

INTRODUCTION

“Teach Us to Pray” is a study in our Lord’s response to His first disciples when they asked Him, “...*Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.*” (Luke 11:1b) Now, two thousand years later his disciples are still asking, “Lord, teach us to pray.”

My own journey began over twenty-five years ago when, as a new believer, I found myself spending hours alone seeking God in the remote areas of Thousand Oaks, California, as well as early morning prayer with other brothers, Monday through Friday at 6:00 A.M. Then, I moved to Ventura and used the top of an old Victorian house, or the railroad tracks, or the beach as my “secret place”. From there I moved to Idaho and found snow covered roads where I would pray until my feet got too cold, or in the bathroom of the studio apartment that I shared with two other guys. In the summer, the streams and a small hill overlooking the market where I worked became my favorite places to pray. I also began to read about prayer from others who had gone before me: E.M. Bounds, “Praying Hyde”, Brother Lawrence, and others. This only increased my appetite. I prayed in the morning but woke my roommates up. So I had to learn to find that secret place where I could meet with God but not disturb others. After Cammy and I got married, I found early morning walks, from

5:00-7:00 A.M., provided me time to pray and not interfere with the family (although I was tired at times).

By the time we started Jubilee Church in September of 1984, I was a “practicing, praying disciple”. I was determined that Jubilee would be a “house of prayer”. Besides our Sunday services in the banquet hall of a pizza place, our first meetings were a men’s prayer meeting held on Friday mornings at 6:00 A.M. at a member’s house. When we leased our first building in Santa Rosa Plaza, we immediately began early-morning prayer, Monday through Friday at 6:00 A.M.

It was around this time that I came across a teaching by Dr. Larry Lea entitled, “Could You Not Tarry One Hour?”. From this teaching I made many life-changing discoveries in the art of prayer. I say “art” because prayer is certainly not a science, for as we commune with the Creator of the universe, He often supersedes many of His own rules as He imparts grace.

Dr. Lea taught that the “Lord’s Prayer” was not meant to be a thirty second recital but an outline. This outline contains a plan to pray that was taught by Jesus. The outline was broken into six parts with each part addressing important aspects of our walk with Him. For me, the most revolutionary thing in this outline was found in Part Two: *“Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”* Dr. Lea taught me to pray my

priorities. Up until this time, I prayed my opportunities or problems - whatever excited me, or most irritated me. I had discovered the hard way that this “hit and miss” approach left things not covered until they affected me.

Once I began to practice the Lord’s Prayer, stability, soundness, and strength came to me, as integrity increased in every area of my life: my secret life, my married life, my family life, my church life, and my work – simply because I remembered to pray for all of them! At the same time, I heard Pastor Jack Hayford say, “Some people are not mentioned in heaven because no one mentions them on earth in prayer.” This challenged me to mention my family and extended family members every time I prayed. The Apostle Paul said, “...*always in every prayer of mine making mention of you all with joy.*” (Philippians 1:4)

Much of what is in this pamphlet, I have discovered as I practiced the outline that Dr. Larry Lea gave. The Holy Spirit, seasons of life, and His workings have expanded upon this outline found in the Lord’s Prayer and this is by no means a finished product. I continue to discover new things in prayer and the prayer emphases change to keep up with God, but the simple steps in prayer, that Jesus taught His disciples, remain consistent.

Recently, while I was teaching this method of prayer to a group of about twenty people on an early Thursday morning, I realized that what is so needed is “constant prayer”. Not conformity, but consistency – constant, continual prayer. An Olympic athlete excels through constant practice, and you will excel as you practice prayer.

Jesus’ disciples did not ask Him to teach them “how” to pray, but simply “to” pray. May that also be our request as we follow our Lord together.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Steve".