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ABSTRACT

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Thesis Statement

A Lenten prayer series (utilizing The Meaning of Prayer by Harry Emerson Fosdick) can be developed which will enable local church participants to offer care for others and assist their own spiritual development.

Title: THE MEANING OF PRAYER: A MODEL FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Using both descriptive and empirical methodologies, this study attempts to test viability of The Meaning of Prayer as a manual to teach prayer and develop care between the members of the Arcadia United Methodist Church. Included in this effort is the development, testing and evaluation of a survey instrument. This instrument measured the prayer habits, beliefs and customs of the church before and after the project. A collateral strategy to enhance the overall impact of the project was offered simultaneously. This strategy involved preaching, prayer resource materials, Sunday School Classes and media displays among others.

Chapter 1 introduced the context for the project. This writer's understanding of the context and personal motivation for doing this project was discussed. Statistical information was offered to help delineate an objective understanding and approach to ministry.

The project text was discussed and a working project thesis offered.

Chapter 2 gave a review of related literature in the area of prayer and prayer ministry. A synopsis of database searches was offered. Brief annotations of primary sources was shared.

Chapter 3 was an exegesis of scriptures later used in the concomitant component of the project. This component was the February Prayer Emphasis for the whole church. This exercise helped me to develop some initial skills in relating preliminary exegesis to developing local church prayer ministry.

Chapter 4 reflects on some local churches with outstanding prayer and care ministries. By interviewing local church staff and laity involved in these ministries, I developed an awareness of effective models for prayer and care ministries. Moreover, I was able to ascertain shared characteristics of praying churches. This experience gave me background for developing prayer ministry at Arcadia and for teaching the project course.

Chapter 5 was a description of the project including project development and implementation. Included in this chapter is the explanation of questionnaire design, development and execution. The role of the Congregational Reflection Group in project development is shared alongside the experience

of leading the project.

Chapter 6 is a reflection of and analysis of the project. This chapter goes into more detail of the description of the project. Serious reflection on the execution, experience and outcome of the project is given. Both descriptive reflection and empirical analysis including questionnaire data and charts are offered. Several suggestions are offered in relation as to how I would do this project different if offered again.

Chapter 7 examined the effectiveness of the project and offered suggestions to local churches to improve efforts in prayer ministry. A helpful accomplishment of the project was the awareness of how vital prayer ministry is to the development of Christian care in a congregation.

The Appendix contains copies of letters, questionnaires and lesson plans for the project.

The Bibliography lists the various resources used for the project, including those consulted during the process of developing, implementing and analyzing the project.

THE MEANING OF PRAYER: A CASE MODEL FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

BY

JOSEPH A. GEARY

**A dissertation proposal
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Ministry
Asbury Theological Seminary**

May 1991

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AUTHORIZATION

In presenting this Project/Dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Ministry degree at Asbury Theological Seminary, I agree that the B.L. Fisher Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for copying of this Project/Dissertation, in part or in whole, for scholarly purposes may be permitted by the Library. It is understood that copying or publication of this Project/Dissertation for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Signed: Joseph A. Geary

May 19, 1991

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CHAPTER 1

The Introduction

The Arcadia United Methodist Church was founded in 1920 by resident families in the West End of Paducah, Kentucky. Members of Fountain Avenue United Methodist Church and the Broadway United Methodist Church, assisted neighborhood families to form this fledgling fellowship that soon moved into a small frame structure on Adams Street. For the next twenty years Arcadia shared its pastor with another congregation, forming a two-church charge. This arrangement came to an end in the early 1940's. Warren Phillips, a young ministerial student was appointed to serve Arcadia and the church became a station or self-supporting entity.

In the beginning, the congregation was made up of families who could walk to church or ride a buggy. On the edge of the city, the congregation was essentially rural in character. People moved in from the surrounding counties to work at the railroad shops, river industry and textile mills. Arcadia was a small membership church, mostly made up of homogeneous families of similar situation and background.

In the early 1950's, a new church building was constructed on lots about two blocks away on the corner of Clark and Lone Oak Road. Led by an energetic

pastor with a gift for architecture, Rev. C.H. Rayl, the people did much of the work constructing their new place of worship. This building continues to serve as the place of meeting for the congregation today.

For the first fifty years of the congregation's life, essential decisions of parish life were decided by the founders of the church. Mostly consisting of those founding members of the church with extended family and friendship ties. These leaders, by formal and informal structure, preserved the status quo and maintained a middle-size church. Arcadia has taken pride in being able to meet all financial obligations. From the perspective of past leaders, the conservation of congregational resources was the prime value.

Today the church is located in the center of the metropolitan-regional area. The church attracts membership from throughout the city and county. The congregation's membership shows social, economic, religious and political diversity. Now a multi-cell congregation, Arcadia is made up and held-together by many small groups, families, individuals and constituencies. The church has been blessed by modest growth and now faces the problems of parking and building space availability. Unlike many United Methodist Churches in the Memphis Annual Conference, Arcadia has a wide range of ages represented in the

membership. 1988 statistics revealed 351 members. One third (37.7%) are 60 and over, (10.4%) are 50-59 while (8.%) 40 to 44. In the lower ranks (28.2%) are 20-39 years old while (3.10%) are 15-19. The remaining (11.6%) are children below the age of fourteen.¹

The changes in the congregation's makeup have taken some 20 years to happen, with much of the change in the last 10 years. Additional description of this change will allow an understanding of the problems and opportunities to be addressed by the project.

Statement of the Problem

Upon arrival as pastor of this congregation in June of 1988, I became aware of the changes in the mix of the congregation as revealed by the church study. The average age of the congregation was dropping. The church became theologically diverse. New members joining came from different areas of the United States and added to the diversity.

Secondly, according to the church treasurer and the church secretary, attendance and finances were in a slump. There was general suspicion and animosity between some young and old, older members and newer members. The general congregational climate was

¹A statistical study of Arcadia was completed by The Association for Christian Training and Service, Nashville, Tennessee. This study was a statistical analysis of the congregation. This process was completed in 1988.

negative, fearful and suspicious. Coming from a small-town pastorate, I experienced great discontinuity. I struggled with my own sense of grief and loss over my former charge, while trying to effectively minister to a church in the throes of crisis and change.

The problem to be addressed can be stated as a question: "What approaches or strategies should be taken to minister to a divided and hurting people?" A related question asks, "How can one help to build an essential unity, collegiality and identity among diverse peoples?" The risks are high. The church is poised for tremendous church growth if the divisions and suspicions heal. It is in the interest of facilitating community, encouraging renewal and fostering healing that I found my motivation for doing the project. Inspiration for this project also came from Henri J. Nouwen from his discontinuity in moving from Harvard to the community of L'Arche, serving the handicapped. Nouwen said in his reflections on Christian leadership, In The Name of Jesus,

"Jesus sends us out to be shepherds, and Jesus promises a life in which we increasingly have to stretch out our hands and be led to places where we would not go. He asks us to move from a concern for relevance to a life of prayer, from worries

about popularity to communal and mutual ministry."²

Like Nouwen, I had to move from a personal concern of being accepted to an objective strategy of ministry and mission. What strategy or model Christian discipline could address this concern? This was an area of personal struggle. An examination of Arcadia revealed to me that the church had many small groups and that persons were primarily finding their identity and nurture within them. In contemporary Christian society, the formation of small groups is a desired prospect. Along common interest lines such groups attract new members and conserve existing ones. Moreover, such groups accomplish ministry and fellowship needs among their adherents. Suzanne G. Braden and Shirley F. Clement in their book, Small Groups: Getting Started, express the conviction that small groups enhance the mission of the local church. Braden and Clement assert the mission of the church to be:

"First, reaching out to people as they are and receiving those who respond. Next, helping them relate more closely to God through Jesus Christ. Then, nurturing them and supporting their growth in Christian discipleship. Finally, sending them back to their homes, workplaces, schools, and neighborhoods to make the world more loving

²Nouwen, Henri J.M. In the Name of Jesus. New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1989, 71-72.

and just." "Churches without a variety of active small groups are unlikely to be as effective as they would like to be in carrying out this four-pronged mission."³

Braden and Clement make this observation on the grounds of evangelism, as they have discovered it is easier to break into the life of a larger organization through participation in small groups. For the context of this project, I believe a small prayer class could especially help the church to reach the second mission goal listed above. It should be noted, however, that at Arcadia some small groups formerly have contributed to isolation and division. Criticism between some groups was common. Moreover, most groups seem to focus only on themselves. There was not much proof of a group seeking to minister to or address the larger church need. The worship service appeared to be the existing opportunity to address the larger membership. This could be one avenue to reach the membership. Another might be the development of a short-term class. Could such a class or group view the entire congregation as its field of service?

Struggling with these questions and trying to minister to the context described, I began to consider the discipline of prayer. Would prayer ministries be a

³Braden, Suzanne G. and Clement, Shirley F. Small Groups: Getting Started Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1989, 2-3.

means of entering into the care of others and assisting them in their inner spiritual development? Upon further reflection and refinement of this question, I decided to conduct a project that would try to address the questions raised. There are some theoretical frameworks and justifications this issue raised.

The theoretical framework for the dissertation grows out of the conviction that one of the greatest ways people can experience the care and love of a Christian friend is for that friend to pray for them. Arcadia is a metropolitan regional church where many members do not know one another well. Although many small groups exist, no single ministry reached out to all groupings, and peoples except the Sunday service of worship. A prayer class that could lead to prayer ministries might have such a scope. Perhaps a prayer class could be a means through which God could minister to us, pastor to people, diverse peoples one to the other. Charlie Shedd's reflection on prayer ministry, The Exciting Church Where People Really Pray, offered a definition of prayer that supports this model, "Prayer is not first man's trying to get through to God. It is first an opening up to God who is trying to get through to us."⁴

⁴Shedd, Charlie W. The Exciting Church Where People Really Pray. Waco: Word Books, 1974, 19.

I observed a spiritual hunger among the people of the church. Many were yearning to grow in their relationship to Christ and the community of faith, the local church. Through the didactic establishing period of the prayer ministry and through continued growth moments in weekly meetings, spiritual formation could happen.

Prayer ministry may be the model that will help participants have a structured opportunity to bear one another's burdens, enter the suffering of others and through awareness, develop a greater Christian sense of love and care. As the pastor, through leadership in prayer ministries, I could become more aware of the real life issues facing the people. I hoped that as prayer ministries developed, I would have an authentic way of entering into and understanding the context for ministry at Arcadia.

"Pray for me" can become the buzzword of a congregation. Often repeated, it lacks much thought or meaning. Or it can be the plaintive plea of a person who realizes the power of prayer. In a congregation with persons from different areas of the country, various denominational and theological backgrounds, the plea may also be misunderstood. Also, the plea may simply be forgotten in the rush of individualistic

life. An effective local church prayer ministry would include a means to receive prayer requests.

A person who engages in intercessory prayer will develop a healthier sense of respect for his brothers and sisters. A church with opportunities for prayer life is a church that is preparing its members for congregational care and the way of peace. It has a care giving structure in place for those who face great decision, obstacles and tragedies. A prayer ministry will hear the spiritual concerns of the people and convey these to God..

Thesis Statement and Project Components

With the needs of the Arcadia United Methodist Church in mind, I developed the following thesis statement: A Lenten prayer series (utilizing The Meaning of Prayer by Harry Emerson Fosdick) can be developed which will enable local church participants to care for others and assist their own inner-development. Therefore, the working title of the project/dissertation is, "The Meaning of Prayer: A Model for Spiritual Renewal." With the thesis in mind, what components might this Lenten prayer project have? Upon reflection, I developed the following approach. (1) A concomitant emphasis on prayer. (2) A ten-week class on prayer utilizing The Meaning of Prayer by Harry Emerson Fosdick as a guide for study

and praxis.⁵ (3) Each Sunday School Class (all ages) was asked to stress the study and reflection of prayer and spiritual life in concurrence with the four-week worship series. (4) There was a communications and visual emphasis on prayer in the church buildings and through printed materials. (5) There was a prayer book table and display to encourage individual reading and reflection. A descriptive, step-by-step approach of each of the components is in Chapter Five of the project/dissertation.

Since the Lenten season is traditionally viewed in this church as a time of study and spiritual growth, the project was implemented accordingly. To affect the prayer lives of as many people as possible, a sermon series, Sunday School emphasis and book table were chosen. The ten session class afforded the opportunity to examine prayer life and ministry at a greater depth.

The Meaning of Prayer Class would become the centerpiece of the intervention phase and the project/dissertation. In consultation with the Congregational Reflection Group, and individual interviews within the congregation, the text The Meaning of Prayer was chosen. The text was chosen for several reasons. The Congregational Reflection group

⁵Fosdick, Harry Emerson. The Meaning of Prayer. Nashville: Abingdon Press Reprint, 1989.

asked me not to use a workbook style format because the church had previously used this type of study book. I desired to use a book that would offer a classic source of prayer teaching. Moreover, I needed an author that would appeal to a diverse constituency. Because Harry Emerson Fosdick is known as both a member of early 20th Century liberal protestantism and a classical teacher of prayer, his work seemed a natural choice, and (4) The text lends itself to didactic purposes. Readings are broken down into daily devotions. Each week's worth of readings ends with challenging, stimulating questions for reflection. An evaluation of the text is found in the evaluation chapter of the project dissertation.

Research Methodology

The project/dissertation follows the descriptive model. The model was chosen because it allows both qualitative and quantitative analysis based on observation. In developing a methodology, I followed the guidance of John Lofland and Lyn H. Lofland in Analyzing Social Settings: A guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis. The authors suggest three ways of gathering data: "looking, listening, and

asking."⁶ Chapters Six and Seven of the project/dissertation will analyze the project and offer conclusions reached after reflection and research.

In order to be adequately informed and prepared for the intervention stage of the project/dissertation, several steps were taken. First, a review of related literature was completed. Using data base searches and personal research, the writer has compiled a summary of the normative literature in local church prayer ministry. This forms the basis of Chapter 2 of the project/dissertation.

Moreover, a questionnaire was developed, refined and pre-tested with the Congregational Reflection Group, Dr. Steve Harper of Asbury Theological Seminary and Dr. Maxie Dunnam, former World Editor of The Upper Room. The questionnaire examined the prayer beliefs, habits and practices of the congregation. A pre-test of the Arcadia church was conducted in October of 1989, with a random sampling of 60% percent of the membership. This figure was chosen in the hope of a return rate that would sample at least one-half of the membership of the church. 80% of the instruments

⁶Lofland, John and Lofland, Lyn H. Analyzing Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1984, 47.

mailed were returned. Moreover, the questionnaire was given to The Meaning of Prayer Class both before and after the course. The results of the pre-test were used in preparing course notes and in preaching to the congregation. A post-test of the same congregational respondents was done in October of 1990. A comparison is found in the evaluation chapter of the project/dissertation.

Assumptions

The project/dissertation is based upon several assumptions. First, that prayer builds concern and authentic Christian care within congregations. Second, that prayer ministries have an outreach and affect on persons not directly involved in prayer groups and ministries. Third, that healing, forgiveness and reconciliation may happen when a person recognizes they are loved by an act of prayer, especially from someone with whom they are estranged. Finally, that each human being has the capacity for prayer. With participation in a prayer group, class, or worship service their lives can be enhanced.

More preparation took the form of exegeting three biblical passages with insights into prayer and prayer ministry for the concomitant component. This exegesis is found in Chapter Three. Also, to be better informed and to be able to recommend models of prayer ministry

to our congregation, the writer has undertaken an exhaustive approach in compiling contemporary models of local church prayer ministry. These models form Chapter Four of the project/dissertation. Chapter Five is a descriptive narration of the project and intervention stage. Chapters Six and Seven will analyze, evaluate and conclude this dissertation. I hope it will serve to effectively report the experience at Arcadia United Methodist Church and to provide resources for others who might wish to emphasize prayer in the local church. In the next chapter I will explore the salient literature which informed and guided my work.

CHAPTER 2

A Review of Related Literature

Interest in prayer and prayer groups is growing. Persons interested in teaching/preaching on prayer and beginning prayer ministries in the local church will have no trouble in locating resources. The difficulty arises in the boon of materials and the attempt to set limitations and find material suitable for one's context. I used as the primary source for the project The Meaning of Prayer by Harry Emerson Fosdick. This book is a good one to use as a model for prayer teaching in the local church. The book has the following positive characteristics: ten brief chapters broken down into daily meditations, questions and answers for each chapter, prayers from ancient and classic sources, and content that masterfully demonstrates Fosdick's wisdom of applying biblical content to bear upon human need. The book also has limitations and a greater explication of this source will be forthcoming in this chapter.

Limits of Study

I will not attempt to cover all material related to prayer or prayer groups in this chapter. My goal is to demonstrate to the reader the material used to develop the project/dissertation. The main goal of the

project was to survey the local church's prayer habits, beliefs, and customs and then intervene with a prayer emphasis, the centerpiece being a Lenten Study using The Meaning of Prayer. Also, at the conclusion of the project, a post-survey was taken of the same randomly selected members to see if the project had any measurable affect on their prayer lives. These aspects will be discussed in Chapters Five and Six of the project dissertation. I am not trying to provide an overview of the vast amounts of prayer resources available today, but simply review those materials that were directly used to conceive, resource and lead the prayer emphasis.

The Bibliography listed at the end of this paper will give additional resources which the reader may elect to use for more comprehensive study.

Primary Resources

For development of the project, I used the following primary resources, to give a general overview of prayer, prayer groups, small groups, local church life, personal prayer encounter and expected difficulties and blessings. It is not my intention to give an exhaustive analysis of each book, however, I will share an annotation of each resource.

The Meaning of Prayer.

This book was used as the basic text for the teaching phase of the prayer project at Arcadia. The book uses a format that includes daily reading and reflection. Each daily reading deals with the theme of the week combined with a scripture selection. Woven into each reading is teaching from classic figures of Christianity combined with those of persons who were contemporary voices in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries. Harry Emerson Fosdick intertwines his own teachings among the others. Each per diem reading concludes with a prayer seeking enlightenment of and commitment to the issue/theme of the day/week.

Especially helpful are the questions for discussion found at the end of each chapter and the Tenth Chapter dealing with unselfishness in prayer. Topics of this book include : prayer as communion with God, prayer hindrances and difficulties and unanswered prayer among others. The Meaning of Prayer is a book that uses a devotional/reflective format to teach the great themes/issues of prayer.

Prayer Ministry in the Local Church.¹

¹Harper, Steve. Prayer Ministry in the Local Church. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1976.

This book, gives a basic explanation of how prayer ministry can be developed, led and sustained in the local church. While the book is primarily written for local church pastors, those lay persons who are interested in prayer development in their local church would find the book helpful in the areas of readability and step-by-step planning. The book has several different appendices listing helpful resources and small group activities and resources.

This book has several beneficial chapters. Among them are treatises dealing with calling the church to prayer and taking advantage of unique pastoral opportunities related to prayer ministry in the local church. The book proved a valuable resource to me during the conception and planning stage of the project/dissertation because the author uses an autobiographical approach telling the story of his struggles to develop prayer ministry in his church. The practical experiences elucidated, combined with the sensitive callings and cautions, were helpful in preventing common mistakes in organizing prayer ministry. An example of these practical tips is found on page 51 where the author states, "There is one word of caution though --- the leader is not to be the

"talker" in the group. He is a learner too. His task is to stimulate."²

Pray and Grow: Evangelism Prayer Ministries.³

This book is one of a growing genre to give the reader an understanding of how prayer relates to church growth. The writer of this book was assigned to a small church in Texas that has now experienced phenomenal spiritual and numerical growth. Author Tekyl gives credit to prayer related ministries as the primary causal factor of this growth.

This book is a gold mine of prayer strategies and contemporary success stories of local churches engaged in prayer ministries. This book lends itself well as a text book for a short term class on prayer. It is very readable, tends to build excitement and expectation and packs a lot of information in 48 pages. The major model suggested by Tekyl is the development of one hour of prayer, per day, per member. He leans heavily on Dick Eastman who pioneered this strategy in a book entitled, The Hour that Changes the World.⁴

This book was helpful to me during the formation stage of the project/dissertation and will be helpful

² Ibid, 51.

³ Tekyl, Terry. Pray and Grow: Evangelism Prayer Ministries. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1988.

