



Anglican Network in Canada

First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer – August 2013

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. Philipians 4: 6 ESV

Welcome to our August 2013 first Friday Call to Prayer. Our aim is to provide you with teaching that we trust will enhance your prayer experience and will be an encouragement to you. We will also provide you with praise items and prayer requests coming from within ANiC and the Anglican Communion worldwide.

<p>We encourage you to set aside the first Friday, August 2nd, as a day of prayer and fasting for the Church in these critical days, ideally gathering with other believers in your parish or region for corporate prayer at some point in the day</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Prayer Quotes</p> <p><i>“If I fail to spend two hours in prayer each morning, the devil gets the victory through the day. I have so much business I cannot get on without spending three hours daily in prayer.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Martin Luther (1483-1546)</p>
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Ten Years Later – Part one

This October will mark the ten year anniversary of the publication of this monthly first Friday Call to Prayer. Originally begun under the auspices of Anglican Essentials Canada, it has been part of the ministry resources of ANiC since January 2009. Through this decade, it has been my privilege most months to share a meditation on some aspect of prayer as we seek to grow together in this most important activity. Your comments and words of encouragement over the years have been such a blessing and source of inspiration.

As ANiC's national prayer coordinator, I believe the most important mandates of this calling have been to exhort and encourage ANiC church members to pray, to impart vision as to the importance and privilege of prayer, and to provide teaching and focus for prayer in this first Friday Call to Prayer email. I have also had the joy of traveling from coast to coast, conducting seminars in ANiC churches on prayer, and seeing people catch the vision of prayer being the language of love between us and our gracious heavenly Father.

What I would like to do over the next two months leading up to October is to share seven things that I believe that the Lord has taught me through this incredible process. These may very well be familiar thoughts to you, but we all need reminding and exhortation to not slide into prayerlessness. My goal is that, wherever you are in your knowledge and experience of prayer, you will be encouraged to go deeper.

Okay . . . seven things. Here we go . . .

1. **Jesus himself was a man of prayer**

I am currently reading a book with that very title – *“Jesus – Man of Prayer”* by an Anglican contemplative nun, Sister Margaret Magdalen. She examines in detail the various aspects of Jesus' prayer life, driving home the fact that even the sinless Messiah of the world needed to spend large amounts of time in prayer with the Father. She writes:

“It becomes clear that, despite the enormous pressures on his time and energy, he did not, indeed

could not, allow prayer to become a casualty. Communion with his Father was the mainspring of his life.”

The Gospels record many situations where Jesus would slip away from the disciples and the crowds to spend time alone with the Father; sometimes early in the morning, other times all through the night. And it's clear that Jesus wanted his disciples, including us, to have that same life-giving experience in prayer that he did. Jesus told several parables that demonstrated this desire. Luke understands the heart of his Master as he introduces the parable of the persistent widow.

*“He told them a parable to the effect that they ought **always** to pray and not lose heart.”*

Luke 18: 1 ESV

When his disciples asked him to teach them to pray, Jesus responded enthusiastically with the words of what we now call the Lord's Prayer. He was delighted to teach them to begin to engage the Father through prayer the way he did. Think about this: if the sinless Son of God in human form found it essential to spend time in prayer with his Father in order to carry out his ministry, how much more do we need to soak in his presence and learn to hear his voice in order to be obedient to him in our own lives!

2. **Prayer is a delight and privilege, not just an obligation or duty**

When I first became a Christian as a young boy of 8, I was instructed by my Sunday School teachers and other adults that daily Bible reading and saying my prayers was a duty, an obligation that all Christians needed to fulfill. Somehow, God was impressed and satisfied with me if I remembered to fulfill these duties on a daily basis. If I'm honest, it was closely akin to picking up my pajamas and making my bed in the morning: duty, obligation, discipline. It was not at all intended to be fun or pleasurable..

But that is so far from all that our loving Saviour intended! The reality of prayer is that, “You don't **have** to; you **get** to!” The truth is that, notwithstanding our sinful lives and repeated failures at trying to keep the law, we have unrestricted and unlimited access to Almighty God 24/7! We get to spend unlimited time, whenever or wherever we want, with the King of kings and Lord of lords! There are no right words that you have to use; there's no purification ceremony that we have to endure. Muddy boots, runny nose and all, we can come into His presence in prayer! What a joy; what a privilege! It boggles the mind!

3. **Prayer is the life-flow between God and us. Without it, we're out there on our own!**

There's a TV drama that's been on this season called *Revolution*. The premise of the plotline is what would life in America be like if suddenly, without warning, all electricity was shut down. Nothing electrical or mechanical works; no TV, no internet, no air conditioning, no refrigeration, no communications, no iToys. Or, try to imagine life without any source of water in which to shower, wash your hair, bathe the kids, make a cup of tea, soak in the hot tub, or have a refreshing drink.

