Now that is usually too little time for me to cover everything, I need to cover individually so inevitably I end up exceeding my target for the day. Please remember that corporate prayer was never meant to replace individual prayer. Make sure that you are also praying outside of the prayer meetings you attend. *Acts 16:13 On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer.* **What are the places designated for corporate prayer in your life?**

Is it possible for you to adjust your lunch time at work so that you can join a prayer meeting at noon?

11. Get information with regards to your prayer themes

Nehemiah had questioned people first before interceding. *Neh 1:2-4 Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that had survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem. 3 They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with*

fire.” 4 When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.

Nehemiah also examined the wall before rebuilding. Remember that part of being a watchman is building walls.

Neh 2:11-18 I went to Jerusalem, and after staying there three days 12 I set out during the night with a few others. I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem. There were no mounts with me except the one I was riding on. 13 By night I went out through the Valley Gate toward the Jackal[a] Well and the Dung Gate, examining the walls of Jerusalem, which had been broken down, and its gates, which had been destroyed by fire. 14 Then I moved on toward the Fountain Gate and the King’s Pool, but there was not enough room for my mount to get through; 15 so I went up the valley by night, examining the wall. Finally, I turned back and reentered through the Valley Gate. 16 The officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, because as yet I had said nothing to the Jews or the priests or nobles or officials or any others who would be doing the work. 17 Then I said to them, “You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.” 18 I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me. They replied, “Let us start rebuilding.” So they began this good work.

Get into the habit of studying the areas in which you called to be a watchman. This gives you more fodder as you pray. Ps Vimbai can pray for extended periods over the situation in Ukraine because she has studied it and has listened to sermons and prayer meetings with regards to it. If you get into the habit of deciding the night before what you are praying for in the morning you can actually list the specifics of your prayer before hand and also carry out some research. It is better to do this type of preparation and then pray more effectively than praying amiss due to your ignorance.

Being in relationship with people and not isolated from them will help you to understand their life situations so that you can pray more effectively. Because I am privileged to know a lot of details about people as a pastor it helps me to pray for the flock. Intercessors are more effective when they are part of a community. Find out their children’s names and pray for them by name. Learn to ask people more than two questions deep about what is happening in their world. Someone asked me recently, “What do you pray about for many hours?” When you carry people in your heart and are aware of the details of their lives it takes a while to pray through these things for them.

Some of the information you need in prayer may include looking at the calendar of meetings you have on that day and praying specifically into them in detail. Take the agenda items and pray over each one. As a speaker I often go through my sermon points or power-points for corporate events and pray them over my audience. This takes time to do. If you have this kind of practice you can’t be praying for only 15 minutes.

12. Practise Prevailing Prayer

Involve your whole being in prayer for people. Keep praying until you have reached the goal of the prayer. Don’t stop praying. Pray Until Something Happens (PUSH).

Are there prayer requests you need to revisit because you have not yet pushed through to breakthrough?

Gal 4:19 Oh, my dear children! I feel as if I’m going through labor pains for you again, and they will continue until Christ is fully developed in your lives.

This is prevailing prayer. Praying like this tends to extend your times of prayer. This is where you push in the spirit. It might involve groans from the Holy Spirit as you birth something. I was praying for a couple recently and found that as I opened myself to this, a new tongue came to me, and I also found myself groaning. The glory of God then came upon me and found myself shaking. This happens as we allow God to take over our prayer.

James 5:16b (AMP) The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working].

This type of prayer releases great power.

George Muller

George Muller was a legendary prayer warrior – according to his autobiography, he had over 5000 requests answered on the day he prayed them. Muller started 117 schools and ran a group of orphanages in England that took care of over 10,000 boys. He “retired” at the age of 70 and became a traveling evangelist, logging over 200,000 before the days of planes.

Muller had five friends who were far from Christ, and he committed to pray for them every day until they were part of God’s family. After a few months, the first man came to Christ. Within 10 years, two more had come to faith. After 25 years, the fourth man was saved.

But the fifth man was a holdout, so Muller continued to pray for him every single day... for 63 years and 8 months. Muller eventually died, and before his coffin was placed in the soil, his fifth friend committed his life to Jesus.

Takeaway: This is called prevailing prayer – it’s a gut-it-out, long-term commitment to doing the hard work of “moving the hand of God by prayer alone.” Commit to praying for the long-term.

13. Make a commitment to carry God’s burdens

Praying through a burden from the Lord makes prayer a lot easier. We can only do this when we lay our own burdens at His feet. *Ps 55:22 Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.*

14. Make use of crafted prayers

A crafted prayer is a prayer that has already been written out, either by yourself or someone else. It is typically well thought through based on God’s agenda for the recipient. There are different forms of crafted prayers. For example, you can access various prayers that are recorded in scripture and make them your prayers. You can also work through specific passages of scripture e.g. Psalms and Isaiah and convert them into prayers. Sometimes after praying powerfully over someone, you might want to write out what you prayed and then continue to use that prayer you have crafted on a different occasion when you might not be feeling a great unction to pray for them. The power of crafted prayers is that you have something to pray even when you have run out of words on that day. The fact of the matter is that we don’t always have the words. On other occasions we just don’t feel that inspired. The Psalms are powerful crafted prayers for praise and worship. I have also found it useful using lyrics from great worship songs and declaring them to God. There are times when you need to simply praise and not always petition. Some of the Apostolic prayers we

see in the Epistles are powerful crafted prayers to use when praying for your disciples. Here are some examples:

- For wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God (Eph. 1:17)
- For strengthening with might in the inner being (Eph. 3:16, Col. 1:11)
- For love to abound (Phil. 1:9, 1 Thes. 3:12)
- For the knowledge of God's will (Col. 1:9)
- That the Word of the Lord would run swiftly [rapidly spread and powerfully take hold] (2 Thes. 3:1)
- To glorify God in unity, with joy, peace, and hope (Rom. 15:5-6, 13)
- To preach with boldness and power (Acts 4:29-30)

(Compiled by fragrancearise.com)

I sometimes use my book, "Crafted Prayers, Declarations and Decrees" when I am praying. I have crafted prayers for parenting, marriage, customer relations and many other topics. It will take a while to get through all of them.

15. Develop standing agenda items for daily prayer

This means that you have specific days for praying into certain things. This type of structure helps to ensure that you don't spend many months not praying for an important aspect of life. You can still pray into additional things on those days as the Lord leads you, but this is one of the reasons I end up praying for extended periods. We can have a church programme for prayer, but I still have my individual items to pray through. For many years in our household, we have had the following themes for daily prayer. Monday – our marriage. Tuesday – our children. Wednesday – our parents and siblings and their families. Thursday – our ministries and careers, Friday – our friends. Saturday – the nation and its leaders. Sunday – the church. In scripture we are commanded to pray about specific things, for example, praying for the government.

16. Pray with different kinds of prayer

Ephesians 6:18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

We tend to only categorize our prayers based on the topic. "I am praying today for my country, tomorrow for my family etc". In order to extend your prayer times, it is important to also categorize your prayers based on the type of prayer not just the target. Is it a prayer for thanksgiving? Are you now switching to the prayer of agreement or the prayer of faith? Is it the prayer of binding and loosing now? When you do this, it allows you to shift gears in your prayer. When you don't do so, it can become like you are driving a 5 – gear vehicle but only remaining in gear 1. Ask God for wisdom with regards to the types of prayers you can pray on different occasions and in the same extended time of prayer. Soon I will be preaching on some uncommon prayers that need to be prayed by believers. God has given us wonderful tools that take our prayers to their next level.