⁴ Eastman, Dick. The Hour That Changes the World. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978.

in ongoing prayer ministry in the local churches I serve. Like Steve Harper, Terry Tekyl has prayer ministry experience. It was practically helpful to just see a praying church modeled for me. Tekyl was also helpful to me in the area of motivation for prayer leadership. Particularly I would point out a statement found on page eleven of his book which states, "The practice and persistence of prayer is rooted in the conviction that it really does make a difference."⁵ Reading Tekyl's book constantly challenged me to think through what I really believed about prayer. I took this same sense of urgency into the local church classroom when I taught the prayer project. Using Fosdick's book as the model for the project did not prevent me from challenging each student to think through what they really believed about prayer. I borrowed this challenge from Tekyl. I believe it is in keeping with the spirit of Fosdick who also wanted the reader of his book to make a serious examination of prayer belief and practice.

The Exciting Church: Where People Really Pray.⁶

⁵Tekyl, 11.

⁶Shedd, Charlie W. The Exciting Church: Where People Really Pray. Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1974.

This book chronicles the account of Shedd's pastorate of a small church on Jekyll Island, Georgia. In the midst of a Bible Study early on in his ministry the question was posed, "I wonder what would happen in our congregation if every member was prayed for every day by someone?"⁷ This question led to the beginning of an exciting chapter of revitalization for this church. This work gives a brief pastoral observation of each benchmark along the way to renewal. These observations were helpful to me in the development of the project. They became pastoral models of observation and helped me to anticipate the need to act as story/interpreter of our own church's experiences.

The second half of this book is a page by page account of some of the most consistent questions posed to Shedd about local church prayer ministry through the years. In a succinct fashion, Shedd uses brief pithy statements for his responses. This section is filled with practical suggestions. I especially found this book helpful because it deals with a church that had a sincere desire to grow in prayer, a small membership church. So many of the models held up to observation today were already large membership churches. For many of us who serve small or medium size congregations we then have the added burden of trying to decide what

⁷ Ibid., 18.

"fits" our context. Shedd shows that with Bible Study and the willingness to engage in patient prayer development, great things can occur.

Another aspect of Shedd's leadership that influenced me in the project/dissertation is his incarnational approach. Shedd does not assume that he is the prayer leader and as pastor his job is to get these other Christians praying. Throughout the book, and one would infer in his ministry in the Jekyl Island church, Shedd clearly desires the prayers of his congregation. His humble approach models Christ like humility and transparency. After reflection, I decided this approach was indeed a valid one and have attempted to embody it in my prayer leadership at Arcadia. An example of Shedd's approach and attitude can be found in this statement.

"But as a pastor, I don't always know who needs to be accomplishing what. God alone knows that. And this is another good thing in a praying church --He brings his own balance when people are open to him."⁸

The Prayer Ministry of The Church⁹

⁸ Shedd, 56.

⁹ Nee, Watchman. The Prayer Ministry of The Church. New York: Christian Fellowship Publishers, 1973.

This book is a collection of messages on prayer given by Watchman Nee during the period 1940-41. The title of the book is the first message and is the basis for chapter one. Nee's method is exegetical and didactic. He carefully unravels a scripture for setting, audience and meaning and then attempts to apply the scriptures to the current context. Like Jesus who used illustrations common to the life experiences of his followers, Nee applies the teachings of prayer to the modern context using illustrations common to modernity. A good example of this is the following:

"The whole matter can be likened to the flow of water in one's house. Though the water tank of the Water Supply Company is huge, its flow is limited to the diameter of the water pipe in one's house. If a person wishes to have more flow of water, he will need to enlarge his water pipe. Today the degree of the manifestation of God's power is governed by the capacity of the church. Just as at one time earlier, when God manifested himself in Christ, His manifestation was as large as the capacity of Christ; so now, God's manifestation in the church is likewise circumscribed--- this time by the capacity of the church. The greater the capacity of the church, the greater the manifestation of God, and the fuller the knowledge of God."¹⁰

In comparing the Church to the common water tower Nee assures his audience will experience a word picture that will help them visualize his point. This book was helpful in the project/dissertation development phase

¹⁰ Ibid, 18-19.

by helping me see the need to teach in such a manner that people could visualize the subject matter. The inductive teaching style of Nee is cross culturally appropriate and effective.

Nee's addresses in this book deal with the call to prayer ministry in the local church, a study of the Lord's Prayer, a reflection upon the power of the name Jesus and discussions dealing with authority and prayer and being spiritually alert. The chapter dealing with the Lord's Prayer was good background reading as I prepared to preach on that text during the project. Nee's view that prayer ministry is central to the life and ministry of a local church combined with his confidence in the power of prayer provided me inspiration for doing this project.

Contemplative Prayer.¹¹

Contemplative prayer, according to Merton, is "not so much a way to find God as a way of resting in him whom we have found, who loves us, who is near to us, who comes to us to draw us to himself."¹² This is as close to a definitive definition of contemplative prayer as one is to find in this work. Thomas Merton is helpful in that he steers the student of prayer away

¹¹Merton, Thomas. Contemplative Prayer. Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1969.

¹²Ibid., 29.

fom mechanics and more into the "rest" of God. By this I mean a de-emphasis of the Western tendency to look for a cut and dried formula for quick access to the presence of God. Instead, one can allow the apparent void of silence and solitude to fill the soul with the real presence of God. Historically, this is cultivated and done in the monastic tradition, according to Merton by prayer, reading, meditation and contemplation.¹³

This book was chosen for the project/dissertation phase because of my exposure to Merton's writings at Asbury Theological Seminary and my desire to broaden the theological/historical base of what I taught in the Arcadia project. Beyond that, I found the book personally helpful in my own prayer and spiritual formation. This book helped me to appreciate unstructured time, silence and solitude.

Journals and Database

There are many journals which would be of interest to anyone wanting to learn more about prayer and spirituality. I have listed them as Appendix A. This is certainly not an exhaustive list and one is likely to find articles concerning prayer in most any religious journal. However, these journals were found to have relevant articles for prayer teaching and local

¹³ Ibid.

church prayer ministry. These articles are source material quoted elsewhere in the dissertation.

Religious Publications

Many religious publications were helpful to me in the planning of the project. These are also listed on Appendix A in the back of this dissertation. In the process of reading these journals and articles, I did not find any specific article that gave me a step by step approach to doing my project. Most of these articles provided general insights into prayer, prayer groups and local church prayer ministry. As such, they provided general background material to use in the teaching phase and in actual prayer experiences.

In order to be aware of literature that may have been available to help me in the project/dissertation, I conducted two database searches. The first search was the A.T.L.A. Religion Database.¹⁴ This search was unsuccessful due to several factors. Among them were the general unaquaintance of religious terms by the person conducting the search at Paducah Community College, Paducah, Kentucky. The librarian would not allow me to personally conduct the word search. Thus many postings appeared, but I was prohibited from actually using computer time to search specific

¹⁴A.T.L.A. Religion Database, American Theological Library Association, 5600 South Woodlawn Ave. Chicago, Illinois 60637

postings. I was able to conduct the subsequent database searches.

My second search was of the Wilsonline.¹⁵ I found the following postings:

Prayer and Ministry	- 71 Postings
Prayer and Teaching	- 178 Postings
Prayer and Groups	- 22 Postings
Prayer and Local Church	- 8 Postings

I was not able to find many articles or dissertations that dealt with developing prayer ministry in the local church.

Background on Harry Emerson Fosdick

Since the scope of the project basically encompasses using The Meaning of Prayer as a text for a prayer class designed to bring about spiritual renewal in the church, it was helpful to read background material concerning Harry Emerson Fosdick. Specifically, I read his autobiography and a biography in an attempt to understand more of his personal and spiritual formation. These two books are The Living of

¹⁵Wilsonline. American Theological Library Association, 820 Church Street, 3rd Floor, Evanston, Illinois 60201

Wilsonline is a servicemark of The H.W. Wilson Company. Religion Indexes on Wilsonline and Wilsondisc encompasses four American Theological Library Association (ATLA) publications, combined in a single database: Religion Index One: Periodicals 1949-59 and 1975 - (RIO), Religion Index Two: Multi-Author Works 1960- (RIT), Research in Ministry 1981 - (RIM), and Index to Book Reviews in Religion 1975 - (IBRR).

These Days,¹⁶ and Harry Emerson Fosdick: Preacher, Pastor, Prophet.¹⁷

Other Sources

In the quest for sources and information for the project/dissertation, I personally interviewed a few dozen people. This included pastors, laity, and staff members of local churches known for prayer ministry. I also interviewed J. Steven Harper, seminary professor.¹⁸ Dr. Harper shared a bibliography of prayer and spiritual life resources that he developed. The results of the interviews are mainly found in Chapter 4 of the project/dissertation.

Biblical Foundations

Considering the wealth of material related to prayer that is found in the Bible, it is difficult to point to any particular pericope of scripture and say "this is the foundation for prayer ministry." In attempting to locate pertinent scriptures for the preaching/teaching phase of the project, I found II Chronicles 7:14, Matthew 6:5-15 and Colossians 1:1-14 to be helpful. Each scripture has something to say

¹⁶Fosdick, Harry Emerson. The Living of These Days. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956.

¹⁷Miller, Robert Moats. Harry Emerson Fosdick: Preacher, Pastor, Prophet. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

¹⁸Harper, J. Steven. Professor of Spiritual Formation and Wesley Studies at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky.

about personal and corporate prayer. Chapter 3 of the dissertation elucidates these foundations and makes application of them in prayer ministry.

Conclusion

Resources concerning prayer and local church prayer ministry are not difficult to find. The difficulty may arise in sorting through the vast materials related to prayer and choosing those appropriate to your interest and context. In my search of related literature, I did not find any direct resources applying Harry Emerson Fosdick's book The Meaning of Prayer as a case model for spiritual renewal in the local church.¹⁰ I do not consider this a hindrance to the development of the project. Since the project basically critiques Fosdick's work as a prayer manual, the absence of other literature is not critical. Therefore, I chose primary resources in the area of local church prayer ministry, prayer in general, contemplative prayer that I could use and adapt to my teaching context.

¹⁰Fosdick, The Meaning of Prayer.

CHAPTER 3

Exegesis

The Bible remains the authoritative guide for Christian life and witness for many Christians. Therefore, it is imperative to consult the canon of scripture for direction in local church prayer ministry. The Bible has much to say about prayer. It would be far beyond the scope of this dissertation to exegete very many passages.

However, a few are noted to show elements in my exegesis how the scripture was relevant to prayer ministry. I have selected three passages, one from the Old Testament and two from the New Testament. These passages became foundational scriptures for a series of sermons preached as part of the overall prayer emphasis month at Arcadia.

This Chapter will examine the passages in terms of background, a relatively brief exegesis and application for prayer ministry.

The first passage to be examined is II Chronicles 7:14,

"if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land." (II Chronicles 7:14 NIV)

Chronicles belongs to a section of the Old Testament that seeks to relate history from Adam to the time of

Cyrus, King of Persia. In the Hebrew Masoretic Texts, Chronicles is found in single volumes and usually placed in parallel to Genesis, II Kings and Ezra-Nehemiah. Also, Chronicles would be placed as the last text in the canon. When the book was translated into the Greek Septuagint it needed almost twice the space since Hebrew texts contained no vowels.

Practically, the book was placed where we find it today, before Ezra and Nehemiah. The Hebrew meaning of Chronicles is "things of the days" or "events of past times." It was Jerome who when translating the Vulgate edition first used the title "Chronicle."¹

Evidence in the text of Chronicles indicated authorship being heavily influenced by the Priestly Code or writer P as often called by textual critics. Specifically, the Priestly writer had a stated interest in building a concrete pattern for Temple worship for the Jewish congregation. Moreover, the use of the term LORD to describe our deity is a term of expression used often by the Priestly Code writer(s).² With this background in mind, let us now turn our attention toward a brief exegesis of this passage.

The Hebrew word translated "prayer" in this sentence is פָּלַל (palil) which means to give

¹The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible. 5 vols. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962, 1:572-573.

²Ibid, 574.

judgment, or estimation to one's life or situation and to change course.³ There are four conditions in the statement that invite scrutiny. First, a recognition of identity. God says "my people, who are called by my name." God seems to say the first step to reconciliation after estrangement from the Heavenly Father is to simply remember who you are! You are God's son or God's daughter. So the first step to reconciliation when you have stepped astray is to recognize that you are God's. Secondly, after this recognition comes the approach to humility. To recognize that you are God's, is to recognize who is the Creator and the created. To do so leads to an experience of awe, respect and humility in approach.

The next condition is seeking the face of God. The people are clearly told they shall seek God. This is a call for communion, for fellowship, for worship, for holiness. This is a call beyond the Temple, beyond the Levite Priest, this is a call to seek God. No less than a wish to seek God will do! Finally, understanding who we are and humbly seeking God are the prerequisites to a genuine conversion, "turn from their wicked ways." The word "turn" is rich in the meaning

³Harris, R. Laird, Archer, Gleason L. and Waltke, Bruce K. eds., Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. 2 vols. Chicago: Moody Press, 1980, 2: 726-727.

of repentance, understood to change directions, go a different way. Beyond all the feasts, sacrifices of many animals and earthly show, God strongly communicates to Solomon his wish for genuine human conversion.

As God senses the sincerity of the individual or corporate response to his plan, he then promises to make things right. He makes three specific promises. First, God promises to hear the prayer of the petitioner. This statement, taken alone and literally, could lead one to the mistaken impression of a distant and pouting God. But, placed alongside the larger Old Testament view, one can develop a balanced interpretation. Surely, the God who brooded over the waters or who habitated with Moses on Sinai or who sought Adam in the Garden is not confined to hearing only from heaven. Maybe the text graphically states the sober view God takes of a creation that might be tempted to casually offer sacrifice at the Temple in lieu of authentic worship.

Another way to view his promise to hear is to hear it in terms of a promise. Rather than see it as hard hearted or overly conditional, a more comforting view would be of a real promise to hear our prayers, if we will move to God in a repenting manner. This could be understood as a promise of comfort to the sincere

repenter. Secondly, God promises to "forgive their sins." It should be noted again, how easy it is in Western Civilization to slip into a preference for the individual interpretation response. However, all the texts we are examining here are for a faith community. God was speaking to a nation through their leader Solomon. God is asking for "his people" to make such responses. This brings forth the plural response from God, "forgive their sins." As God hears and is moved to forgive, so the logical consequence of hearing and forgiving happens, that is healing. In this case, the third promise is the healing of the land. This is an obvious referral to the "droughts, plagues." Now let us examine the relevance of this text for prayer ministry.

In this passage, we discover how sincerely God wants an authentic relationship with people. He desires worship that is genuine and clearly gives the faith community an opportunity for prayer, supplication, repentance and refraining from sin. Prayer is a medium for this to happen.

For the individual, this text speaks to the importance of involvement in the community of faith, in worship, in prayer and in genuine service and life. About individual spiritual leadership, we note how God first spoke with Solomon, the individual leader of

these people. Indeed, II Chronicles 7:17 and following deals specifically with the fidelity that God calls for in his leaders. God is holding the leader responsible for communicating his vision of a faithful community. To those of us who feel called to leadership in prayer ministry, this passage teaches us that our leadership implies more than having fun and getting our caring strokes. God expects us to clearly share his vision of a mature, sincere and whole community. This text reminds us of the serious nature of our calling and position as guides and friends of others.

Prayer groups may wish to outline II Chronicles 7:14 as a means of prayer. It could be very helpful to examine identity, humility, holiness and repentance as channels for reflection and action. After a time of moving through these areas, the group could joyfully claim the hearing, forgiving, healing presence of God in their lives. Prayer groups could also use the stories in surrounding chapters to study the emergence and importance of community worship in Hebrew life. A good question would be, "How should prayer find its way in our community life today?"

Prayer counselors as an integral part of local church prayer ministry could, when proper, use the same formula to help people who need to confront moral decay in their lives. After trust is established in the

counseling relationship, the counselor may wish to have the person read II Chronicles 7:14 silently. After a time of meditation, the counselor may ask the person what struck him or her personally. Then, they are asked to read the same scripture again, slowly, meaningfully. After some time, invite the counselee to make an application to him/herself. End by inviting a final reading. After this, encourage the person to share aloud and directly to God any spontaneous prayers that come naturally and seem waiting to be shared. This is a modified version of a group dynamic called "Praying the Scriptures" described by Suzanne Braden and Shirley Clement in Small Groups: Getting Started.⁴

The second passage to be explored is, Matthew 6:5-15...

"5 But 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 men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. 6 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. 9 This is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10 Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily

⁴Braden, Suzanne G. and Clement, Shirley F. Small Groups: Getting Started. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1989, 25-26.

bread. 12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." 14 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

The traditional view is the first gospel was written by Matthew a disciple of Jesus. There is some disagreement among New Testament scholars regarding, whether the Levi mentioned in the other synoptics is really the Matthew we discuss. In Matthew the equivalence of Matthew and Levi are made, but seemingly not in Mark or Luke. After reading in this area, I am under the conviction they are one in the same. Perhaps, one name or the other is an endearment much like Simon/Peter. Matthew is the first of the gospels in the traditional order, but it is not believed to be the first one written. Matthew appears to have been influenced by Mark and the source known as Q. The only strong ancient evidence regarding Matthew being first is attributed to Papias who was quoted by Eusebius in his Church History. Most Bible scholars place the date of the gospel between 95-115 A.D. According to F.C. Grant, the gospel seems to have received only a minimum of textual change through the centuries. The use of

the Beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer, Passion Narrative have prevailed over parallels in the other gospels.⁵

And now let us briefly exegete this passage. Matthew 6:5 does not condemn prayer in the synagogue or public place. It condemns those whose only motivation is to be "seen by men."⁶ Jesus chooses this illustration to declare the worst motivation for prayer, that of garnering attention to the self. The Greek word translated "prayer" six times in this passage is *προσευχῆμαι* (proseuchomai). It denotes prayer in general and is used without further qualification.⁷ In the next verse of this passage we see that God is not limited to a public display to see or hear our prayers. The unseen God is aware of unseen prayers. In this statement, we also find Jesus introducing a term of prayer that is not found in the Old Testament and does not have parallels in the First Century. This is the term "abba" which is the child like form of father, or daddy. Just as an earthly father is to be enjoyed in terms of present relationship, so God wishes the constant communion of his creation.

⁵ I.D.B., op. cit. Vol. 3. 301-303.

⁶ Albright, W.F. and Mann, C.S. The Anchor Bible. Matthew. 44 vols. Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1971, 26: 75.

⁷ Ibid.

The next few verses caution against vain repetitions of prayer. Vain because a loving God already knows, it is just needless. Beginning with Matthew 6:9 and following we have the Lord's Prayer. Beginning with a plea to hallow God's name the prayer continues with a strong Kingdom of God motif.⁸ Verse 6:11 is a petition for a basic need, bread. This verse helps us to recognize God as the source of our basic needs.

A second petition is given in 6:12 as a request for forgiveness and a promise is also made to forgive. The Aramaic perfect in this verse could be interpreted to mean "as we hearwith forgive." An action taken before, a recognition of our will to forgive, done in good faith in the present and as a witness to the coming Kingdom.⁹

The last verse of the model prayer is a request to spare being led into temptation and a requests to be spared from the evil one. This recognizes that temptation is a possibility but petitions God to not allow us to experience such a trial. Scholars vary on the last part of 6:13, some translate this to mean

⁸Greulich, Ronald. "A Survey of the Teaching of Prayer in the New Testament" B.D. thesis., Asbury Theological Seminary., 1958, 6.

⁹Ibid, 196.

"evil" while others say "evil one." Perhaps as Ronald Greulich concluded, "the effect is the same."¹⁰

In Matthew 6:14-15 we have an added admonition to forgive. God is portrayed as not willing to forgive those reluctant to forgive others. As God cancels our moral debt, we in thankfulness and humility should forgive others. The passage reminds us of the human tendency to forget and fall into self-righteous indignation of the failings of others. We are reminded that amazing grace is practiced from God to us and from us to others.¹¹

For the individual, this passage has a clear call to holiness in prayer. God is not amused by false piety, or religious displays to draw attention to one's self. In this passage, Jesus addresses the inward motivation of such "prayer." The passage gives clear direction for prayer life, a life free from needless repetitions and disfigurement. The individual is given a clear model for prayer, a model that puts God in a central hallowed position, that expects the joys of current relationship and yearns for the fulfillment of the Kingdom. This prayer helps the individual focus on daily dependence and sustenance from God and causes him or herself to confront their need to forgive. The plea

¹⁰Greulich, Ronald, op. cit., 10-11.

