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**Who Prays When You Pray?**

**By A K Whitehead**

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When we pray, who does the praying? Almost any knowledgeable Christian will give the same response to that question. In fact, it is a questions which separates the knowledgeable from the less knowledgeable Christian.

The response, of course, ought to be that it is the Holy Spirit who does the praying, not us. For example, Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:18 that we should pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. So however we are praying and whatever we are praying for, it should be the Holy Spirit who is doing the praying.

But is it?

**Establishing Our Priorities**

Sometimes we are so caught up in our own problems and difficulties that we perhaps miss—remember what Paul tells us in Romans 8. 26. We behave as if he said that, when we do not know what to pray for, the Holy Spirit will pray on our behalf.

In fact, when we think about it, that would be a contradiction of Ephesians 6. 18. Of course, what Paul actually says in Romans 8:26 is that the "Spirit helps us in our weakness." This weakness is a general condition, not a specific one! For Paul goes on to say that "We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express." (New International Version).

## Who Prays When You Pray?

Again note that there is a general statement here: "We do not know...", He does not say "On those occasion when we do not know what to pray for..."

We often think we know what to pray for. Some of us may consider that we always know what to pray for. We either ignore what Paul says, or we do not know what he says, or we do not want to meet what he says "head on", as it were.

In effect, we establish our own priorities in prayer. Moreover, we establish in them preference to whatever the priorities of the Holy

Spirit happen to be.

### **Some Of Our Problems**

There are several important problems which we tend to have in allowing the Spirit to establish his own priorities in our prayers.

1. We lack faith. We do have faith, certainly, but do we use it? If we don't, it will not grow. Here, we need to have sufficient faith to know that the Spirit does hear us and responds to us.

2. We lack trust. This is certainly a strict concomitant of faith. If we do not have sufficient of the former, we shall certainly be deficient in the latter! Can we trust the Spirit to pray through us? and for what is most needed at this time?

**3. We lack experience. If we don't exercise our faith, and if we don't trust, we shall never accumulate that essential experience of allowing the Spirit to pray through us. We shall never know whether he does or doesn't**

### **Establishing the Priorities Of The Holy Spirit**

**So how do we accumulate that experience? Simply by doing what the New testament tells us to do. In chapter 14 of John's gospel Jesus gives us a whole list of what the Spirit will do for us as a consequence of his indwelling.**

**If we really do believe in that indwelling of the Spirit, we should know that he is always there for us to turn to. And not least in prayer. In fact, looking at what Jesus says in this passage, prayer is by far the easiest way to learn how the Spirit communicates with us.**

**So next time we come to pray, we do not arrive with a self-generated list of what we think we ought to be praying about.**

**Instead, we:**

**1. Make a deliberate effort to come to an internal state of quietness. There are various ways of doing that. One pray-er used to stand before his chair and reflect that here he was going to meet God. Or try a very reflectively prayed formal prayer. Or spend time bringing before God all those sins through which you have offended him since the last time you prayed. These are just helps at the start.**

**2. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead your pray. Then "listen". Not for some inner or external voice to speak, but for the Spirit to speak his thoughts into your mind. They will like as not simply come as thoughts.**

**Have the courage of faith to follow them. Have the courage not to pray anything if nothing comes. The pastor of the largest parish in the world, Paul Youngi Cho says that he never preaches on Sunday what the Spirit has not given him on Saturday. If he receives nothing, he**

**simply does not preach.**

**It is as simple as that. If you practice Christian meditation on Scripture this will all be very easy for you because one cannot properly meditate on God's word by doing it one's self. The Spirit has to do it. We learn how to let him. In the process one learns how to recognise the different ways in which The Holy Spirit speaks to us.**

**Although it is easier through meditation, we can still learn to listen and hear and be guided by him through other forms of prayer.**

**About The Author A K Whitehead Web Site: [www.christianword.co.uk](http://www.christianword.co.uk) Experience: Over twenty years in Christian healing and teaching. Qualifications: B.A., M.Phil., Camb Univ Cert in Religious Studies Conditions of use: This article may be reproduced on condition that it is unaltered and that all this information is included.**

**A New School Year**

**By Kimberly Chastain**

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**Depending on where you live school will be starting this month or next month. A new school year is usually exciting and scary at the same time. Most children won't admit it, but they are ready to get back to school and see their friends. As much as I love not having a rigid schedule in the summer, I do miss the structure of the school year. We get up later in the summer and go**

to bed later as well.

When you think of a new School Year what are your first thoughts? Back to school shopping for clothes and school supplies. A big transition from elementary to middle school, or to high school, even college. A new teacher who you heard is strict or not strict enough? There can often be lots of anxiety with a new school year for parents as well as children.

Can I offer a few suggestions for your back to school list? Remember whose children they are. Yes they are our children, but they are God's children. He cares about them and loves them more than we ever could. Pray for your children. Pray for their academics, choice of friends, study habits, and wisdom to make Godly choices. Pray for their teachers. If their teachers are not Christians, pray that God can use you to be an example to their teachers. Pray for the administrators in your child's school. Pray for the safety of your child and all the children at their school. Pray that your children will see a Godly example in you, with how you handle school difficulties or problems with your children. Begin praying with other mothers for their children as well. We don't have to carry the burden alone. Above all remember God is in control. I often have a difficult time remembering that principle.

In closing, God is a mighty God and he cares about our concerns. I often pray on the way to taking my children to school. I pray when my children are having difficulties with friends. God cares about everything in our lives and He truly cares about our children. My mother is a prayer warrior for my children and myself. May we all become prayer warriors for our children. Take your problems to Him and leave them there.

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Kimberly M. Chastain, MS, LMFT is the Christian Working Mom Coach and a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist who specializes in helping Christian women make the most of their lives. She is the author of the on-line course, "I Can't Say No" and Pearls of Encouragement for Christian Working Moms, a free e-book. If you suffer from "I Can't Say `No" Syndrome, visit Kimberly's site today for the details on an exciting email course that's sure to set you free!

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