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**Encouraging Prayer Resources for Women**

By Lisa M. Hendey

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An Author Interview - Michele Howe  
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As we put the election behind us and enter into the holiday season, many have the desire to approach life with a more spiritual, less materialistic perspective. The difficulty is in establishing, and remaining devoted to, prayer and meditations rituals which will provide clarity, wisdom and motivation. Most women are so busy serving those around them in a multitude of little ways that they frequently neglect their own spiritual needs. Perhaps the most "prayer challenged" of all are new mothers, transitioning with joyful spirits but exhausted bodies, to the new role they now play.

Author and mother Michele Howe has teamed with publisher Jossey-Bass to create a series of books for women to inspire prayer and offer encouragement for life's many challenges. Each of these handsomely crafted, hardcover books offers a series of true life stories, followed by relevant scripture references and heartwarming devotional prayers. Two of the books, Prayers for New and Expecting Moms and Prayers for Homeschool Moms are designed to meet the special needs of a segment of women who face unique and changing situations in their roles as mothers. Prayers to Nourish a Woman's Heart and the uplifting Prayers of Comfort and Strength are resources for all women, regardless of age. I had the opportunity to consult with Michele Howe on the topic of prayer and am pleased to share the following interview.

Q: Michele Howe, author of numerous books including Prayers for New and Expecting Moms, Prayers to Nourish a Woman's Heart, Prayers of Comfort and Strength and Prayers for Homeschool Moms, thank you for your time and participation in this Book Spotlight interview. Please take a few moments to tell our readers a bit about yourself and your family.

A. My husband and I are the parents of four teenagers. We have three daughters and one son. Our family lives in LaSalle, Michigan near the shores of Lake Erie. My husband, Jim, is a public high school teacher and we have homeschooled all our children through the eighth grade when they begin

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traveling with their dad to school each day. He has been both their mathematics instructor and their track coach...so dad wears several hats...just as I have during our homeschooling years as mom and teacher.

Q: You are a prolific writer. How does a busy, homeschooling mom of four make time to write?

A. When our children were smaller, the only time I had to write was early in the morning immediately after my husband left for work. During those physically demanding early parenting years, I had a goal to write for thirty minutes per day...it is amazing how much can be accomplished during that slim time spot. As our children grew and became more independent academically, I was able to slip in another late afternoon slot of maybe an hour to write after school was completed and before dinner preps. Now, with one college-age daughter, two high schoolers, and one junior high age son, my life is just as

busy...if not more so, but it is also more flexible. I've always looked for holes in my day and took full advantage of them to either read or write.

Q: Your recent books emphasize the nurturing comfort provided by prayer. For those who have not yet read your books, please describe the format you use in the books. Where do the stories you share come from?

A. All four of these books of prayer contain the same format, yet they target women in different places of life or in differing situations. Each book contains 52 stories of real women facing real challenges. These short narratives are followed by a Scripture verse, then by an honest, transparent prayer, and a short quote. Almost all of my stories are based on women I know, in the few instances that I don't personally enjoy a friendship with a particular woman whose story I am telling, I learned of these remarkable ladies through word of mouth. I feel strongly that women learn through the experiences of other women....and a camaraderie is developed when women share honestly. What better place to find comfort than at the feet of Christ through prayer?

Q: Most moms I know honestly want to include prayer and devotion as a part of their day, but feel they fall short in this area. How can we, as wives and mothers with so many demands on our times, make time to pray?

A. I recently heard a phrase that made a huge impact on me. Women of faith should view their prayer time as a "crusade" for the well-being of those within their sphere of influence and without. This hit me....I wondered, if I took prayer seriously enough, then I could envision myself as a participant in a military campaign of sorts....interceding for the souls of individuals throughout our world. I think that before we can discipline ourselves to commit to daily prayer breaks, we need to ask God to give us the vision and the burden for it. Without God's grace and His love for the lost, we'll experience far too many starts and stops. As in every area of life, women make time for that which is important to them. I have to ask myself every morning, what matters most to me? Checking off my to-do list or settling in with God and His word and making myself quiet before His throne?

Q: What message do you hope to send with your writing?

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A. My desire is that women find hope and help and sustaining vision for their lives as they enter into a holy place with the Lord. I pray that every woman is equipped to not only survive her challenges...but thrive in the midst of them. There is hope with God...He promises to make a way where there is no way. He promises strength, and grace, and the courage to face life and death...and every possible scenario in between. Would that every one of us believe these promises and set them in the forefront of our mind's eye every day.

Q: For women looking to establish or strengthen their daily prayer ritual, how would you suggest your books be used as a compliment to other prayer and devotional resources?

A. I would suggest finding a good, "read through the Bible in a year", study Bible and use it daily. Then, read one story selection per week, re-visiting the Scripture verse and the prayer every day for the remainder of that week. In this way, the truth of God's promises is solidified and cemented into our minds....and by rereading the prayers....our focus for the week is consistent on developing a specific character quality.

Q: What do you do when you find yourself in a prayer "dry spell"?

A. I read from the classics. I look through my library and find others who are heartfelt pray-ers...and I let them speak for me....I find that reading the prayers of others such as; Richard Foster, Oswald Chambers, C.S. Lewis, John MacArthur, and Elizabeth Elliot....invigorate me to keep on persisting through any dry periods.

Q: All moms need love and support, but especially new moms or "moms to be"! What advice would you give to those anticipating the joy of motherhood or those with new infants?

A. Spend time looking up and then meditating upon those verses that speak of mothering and childrearing....and by daily asking God for the "mind of Christ" for every situation. Let faith, not fear, rule in the heart!

Q: Michele Howe, thank you again for sharing your time and the gift of your writing. Are there any closing thoughts you'd like to share with our readers?

A. Thank you for allowing me to share my heart for women with your readers. I am so grateful to have the privilege of telling the experiences of courageous women from across our country, one story at a time, one prayer at a time.

For more information on Michele Howe's books visit  
<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0787965812/digitalcropper-20>

Lisa M. Hendey is a mother of two sons, webmaster of numerous web sites, including <http://www.catholicmom.com> and <http://www.christiancoloring.com>, and an avid reader.

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## **Continue in Prayer**

**By Angelique Watkins**

### **Continue in Prayer by Angelique Watkins**

Something that I wanted to share on Prayer that I once read .... especially after reading this "God's Heart is aching."

Prayer lifts heavy loads from our hearts. Prayer gives us courage to go on when the way looks dark. Prayer opens doors and melts hard hearts. Prayer changes lives and wins souls. Prayer brings response from God.

Prayer is not a duty to be performed; it is a privilege to be used and enjoyed. It is the talking over of life's problems with one who has power to solve those problems.

Prayer is an obedience of confidence in God. Prayer is an expression of our conscious need of God. Prayer is an act of obedience. Satan will keep us from praying if he can.

Psalms 34:10 "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."

James 4:3 "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures."

Jesus went aside to pray. If HE felt a need for talking to God, how much more do we need that strengthening fellowship!

Matthew 7:7, 8 "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

Independent Home Based Researcher, Writer and Life Enrichment Advocate. Israel, Messianic, News From PacRim and Arab Ministries Fellowship.



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