¹¹The Interpreters Bible. 12 vols. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956, 7:316.

for deliverance from temptation and evil reminds that God alone is our ultimate help from life's detractors. The individual clearly has a model that can be a great aid for a broad and focused prayer life. Care should be taken accordingly to not calcify this model and deplete it of life.

Groups wanting to pray and to study prayer have a rich resource in this passage. The passage is the pinnacle Christian resource of prayer. The narrative lends itself to a short-term course on prayer. It can also be used in other teaching and preaching situations. This is a passage that should be used in confirmation classes. One overarching theme can be taught to groups from this passage is the unselfish nature of prayer. The pericope states, "Our Father, our daily bread, our debts, our debtors." The use of the plural here is striking. We are not to say I and my, but "our."¹²

Terry Tekyl of Aldersgate United Methodist Church in College Station, Texas suggests using the Lord's Prayer as an index prayer. Tekyl explains:

"Our Father which are in heaven, hallowed be thy Name." Begin your prayer time with the understanding that God is a father to Jesus the Son. Now exalt God. And meditate on God's other wonderful names or images. Set them apart in your heart. "They Kingdom

¹²Fosdick, Harry Emerson. The Meaning of Prayer. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989, 169.

come." Pray for God's Kingdom to be established. Seek God's reign of peace in homes torn by strife. "Thy will be done." Pray that someone will come to Christ. This is God's will. Pray for God's justice in a war-torn world. This is God's will. Next, "Give us our daily bread." Pray about your personal needs. Pray for those who hunger for food. Pray for the church's ministry to be amply supplied. This manner of prayer could go on and on. The point is to take the Lord's Prayer, or any other prayer (e.g. David's prayer in I Chronicles 29:10-13) and expand on it in your personal prayer time. The prayers of the Bible teach prayer. The Bible is a marvelous prayer manual for teaching us in our approach to the presence of God."¹³

Tekyl's suggestion lends itself to personal and group ministry. I would especially commend the use of this model in a group because I discovered through the pre-test random survey of Arcadia United Methodist, that many people do not believe the Bible is a good source to learn about prayer.

The third passage to explore is Colossians 1:1-14:

"1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, 2 To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse: Grace and peace to you from God our Father. 3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints, 5 the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel 6 that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is producing fruit and growing, just as it

¹³Tekyl, Terry. Pray and Grow: Evangelism Prayer Ministries. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1988, 36.

has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. 7 You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, 8 and who also told us of your love in the Spirit. 9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. 10 And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, 11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. 13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

Evidence suggests that Colossians was widely accepted as canonical as early as 200 A.D., most notably by Irenaeus. The Apostolic Father also accepted Pauline authorship of the letter. There is disagreement among Biblical scholars regarding date and place of writing. Arguments exist for Caesarea, Ephesus and Rome. Suggestions for the date the book was written range from 50-75 A.D.¹⁴

A brief exegesis of this passage will be followed with an application from the text. In Colossians 1:3 the apostle prays and thanks God for what he has given the Christian community and Paul intercedes on behalf

¹⁴I.D.B. op. cit. vol. 1 658.

of the Colossian faith community. This verse is often used as an authenticator of Pauline authorship since it is nearly identical to Romans 1:8.¹⁵

Verses 4-8 of the text comment on what Paul has heard about this church and how the news of its faithfulness has moved him to thanksgiving. In 1:9 Paul is moved to intercede on their behalf in prayer to the Lord. Specifically, he asks that the Church know the will of God. This will be done through the revealing nature of God, spiritual wisdom and understanding. Paul not only desires knowledge be given the Colossians but "all spiritual wisdom." Here is a call to mature as faithful servants, a maturity given through spiritual revelation and faithfully seeking the will of God and standing on a tradition of an apostolic gospel.¹⁶

In Colossians 1:10 a continued strong intercession for the maturity of the saints is declared. A life that is worthy, pleasing and making a difference is desired by Paul for this local church. There is a strong creation theme present in the phrase bearing fruits. This is reminiscent of the Creation story where humanity is directed to "bear fruit and

¹⁵Lohse, Eduard. Hermeneia. 66 vols. Colossians. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971, 14-15.

¹⁶Clark, Gordon H. Colossians Jefferson: The Trinity Foundation, 1979, 13.

multiply." The true gospel will do both aspects, build a life that is worthy and pleasing and one that makes a difference, bears fruit.

In verses 11-12 of this text a shift of thought is occurring. The text no longer has introductory language. Instead, a shift to the liturgical language of prayer is developed. Paul is obviously caught up in the contemplation of the grace of God. This is similar to the beginning of the Epistle to the Ephesians. As Paul continues to make specific the direction of his intercession and encourages the church to let this lead them to thanking the "abba" who as a loving father has given them an inheritance as members of the family of light.¹⁷

The concluding two verses of Colossians 1:1-14 include a creed of faith. Paul pronounces that the community of people have been freed by the redemptive work of God. This is the fulfillment of the Lord's Prayer, "deliver us from evil." The phrase "in whom we have" connotes a present reality of forgiven and delivered life.¹⁸

The application for this passage will be restricted to group ministry instead of individual direction, although the individual would profit in his

¹⁷The Interpreters Bible op. cit. vol. 11, 158.

¹⁸Hermeneia op. cit., 39.

prayer life by reading and contemplating the great themes of this passage. The reason should be clear. Paul was addressing a community of faith in this passage and speaks of God's acts for this community.

The first application from this text would be to acknowledge the profound power of intercession. Harry Emerson Fosdick called this the "revelation of intercession." This means the peculiar blessing people experience when you reveal you have been praying for them. To illustrate his point, Fosdick uses the passion narrative of Luke 22:31-34 involving Jesus and Peter. Jesus reveals to Peter that Satan had asked to have him. However, Jesus says he interceded on Peter's behalf. Fosdick muses, "put yourself in Peter's place and see what the revelation of the Master's love, expressed in secret intercession, must have meant to him."¹⁹

What did it mean to the Colossian church to know the Apostle Paul was interceding for them? It was a strong motivator to have an Apostle praying for your spiritual growth and maturity. The revelation of intercession says you are loved, you are worthy, you are being taken to God in the secret place.

What does the "revelation of intercession" mean for those giving leadership in group and intercessory

¹⁹Fosdick, Harry Emerson, op. cit., 173.

prayer ministry? Perhaps, a sense of the importance of their ministry. A sensitive prayer leader may know when it is proper and timely to reveal their intercession. They can use it at just such a time as Christ, to lift the spirit of one like Peter. Or like Paul, to encourage further maturity of the group.

One practical way to practice the revelation of intercession is Ten-a-Week Plan. I have know about this plan and have used it for some time. I do not have the source of its origin. This is a prayer ministry. Each Friday, our Church Secretary goes through our membership roll and chooses ten individuals. She is attentive to choose a good mix of young and old, new member and long-standing, active and inactive, community based and out of state. These persons receive a post card from her the next day. On this card she states that she has chosen them to be carried by the Pastor on a 3 x 5 card all during the coming week. They are told the Pastor will remember them daily in prayer. They are told the Pastor will spend a special hour in prayer for them the coming Friday. If they have needs or thanksgivings they would like to share, they will contact the Pastor on Sunday or during the week. After the Pastor's prayer time on Friday, a new group is chosen for the coming week.

I have discovered the revelation of intercession helped to strengthen my ministry. Persons with whom I have not developed a close pastoral relationship are coming to me and sharing from their lives. I have been faithful to carry the card and to pray daily for them and have been faithful to follow through with the special hour on Friday.

Beyond the beauty of the revelation of intercession, groups would do well to examine exactly what Paul was praying for when he wrote the Colossians. He thanked God for their faith in Christ and for the love they had for one another. Although this is highly commendable, Paul continued to pray for them and ask God to fill them with knowledge of his will and for spiritual wisdom and understanding. He prayed they might live lives pleasing to God. In summing up, he prayed they continue in their growth and maturity, thanking God for his mighty act of redemption.

To conclude, I have sought to present basic exegesis of the three passages examined and show how these texts might be used in a local church prayer ministry. The passages have much to teach for individual and group life, and for the larger community of the church.

CHAPTER 4

Models of Local Church Prayer Ministry

In the course of conceiving and designing the project, I was confronted with the problem that I had never had a course in prayer. I had not read that many books on prayer nor served or attended a local church known for its prayer ministries. How could I lead Arcadia in this area with such a weak background? I observed how ironic it is that as a United Methodist pastor I often led persons in the vows of church membership one of which is upholding the church with prayer. And yet, despite this being a common vow I and others seldom teach or model how to pray.

Therefore, in an attempt to understand the process of developing a local church prayer ministry I began to interview churches that had established track records in this area. I developed a list of names from several sources. First, from J. Steven Harper, seminary professor.¹ Next, from my own personal observations of churches involved in this area. Steve Harper's book Prayer Ministry in the Local Church also provided strong impetus for gaining awareness and insight into

¹Harper, J. Steven. Professor of Spiritual Formation and Wesley Studies at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky.

just what churches were doing. In his chapter entitled, "How Shall We Pray?" Harper spoke to me when he said:

"Therefore one important emphasis in the ministry of the church will be helping persons establish and grow in their life of prayer. In most cases this will be the responsibility of the pastor. He must begin by personally growing in his own life of prayer, and then out of his experiences he can lead others to fruitful prayer."

and again:

"Rather than looking at the prayer ministry of the church as a whole we must look at segments of it and see where and in what specific way we must begin. In our own church, for example, I felt led to begin by preaching a series of messages on prayer and encouraging interested persons to begin a reading program on prayer. It was out of this two months of preaching and supplemental reading that God began to expand our vision and call us to new ministries."²

These words spoke to my context and burden for my church. By discovering how others developed prayer ministries and sustained them I could receive practical and theoretical mentoring. Moreover Harper helped me to see that by using preaching and teaching I could use these two mediums to make a simple start in prayer ministry at Arcadia. For these reasons, a reservoir of of models would be helpful. In this chapter I will

²Harper, Steve. Prayer Ministry in the Local Church. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976, 18.

describe several of the churches that I interviewed. I will describe their prayer ministries. Specifically, how these ministries evolved and who were the major persons and resources involved in the growth of prayer ministry. At the conclusion of the chapter, I will share how information gleaned from these models was used in the project/dissertation.

Church of the Trinity, Mobile, Alabama

The Church of the Trinity, Mobile, Alabama is a growing spiritually alive congregation. The congregation of nearly 200 persons is made up of an eclectic mix of people formerly of other denominations and backgrounds. Mixed in are an assortment of persons mainly in the age 20-45 bracket who are converts to Christianity and are actively being disciplined by the members of the church. The church meets in a converted warehouse with flexible seating and worship space. Church of the Trinity is pastored by Dewey Fleming a retired United Methodist pastor and is governed by a Board of Elders. This board has three members currently, of which one is the pastor. The board must be in complete agreement before any direction is taken on behalf of the whole church. The board makes most of the major decisions of this congregation.

Although only in existence 31 months, the church is growing numerically and spiritually, especially in

the area of prayer ministry. I was fortunate enough to attend an evening worship service at this church and be personally blessed by the alive sense of Worship and the attention given to prayer ministry in the congregation. Afterwards, I sat down with the Elders of the church and interviewed them as to the prayer and spiritual ministries of the congregation.

Early in the existence of this new congregation, Pastor Fleming invited the congregation to study and reflect on the book Why Pray? by B.J. Willhite.³ Pastor Fleming reported the study lead to an overall sensitivity to personal and corporate prayer in the new church. Later, B.J. Willhite was invited to come and lead a weekend prayer teaching experience where he personally shared the contents of his book. From these early stirrings, an overall prayer ministry has developed.

The elders of the church meet monthly on a Saturday from 8:00 A.M. till Noon for prayer with the emphasis being placed on a clear direction for the church. The congregation has been divided into groups of 7 for a care group or shepherding plan. Instead of meeting for worship on a certain Sunday night of the month, the care groups are encouraged to meet. A Lay

³Willhite, B.J. Why Pray? Altamonte Springs: Creation House, 1988.

Shepherd has charge of the spiritual care of his group. At the Sunday night meeting, the emphasis is on small group prayer.

As with any church developing prayer ministries, occasionally some fail. Specifically, at the Church of the Trinity is was a model to have everyone meet at the church for a one hour period twice a week to pray. After a modest start, this model proved to only attract a few people that were basically involved in other praying ministries. Rather than feel defeated, the church simply admitted this was not appropriate for their context and sat out to discover other paths.

Other praying ministries include the entire church gathering on one Sunday night per month for a service of prayer and praise. At this service, the elders will anoint with oil any person who request it. (cf. James 5:14). Another area of prayer ministry is in the whole area of using prayer to help persons visualize themselves in the presence of God as an act of worship. Elder Bill Roberson described this process as much like a guided prayer experience. As Elder Roberson described this ministry I was taken at how closely it resembled the Jewish understanding of the Hebrew shechinah (presence of God) and kavanah (attention to the presence of God). Seemingly, the leadership of this church was using guided prayer imagery to help

worshippers experience the presence of God and then by the same model allowing them to give reverent attention to that presence.⁴

According to Pastor Fleming, the Church of the Trinity is a Church whose members pray routinely for the ongoing ministries and worship services of the church. The development of a wholesale prayer consciousness at this church has led to a burden for the future of the people of the City of Mobile. I was impressed with this Church really having a burden over the quality of life experienced by the people of the City, both spiritual and temporal.

Pastor Fleming credits what he calls "the radical books" with shaking him from his lethargy and leading him to prayer and prayer leadership. He related as to how he read standard and classic works of prayer through the years and how he agreed with each but it still did not lead him towards an active prayer life. He labeled in a praiseworthy way what he calls the new radical genre of prayer literature. He specifically lifted up three works that were seminal in his change of heart. They are This Present Darkness,⁵ Destined

⁴Heschel, Abraham Joshua. God in Search of Man. New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1955. 156 & 314.

⁵Peretti, Frank E. This Present Darkness. Westchester: Crossway Books, 1986.

for the Throne,⁶ Why Pray?,⁷ and Could you not Tarry one Hour?⁸ Each of these books would have in common a radical call to prayer as a lifestyle and way to be in complete obedience to God. They also deal in varied approaches to prayer motivation, how to pray, the point of praying and models of praying.

The Church of the Trinity is an example of a new multi-denominational church that incorporated prayer as a central thrust of congregational life at its founding.⁹

Church on the Rock, Rockwall, Texas

Larry Lea first had experience in large church ministry as an associate at a charismatic Southern Baptist Church in Dallas in the early 1970's. Later that decade he spent a few years as a travelling charismatic evangelist. In the late 1970's he moved back to his hometown of Kilgore, Texas and came under the prayer mentoring of B.J. Willhite, an Assembly of God minister. This is the same individual who had a positive impact in developing prayer ministry at the aforementioned Trinity Church. For a few years they

⁶Billheimer, Paul. Destined for the Throne. Ft. Washington: Christian Literature Crusade, 1988.

⁷Willhite. op. cit.

⁸Lea, Larry. Could you not Tarry one Hour? Rockwall: Larry Lea Ministries. 1984.

⁹Interview with Dewey Fleming, Bill Roberson, Conan Davis of the Church of the Trinity, Mobile, Alabama, 21 October, 1989.

prayed each morning at 6:00 A.M. together. In 1980 Larry Lea believed God was calling him to establish a church in Rockwall, a suburb of Dallas. Heeding this call, the Church on the Rock was founded in January of 1980. On the first Sunday, the Church met in a roller skating rink. There were 200 in attendance on the inaugural Sunday.

Today the Church on the Rock meets in a new auditorium that seats 10,000 people. In 1985 alone the Church won 3500 new members. The membership at the end of 1989 had approached 7000 members. Now a regional church, the Church on the Rock attracts members within a 100 mile radius of the Dallas-Ft.Worth metroplex. During this time, Larry Lea and the church staff and lay leadership have worked very hard to insure that the church remains the church and not just a large convention or gathering of people. Dr. Jerry Howell, Minister of Evangelism and Prayer relates that intentional programs of koinonia, discipleship and pastoral care have been implemented. The church is governed by Larry Lea and a Body of Elders.

Prayer and care have been foundational/organizing principles for the Church on the Rock. From the onset, pre-service prayer of 30 minutes before worship services was occurring. After the church grew so large and then needed to schedule additional services, the

pre-service prayer was eliminated for practical reasons. Now the church has morning prayer meetings through the week and then on Saturday evening to fill the need to undergird the church and world with prayer.

At 5:00 A.M. each weekday morning, persons gather in the prayer chapel for personal prayer. At 6:00 A.M. the lights are gently turned up and a praise worship leader begins to lead the pray-ers in praise worship songs. The emphasis now is on corporate prayer. Dr. Howell relates that in the Church on the Rock's way of thinking "praise is the highest form of prayer."

Dr. Howell begins to lead the corporate prayer service after some twenty minutes of spiritited praise singing. Using what he terms a revelational prayer style, Dr. Howell begins to guide the faithful into focusing on the areas of prayer he feels the Holy Spirit is leading him to declare. This ordinarily roughly follows a Lord's Prayer model that encompasses the covenant names of Jehovah as described in the Old Testament. Larry Lea developed this model and it is thoroughly described in his foundational text Could you not Tarry one Hour?¹⁰

The Friday morning corporate prayer meeting is personally led by Larry Lea. This meeting is nationally televised. On Saturday evening a similar

¹⁰Lea, op. cit.

model takes place in the sanctuary of the church and is led by Dr. Howell or another associate. The substance of this meeting is similar in style to the other prayer meetings except in closure. At the end of this meeting the prayers of the faithful focus on the upcoming Sunday slate of services, the church staff and all of the laity. They pray for first time visitors and a full outpouring of the Holy Spirit to move and descend on the Church again. Moreover, they pray for each activity or ministry happening within the church that week.

Prayer services are so intertwined with the ongoing worship of the church that the concept of special prayer groups is almost foreign. Although a few ladies prayer groups exist, the focus at Church on the Rock is to so integrate prayer into the lives of people and worship services that such groups aren't needed. There also are some regional prayer meetings led by laity trained in the prayer concepts of Larry Lea that lead meetings in the Dallas-Ft.Worth regional area.

Care has also been intentionally developed at the Church on the Rock. The Church follows a care group model whereby members are placed in small geographical care cells or in care cells that meet a special interest or need, i.e. singles. These home cells are

not primarily prayer groups although prayer is important and utilized in each group. They are primarily care and teaching centers. Much of the ongoing pastoral care is given in these groups by cell group leaders called "touch pastors." A regional pastor supervises several touch pastors. The regional pastor is trained to offer more enhanced pastoral skills as needed by his wards. Each associate pastor on the staff of the Church on the Rock supervises several regional pastors. Dr. Howell relates that C. Peter Wagner was instrumental in helping them develop this pastoral care model.¹¹

When asked what resources were essential in preparing for local church prayer ministry, Dr. Howell first suggested all of the current publications of his Senior Minister, Larry Lead. In addition to these books, he suggested reading and implementing the teachings of the following books and authors. Dr. Howell said they were foundational to his own development. They are: Power Through Prayer,¹²

¹¹Wagner, C. Peter. Leading Your Church to Growth. Ventura: Regal Books, 1984.

¹²Bounds, E.M. Power Through Prayer. London: Marshall Brothers, 1912.

Purpose in Prayer,¹³ The Hour That Changes the World,¹⁴ and Why Pray?¹⁵

The Church on the Rock is the paramount example of the modern charismatic church built on the foundations of prayer ministry and pastoral care.¹⁶

Highland Park United Methodist Church, Dallas, Texas

Dr. Leighton Farrell is the Senior Pastor of the 10,000 member Highland Park United Methodist Church, in Dallas, Texas. The church is located near the campus of Southern Methodist University. A large, expansive gothic structure serves as the church building. An upper room near the bell tower serves as the church's prayer ministry center. To understand more about the prayer ministry of this congregation, I interviewed Rev. Dudley Dancer, who is Minister of Pastoral Care and Prayer.

In recent years the prayer ministry of this congregation was revitalized largely through the efforts of one individual. Mrs. Adele Hatcher discovered the room adjacent to the bell tower was being used for storage. She dreamed this room could be

¹³ Bounds, E.M. Purpose in Prayer. New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1920.

¹⁴ Eastman, Dick. The Hour That Changes the World. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978.

¹⁵ Willhite, op. cit.

