
Prayer

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Repentance and Tears

When we are confronted with the mighty love of God, our heart is deeply touched; one natural reaction to this experience is an utterance of repentance. And we do this through prayer. We are awed by the greatness of God—His love, but also His standard. And when we review our own words and actions, we realize that we do not live up to His criteria. With a heart of contrition, our eyes glistening with tears, we express to God our sorrow that we have not yet perfected our heart and have not yet become a true man or woman.

Yet repentance does not arise out of fear, but rather from the hope to be free of our burdens and our guilt. To come to this point, we must recognize that we are sinners. In the brilliant light of God, all is exposed—the entire tragedy of mankind. We desire that our hearts be purified, and repentance is part of the process. We deeply long for salvation, and in our penitence we anticipate meeting God in His love—not His judgment.

As Unificationists we are not merely concerned with our personal sins when we repent, but the sins of all mankind—our ancestors, and even that original rebellion which severed man's connection to God.

Since we ultimately must take responsibility for these transgressions, we would do best not to center our repentance merely on ourselves. Instead, we should shed public tears. They are the healing and cleansing ones, while tears of self-pity accomplish nothing more than release.

When a Unificationist is confronted with the Principle and for the first time recognizes man's sin against God, the necessity to repent for the distance which *still* exists between God and man becomes obvious. We were previously unaware of what our relationship to God should be. Neither did we understand our rightful relationship to the creation. Therefore, we should even feel repentant to all of nature for our lack of respect.

Repentance actually demands us to change direction: we have to turn away from following Satan and head back to God.

We each have a reason to pray, but that motive should not be centered upon ourselves. It is best to pray and shed tears for others. You will discover that tears unlock the gates of heaven; at the moment you connect with God, you will be amazed that you can experience deep pangs of His sorrow. Yet if you can manage to go one step further and shed tears for your brother or sister, you will even feel his or her lamentation. There is no escape; once you come to God in a tearful prayer of contrition, you *will*

shed tears. The greatest heroes in history—those true giants of spiritual stature—shed tears. Even Jesus Christ shed tears; the Bible records that he wept over Jerusalem.

Tears are nothing to be ashamed of. When a great man sheds tears, he only becomes greater.

How can we open up our heart? How can we overcome our personal problems? We have to unload that burden in our heart and discover why we became blocked in the first place. By casting off our sins, we eventually become free. And this is possible through daily repentance in prayer. When we repent from the depths of our heart, we will feel a definite spiritual emancipation.

Before God's blessing can penetrate our lives, we must repent. When you approach God in prayer, you should repent that you are not more adequate. Pray that you could do more, but ask God to accept you anyway. A person can repent when he is on the brink of changing his life.

Praying to God is so simple. Understandably, there may be those moments when it seems difficult to formulate the right words in order to convey all that lives within your heart. But just let your emotions flow. By coming to God in prayer you will be able to feel His emotions and then start to shed tears. And those are the kind of tears which bind you with the living God.

Tears come when you experience certain emotions. Therefore, in order to shed tears, something has to happen inside of you. It is nearly impossible to cry if you are emotionally barren. But as soon as you stand before your God in sincere repentance, tears may just start to flow. And that is when you can be assured that He is very near!

Repentance has a great place in prayer. We are all inadequate. No matter how hard we try, we never fulfill all that God expects of us. And that is one reason we have to repent—repenting for both those things which we know we have done wrong and even those mistakes that we made unknowingly. Yes, we need to ask for personal forgiveness. But even more, we must beseech God to forgive the sins and insufficiencies of our brothers and sisters, leaders, nation, and the world.

When you pray, repent before God. There is no need to tell anybody else of such an intention. Nobody will force you to do it; it should be a

natural reaching out to God. If you repent during unison prayer, it is not necessary for you to talk loud enough for everybody else to hear. Just confess to God from the depths of your heart and unload that millstone. But on the other hand, it is important that you absolutely believe God will grant forgiveness on the basis of genuine repentance.

It is impossible to hide something from the eyes of God. Your heart may weigh heavy for years but you don't know why. Some worry consumes you, yet you cannot figure out what it is. If your spiritual growth is stagnant and it does not seem you are progressing, do a little research in prayer and deep thought. You may discover that you have forgotten to repent to God for something.

You can come close to someone when you shed tears for him in prayer. When you go to God and implore Him to forgive your brothers and sisters and even repent on their behalf, you cannot help but weep for them. Those tears which fall on your face or clothing may seem to disappear, but they stay quite visible to the spiritual eye. They actually bind you to that person for whom you interceded, be it parent, brother or sister, friend, employer, or employee. But they especially weld you to your God and True Parents.

The experience of shedding tears for another can take the form of receiving a revelation from God. God reveals to you at that time how He feels about the person, how valuable that person is to Him, and how close the person is to His heart. Your level of spirituality and vertical connection, as well as your ability to cry on behalf of another, can teach you many things.