Trying to live the Christian life without prayer is like these examples; it's virtually impossible. Prayer is the two-way flow of life that energizes our relationship with God and provides us with power to obey. Jesus refers to this life-giving flow in John 15 when he uses the example of the vine and the branches.

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you”.

John 15: 4, 5 & 7 ESV

Fellowship with the Lord through prayer is the primary way that we “abide in the vine”. To neglect prayer is to live a life with the power turned off!

4. Prayer is for all of us, not just the hard core intercessors.

Supposing in your family as you sit around the dinner table only certain people ever spoke, ever shared what they were feeling or about the joys or stresses of their day (if you have teenagers, maybe it sometimes feels like that!). “Well, I would say something, but I’ll leave it Dad or my sister – they say it so much better than I would!”

As a parent, wouldn’t you want to hear from everyone in the family, even down to the toddler who’s just learning to talk? Sometimes it’s like that in the Church; “O well, we should leave prayer to the ‘experts!’” Not so! Jesus wants to hear from everyone that he loves, that he died for, everyone in the family!

More to come next month!

Garth V. Hunt+
prayer@anglicannetwork.ca



Praise God ...

- For the ultimate sacrifice that Jesus made upon the cross of Calvary for you and for me.
- For the incredible privilege of prayer that means we can come boldly into the presence of Almighty God sharing our burdens large and small, and delighting in the joy of intimacy with Him.
- For the many ANiC “projects” and church plants – the small, but growing congregations of faithful Anglicans that He is adding to our number.
- For faithful Anglican primates, bishops, clergy and laity – throughout the Communion – who are standing for truth even when their stand for Christ and His Word makes them targets of attack.

Confess if needed...

- How easily we slide into mere prayers of habit or prayerlessness altogether robbing us of the life-flow from our Heavenly Father that we so desperately require.

Please pray...

- For a **renewed focus on prayer** in ANiC churches across the nation so that each member may understand and experience the joy of personally communing with our loving Father.
- For a new visitation of the **Holy Spirit** upon our bishops and clergy, our parishes and our diocese. Pray that the fresh wind of the Spirit will bring renewal, healing and empowerment.
- For **Bishops** Donald Harvey, Charlie Masters, Stephen Leung, Trevor Walters, Ronald Ferris and Malcolm Harding (retired) – and their families. Pray for spiritual and physical protection and renewal, for wisdom, and for a daily closer walk with God.
- For our **Archdeacons**: the Venerables Ron Corcoran (Vancouver Island), Dan Gifford (BC), Paul Charbonneau (Ontario), Tim Parent (Ottawa Valley), Paul Crossland (Prairies), Michael McKinnon (New England, USA), and Darrell Critch (Atlantic Region & Quebec) – and our Dean of Multicultural Ministries, the Very Rev Dr Archie Pell..
- For all of our **ANiC clergy** and families, especially those experiencing spiritual and physical attack.
- That God would continue His work in and through the **Anglican Church in North America**
- For **Archbishop Bob Duncan** (and wife, Nara), especially for wisdom as he seeks to give godly leadership to our province, including the strategic choice of his successor in 2014.
- **GAFCon Primates and the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglican (GFCA) leaders** – Pray for the Lord’s courage and wisdom as they seek to guide the orthodox reformation and realignment that is taking place in the Anglican Communion. Pray for the second **GAFCon gathering** this October in Nairobi.
- **Southern Cone** – Pray for Presiding Bishop Tito Zavala in his primatial duties and for this Anglican province which includes much of South America.

- For the new Archbishop of Canterbury **Justin Welby**. Pray that the Lord will grace him with wisdom, courage and the faithfulness to follow the teachings of Scripture in his decision-making.
- For the **ANiC congregations** that have lost their places of worship and are meeting in temporary facilities. May God comfort and pour out His blessing on them. May they be filled with the joy of the Lord as they seek His guidance in their ministries, potentially including permanent worship facilities.
- For the Anglican Relief and Development Fund Canada (**ARDFC**) as it raises funds for a training and education centre in the **Diocese of Recife** (Brazil). Also for ARDF and the Anglican Church in North America as they bring relief to the victims of devastating **storms and tornados in the US**.
- For the **flood victims in Calgary and other areas of Alberta and BC** as they seek to repair the damage to their homes and restore normal life. Pray that the Christians in the flood zones will bring a message of hope to those who have lost so much.
- For **all the Christians in the Middle East** who are facing increasing pressure and persecution as many of their countries embrace a more aggressive and extreme form of Islam.