¹⁶ Interview with Dr. Jerry Howell, Minister of Evangelism and Prayer, Church on the Rock, Rockwall, Texas, 23 October 1989.

used for a prayer tower. She dreamed this room could be transformed into a 24 hour a day prayer room and ministry center. She shared her ideas with the church leadership and the prayer tower ministry began.

Some 200 trained intercessors work in this ministry. Each day, an individual staffs the prayer tower from 7:00 A.M. until 10:00 P.M. At the latter hour the last person dials the next person using call forwarding, hence the ministry is staffed throughout the night. The range of individuals involved goes from teenagers to a 91 year old woman. A third of the intercessors are members of other Dallas area churches. These individuals from other churches have taken this model to their home church. This particular model is now being used by several Dallas area churches.

Rev. Dancer leads a weekend retreat for each adult Sunday School class in his church each year. During these retreats he discovers and recruits most of the intercessors for this ministry. In addition, special training events are held two times a year for those in prayer ministry. In order to adequately thank those involved, Highland Park hosts an annual appreciation banquet for volunteers.

The intercessors also serve as conduits for the ongoing care ministries of the church. Each hour an intercessor calls three homebound members of the

church. Any information the intercessor thinks should be passed on to the pastoral counseling staff is noted. This helps the pastoral counseling staff know who is entering the hospital or if other needs exist.

Those involved in Highland Park's prayer ministry do not do crisis counseling. The church has pastoral counselors on twenty four hour call who immediately respond to crisis calls. Highland Park's philosophy is prayer intercessors should give themselves to this ministry only.

When asked what affect the prayer ministry had on the people of Highland Park, Rev. Dancer replied "assurance." Further questioning revealed assurance meant there was a widespread conviction the church legitimately cares for its people. Members have confidence if a crisis does arise, the church will be there to assist them.

Rev. Dancer has used several books of prayer to draw personal strength and guidance for prayer ministry. Those that have been useful in training intercessors and specifically beneficial to this ministry are; The Meaning of Prayer¹⁷ A Guide to

¹⁷Fosdick, Harry Emerson. The Meaning of Prayer. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989.

Daily Prayer,¹⁸ Living Reminder,¹⁹ Out of the Depths:
Studies Into the Meaning of the Book of Psalms.²⁰

Highland Prk United Methodist Church gives example to a large mainline church developing prayer ministry along a single strategy. Highland Park has implemented their strategy well. Using a simple plan, persons are involved in a prayer ministry that permeates their congregation and beyond with the care of Christ. ²¹

First United Methodist Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Located in the historic downtown district of Tulsa, First United Methodist church is witnessing a thorough renaissance of spiritual life. Local church leaders trace the development of prayer ministry and spiritual vitality back to the appointment of Dr. L.D. Thomas, Jr. as pastor. Today, the nearly 7000 member congregations blessed to have nine prayer strategies. To gain insight into the prayer life of this congregation, I interviewed Harriet Thomas, widow of Dr. Thomas and Rev. Stan Beason, Minister of Pastoral Care on the church staff.

¹⁸Barclay, William. A Guide to Daily Prayer. New York: Harper & Row, 1962.

¹⁹Nouwen, Henri J.M. Living Reminder. New York: Seabury Press, 1977.

²⁰Anderson, Bernard. Out of the Depths: Studies Into The Meaning of the Book of Psalms. New York: Board of Missions, The United Methodist Church, 1970.

²¹Interview with Rev. Dudley Dancer, Minister of Pastoral Care and Prayer, Highland Park United Methodist Church, Dallas, Texas, 23 October 1989.

Dr. L.D. Thomas, Jr. was appointed to serve the ailing downtown church in the mid-1970's. Dr. Thomas had the vision of renewal for this congregation that involved ministries of prayer, wholeness and healing. Dr. Thomas laid the foundation for this renewal through the preaching of a series of sermons entitled, "Finding Wholeness through Divine Healing."²² After the foundation of interest and background was built through this sermon series, Dr. Thomas began recruiting and training lay leadership in prayer counseling. He also began to bring in other leaders of prayer and healing and have them conduct workshops in his church. As Harriet Thomas forcibly said, "We believe in the ministry of the laity."

Today the congregation has nine areas of prayer and healing/counseling ministries. Annually, people from the congregation and from all over the United States come to take the training offered at First United Methodist Church. Let us now take a descriptive look at these ministries.

The first is called counseling prayer ministry. Teams of two or husband and wife teams are organized and trained. This ministry is as it sounds. The teams offer counsel through prayer. They deal with subjects

²² Thomas, Dr. L.D. Finding Wholeness Through Divine Healing. (Tulsa, Oklahoma: First United Methodist Church, n.d.), cassette series.

such as the healing of painful memories and issues such as forgiveness. Currently, over two hundred teams function through this church.

Another ministry is professional pastoral counseling. This is ministered by the ordained pastoral care staff of the church. Next, there are healing prayer teams. These are teams of two to three people who meet by appointment with those desiring healing. They usually pray and minister for physical healing. These teams will visit hombound members and hospital or sick rooms.

There exist an intercessory prayer group that meets each week and receives requests from the congregation and community. Also, there are over sixteen rayer chains functioning throughout the congregation. Still another aspect of the prayer ministry of First United Methodist Church includes the numerous Twelve Step groups that function to meet human and spiritual need.²³

Rounding out the ministries there are group counseling, a prayer list given to classes and groups/testing assessment ministries. It was clear from the interview that particular strengths in the process at First United Methodist Church were a caring

²³Alcoholics Anonymous. New York: Alcoholics Anonymous Services International, 1939.

pastoral department secretary who seemed exceptionally skilled in referring persons to the area of prayer and care ministry they needed. And in the broader arena, a well recruited and trained department of pastoral care.

Both Rev. Beason and Mrs. Thomas agree that churches looking to begin prayer ministry should start with one strategy. Next, learn to do that strategy well. They also emphatically added that openness and receptivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit was a must. Not only were these the two areas recommended, but looking back these were the two areas of beginning renewal for this church!²⁴

Bandana United Methodist Church, Bandana, Kentucky

Bandana United Methodist church is some one hundred believers who make their home in rural Western Kentucky. Bandana is a small town of a few hundred in Ballard County which is largely a farming and agri-business area. When Pastor Don Jones arrived at Bandana in the mid-1980's, he found a church dealing with a high rate of pastoral turnover and congregational apathy.

The revival of this congregation began with Pastor Jones calling his church to prayer in order to ascertain the will and direction god had for Bandana.

²⁴ Interview with Stan Beason, Minister of Pastoral Care and Harriet Thomas, member, of First United Methodist Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 24 October 1989.

Many people responded to the call to gather at the church for prayer and discernment. Out of those initial prayer meetings Bandana marks the roots of revitalization.

In the past 5 years Bandana has shown spiritual and numerical growth. The church recently built and dedicated Sunday School classrooms and fellowship hall space. The sanctuary of the church has been remodeled and reconfigured to hold a growing congregation.

The prayer ministries of Bandana are few and simple but well interpreted and sustained. A monthly calendar is printed. Each day has a particular prayer focus and accompanying scriptural text. The entire membership is remembered and cared for through this medium. The church also has a simple printed form in order to take prayer requests and an intercessory prayer group regularly prays over these.

In the worship service of Bandana, significant time is given to prayer and prayer requests. Pastor Jones seems particularly adept at getting his people involved in prayer ministry, often in fetching ways. An example would be his taking a candle and lighting the candle and placing on the altar. he then asks his people to come and take the candle and hold it while sharing their requests to the congregation. Afterward, the candle is placed back on the altar. Minister and

congregation then pray. The lighted candle remains on the altar throughout the worship service.

The Bandana United Methodist Church is a good example of a small membership church that takes common prayer strategies and uses them well. Moreover, it is an example of a church that began its prayer ministry through a common meeting which stressed lamentation and repentance. That is to say, the church sought the forgiveness and indwelling power of God the Holy Spirit.²⁵

Centenary United Methodist Church, Lexington, Kentucky

The 2700 member Centenary United Methodist Church is a metropolitan-regional church located in Lexington, Kentucky. The Reverend Al Gwinn is Senior Pastor. I was fortunate enough to be able to interview Mrs. Betty Peterson, a layperson who is involved in the church's prayer ministries.

Mrs. Peterson is quick to give credit to the ministry of a former pastor, Reverend Sewell Woodard who helped get the church moving in prayer ministry. She also credits the teaching and presence of Margaret

²⁵ Interview with Don Jones, minister of the Bandana United Methodist Church, Bandana, Kentucky, August 12, 1989.

Therkelson as crucial to the establishment of and continuing vitality of their prayer ministries.²⁶ Centenary's prayer ministries are found in three basic areas. Let us briefly examine each ministry.

The Centenary Prayer Line has its telephone number prominently listed and centered on the worship bulletin. The unique feature here is the prayer line goes directly to the home of a member, Mrs. Betty Peterson who takes calls and records requests. Mrs. Peterson will pray with each person. When she is away a tape recording is in place to receive calls. When she returns, she promptly returns all calls.

Each day the church has a different prayer captain who will be telephoned by Mrs. Peterson and given the requests. This prayer captain will then pass these through a prayer chain in effect that day. Mrs. Peterson says she receives many requests on an average day. This model seems to work very well for Centenary.

Additional prayer ministries at Centenary include a Tuesday night prayer meeting. Men and women attend separate prayer groups at this Tuesday night event. Mrs. Peterson says this elicits more response from

²⁶Margaret Therkelson is a Marital and Family Counselor as well as Spiritual Director and Guide. She has a private practice and is a member of Centenary where he teaches a Sunday School Class and is active in the prayer and spiritual life of the church. Her address is 52 Mentelle Park, Lexington, Kentucky 40502

those in attendance who may have a request that is related to their spouse or their marriage but would be hesitant to share it with that spouse present. Also, the Centenary congregation is blessed with an early morning prayer time on Thursdays. The chapel of the church is opened for this occasion.

According to Mrs. Peterson, these ministries of prayer have had an impact on the life of the Centenary congregation. People and ministries have been undergirded with prayer. Some one hundred persons are now involved in some aspect of the church's prayer ministries.

The Centenary United Methodist Church provides an example of how a few prayer ministries can permeate a congregation with a sense of care and spiritual undergirding. Mrs. Peterson believes the church will continue to grow in prayer ministry offerings.²⁷

Sunrise United Methodist Church

Colorado Springs, Colorado

This church was organized in the north suburbs of Colorado Springs in the early 1980's. The first pastor was Rev. Jim Cowell who now heads new church development with the United Methodist General Board of

²⁷ Interview with Mrs. Betty Peterson, leader in prayer ministries, Centenary United Methodist Church, Lexington, Kentucky, 15 March 1990.

Discipleship.²⁸ The church now has the Rev. Ed Beck as its Senior Pastor. Rev. Beck came when the church was one year old. Now entering its second decade, Sunrise will receive its 1000th new member this year.

Rev. Beck has an intentional prayer ministry in his church that centers around a twice monthly service of healing. He prefers not to use the word healing, substituting wholeness instead. He believes the word healing is easily misunderstood due to responses he has received in his ministry context. During these services of healing/wholeness, Rev. Beck and lay and clergy staff leaders carefully follow the insights of James K. Wagner of the Upper Room Staff.²⁹

During these services, Beck and staff will use scripture, prayer and Holy Communion. This service is conducted just prior to the regular Sunday morning service. Rev. Beck reports persons come fresh from these meetings to join others in worship. He sees this service as an integral part of what the Sunrise United Methodist Church is all about. In many other areas of the church life, wholeness, fitness are emphasized. He would encourage anyone who is preparing for prayer

²⁸Rev. Jim Cowell, General Board of Discipleship, The United Methodist church, 1908 Grand Avenue, P.O. Box 840, Nashville, Tennessee 37202-0840

²⁹James K. Wagner is director of Healing Ministries with The Upper Room, The United Methodist Church, Board of Discipleship, 1908 Grand Avenue, Nashville, Tennessee 37202-0840

ministry to meet with the staff of the Upper Room for guidance and direction.

Sunrise gives example of churches that are integrating their concept of prayer ministry into a larger wholeness and wellness concept for their congregation. The use of Holy Communion also states a belief in the healing power of sacramental grace. Moreover, for Sunrise prayer ministry should flow directly into morning worship where those prayed may continue to be blessed/healed by the presence of God and encouraged with the message of the gospel.³⁰

Conclusion

The experience of interviewing churches with ministries of prayer was instructional. I was able to get an idea of what prayer ministry is and how to get started in my own congregation. By examining the ministries of other believers, I was able to save several steps in the process of launching and sustaining ministries. Among them are: don't begin with several ministries, begin with a few and do them well and radically depend on the Holy Spirit for guidance, revelation and insight.

Another area of insight was to discover some common traits among these diverse congregations.

³⁰ Interview with Rev. Ed Beck, Senior Minister, Sunrise United Methodist Church, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 23 February 1988.

Traits that churches with prayer ministries seem to have in common. The remainder of this conclusion will be a brief narrative of these traits.

The Common Traits of Churches with Prayer Ministries.

1. Pastor is either committed to prayer ministries or does not openly oppose them.

Most of the churches I interviewed were lead by pastors who actively nurtured and supported prayer ministries. Some of them helped to birth these ministries, while others nurtured those begun in previous pastorates. Only in a few situations were the pastors not directly involved in the prayer work of their congregations. In these situations the leadership of prayer ministry either fell to someone else or these pastors did not openly oppose this type of ministry. Although prayer ministries can be started, expanded and sustained by the laity of the church, the pastor's leadership is always helpful. Steve Harper speaks to the issue of the pastor's personal example of prayer life when he says, "If prayer is important to him, his people will not be long in discovering this. The power of personal example cannot be over-emphasized."³¹

³¹Harper, Steve. Prayer Ministry in the Local Church. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976, 25.

2. Open to the Leadership and Presence of the Holy Spirit.

Dr. Jerry Howell of the Church on the Rock asked me if there were Charismatics in my congregation in response to my question as to how to get started in prayer ministry. This was his way of determining if there were points of openness to the presence of God the Holy Spirit. Mrs. Harriet Thomas of First United Methodist Church in Tulsa asked the question directly, "Is your church open to the direction and leadership of the Holy Spirit?"

Whether in the interviews, or sensed through prayer and worship meetings, it was obvious to me these churches believe in a caring God who is near to them and who deeply wishes to act in their lives.

3. Use a Revelational Leadership Style in Prayer Meetings.

By revelational, I mean often completely listening for God the Holy Spirit to offer the next step, the next utterance or direction and tone for the meeting. Prayer meetings in these churches have an open, free and unstructured feel about them. Yet, I never felt as if the leaders in these meetings were unprepared or grappling for the next move. There was a smooth flow and transition from one aspect of the service to the

other. These leaders believe in a God who will reveal and lead.

4. Spend more time Praising God in Worship.

In each situation where I worshipped alongside the members of churches with praying ministries, I witnessed a greater amount of time being given to the praise of God in the worship services. This was accomplished by singing songs from the praise worship genre of hymnody, direct utterance of praise of God from the worship leaders, singing choruses of praise and eliciting testimonies of the love of God from the people. There seems to be a direct connection between the praise of God and our willingness to reach out to him in prayer. Peter Monkres alludes to this connection when he says:

"Prayer ripens in proportion to our ability to focus on God as the fundamental source of nurture in our lives. Therefore, the first step in teaching prayer is to create an environment in which people of faith can deepen their trust in God, receive the love that God offers and share it generously."³²

5. Have one to two People who Begin and Lead the Ministry.

I did not witness a single church that started their prayer ministries with a committee. These

³²Monkres, Peter R., "Teaching Prayer to the Congregation," The Christian Ministry. November-December 1987:20.

structures seemed to follow, but they did not exist at the beginning. Whether it was Dewey Fleming at Church of the Trinity or Larry Lea at Church on the Rock, some person, lay or clergy, caught a vision of a praying church. This leads me to understand that prayer ministries can be conceived, developed and lead in most churches regardless of size.

6. Each Church Began with one or two Prayer Ministries.

The common single thread of advice given me from each church was to begin with only one or two ministries. Although, most of these churches now have multiple ministries, they were developed only after several years of prayer work. The Church on the Rock began with 30 minutes of prayer before each worship service, and First United Methodist of Tulsa started training counseling prayer teams. The Bandana United Methodist Church began with a service of repentance and renewal. As ministries were blessed of God and matured, the leadership gradually began to understand the need for additional ministries. Each came at its own time and peculiar to the need of the actual context.

7. Increasing Prayer Ministries Increase Pastoral Care Ministries.

In each of the situations I researched, I discovered that as the churches grew in their prayer ministries they also were forced to expand their pastoral care ministries. Prayer ministries draw, and reveal the whole picture of human need. Many times the persons receiving prayer are in need of other services. This may come in the form of pastoral counseling, group therapy, social services and many more. The pastors of these churches report increased case loads in pastoral care. The church finds the need to hire additional pastoral care staff. Prayer ministry seems to ask the begging question, do you care enough to assist me at the point of my real life need?

In the process of interviewing these local churches, I was able to reflect on the connection of scripture and context for prayer ministry. Using the same verses exegeted in the prior chapter, I would like to share the correlative effect. A few brief samples follow.

At the Bandana United Methodist Church renewal began with corporate repentance. One cannot help but think of God's plea to Solomon. (c.f. II Chronicles 7:14). God issued the invitation to his people through Solomon to "turn from their wicked ways and seek my

face." Essentially this what the people of Bandana did.

The Church on the Rock grew rapidly during the 1980's. One of the primary prayer teachings that is taught each new member is a model of prayer using the Lord's Prayer. This charismatic congregation seeks to have a personal relationship with a living, ever present God. They believe their relationship with God affords them much joy in daily living. In my experience of interviewing their leaders and worshipping with members, I couldn't help but think about the use of the term "abba" in the Lord's Prayer. (c.f. Matthew 6:9.) The people of The Church on the Rock cry out to a loving God in such personal adoring ways. The church is a good example of a body of believers who exemplify the relationship that Jesus had in mind between God and humanity.

Tulsa's First United Methodist Church afforded me great hospitality. During the process of the interviews, I was extended every courtesy. The interest the staff showed in me and this work of prayer ministry was very gratifying. They were careful to take notes themselves of the work I planned to do in my own context. When they told me they would be praying for me, I had no doubt they would. Like the Colossians who were given the prayer encouragement of Paul, I felt

encouraged and challenged to go on toward maturity and service. (c.f. Colossians 1:9-12.)

Doing these interviews and research helped to equip me to plan for the project/dissertation. I gained leadership skills as well as practical advice on where to avoid the pitfalls. It helped me to understand the critical nature of the pastor's leadership in the matter of prayer ministry. The common traits that emerged were helpful in understanding what praying churches share. By coming to terms with these observations, I have been given a possible preview of the future of our church. The reader will see how this information was used in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER 5

Description of Project

This chapter will examine project development and implementation. The development of the project took one year, from January 1988 to January 1989. The implementation was conducted throughout the Lenten season of 1990. An exception to the Lenten implementation was the pre-test and post-test of the congregation using a questionnaire. The pre-test was conducted on a random sample of the congregation in October 1989 and the post-test conducted on actual respondents in October of the following year. It is hoped that this descriptive portrayal of the procedure will be beneficial to others planning local church prayer ministry. The following is a description of the preparation process. A brief description of the project implementation will conclude the chapter in favor of a detailed narrative alongside the evaluation chapter.

After the project proposal was approved in July of 1989, I took the completed proposal back to the Arcadia Congregation Reflection Group. This group had previously given input into the design and direction of the project. Now it was time to begin the final

preparation phase in order to commence the project in lent of 1990. This season was chosen by the group because it is a traditional time of spiritual reflection in our local church. Previous short-term studies had been taught during this period, so it seemed like a reasonable and traditional time to teach. I was to bring a questionnaire related to the project to field test with the group at our next monthly meeting.

Survey Development

The questionnaire was developed over a 30 day period. It was designed to give data relating to personal statistics of surveyee, their feelings concerning prayer and their prayer habits. Surveys are placed in the appendices portion of this dissertation. They reflect, in order, rough draft, pre-test and post-test questionnaires.

The personal data section elicited information concerning sex, marital status, age, vocation, and level of education. It also measured how long the respondent had been a Christian and how long they held membership at Arcadia. The last two questions were asked in order to reflect on any correlation between length of faith in Christ and prayer habits and beliefs. The concluding question of this section was

asked in order to determine any differences in habits between members of long standing and newcomers.