When do you have the closest relationship to God in prayer? When does your heart fairly float on the river formed by your tears? It is when you repent. It is when you totally capitulate before God. It is better for someone who is full of pride not to approach God in prayer. I believe God turns a deaf ear to a prayer prayed in a conceited or haughty way. Yet when we petition God in a natural and down-to-earth way with respect and honesty, He *will* respond. And His gratitude for our repentance is far greater than we can ever know.

How do we reach God in prayer? By repenting. By declaring bankruptcy. Tell God that you realize you have run out of resources and are anguished because you know that you cannot pay back what you owe Him. While you may be bankrupt, you should never forget or doubt that when forgiveness comes, your debts will be cancelled and you begin at zero once again. That is the solace you can feel through a prayer of repentance.

Repentance is best offered in tears. We may first shed tears of sorrow because of remorse, and later cry those of joy as the hope of freedom and salvation fills our heart. Tears bring freedom and peace; they are the vehicle useful in unloading a heavy heart. Talking to God and crying tears brings a great relief. God then takes us to His bosom where we can nestle in His heart of unconditional and forgiving love.

When we shed tears of repentance, we will find God. One bridge that we must definitely cross to reach His home is built from the veil of tears we weave during a prayer of sincere repentance. We should shed tears each time we pray. We have been away from God for so long. Now that we have started to connect with God once again, we should daily converse with Him through prayer. We should feel as though we never want to do anything that would separate us again.

Unificationists have been called to shed tears for all of humanity—those people who lived in the past, those who live in the present, and those who will live in the future. Our True Parents display such an amazing example of living lives of prayer laced with tears. God and True Parents have proclaimed this as the age of tears, for they inform us that during this critical stage of the restoration providence, shedding tears is one requirement to meet God.

Throughout human history, countless tears were shed in prayer. Rivers of tears flowed from the eyes of millions of people for a multitude of reasons. Some felt the heart of God and cried. Others needed God because they were in turmoil. Still others had a deep yearning for God after hearing that He is the homestead of all mankind. Even now countless human beings have a great longing to reach home. There are thousands and thousands of people praying at this very moment. Throughout history people have been praying to someone—something—they may have never seen and perhaps may have never heard directly. Yet they kept praying anyway. The unseen world *must* be a reality.

Once you begin to speak to God, you come closer and closer to Him, and the intensity of His light becomes ever stronger. As you speak further in prayer, even your smallest of sins becomes exposed to you. Subconsciously, many of us are afraid to meet God because we know that such a disclosure is part of the process. Exposure of sin and commitment go hand-in-hand. If your heart bows before God, you have no recourse but to repent. As you grow nearer to God, you will notice even the smallest specks of your spiritual dirt. His love shines upon you like a thousand watt spotlight. All the small points you attempted to hide from people suddenly become visible

and can even make you shield your eyes in shame. But once they are uncovered, you will probably feel as though you are unmasked. Although that is what we dread, there is nothing we can successfully conceal from the penetrating and introspective eyes of God. It is often that inevitable meeting of our eyes with God's that we fear. That is why we are often shy—in front of Him and other people. And that is the reason we roll the stone in front of our hearts.

We tend to recoil from facing God, from sharing with others, and even from confronting ourselves because of something that has happened or feelings we harbor. But what we fail to realize is that while God's love is bright enough to show every particle of spiritual dirt, it also contains a powerful cleansing agent that can remove any dust which accumulates. Yet that cleanser is activated only through heartfelt repentance.

If the subconscious fear of being confronted with judgment takes command of the heart, it will prevent us from breaking through in prayer. But the only way to shatter that anxiety is through repentance.

The Essence of Prayer

Prayer is more than bread for our spiritual lives. To me, prayer is life itself. And prayer is necessary because Satan exists.

Although my definition of the word "prayer" might vary slightly from the one found in the dictionary, I feel that simply stated, prayer is a conversation with God. As give and take goes on inside our heart, we definitely feel something begin to move. And that is the first stirrings of a true liberation of our spirit. In prayer, we open up and encompass the whole universe. But it always begins within the heart. Once we enter the realm of deep and sincere prayer, we may find that God has been awaiting us.

Prayer is very simple. You will find that the most uncomplicated words have the greatest effect. If you come to speak with the tongues of angels, your word patterns may be enchanting, but it is not necessary to strain yourself just to weave a tapestry of beautiful words. In prayer, you merely need to stand in front of God and you are home.

Prayer means many things to many people. But what does it mean

to God? What kind of prayer does God consider real prayer? I believe a prayer offered in sincere humility is most precious and touching to God.