The second section of the questionnaire sought to measure the range of response to thirty statements about prayer. Using a range of 1-7, with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 7 indicating strong agreement. Numbers 2-6 indicated stratas of agreement-disagreement with 4 indicating neutral feeling. These questions reflected a broad spectrum of prayer conviction. It should be noted that feelings are hard to assess and very much are subject to fluctuation. The best I can report from this survey will be feelings about prayer.

The third core area of the survey measured the frequency of prayer. In addition, the selection of questions in area three dealt with personal prayer, prayer before meals, with family and during services of worship. The survey concludes with the completion of the third core area.

I was aided in the development of the questionnaire by several sources. A handout entitled "Learning From Bad Examples" given to me while taking the course Dissertation Writing and Field Research Method at Asbury was especially helpful.¹ The handout has various examples of poorly written and conceived

¹Doctor of Ministry Course, BB 820, Dissertation Writing and Field Research Method, Asbury Theological Seminary, January 9-13, 1989.

questions. In addition, I sent copies of the rough draft of the questionnaire to my advisor, Dr. Charles Killian, Dr. Maxie Dunnam and Dr. Steve Harper for their input.² Insights from these leaders were taken into the revision of the rough draft.

At this point, the questionnaire was field tested by the Congregational Reflection Group at Arcadia. Comments and suggestions from the group proved helpful in refining the questionnaire. The first suggestion was to take the measurement column and place to the right as a separate column. This helped add clarity to the document. The phrase "non-believers" in question 4 was changed to "non-Christians." This was done because the group felt everyone believed something, hence, no such thing as a non-believer.

Several other questions were re-worded, re-written to improve clarity and prevent double meanings or vague interpretation. You may compare the before and after questionnaires in the appendices section of the dissertation. Since the Congregational Reflection Group represented a pool of persons directly from the

²Dr. Charles Killian is Professor of Preaching, Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky and my academic advisor. Dr. Maxie Dunnam is the former editor of The Upper Room devotional magazine and pastor of Christ United Methodist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. Dr. Dunnam is noted author of books and articles related to prayer.

larger group and context to be surveyed, their opinions and advice were of value.

The next step in the implementation of the project was to ask our church secretary's assistance in doing the clerical work related to the pre-test of the congregation. Readily agreeing to this work, our secretary conducted a random sample survey. The criteria used in conducting the survey included the pre-test conducted on October 6, 1989. The pre-test was sent to those who lived in the Paducah area, both active and inactive members. Two hundred forty nine from Arcadia live in the community. One hundred twenty five were randomly selected from the membership roll by the secretary. Starting with the first letter in the alphabet by the initial individual's name, the secretary chose every other individual. In order to sample at least 50% of our membership, 25 more names were selected by the sample random method after the first drawing. At no time during the entire process did I or anyone have knowledge of who was chosen. Confidentiality was stressed throughout the process of surveying.

A total of 150 surveys were mailed with an explanatory cover letter and postage-paid return envelope enclosed alongside the instrument. 105 were returned for a return rate of 70%. Of these eight were

spurious or incomplete returns. Ninety Seven completed surveys were used to compile the pre-test data. Post-survey methods will be discussed later in this chapter.

Study of Text and Formation of Lesson Plans

After the pre-test survey was conducted, I turned my attention to a daily reading of the project text The Meaning of Prayer by Harry Emerson Fosdick.³ I used this text as a source of personal daily devotional reading. Each day I would also make extensive notes to use in the teaching phase of the project. This was accomplished during a ten-week period in the fall of 1989. After this period of preparation, I turned my attention to making lesson plans.

I used a lesson plan structure that was given to me as a handout in a previous academic program. The structure calls for preparation in the areas of time, unit time, activity and material resources. Of primary teaching importance are the stated list of objectives that accompany each session. The lesson plans are included in the appendices portion of the dissertation.

January of 1990 became a month of publicity for the The Meaning of Prayer Class within the church. Announcements were made in the newsletter, worship

³Fosdick, Harry Emerson. The Meaning of Prayer. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989.

bulletin and from the pulpit. I spoke to many members personally and encouraged them to attend the class. Part of the overall goal developed by myself and the Congregational Reflection Group was to have a prayer emphasis alongside the prayer class. Therefore, much of January was also spent in developing collateral prayer materials and strategies.

The collateral strategy was to be conducted over the month of February 1990 in conjunction with the beginning of The Meaning of Prayer Class. A four week sermon series on prayer would be preached and each adult Sunday School class was asked to emphasize prayer and spiritual life. The children's and youth department of the church school was asked to emphasize and teach prayer. A resource table of materials for adults, youth and children was developed. The church bulletin boards would be used to highlight and publicize the prayer theme.

Implementing the Project

During the month of February the collateral prayer emphasis was conducted with The Meaning of Prayer Class. This class began on Wednesday evening with an initial turnout of sixteen persons. The class was conducted for ten weeks concluding in Holy Week. The class was given a pre-test of the prayer questionnaire on the first night. During the course of the class the

attendees attrited to an average of 10 persons per week.

A detailed description of the phase will be shared in the analysis chapter. The concluding aspect of the implementation phase was the post-test of those respondents who had returned their questionnaires. This test was conducted one year later in October of 1990. The purpose of waiting a year was to make sure the test results were not skewed while prayer was the "buzz word" around the congregation. Moreover, I assumed that by waiting one year the survey would more accurately portray the honest changes in congregational prayer life.

Two questions were added to the second survey. (see appendices) One question asked whether the respondent believed the prayer project helped the Arcadia Church, the other the respondent. Other than these changes the survey remained unchanged. Ninety Seven surveys were mailed with an accompanying letter and postage-paid envelope along with the survey instrument. These were sent to those who had actually responded the previous year. Although 105 surveys were returned in the pre-test, 8 were either spurious or incomplete surveys. Of the 97 sent, 67 or 69% were returned and form the database analyzed in the next chapter.

Biblical and Prayer Model Insights

The process of exegeting the passages of scripture found in Chapter 3 helped me to appreciate just how much the Bible is an excellent source for the teaching of prayer. Therefore, a must question in the survey was to gauge the surveyee's attitude toward the Bible in this matter. Question 15 stated "The best place to learn about prayer is to read the Bible." This conviction also led me to seek a teaching text that was also an excellent source of biblical prayer teaching. The Meaning of Prayer by Harry Emerson Fosdick supplies a daily scripture reading and provides a marvelous source of Biblical insights into prayer.

The experience of corporate repentance as a means to spiritual renewal at the Bandana United Methodist Church had an affect on me. I decided to intentionally include a time for quiet reflection in each class session. During this time I invited each student to reflect on their day of life and seek God's forgiveness for their sins. I carefully explained II Chronicles 7:14 as I understood it and invited them to experience renewal through a candid, honest relationship with God.

It should be noted that the three texts exegeted in Chapter 3 were the basis for a series of sermons preached at the onset of the project. Moreover, the scriptures left an indelible imprint on my thinking

toward prayer and prayer ministry. I found myself using them and mentioning them in response to questions raised in class and other situations of prayer leadership.

The churches I interviewed for the project gave me many approaches and models for prayer and prayer ministry. This information found its way into the planning, designing and implementation of the project. The experience of visiting the Church of the Trinity helped me to see how important it is to teach prayer. This new congregation began immediately to teach their people prayer. Out of this experience, I saw the need to choose a helpful text. The Church of the Trinity used Why Pray? by B.J. Willhite. Since my local church comes from a more liberal, mainline tradition, I decided to seek a different text.

The experience of The Church of the Trinity was reinforced by the visit to First United Methodist Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma. The late Dr. L.D. Thomas helped the spiritual renaissance of this church by preaching and teaching the importance of prayer and a radical dependence on the Holy Spirit for guidance and healing. This information further helped to galvanize my comittment to teach prayer and organize prayer ministry. Furthermore, the interview at First United Methodist Church taught me the importance of beginning

where the people are in their context, rather than where I might assume or want them to be. The importance of an accurate understanding of context was paramount to successful prayer leadership. Thus, the development and implementation of an adequate survey instrument was understood as crucial to the success of the project.

The interview with Sunrise United Methodist Church helped me to understand the importance of language as help or hindrance to spiritual renewal. The leadership of Sunrise refuses to use the word healing in their services of healing and prayer. Instead, words like wellness or wholeness are used. In the context of Sunrise, the leadership has discovered certain words are barriers to participation in these services. While the word healing is not a barrier in my context, I was challenged to think through what words could be inappropriate. It was in this search that I became sensitive to certain uses of language in Fosdick's text that could be offensive to our people. . . . In The Meaning of Prayer, I discovered language that was sexist and racist in tone and intent. I simply pointed this out at the onset of the course and asked people to realize the text was written in an era when people were not widely sensitive to this issue. I also asked them to

not allow this language to deter them in their search for meaningful understanding of prayer in this text.

In conclusion, the process of conceiving, planning and implementing this project was lengthy and intentional. I have sincerely made the attempt to research, reflect and act in such a way that would convey the convictions inherent in this project and enable our people to mature in prayer and act in faith. I have gained new skills in planning, surveying and teaching. The process of integrating Biblical insights and models of ministry was rewarding.

Chapter 6 will also reveal data from the implementation stage as I reflect and analyze this project. A careful reading of this chapter will give the reader a clearer picture of the process used in the Arcadia prayer project.

CHAPTER 6

Reflection and Analysis of Project

This chapter will analyze the project results in three broad areas. First, how did the project affect The Meaning of Prayer Class? Second, how did the project affect the Arcadia United Methodist Church? Finally, how did this project affect me? I will use both descriptive and empirical methods in this reflection. The concluding chapter of this project/dissertation will examine the important areas of; whether the results met the expectations for the project, was the project appropriate to accomplish the goals and what adjustments and recommendations should be made.

How the Project Affected The Meaning of Prayer Class

The class commenced on the first Wednesday of February, 1990. ~~Their were sixteen persons in~~ attendance for the first meeting. We met in a comfortable room of our church with the students gathered in rows facing me behind a desk and seated. During the initial session time was taken to distribute texts and administer the pre-test of the prayer questionnaire. After all had gathered and taken the

pre-test, we took several minutes to hear concerns and to pray. At this juncture, I shared a brief oral biography of Harry Emerson Fosdick.

I shared with the class that Fosdick wrote The Meaning of Prayer in 1919 while on sabbatical from his teaching post at Union Theological Seminary and during a difficult personal time in his life.¹ Next, I spent a few moments sharing with the class my own evaluation of the text. This was done in order to stave off anticipated comments from the group concerning comments that might be interpreted as racial or sexist by Fosdick in The Meaning of Prayer. Examples of such statements are, "The African savage beats his fetish when a petition is answered," and "as frightened women clutch at the reins when there is danger, so do we grasp at God's government with our prayers."²

In recognizing these statements along with acknowledging that some illustrations were historically and culturally dated, I simply sought to convey to the students that they should recognize these factors, sit them aside and go for the timeless prayer teaching found in the text. At this point, I balanced my

¹Miller, Robert Moats. Harry Emerson Fosdick: Preacher, Pastor, Prophet. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

²Fosdick, Harry Emerson. The Meaning of Prayer. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989.

presentation by pointing out Fosdick's rich use of scripture as a teaching tool for prayer and his wealth of illustrations from classic prayer leaders from throughout history. I asked them to give Fosdick a fair hearing and to concentrate on the subject matter discussed in the daily readings and during course time. After this discussion, the bulk of the first session was given to the first chapter summary of Fosdick.

At the close of the first session, I had the group break down into groups of four for prayer. Previously, I had asked a few persons to lead their group. The rest I had randomly placed among the groups. The groups were dispersed throughout the building for prayer.

It was apparent to me from the facial expressions and the body language that significant numbers felt threatened by this assignment. I casually moved from group to group listening and observing. I noted people were uncomfortable praying in groups of people they did not know. I concluded this exercise had been a mistake and that I had assumed most of the persons from our mid-size church knew each other. There was not enough community within the group to enhance a vital prayer experience. This especially seemed true in groups where there was a wide variance of age. For the remainder of the project, we stayed together as a group

with prayers rotating from persons within the group who demonstrated comfort in praying.

Only half of the initial crowd returned the following week. And for the remainder of the project, the group averaged eight to ten persons. The group that returned were very faithful to attend each session. They also turned in a pre-test questionnaire and were on hand for the post-test questionnaire at the end of the course. I asked those who did not attend again, why? Comments usually centered around this statement, "It was not what I thought it would be." Some came expecting a prayer group, not a class. Others were turned off by the daily reading assignment from Fosdick. Still others feared being called on to pray. I concluded I had not done a thorough job of interpreting the class to the local church.

Each Wednesday evening throughout Lent, I taught the class. Class members developed a trust level and the sharing rose with each session. Toward the end of the session, the class became as any other small group in the church. Members grieved at the prospects of the class coming to a end.

The class developed an awareness of the inner struggles, problems, joys and victories shared. I have noted since the closure of this class an ongoing fellowship of care. Therefore, I believe in part, the

project was successful for those who persevered. This is based on two goals. First, care was developed and observed continuing. Second, a growing understanding of prayer is indicated by survey results.

Prayer Class Survey Results

For the purpose of empirical reflection, I have tabulated the results of the pre-test and post-test surveys of the prayer class. A total of seven questions will be examined. These particular seven questions were chosen because on the general church population they showed the most change. By focusing on the same seven, the reader will be able to compare class results with those from the general population. On the general church population survey, two additional questions will be examined. These questions were developed after the teaching phase of the project and were given only in the church post-test.

There are many variables within the survey instrument and data that could be researched. This data has been retained and I will make it available to any person that would like to further explore this research.

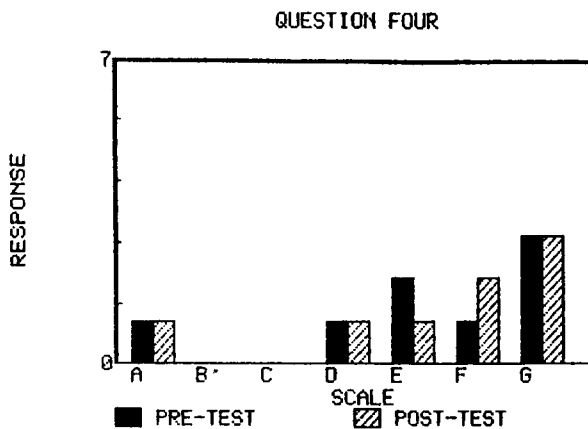
Now, let us examine the data. The format will be the listing of the question, followed by a bar graph illustrating the pre-test and post-test data.

Following each bar graph will be a brief summation and reflection of the information.

In order to clearly understand the data the following key is offered to interpreting this bar graph data. First, please remember the first set of graphs represent The Meaning of Prayer Class. The vertical column is measured in increments of one through seven. Seven represents the total number of respondents from the class. The horizontal bar represents the range of agreement-disagreement of the survey question. The range of response is from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. The computer software used to calculate the responses would not allow for corresponding numbers on the horizontal chart. So the letters A through G are offered with A = 1 and each letter corresponding with a numerical sequence. Hence, A equals strongly disagree and G equals strongly agree. The letter D or mid-range indicates unknown or neutral feeling.

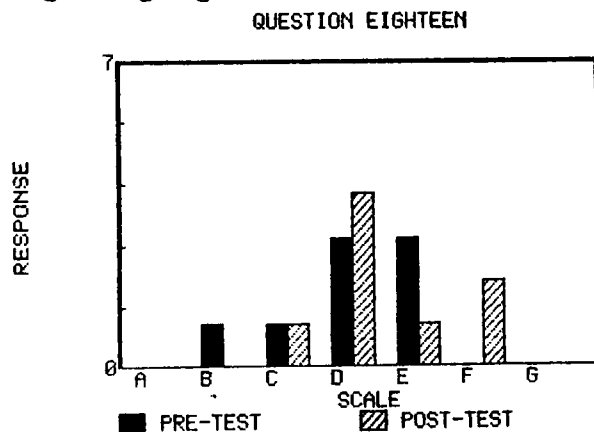
The questions chosen to illustrate for analytical purposes are those with some significance of change from pre-test to post-test. Most of the other questions revealed no change in prayer feeling from one year to the next. So the questions we examine here are those that revealed some movement.

4. God hears the prayers of non-Christians.



Pre-test results show that most of the class agreed that God hears the prayers of all people. Post-test data reveals one person making a shift toward stronger agreement while one person still held on to strong disagreement. Other respondents appear to have retained their stand. The class had a slight impact here, helping the class to affirm that God listens to his children everywhere.

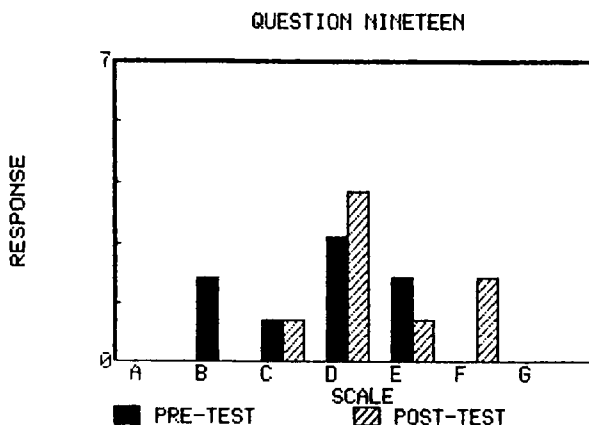
18. Arcadia United Methodist Church is a praying congregation.



Pre-test results of the class showed a somewhat evenly divided perception. Most of the data was in the center of scale, either indicating not knowing or slight agreement or disagreement. The post-test data revealed a dramatic shift toward agreement, with some shifting from disagreement to not knowing.

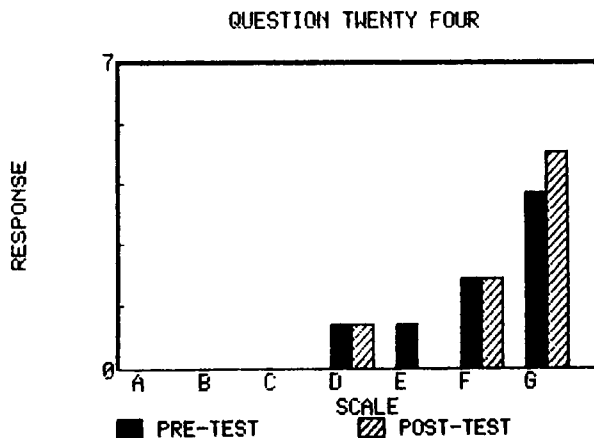
It appears the class became aware of the prayer lives of others and the growing prayer ministry opportunities within the congregation. Also, just simply having the class may have helped to shift this data toward positive post-test results.

19. Arcadia does an adequate job of teaching and emphasizing prayer.



This question measured whether the respondent believed our church was doing an adequate job of teaching and emphasizing prayer. The class results were mostly on the negative or don't know side in the pre-test. As you can see, the post-test demonstrates an almost complete reversal of perception. Here again, having the class may have convinced the surveyee the church is serious in its attempt to embody this statement.

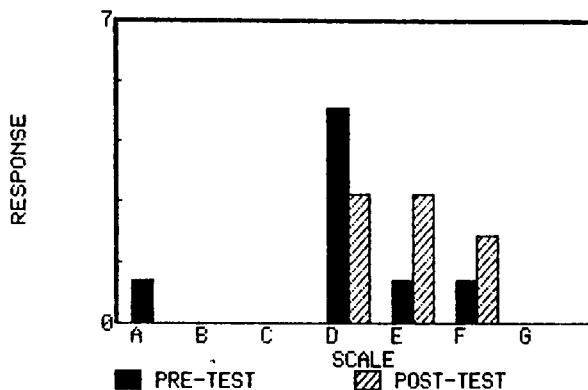
24. God has answered some of my prayers.



Members of the class voiced a strong belief that God had answered some of their prayers. The course did little to change this positive response.

25. I believe most Arcadians pray on a regular basis.

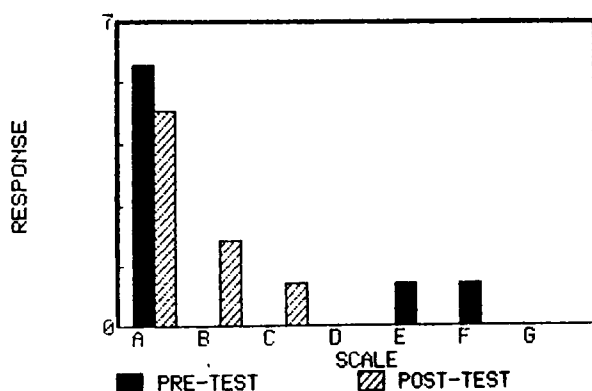
QUESTION TWENTY FIVE



Most respondents simply didn't have a clue how to answer this in the pre-test. But the post-test shows a dramatic shift to agreement. I believe the course text (Fosdick) is responsible. The text stressed that all peoples pray. Moreover, the prayers of class members helped them to see that others pray.

29. Prayer is a spiritual discipline unique to Christianity alone.

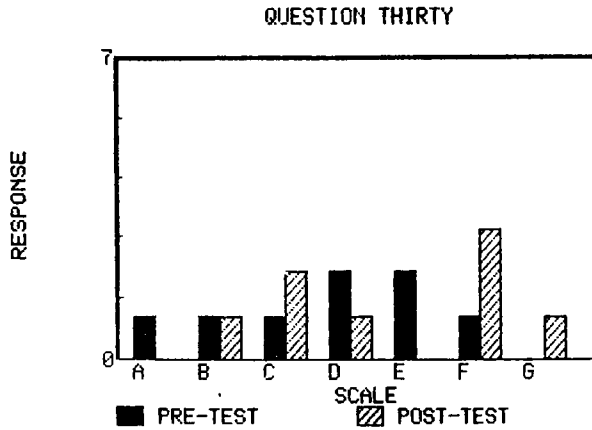
QUESTION TWENTY NINE



Pre-test data conclusively states that most of the class thought prayer was unique to Christianity. Fosdick helped to dispel this

as post-test results show a complete shift to disagreement with the statement.

30. Much prayer time is spent thanking God for what he has done.



Pre-test data portrays a class evenly divided on this subject. Post-test results reveal a slight shift in agreement. This was discussed in the course both by Fosdick and myself. These results may suggest the respondents both feel thanksgiving should be a greater part of prayer and also admitting that often it isn't.

This data demonstrates that class members were impacted by the course text and the class. In addition to filling out the questionnaire, I asked the class to answer five questions given at the close of the last session. Below, I have listed those questions and summarized the comments from the class.

1. Please evaluate the text.

- a. "very much appreciated reading Fosdick's book."
- b. "the book was easy to understand."
- c. "I enjoyed Fosdick's insights on prayer, he really ignited my interest."
- d. "I enjoyed the daily comments."
- e. "Excellent choice. Well organized and written."
- f. "basically good, brings to light concepts average

person probably wouldn't pursue."

- g. "text was very useful as spiritual needs do not change, especially appreciated the prayers in it."
- h. "worthwhile, but I was stumbled up by its language."

2. Please evaluate the course.

- a. "class was helpful in my growth in prayer."
- b. "sharing was helpful, would have liked a circular or more comfortable seating arrangement."
- c. "good to hear others share, small setting a plus, good to get to know others."
- d. "helpful to hear others express their love for God, and yet to know they have same fears I do."
- e. "enjoyed friendliness and openness of others, class was neither too long or short."
- f. "I would have enjoyed more class discussion and sharing of experiences as how they related to the issue."
- g. "an opportunity to experience people, their thoughts and their lives that I generally do not deal with."
- h. "enjoyed class discussion and fellowship."

3. Please evaluate the teacher.

- a. "wished you had facilitated more conversation from the participants regarding their dilemmas, joys and prayer experiences."
- b. "good teacher, very knowledgeable, wished you had asked class members what they understood about the chapters more."
- c. "appreciated your joys and concerns in leading this class."
- d. "your leadership was very effective for me, I especially enjoyed the personal experiences you shared."
- e. "you kept discussions moving, asked for interaction from the group on all phases and opened each session with prayer."
- f. "good class leader; open to ideas and comments; encouraging of independent thought; tries to be considerate of time needs."
- g. "you helped set an atmosphere to share our experiences and helped us to reflect on our present prayer life and possibility of how it could grow."
- h. "at times you talked over my head."

4. How did the class help you the most?

- a. "the most helpful aspect of this study was the discipline of keeping my heart and mind on God."

- b. "having a goal structure of reading and group attendance which kept me working."
- c. "I needed a revival and this book was great."
- d. "enjoyed the daily readings, made me examine areas I had never thought about."
- e. "The book and its many insights to the use of the need for prayer was very helpful, I can see picking up Fosdick again."
- f. "teachers insight into various issues as well as those in the class, the caring people had for each other was evident."
- g. "most appreciative of the printed prayers Fosdick used in the text. Some of them will be "my" prayers from time to time."
- h. "made me more comfortable with my level when discussions centered on others struggles and triumphs."

5. What questions remain for you?

- a. "the inability to maintain a consistent devotional life that enables me to experience the presence of God."
- b. "need to learn more and be in fellowship with praying church members."
- c. "I am not comfortable with praying publicly, I was hoping we would be taught how to do this."
- d. "I feel in the future I must rely more on my prayers to get close to God."
- e. "I know I need to grow in my spiritual life."
- f. "how to approach an unpraying family about beginning family prayer."
- g. "how do I form myself into a better prayer-er now that I have a glimpse into prayers greater depth."
- h. "the only question that remains is will I appropriate the things I've learned."

Analysis of Class Feedback

Concerning the prayer class text the comments were overwhelmingly positive. Only one mentioned the language being a block. Frankly, this surprised me. I anticipated more negative comments in this area. This points to the well-organized quality of the book,

weaving scripture, devotion, classics and prayer in a daily reading format. This convinces me that with proper introduction and interpretation the book is useful for local church prayer ministry.

All of the post-test respondents said they enjoyed the class and feel it benefited them spiritually. There was overwhelming affirmation of the personal prayer journey exchanges and struggles of fellow classmates. The comments reveal a sense of identification and care for one another developed. This was a major goal of this project. The negative comments centered in on seating arrangements and sharing time. If I were to do this type of project over, I would arrange a less formal class setting and devote more time to personal input from the class.

There were varied responses as to my effectiveness as the project teacher. While all seemed to affirm me as a teacher and person, there were many suggestions for further improvement. Again, persons were critical of my not facilitating more conversation and discussion from class participants. One person said I talked "over their head." However, some appreciated me "keeping the discussions moving," and "tries to be considerate of time needs." The varied response is indicative of differing personality and temperament types as well as varying needs to express concerns and

problems. I tried to strike a balance between adequately covering class material, evoking dialogue from the class and being mindful of the time. I believe I still have much to learn in this area.

The class seemed to help persons in the area of disciplined spiritual growth, personal renewal, intellectual growth, and koinonia. These were target areas of teaching and project goals. I took a great deal of satisfaction as I read these accounts.

The questions that remained for the prayer class varied with individual need. Class members pointed out the need for ongoing structure in devotional life, the need for improved Christian fellowship opportunities and the need to address outstanding deficiencies. Issues such as praying in public and praying with one's family surfaced. Another area was the fear of either not appropriating the material or not knowing how once they have caught a vision of the riches of praying.

The response to the last question helped me to gain insight for further prayer ministry. It is obvious that many people will continue to grow in prayer and spirituality only through the discipline of prayer groups. We can and must develop these for our church. There is also a continued hunger and desire to grow spiritually that is currently unmet. Special class sessions and teaching opportunities need to be

developed for special issues like praying in public or prayer leadership in the home.

Two of the projects main goals were met in the prayer class. Harry Emerson Fosdick's book, The Meaning of Prayer proved to be largely effective as a text to teach prayer.³ And, there was evidence from the descriptive comments from the group that congregational care is enhanced through prayer ministry. Importantly, the class helped me to see areas of needed improvement as a pastor and teacher.

How the Project Affected the Church

From the beginning, two central goals for this project were clear. First, the efficacy of The Meaning of Prayer as a manual for teaching prayer in the local church.⁴ Second, will the teaching of prayer and the development of prayer ministry enhance care in the congregation? Secondary goals focused on a collateral prayer emphasis of preaching, teaching prayer to the larger congregation not directly involved in the prayer class. This section of the chapter will attempt to analyze how the project affected the larger church. Initially, the dissertation will address the effectiveness of the larger collateral strategy. Next, both the pre-test and post-test survey results

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

will be compared. Brief annotations will follow each survey bar graph offering possible interpretations from the data.

Collateral Prayer Strategy Analysis

As the prayer class commenced on the first Wednesday of February 1990, a concomitant prayer emphasis unfolded for the local church. This prayer emphasis was one month in duration. It concluded on the last Sunday of February with the prayer class concluding some six weeks later. This church wide prayer emphasis included several components. They were; four sermon prayer series on prayer, month long prayer emphasis in Sunday School, literature table to supplement personal and teaching prayer interests. Additional actions taken included a childrens sermon on prayer during one Sunday in February, bulletin board highlighting the prayer emphasis, newsletter articles, bulletin insert and childrens activity and coloring book on prayer. The collateral prayer emphasis was undertaken for several reasons. I believed only a small group would avail themselves of a prayer class. So the prayer emphasis allowed an opportunity to teach and reach more people. Secondly, the pre-test survey results demonstrated to me a need within the congregation to grow in their understanding and practice of prayer. Specifically speaking, I was

appalled that a significant percent believed the Bible to be an uneffective source to learn about prayer.⁵

I used the biblical texts exegeted in Chapter 3 of this project/dissertation as the source text for the sermons preached. The purpose of exegeting these texts and including them in this research was to provide background in preaching a sermon series on prayer and to gain additional biblical insight to be used in the didactic component. I received many positive comments about the sermons from the laity of the church. People generally seemed appreciative. Many commented they had never heard a sermon series preached on prayer. However, I did note with some concern the facial features and body language of some that indicated they were tiring of the series. I personally believe they would have tired with any series. I believe this because it is my understanding that past clergy have not preached series of sermons in this church. Hence, an impatience with dealing with frequent subject matter apparently has developed.

Parents were appreciative with their comments concerning the emphasis to teach their children to pray and the materials given to the children. The publicity

⁵22% of respondents indicated the Bible was not the best place to learn about prayer or indicated they were uncertain.

seemed effective in helping to create a good awareness of the fact we were in a prayer emphasis. I did note that very few adult classes seemed to use the materials that were given to them as resources for the emphasis. Apparently, I did a weak job of enlisting their support for this phase. It became something "Brother Joe" wanted, rather than a class election. Hindsight has made this very clear to me. I failed to adequately interpret the emphasis to the adult class leaders and enlist their support.

Overall, I believe the prayer emphasis component was helpful to the congregation. I base this on overall feedback and response.

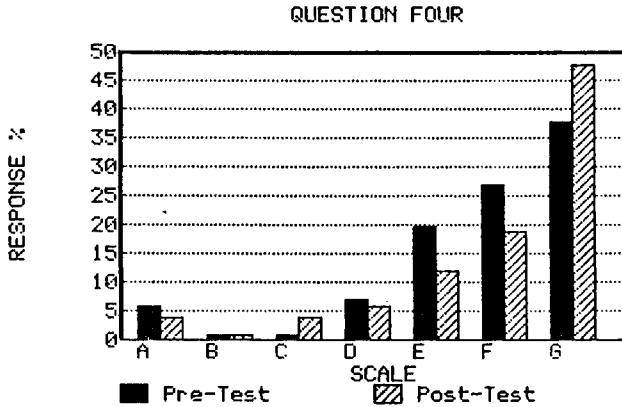
Analysis of Post-Test Survey of Church

In the coming pages, you will have the opportunity to examine the pre-test and post-test comparisons of the prayer survey from the church. There are nine questions to be examined. These include the seven questions previously studied from the prayer class and two questions added to the post-survey for the local church. Consistent with the format introduced, the question will be stated and a bar graph comparison will follow. Below each bar graph, a brief interpretation of data is offered.

The horizontal scale reveals the total number of respondents answering the particular question. Letters

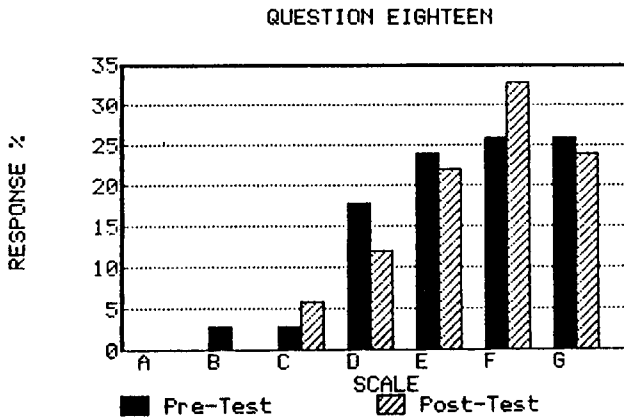
A through G correspond with numbers 1 through 7. With 1 indicating strong disagreement and 7 indicating strong agreement. The intervals measure agreement-disagreement levels with 4 indicating no knowledge or feeling of neutrality.

4. God hears the prayers of non-Christians.



In both surveys the vast percentage of respondents indicated they believed God does hear such prayers. More strongly agree with the statement in the post-test with some shift of the strongly disagree toward center. The project did not appear to significantly shift belief here.

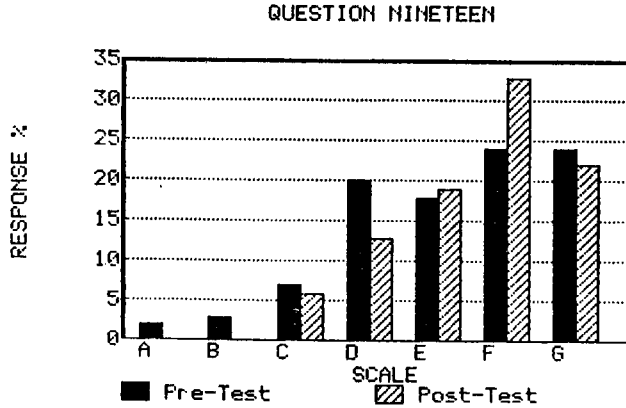
18. Arcadia United Methodist Church is a praying congregation.



A few people changed their minds toward slight disagreement, but most voiced moderate to strong

agreement. Important here, was the decline of the undecided. The emphasis and teaching phase helped to communicate the image of a praying congregation.

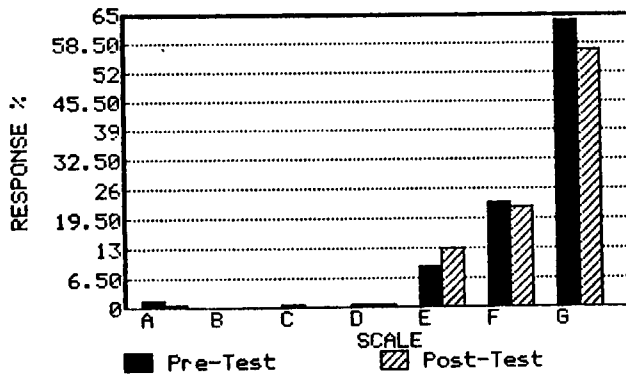
19. Arcadia does an adequate job of teaching and emphasizing prayer.



Question nineteen shows a strong shift toward agreement. Although most agreed in the pre-test, a few indicated disagreement or uncertainty. The post-test clearly shows a move away from disagreement and uncertainty toward agreement. Respondents indicate the church has grown in its ability to adequately teach and emphasize prayer.

24. God has answered some of my prayers.

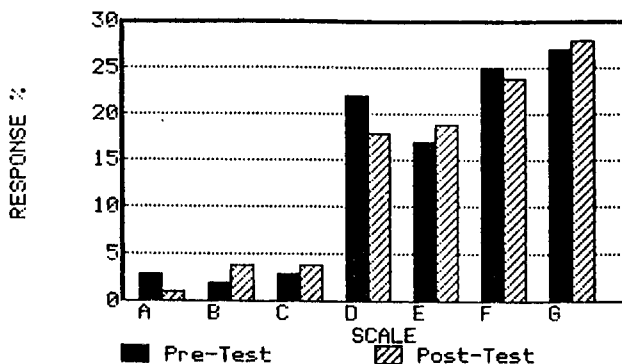
QUESTION TWENTY-FOUR



There was not a single uncertain or disagreeing response on the post-test of this question. While the majority also were in agreement in the pre-test, there were a few disagreeing or uncertain respondents. Remarkably, the respondents one year later indicated positive agreement in total. The project can take no credit here. Simply stated, all believe God has answered some of their prayers.

25. I believe most Arcadians pray on a regular basis.

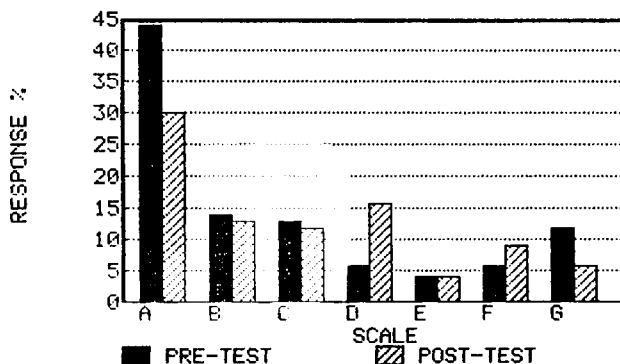
QUESTION TWENTY-FIVE



In both pre-test and post-test results, the majority of respondents indicated they believe Arcadians pray on a regular basis. There does not appear to be any re-shifting in the post-survey on a significant basis.

29. Prayer is a spiritual discipline unique to Christianity alone.

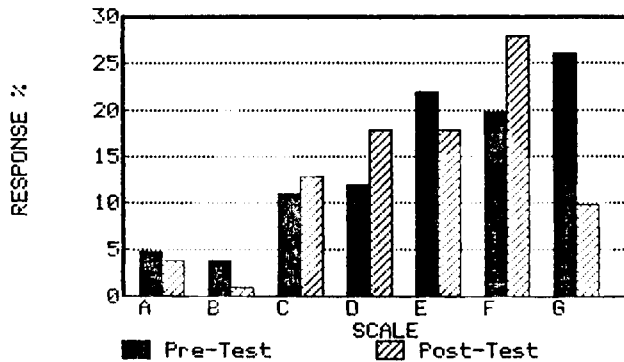
QUESTION TWENTY-NINE



The vast majority of respondents in the pre-test indicated strong disagreement with this statement. In the post-test, surveyees indicated a slight shift toward the center or agreement with the statement, although the majority disagreed. This was puzzling since both the sermon series and the class on prayer dealt with the fact that persons of many religions pray. Obviously, this is one area for future growth and indicates a less than successful outcome of the project.

30. Much prayer is spent thanking God for what he has done.

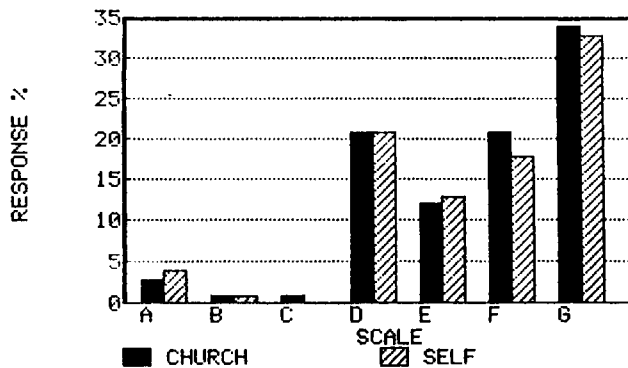
QUESTION THIRTY



There was a greater range of response for this question. However, in both the pre-test and post-test surveys indicate the majority were either uncertain or in agreement with the question. The post-test demonstrates a greater uncertainty and slight shift toward disagreement. Both the collateral phase and prayer class phase dealt with the need to spend more time in adoration and praise in prayer. The survey indicates to me that people have heard that call and it has affected their perception of prayer.

31 & 32. I believe the overall prayer emphasis of 1990 has helped our church. I have benefited from the prayer emphasis of 1990.

QUESTION 31 & 32



Since these two questions were not a part of the pre-test they are placed alongside in the bar-graph to illustrate how response was nearly identical. If a person felt the prayer emphasis was good for the church, they seemed to indicate it was good for them and vice-versa. If they were uncertain on one they seemed uncertain on the other. Most respondents were

in some phase of agreement that the project was both good for the church and for themselves. This bar graph also illustrates how closely people perceive a good thing for the church as equal to a good thing for themselves. It seems Arcadians would have a difficult time discerning something possibly being good for the church and not good for themselves as individuals.

It is clear from the data and descriptive responses that some people benefited from the project. Although that change could best be described as modest at best. It is also good to keep in mind that the survey was sent to those who were active and inactive in church participation and attendance. Had the survey been sent to only active laity, the results may have been more positive.

Since the conclusion of the church wide prayer emphasis and the prayer class, some important things have happened. First, there is a renewed interest in prayer in the congregation. This is manifested by a prayer group being started and a call from the laity to have more prayer vigils during the year. A prayer ministries committee was organized to help conceive and guide the growing prayer ministries at Arcadia. Secondly, I have noted an upswing in the laity asking for prayer related ministries and opportunities. It is no longer something the preacher brings for consideration. Important to the overall goal of the project is the upswing of relating prayer to care. An example of this is found in the case where a young

couple was having difficulty with a hospital bill. The request was made for prayer. Within a week people were praying about this need. During the second week that followed, people began taking initiative in raising the money needed to meet this need. This also indicated to me that prayer and prayer ministries do lead to greater congregational care. Although this could happen in any church, I have noted an increase of such care related incidents since the project and the development of modest prayer ministries at Arcadia.

How the Project Affected Me

For over two years I have lived with some aspect of this project. The affect the project has had on me is varied and deep. I am thankful for the project. I have learned much throughout the conception, development, guidance, implementation and reflection phases. The remainder of this chapter will be an attempt to reflect on the personal experience of doing this project.

1. The project helped me to realize I need to learn more about effective teaching styles. The comments from the students in the prayer class and the lack of acceptance of the prayer emphasis from adult church school teachers indicates this. Although I received affirmation and complements from a number of parishioners, I know I can and should develop in this

area. Suzanne G. Braden and Shirley Clement offer insight to me when they say, "The leader of the group may or may not be the person who manages the content of a particular session."⁶ I intend to grow in teaching effectiveness.

2. I experienced feelings of frustration. Not only did I have an academic interest in this project, but I invested in it emotionally. I desperately wanted the project to succeed. This, at times, led to feelings of despair and frustration. It was hard to hear criticism. It was difficult to trust others input into "my project." Overall, I believe I handled myself well in these areas, but it was frustrating. Charlie Shedd relates a story that proved helpful to me in developing trust and patience. He shares:

"Patience is the key word in developing a local church prayer program. It may take several years to make the dream come true. But since the years are sure to pass anyway, here's an encouraging word from a North Carolina Baptist layman. His church has recently begun a prayer partner program.

I'd say only 50 percent of our people are really with it after twelve months. But maybe we should simply thank God for that. That's 50 percent more than would have been praying without this challenge."⁷

⁶ Braden, Suzanne G. and Clement, Shirley F. Small Groups: Getting Started, Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1989, 16.

⁷ Shedd, Charlie W. The Exciting Church Where People Really Pray. Waco: Word Books, 1974, 107.

I believe the lessons learned in this project has helped me to mature in the area of patience.

3. I learned more about prayer and prayer ministry in the local church. The numerous hours exegeting scripture, reading and researching the project, interviewing prayer leaders in praying churches, teaching and leading prayer in my context, have all contributed to my growth. God has used this opportunity to send the Holy Spirit to help me grow spiritually. Thomas Merton said the sincerity of our prayer depends heavily on our knowing and acknowledging our spiritual state. The constant study, reflection, and prayer has helped me to know more of myself and made me desire more of God.⁸

4. I developed a greater appreciation for efficacy of empirical research method. Researching the project, developing and using the survey instruments and reflecting on the significance of the data helped the effectiveness of the project. I feel that I have grown in my ability to use such methods and believe it will contribute to my effectiveness as a pastor. Richard E. Davies says, "Once we understand what we want to study, empirical techniques may provide us with information that challenges our preconceptions." The

⁸Higgins, John J. Thomas Merton on Prayer. Garden City: Doubleday Books, 1971, 48.

data gleaned from the methodology employed in this project helped me to more clearly understand exactly what did happen.⁹

5. The project was provided intellectual growth and stimulation. In a word, the project challenged me. This was not a simple task. It has called for my best in mental and spiritual concentration and effort. I have learned much about prayer, the local church, teaching, planning, organizing, management, and many other related areas. The constant reading and researching of many genres of books and publications for this project added to my knowledge and awareness. I am better for this reading. Mortimer J. Adler and Charles Van Doren capture my experience in this statement:

"a good book can teach you about the world and about yourself. You learn more than how to read better; you also learn more about life. You become wiser. Not just more knowledgeable, books that provide nothing but information can provide that result. But wiser, in the sense that you are more deeply aware of the great and enduring truths of human life."¹⁰

Adler and Van Doren help to capture the distinction between knowledge and wisdom. In their

⁹Davies, Richard E. Handbook for Doctor of Ministry Projects. Lanham: University Press of America, 1984, 5.

¹⁰Adler, Mortimer J. and Van Doren, Charles. How to Read a Book. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1940, 341.

definition, wisdom is awareness of eternal truths. These truths are centered in the human experience. One great truth, that I have re-learned and experienced is all persons hunger for an experience of God. Another is all persons hunger for intimacy and community within the human family.

6. The experienced convinced me in total that prayer ministry leads to care ministry. I observed this in churches that I interviewed. In churches known for their prayer ministries, there existed growing ministries of care. These ministries focused on the total human need, body, soul, mind and spirit. In my experience with the Arcadia prayer project, I have noted the growth of class members in fellowship and care. I have observed these same members being the spokespersons and advocates of congregational care as well as volunteering to be the ministers of such care. Loren E. Halvorsen in his article Prayer and Action says it succinctly, "Whoever is unwilling to pray should beware of action. Whoever is unwilling to act should beware of prayer."¹¹

Throughout this chapter, I have sought to analyze how the project affected the prayer class, church and myself. The process of reflection will continue.

¹¹Sponheim, Paul R., ed. A Primer on Prayer. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988, 96.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion of a Project:Continuation of a Ministry

The central purpose of this project/dissertation was to determine whether The Meaning of Prayer was viable text for prayer teaching and a catalyst for prayer ministry. The results of this project verified the efficacy of this text for this purpose. Moreover, both quantitative and qualitative analysis indicate a link between prayer ministry and care ministry within a local church context.¹

Using both descriptive and empirical methodologies, this project sought to understand the prayer habits, beliefs and practices of the Arcadia United Methodist Church. The project allowed me to use methods of intervention designed to affect the prayer life of this congregation. The effort of teaching prayer and establishing prayer ministry is seen as central to the task of being a local church pastor.

Chapter 1 introduced the context for the project. Chapter 2 gave a review of related literature in the area of prayer and prayer ministry. Chapter 3 exegeted scriptures used in the concomitant component of the project while Chapter 4 reflected on some local

¹Fosdick, Harry Emerson. The Meaning of Prayer. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988.

churches with outstanding prayer and care ministries. Chapter 5 was a description of the project including project development and implementation. Chapter 6 analyzed and interpreted the project. This chapter went into more detail concerning the description of the project.

This final chapter examines the effectiveness of this project, summarizes lessons for improving efforts in prayer ministry and highlights areas where future study is needed. A helpful accomplishment of the project is the awareness of how vital prayer ministry is to the development of care in a Christian congregation.

I would describe the effectiveness of the project as modest. This review is derived from the empirical data and personal reflection given this effort. The project did enhance congregational care. Moreover, individuals involved in the prayer class and simultaneous prayer emphasis indicated the effort blessed them in particular ways.

I offer the following suggestions in regard to prayer ministry and a prayer teaching model:

1. Local churches should not hesitate to offer prayer ministry. People in our congregations are searching for meaning. They are hungry for contact

with God. They seek ways to encounter the holy and one another in meaningful fashion.

2. People want to be taught how to pray. But they prefer an approach of equality of teacher and student and collegiality in didactic method. A lecture format is probably the least effective. The mechanics of how one teaches and arranges class space may be as important to the outcome of the class as content.

3. The importance of sharing and testimony of the class is not to be underestimated. In addition to hearing what the teacher deems important, prayer students are deeply interested to know how others pray and what their prayer experiences has taught them.

4. A single class, using a single approach will reach only a limited amount of people. Teaching prayer will always be an ongoing process in the parish. A multiplicity of teaching situations and approaches must be offered. A good teacher of prayer must know more pathways of prayer and spiritual growth than he or she has personally undertaken. Since people are reached by vastly different postures and models of prayer, a good prayer teacher is acquainted with many approaches.

5. It is difficult to choose a correct effort at prayer ministry until you have taken the time to analyze your context. This should be done with

patience and love. Moreover, the development of objective research instruments is crucial.

6. Finally, I would suggest the need to update The Meaning of Prayer in the areas of language use and illustrations.² I would rate the book an excellent in overall design, content and use as a manual to teach prayer and care. However, the outdated illustrations and language are definite barriers. The book reveals sexist and racist language and illustrations common to the early part of the twentieth century. This text was written in 1919 and it is important to note that Harry Emerson Fosdick wrote with increased sensitivity to women and members of others races in his later works. The book would benefit from being edited and paraphrased similar to the approach that Donald E. Demaray took with The Practice of the Presence of God by Brother Lawrence.³

The process of conceiving, developing, leading this project has given way to some recommendations for areas of future study. First, what is the link between prayer ministry and the need for additional ministries of pastoral care? I first noted this apparent link in interviewing churches with outstanding track records in

² Ibid.

³ Brother Lawrence. The Practice of the Presence of God, ed. Donald E. Demaray Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975.

the area of prayer ministry. It seems that as prayer ministries increase the demand for pastoral counseling and related ministries also increases. Why? More research and information is needed here for persons interested in developing prayer ministry.

A second area for future study is in the area of expanding pastoral relationships through prayer ministry. I discovered that as I developed prayer ministry at the Arcadia Church that persons who could be categorized as on the fringe of congregational participation began to reach out to me. These persons opened up and shared from their lives when they learned their pastor and local church was serious about the matter of prayer. Again, one must ask why? Could it be these persons saw prayer as the means of conveying hurt or need that separated them from others? This is an area that goes begging for insight and research. In my interview with Rev. Dudley Dancer of the Highland Park United Methodist Church, I asked "What difference has prayer ministry made in this church?" Rev. Dancer surprised me with his answer. He summed it up in one word, "assurance." It seems that in his church the vast prayer ministries have made the people feel an assurance that if they should face crisis the church was prepared in a real and meaningful way to address their needs. What is the apparent connection between

prayer ministry and a calming assurance of grace and care? Again, this is an area for future study.

Ralph L. Underwood wrote an article entitled, "The Presence of God in Pastoral Care Ministry."⁴ He highlights the task of prayer ministry when he says, "the church must be a community of prayer in order to be a community of moral inquiry and a community of caring service to others."⁵ Underwood clearly believes there exist a connection between prayer and the ability to be in care and service. Prayer ministry is a ministry of communication with God that finds life and strength in the community of praying people. Prayer ministries witness to the presence of God in all areas of human life.

What Underwood is saying resonates with my experience in conducting the project at Arcadia. Prayer ministry is a legitimate way to hear, discern and act upon the will of God. It is equally as legitimate in discovering the thanksgivings, joys, petitions and confessions of the people of God. Here God and humanity meet in common discussion.

This project has taught me a new value of the worth and sacredness of every human being. The variety

⁴Ralph L. Underwood, "The Presence of God in Pastoral Care Ministry." Austin Seminary Bulletin October 1985.

⁵Ibid., 5.

of people ministered to in the project and the diversity of their needs and experiences, convinces me of the immense creative power of God. As Steve Harper says:

"If we can establish a vision of the sacredness of every person, then we will sense a call to become involved with them in their need. Our spirituality will be such that we cannot keep it to ourselves. We will ask God to make of us what St. Francis of Assisi prayed for, "Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace." Our faith will be not only a gift to treasure, but also a blessing to share."⁶

During the teaching phase of the project and following on through the completion and beyond, I began to see the people of Arcadia as not simply persons showing up to be taught how to pray. Nor did I view them as pawns to be used for the fodder of my project and academic needs, but for what they were, the people of God. These are God's own family. They are the children of God and heirs of the promise. They taught me much about myself, my teaching methods, my need to be out front. God, as it seems, has also made his appeal known through them to me. I believe any sensitive person teaching prayer ministry will likely encounter their own need to ministered unto by their people.

⁶Harper, J. Steven. Embrace the Spirit. Wheaton: Victor Books, 1987, 116.

I trust I have shown that this project was challenging to me. It helped me gain insights into planning, resourcing, researching and conducting prayer programs for the local church. The insights reported here will forever assist me in prayer leadership.

The future viability of the church may well depend on the development of effective prayer ministries. The sacred task of teaching people how to pray is one we must not shirk. For this reason, we must resolve to give leadership in the development of prayer and care ministry. And we must be ready and willing to let the God to whom we pray lead us to develop other ministries of caring.

APPENDICES

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Appendix A

Journals

There are many journals which would be of interest to anyone wanting to learn more about prayer and spirituality. I would recommend the following: The Chicago Theological Seminary Register,¹ Studies in Formative Spirituality,² Austin Seminary Bulletin,³ The Expository Times,⁴ The Princeton Seminary Bulletin.⁵ This is not an exhaustive list and one is likely to find articles concerning prayer in most any religious journal. However, these journals were found to have relevant articles for prayer teaching and local church prayer ministry.

Religious Publications

The following religious publications were helpful to me in the planning of the project: Praying,⁶ Spiritual Life,⁷

¹Chicago Theological Seminary, 5757 University Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60637.

²Institute of Formative Spirituality, Duquesne University, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania 15282

³The Austin Seminary Bulletin, 100 East 27th Street, Austin, Texas 78705-5957

⁴T. & T. Clark, 38 George Street, Edinburg, Scotland

⁵The Princeton University, Madison, New Jersey

⁶Praying. National Catholic Reporter Publishing Company, Inc., 115 East Armour Boulevard, Kansas City, Missouri 64111

⁷Spiritual Life. Washington Province of the Discalced Carmelite Friars, Inc. 2131 Lincoln Rd., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002-1199

Weavings,⁸ The Interpreter,⁹ Biblical Illustrator,¹⁰ and Envoy,¹¹

In the process of reading these journals and articles, I did not find any specific article that gave me a step by step approach to doing my project. This did not hinder my project. Most of these articles provided general insights into prayer, prayer groups, and local church prayer ministry. As such, they provided general background material to use in the teaching phase and in actual prayer experiences.

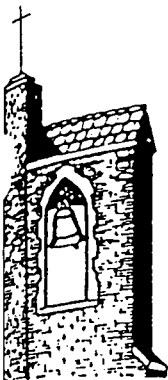
⁸Weavings, The Upper Room, 1908 Grand Avenue, P.O. Box 189, Nashville, Tennessee 37202

⁹The Interpreter, United Methodist Communications, 810 Twelfth Ave, S., P.O. Box 320, Nashville, Tennessee 37202-0320

¹⁰The Biblical Illustrator, The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 127 Ninth Avenue, N., Nashville, Tennessee 37234

¹¹Envoy, Journal of Formative Reading, Institute of Formative Spirituality, Duquesne University, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania 15282

Arcadia United Methodist Church



October 6, 1989

STAFF

JOSEPH A. GEARY
Pastor

MARY PASCHALL
Program Coordinator

JUDY GILL
Church Secretary

C.O. HAYS
Parish Visitor

ROY THOMPSON
Choir Director

KEVIN ELLERBUSCH
Organist

SHERRY WILSON
Organist

Dear Friend:

In order to better understand the thinking of the membership of Arcadia United Methodist Church, we are conducting a survey of the congregation.

You, along with more than 150 others, have been selected at random from our membership list. I do not know who was selected as our church secretary assigned random numbers by each name. Afterward, she chose random numbers from a master list. This Gallup Survey method assures impartiality and accuracy in test results.

We are only interested in your opinions, so do not sign your name. The person whose name is on the envelope should be the person to answer the questionnaire.

The questionnaire seeks to understand the prayer beliefs, practices and habits of Arcadians. I think you will enjoy answering the questions and I thank you in advance for your cooperation. Please return the questionnaire promptly in the return postage-paid envelope. Your pastor has financially underwritten the entire cost of the prayer/survey project.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Geary, Pastor

MEASURING YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT PRAYER
ABOUT YOU:

The following questions will be used in summarizing the questionnaire. Please check the appropriate blanks as they apply to you.

Sex: M ____ F ____

Marital Status: Single ____ Married ____ Divorced ____ Widowed ____ Separated ____

Age: Under 18 ____ Under 25 ____ 25 to 45 ____ Over 45 ____

What type of work do you do? At home ____ Clerical ____ Technical ____ Professional ____
Retired ____ Unemployed ____

Education: High School or below ____ Some College ____ Trade or Vocational/Tech. ____
College Graduate ____ Graduate or Professional ____

How many years have you been a Christian? (in years) Under 5 ____ Under 10 ____
10+ ____ 20+ ____ 30+ ____ 40+ ____ Over 50+ ____

Time at Arcadia United Methodist Church (in years) Under 5 ____ Under 10 ____ 10+ ____
20+ ____ 30+ ____ 40+ ____ Over 50+ ____

ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS CONCERNING PRAYER:

listed below are a series of statements that represent possible feelings that individuals might have about prayer. With respect to your own feelings about prayer, please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by circling one of the seven alternatives below each statement.

1 = strongly disagree; 2 = moderately disagree; 3 = slightly disagree; 4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = slightly agree; 6 = moderately agree; and 7 = strongly agree

Example: The family that prays together stays together.

1 2 3 4 ⑤ 6 7

1. I believe that prayer changes things.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. Prayer is a waste of time, one should act toward their desires.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. People must be taught how to pray.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. God hears the prayers of non-believers.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I must live in love and harmony with others before my prayers will be answered.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. No one has truly learned how to pray until they can pray publicly.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. There is a strong link between the frequency of prayer and forgiveness.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. Well constructed, thought-out, written prayers are not as good as those spoken extemporaneously. (without forethought)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. Clergy should pray but laity are excused from this spiritual discipline.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. There is a direct connection between the prayer life of a congregation and whether that congregation has compassion for others.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11. Longer prayers are more holy and are apt to be heard by God.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12. True prayer is a private matter and not a public work.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13. I believe that others pray for me.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
14. I can be Christian and not pray.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15. The best place to learn about prayer is to read the Bible.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
16. The United Methodist Church, as a denomination, strongly teaches and emphasizes prayer
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17. Prayer is my relationship to God.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
18. Arcadia United Methodist Church is a praying congregation.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
19. Arcadia does an adequate job of teaching and emphasizing prayer.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
20. In time of crisis, I believe my church would sincerely pray for me.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
21. What our church needs is less prayer and more action toward needed work.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- It would frighten me if I thought I would be called on to lead others in prayer.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
22. I believe our church would benefit from having an intercessory prayer group to take requests and pray for others.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

24. God has answered some of my prayers.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
25. I believe most Arcadians pray on a regular basis.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
26. The training I received as a child is adequate for my understanding and practice of prayer.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
27. I tend to pray only during crisis situations.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
28. Prayer is a quaint practice that yields very little real good.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
29. Prayer is a spiritual discipline unique to Christianity alone.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
30. Much of my prayer time is spent thanking God for what he has done in my life and for others.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

ABOUT YOUR PRAYER HABITS:

1. I pray: ____ daily ____ each week ____ several times a month ____ seldom ____ never
2. I pray and return thanks before each meal: ____ always ____ frequently ____ seldom ____ never
3. I have prayer and devotions with my family: (If single skip to number 4)
____ daily ____ once a week ____ seldom ____ never
4. I have prayer and devotions by myself: ____ daily ____ once a week ____ seldom ____ never
5. I pray during the worship service at church: ____ always ____ occasionally ____ seldom ____ never
6. I find myself praying for others: ____ frequently ____ occasionally ____ seldom ____ never

You have finished the questionnaire. Please place in postage paid envelope and return now. Don't delay!

Thank you for your time and interest. Your prompt response is greatly appreciated.

MEASURING YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT PRAYER

ABOUT YOU:

The following questions will be used in summarizing the questionnaire. Please check the appropriate blanks as they apply to you.

Sex: M F

Marital Status: Single Married Divorced Widowed Separated

Age: Under 18 Under 25 25 to 45 46 to 65 65+

What type of work do you do? At Home Clerical Technical Professional
 Retired Unemployed

Education: High School or below Some College Trade or Vocational/Tech.
 College Graduate Graduate or Professional

How many years have you been a Christian? (in years) Under 5 Under 10
 10+ 20+ 30+ 40+ Over 50+

Time at Arcadia United Methodist Church (in years) Under 5 Under 10 10+
 20+ 30+ 40+ Over 50+

ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS CONCERNING PRAYER:

Listed below are a series of statements that represent possible feelings that individuals might have about prayer. With respect to your own feelings about prayer, please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by circling one of the seven alternatives below each statement.

1 = strongly disagree; 2 = moderately disagree; 3 = slightly disagree; 4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = slightly agree; 6 = moderately agree; and 7 = strongly agree

Example: The family that prays together stays together.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
1. I believe that prayer changes things	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. Prayer is a waste of time, one should act toward their desires.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. People must be taught how to pray.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4. God hears the prayers of non-christians.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5. I must live in love and harmony with others before my prayers will be answered.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6. No one has truly learned how to pray until they can pray publicly.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7. If I have a consistent prayer life, the more likely I am to be a forgiving person.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

	Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Agree
8. Well constructed, thought-out, written prayers are not as good as those spoken extemporaneously. (without forethought)									
9. Clergy should pray but laity are excused from this spiritual discipline.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
10. There is a direct connection between the prayer life of a congregation and whether that congregation has compassion for others.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
11. Longer prayers are more holy and are apt to be heard by God.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
12. True prayer is a private matter and not something one should do in public.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
13. I believe that others pray for me.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
14. I can be Christian and not pray.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
15. The best place to learn about prayer is to read the Bible.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
16. The United Methodist Church, as a denomination, strongly teaches and emphasizes prayer.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
17. Prayer <u>is</u> my relationship to God.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
18. Arcadia United Methodist Church is a praying congregation		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
19. Arcadia does an adequate job of teaching and emphasizing prayer.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
20. In time of crisis, I believe my church would sincerely pray for me.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
21. What our church needs is less prayer and more action toward needed work.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
22. It would frighten me if I thought I would be called on to lead others in prayer.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
23. I believe our church would benefit from having an intercessory prayer group to take requests and pray for others.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
24. God has answered some of my prayers.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
25. I believe most Arcadians pray on a regular basis.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
26. The training people typically receive as children is adequate for their understanding and practice of prayer		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------|
| 27. | People tend to pray only during crisis situations. | Disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Agree |
| 28. | Prayer is a quaint practice that yields very little real good. | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| 29. | Prayer is a spiritual discipline unique to Christianity alone. | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| 30. | Much prayer time is spent thanking God for what he has done. | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |

ABOUT YOUR PRAYER HABITS:

1. I pray: ___ daily ___ each week ___ several times a month ___ seldom ___ never
2. I pray and return thanks before meals: ___ always ___ frequently ___ seldom ___ never
3. I have prayer with my family: (If single skip to number 4)
___ daily ___ once a week ___ more than once a week ___ seldom ___ never
4. I pray by myself: ___ daily ___ once a week ___ more than once a week ___ seldom ___ never
5. I pray during the worship service at church: ___ always ___ occasionally ___ seldom ___ never
6. I find myself praying for others: ___ frequently ___ occasionally ___ seldom ___ never

You have finished the questionnaire. Please place in postage paid envelope and return now. Don't delay!

Thank you for your time and interest. Your prompt response is greatly appreciated.

All questionnaire materials, postage, and envelopes have been paid by your pastor.

October 19, 1990

Dear Member of Arcadia:

Enclosed, please find a prayer survey/questionnaire similar to the one you filled out one year ago. That survey was taken in advance of the Lenten Prayer/Teaching Emphasis of 1990. Now, a similar questionnaire is being given those of you who were randomly chosen to see if there are changes in your prayer habits, beliefs or practices.

Once again, your survey is being handled with respect and confidentiality. Only the Church Secretary knows the names of respondents. Your taking the time to fill out the survey is deeply appreciated. The results are very important to my ongoing study of prayer. Your personal contribution is important.

Please be completely honest in your responses. The validity of the questionnaire is assured with your honest, sincere replies. Please don't answer a question with what you think I would want to hear, etc.

Thank you for assistance in my ongoing religious education. A postage-paid envelope is enclosed for your convenience. Your prompt response would be appreciated.

With appreciation,


Joseph A. Geary, Pastor

P.S. All materials, envelopes, and postage are being paid for by the pastor.

Appendix F

MEASURING YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT PRAYER

ABOUT YOU:

The following questions will be used in summarizing the questionnaire. Please check the appropriate blanks as they apply to you.

Sex: M F

Marital Status: Single Married Divorced Widowed Separated

Age: Under 18 Under 25 25 to 45 46 to 65 65+

What type of work do you do? At Home Clerical Technical Professional
Retired Unemployed

Education: High School or below Some College Trade or Vocational/Tech.
College Graduate Graduate or Professional

How many years have you been a Christian? (in years) Under 5 Under 10
10+ 20+ 30+ 40+ Over 50+

Time at Arcadia United Methodist Church (in years) Under 5 Under 10 10+
20+ 30+ 40+ Over 50+

ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS CONCERNING PRAYER:

Listed below are a series of statements that represent possible feelings that individuals might have about prayer. With respect to your own feelings about prayer, please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by circling one of the seven alternatives below each statement.

1 = strongly disagree; 2 = moderately disagree; 3 = slightly disagree; 4 = neither disagree or agree; 5 = slightly agree; 6 = moderately agree; and 7 = strongly agree

Example: The family that prays together
stays together.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 ⑤ 6 7 Agree

- | | | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I believe that prayer changes things | 1. | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2. Prayer is a waste of time, one should act toward their desires. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3. People must be taught how to pray. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4. God hears the prayers of non-christians. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 5. I must live in love and harmony with others before my prayers will be answered. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 6. No one has truly learned how to pray until they can pray publicly. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 7. If I have a consistent prayer life, the more likely I am to be a forgiving person. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

	Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Agree
8. Well constructed, thought-out, written prayers are not as good as those spoken extemporaneously. (without forethought)		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
9. Clergy should pray but laity are excused from this spiritual discipline.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
10. There is a direct connection between the prayer life of a congregation and whether that congregation has compassion for others.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
11. Longer prayers are more holy and are apt to be heard by God.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
12. True prayer is a private matter and not something one should do in public.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
13. I believe that others pray for me.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
14. I can be Christian and not pray.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
15. The best place to learn about prayer is to read the Bible.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
16. The United Methodist Church, as a denomination, strongly teaches and emphasizes prayer.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
17. Prayer <u>is</u> my relationship to God.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
18. Arcadia United Methodist Church is a praying congregation.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
19. Arcadia does an adequate job of teaching and emphasizing prayer.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
20. In time of crisis, I believe my church would sincerely pray for me.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
21. What our church needs is less prayer and more action toward needed work.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
22. It would frighten me if I thought I would be called on to lead others in prayer.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
23. I believe our church has benefited from the intercessory prayer group that meets on Thursday mornings.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
24. God has answered some of my prayers.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
25. I believe most Arcadians pray on a regular basis.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
The training people typically receive as children is adequate for their understanding and practice of prayer.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

27. People tend to pray only during crisis situations.	Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Agree
28. Prayer is a quaint practice that yields very little real good.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
29. Prayer is a spiritual discipline unique to Christianity alone.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
30. Much prayer time is spent thanking God for what he has done.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
31. I believe the overall prayer emphasis of 1990 has helped our church.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
32. I have benefited from the prayer emphasis of 1990.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

ABOUT YOUR PRAYER HABITS:

1. I pray: ___ daily ___ each week ___ several times a month ___ seldom ___ never
2. I pray and return thanks before meals: ___ always ___ frequently ___ seldom ___ never
3. I have prayer with my family: (If single skip to number 4)
___ daily ___ once a week ___ more than once a week ___ seldom ___ never
- I pray by myself: ___ daily ___ once a week ___ more than once a week ___ seldom ___ never
5. I pray during the worship service at church: ___ always ___ occasionally ___ seldom ___ never
6. I find myself praying for others: ___ frequently ___ occasionally ___ seldom ___ never

You have finished the questionnaire. Please place in postage paid envelope and return now. Don't delay!

Thank you for your time and interest. Your prompt response is greatly appreciated.

All questionnaire materials, postage, and envelopes have been paid by your pastor.

The Meaning of Prayer Class 2/7/90

Session	Total Time	Unit Time	Activity	Materials Resources
The Naturalness of Prayer	75 min.		<p>--Have each person fill out a pre-test questionnaire.</p> <p>--See that each person receives a text.</p> <p>--Opening Prayer</p> <p>--A word about Harry Emerson Fosdick.</p> <p>--A word about the text.</p> <p>--A word about the class.</p> <p>--A word about prayer, why pray? Fosdick, p. 178. definition, p. 84.</p> <p>--Share handouts, Chaplain Jessie Moore</p> <p>-- U.M. Reporter</p> <p>-- The Paducah Sun</p> <p>--Holy Spirit is teacher of prayer, Romans 8:26</p> <p>--Jean Grou, p. 32.</p> <p>--Pastor as Guide, Holy Spirit as teacher.</p> <p>--Chapter One of <u>The Meaning of Prayer</u>.</p> <p>A. The Naturalness of Prayer.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. During Crisis, people move to instinct rather than logic, they are moved to prayer. p. 4. 2. Bible makes assumption. p. 1, II Chronicles 6:32-33 3. Universality of Prayer, all religions, p. 9. 4. Questions from group. Questions from Text, p. 17-18. 5. Dismiss Class in small groups to pray. 	<p>-questionnaire</p> <p>-texts.</p> <p>-handouts</p> <p>-Grou book.</p> <p>-Bibles</p> <p>-pencils.</p>

- Objectives:
1. Organize and make introductions.
 2. Introduce author and text.
 3. Disseminate questionnaires.
 4. Get them to think "why pray?"
 5. Discuss the natural aspect of prayer.
 6. Get them to pray in small groups.

Session	Total Time	Unit Time	Activity	Materials Resources
I. Prayer as Communion with God	75 min		<p>—Pass out questionnaires to those who came for first time.</p> <p>--See that each person receives a text</p> <p>--Ask a classmember to lead in opening prayer.</p> <p>—Briefly speak a word about the first class, then</p> <p>A. Prayer as Communion with God.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cannot make God real to us. 2. No relief to our difficulties. p. 19. 3. Persistency seems to accomplish nothing. 4. We prefer "work" to <u>prayer</u>. pp. 20-21. 5. Childish notions & ideas. Difference between "child like and childish." p. 22 6. Do we really, above all else, desire friendship with God? p. 22 7. Prayer as obligation rather than privilege. p. 23. 8. Questions from group. 9. Discuss questions at end of chapter. 	<p>-quest.</p> <p>-articles.</p> <p>C.S. Lewis</p> <p>"Does Prayer really change things."</p> <p>-Bibles</p> <p>-Pencils.</p>

Objectives:

1. Continue to survey the group.
2. Get the group to struggle with defining what communion with God is.
3. Expand the groups awareness of popular barriers of effective prayer.
4. Examine questionnaire questions, numbers, 21,26,28.

Session	Total Time	Unit Time	Activity	Materials Resources
God's care for the Individual.	75 min.		--Pass out questionnaires for first time attenders. --See that each person receives a text. --Ask classmember to lead us in prayer. --Briefly cover previous sessions and introduce the theme. A. Prayer as Pious Form or Vital Transaction. 1. Trying to pray or end by saying prayers, p. 37. 2. Vital and sustaining friendship with God, p. 37. 3. "Prayer as mobile cosmic ether," pp. 38-39. 4. God's awareness and care for you as individual. p. 39. 5. Worth of persons, versus, diamonds. Do we really believe it? p. 40, p. 43. 6. Class questions and comments. 7. Chapter closing questions. 8. Dismiss with prayer.	-Quest. -Texts. -prev. art -Bibles. -Pencils.

- Objectives:
1. See the difference between prayer as pious form or vital transaction.
 2. To appreciate God's care for persons as individuals.
 3. To connect understanding of their worth as an individual to their desire for friendship with God.
 4. Discuss questionnaire questions, numbers, 11,14,17.

Session	Total Time	Unit Time	Activity	Materials Resources
Prayer and the Goodness of God.	75 min.		<p>—Pass out questionnaires to first time attenders. —See that each person receives a text. —Ask classmember to open class with prayer —Briefly cover previous themes and then introduce tonight's.</p> <p>A. Prayer and the Goodness of God.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1, The What of prayer, what is our motivation, what do we really expect? p. 52. 2. Discuss the daily them of will, solitude, receptive mood, willingness, friendship with God. p. 58 3. Discuss underlined comments on pp. 56,58,59,66. 4. Quote from Richard Foster, "Don't do something just stand there!" 5. Questions from group. 6. Questions from chapter 7. Close with prayer 	<p>-Quest. -Texts. -Prev. Artc s. -Bibles. -Pencils.</p>

- Objectives:
1. To get each student to think about their personal receptiveness to fulfilling the will of God.
 2. To see how God historically, through Scripture, has made himself clear as to his desire for friendship and fellowship with all creation.
 3. Discuss questionnaire questions, numbers, 1, 7, 28.

Session	Total Time	Unit Time	Activity	Materials Resources
V. Hindrances & Difficulties.	75 min.		<p>--Begin with prayer, recruit a classmember. --Introduce tonight's theme. A. Prayer Barriers, Difficulties and Hindrances. 1. These keep us from experiencing the full presence of God. 2. Count the costs to grow spiritually, p. 67. 3. The need for self-discipline in thinking. p. 68 4. Successful prayer requires preparation. We too often rush into the presence of God. Compare/ Contrast with our preparation in worship. Pass around a copy of <u>A Guide to Prayer For Ministers and other Servants.</u> 5. Persistence in prayer. p. 70., Psalm 88. 6. An irregular prayer time., p. 71. 7. Prayer is not all Mount of Transfiguration, it is also Gethsemani, pp. 72-73. 8. Check the underlined portions of the summary. Esp. p. 83 Do we really believe this? 9. Group questions. 10. Summary questions. 11. Close with prayer.</p>	Texts. Bible. Copy of Brother Lawrence.

- Objectives:
1. Begin to determine if they are considering the costs of an effective prayer life that experiences the presence of God.
 2. Begin to think about common barriers and hindrances to prayer and to help them begin to think of their own.

Session	Total Time	Unit Time	Activity	Materials Resources
11. Prayer and the Reign of Law.	75 min.		<p>--Begin with opening prayer. --Introduce tonight's theme. A. Prayer and the Reign of Law. 1. Sooner or later we must confront the apparent line between natural law and reason, and our own faith in God. 2. Does factually based natural law tend to decrease your ultimate faith in God? 3. How do you reconcile this problem? pp. 87-88. 4. Again, Psalmist sense of a present caring God, as compared to a distant deity. p. 89. 5. Childlike Spirit, gives way, to an adult skepticism. pp. 90-91 6. Fosdick explains his understanding of miracles, law, etc. Do you agree? Underlined statement on p. 93. 7. pp. 94-95, underlined summary of entire week. 8. p. 105 Faith in prayer versus prayer in faith. 9. Group questions. 10. Text summary questions. 11. Close with prayer.</p>	<p>-Texts. -Bible. -Pencils.</p>

- Objectives:
1. To get each student thinking about their belief in God and in natural law.
 2. To get each student to grasp how this issue presents itself to them each time they petition God in prayer.
 3. To continue to help each student to see God as a caring, loving deity.

Session	Total Time	Unit Time	Activity	Materials Resources
II. Unanswered Prayer.	75 min.		<p>—Open the class with prayer. —Introduce tonight's theme. A. Unanswered Prayer. 1. Fosdick said on p. 108 that one should not abandon prayer if you do not have a <u>petition answered</u> because "<u>much of the greatest praying is not petition at all.</u>" 2. Another aspect of prayer beyond petition is on p. 109, first sentence of bottom paragraph. 3. Read last few sentences of Henry Ward Beecher's prayer on p. 111. 4. The problem of impatience, p. 114, read middle para. 5. Summation of other aspects of prayer goes on to say, however, that petition is important. p. 118. 6. Some petitions <u>must</u> be denied. p. 119. 7. Combination of prayer and work, p. 121. 8. Group questions. 9. Chapter summary questions. 10. Close with prayer.</p>	<p>Texts. Bibles. Pencils.</p>

- Objectives:
1. To mature in your understanding of the various components of prayer, prayer is more than petition.
 2. To get at some of the reasons petitions may be delayed or denied.
 3. To examine questionnaire questions, 1, 15, 21, 24.

Session	Total Time	Unit Time	Activity	Materials Resources
VIII. Prayer as Dominant Desire	75 min.		<p>--Open with prayer. --Introduce tonights theme. A. Prayer as Dominant Desire. 1. First Day, p. 127, "Prayers often unreal." 2, Second Day, p. 129, Superficial requests for forgiveness, read underlined portions. 3. Third Day, pp. 130-131, We go through the form of prayer for our friends. Compare with prayer of Jesus in John 17. Do we follow up, like Jesus, with sacrifice and action? 4. Fourth Day, p. 132, "great character is essential to great praying." 5. Fifth Day, pp. 132-133, "read scripture." Prayer in preparation for Missions. We treat missions as a charity. 6. Sixth Day, pp. 133-134. Do we piously pray for an end to War while we practice the attitudes that continue it? Quote sections underlined. 7. Seventh Day, pp. 135-136. . Read scripture, then mid-section, imagine how God must sort through our prayers for our real desire. "Let us consider this week what our hearts really are set on, what are our chief ambitions and desires." 8. Group questions. 9. Summary questions from text. 10. Close with prayer.</p>	Texts. Bibls. Pencils.

Objectives: 1. What is our motivation in praying?
2. To examine questionnaire questions, 27, 26, 10, 8, 3, 5, 7.

Session	Total Time	Unit Time	Activity	Materials Resources
IX. Prayer as a Battlefield	75 min.		<p>—Call on someone to lead us in prayer.</p> <p>—Introduce tonight's theme.</p> <p>A. Prayer as a Battlefield.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First Day, Clement of Alexandria quote on p. 146. The profoundest need of the world is clean, strong, devoted personality. 2. Second Day, quote Mark 1:32-39, Prayer of Jesus, Quote in text from Fosdick, "Why not this?" 3. Third Day, Highlight of Ephesians 6:10-18, climaxes with "with all prayer praying." "Fortitude to endure." p. 149. 4. Fourth Day, Jesus in desert story. Prayer helped Jesus fight out the purpose of his life. "quote bootm p. 150." 5. Fifth Day, quote italics at bottom of p. 151. 6. Sixth Day, "Battlefield of Gethsemane." 7. Seventh Day., Extra's interest in prayer was in the battle of personal transformation. 8. Quote bottom of p. 155. 9. Quote top of p. 156, illustration on Gorbachev. 10. Quote on p. 162, Prayer is a fight for the power to see and the courage to do the will of God. 11. Questions from the group. 12. Summary questions from text. 13. Close with prayer. 	Texts. Bibles. Pencils.

Objectives: 1. Prayer is a vital discipline in the quest for personal transformation.

Session	Total Time	Unit Time	Activity	Materials Resources
Unselfishness in Prayer	75 min.		<p>--Open with prayer</p> <p>--Introduce tonight's theme.</p> <p>A. Unselfishness in Prayer</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First Day, "Dominant motive in the Master's Life was Service." p. 165. By getting alone in prayer would he have an effect on a greater number of people. 2. Second Day. p. 166, "Man asking for bread does so for his friend." 3. Third Day. "No man is the whole of himself; his friends are the rest of him." p. 167 4. Fourth Day, Lord's prayer teaches unselfishness, "Our Bread" "Our debts" p. 169. 5. Fifth Day, "Communal emphasis of human existence." 6. Sixth Day, Contrast between solitary and social prayer. Christ is especially present in a praying group. "What does this say for local church prayer ministry?" p. 171. 7. Seventh Day, Jesus interceded for all. Jesus tells Peter he has been praying for him, "revelation of intercession." When a person prays for another and does it in secret they must really care. p. 175. No man can keep the consequences of his evil to himself. 8. Group questions. 9. Chapter summary questions. 10. Post-test given to class. 11. Written feedback on class, text, teacher, and open ended needs sought. 12. Close with group prayer 	<p>Quest.</p> <p>Texts.</p> <p>Bibles.</p> <p>Pencils.</p>

- Objectives:
1. Get out of the selfish perspective of prayer
 2. Post-Test the group.
 3. Seek feedback and response.

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