I have stressed the necessity of prayer and encouraged you to pray Without ceasing. Prayer means something beautiful to God. But what does prayer mean to Satan? I feel that in his own way, Satan is "praying like hell," desperate to stay alive and to retain his control over this world.

Discover why you have to pray and then ascertain what to pray about. A deep longing for God and a desire to connect to the source of love can certainly be a prime motivator. Basically, prayer is the expressed longing for God, and the way we can develop an intimate love relationship with Him. The whole world of our emotions becomes stimulated and involved. The intellect helps in formulating words, but sometimes we don't even need words, we just feel or think. Prayer is an extremely internal experience.

I sometimes get the feeling that we expect God to be much like a bellboy—hopping to fulfill our every wish. But should God just act according to the way we direct Him? Is that His responsibility or duty? Should we pray for personal or public matters? What is prayer all about anyway?

In order to successfully live a life of faith, we must pray. It is certainly important to God; He needs to know we are thinking of Him. He wants to know that we care about sharing His love with people who desire to communicate with Him. In that way, prayer and love are the door openers to heaven; people are magnetically drawn to a person who radiates the love of God.

Prayer life is absolutely necessary to actualize a relationship with God and True Parents. Through a life of prayer and devotion, we are able to comprehend so much—about God, True Parents, brothers and sisters, the Blessing, the world, even the more mysterious aspects of the universe.

We light a spiritual fire when we start praying. And the peak of our prayer can become a real bonfire which just continues to burn and burn. If you could see spiritually, you would notice spiritual flames emanating from a person who prays intensively or teaches the word of God. Prayer generates tremendous spiritual power!

There is such a great distance between God and man. The depth of prayers varied throughout the different periods of history according to the level of the spirituality of the people. For example, during Moses' time, prayers were of a different quality than those offered by the people of Jesus' time. In Moses' age the Jewish people may have cried, "God help us! The Assyrians want to conquer us. And the Babylonians are marching toward us

from the other side. What should we do? Help!" The Old Testament reveals how desperately the Jewish people needed to be liberated. They were persecuted relentlessly and consequently their prayers followed a certain pattern. Yet the entire Christian religion is on a different level. Christians have a mediator who is much closer to God than Moses had been. This reflects well in their prayers, because most Christians pray out of love, not fear.

Do the prayers of most Unificationists differ? Yes, I believe so. Because we have been given the Principle, we have the opportunity to feel the heart of God in a much deeper way. Father has revealed so many different aspects of God's heart. Through his sharing, we have become concerned not only with our own struggles, but also desire to uncover *God's* strife. Since Unificationists know that God is suffering yet feels tremendous responsibility for His lost children, we often pray out of the sincere desire to alleviate His agony and pain.

The center of a religious life is communication with God—prayer. Prayer is the very core of a life of faith. Unificationists have heard so often that this is the age of attendance, and that we have both the privilege and responsibility to attend the Messiah. This time in the dispensation is serious and pivotal; we must make sure to fit prayer and action hand-in-glove during this crucial time.

Father encourages us to be active and move forward. He entreats us not to be bystanders but rather to plunge into the mainstream of activities. We can also pray as we move! We can receive confirmation of our experience with God and True Parents. The validity of the Principle can manifest through our prayer life especially when we couple our prayers with action. We can talk to God and act as if He stood right beside us at all times.

Without a strong and dedicated life of prayer, we can never fulfill our mission or be truly successful people. Sometimes we have to make split-second decisions and don't have time to consult with anyone about them. Who can we go to? God. He is there within us—and He has the wisdom and foresight to confirm whether our decision is right or wrong. The time will come when we cannot always be advised by a spiritual leader or True Parents. But we *can* get feedback and answers to the questions we ask in prayer.

We can become free by purging ourselves through prayer. We must have conviction. We must have faith that develops continually. A life of prayer allows us to be better tools for God to work with. We can scrub out the dirty spots on our hearts with the best cleansing agent on the market — prayer!

The Necessity of Prayer

Prayer is a battle. But prayer is necessary because Satan still wields his influence in our lives. Once Satan surrenders before God, prayer will no longer be necessary. Once we have perfected our hearts, we will no longer need to pray. Why would we need to pray after we finally become true temples of God?

Without prayer we cannot successfully fight with or be victorious over Satan. Every human being absolutely needs God. And the way we connect to Him is through prayer. Our vertical connection is *the* most important one in our lives. *Everything* depends upon it. We can never succeed in our mission if we only have the strength horizontal relationships give us. They can never sustain us as will an impenetrable bond with God; a strong prayer life is absolutely necessary for spiritual survival.

Prayer is vital to our spiritual growth. All of heaven is involved in praising God. And spiritual activity without prayer is unthinkable. Many elderly people may not remember biblical history or comprehend the entire word of God, but they *do* know how to pray. Everybody needs prayer—from the very old to the very young. I feel prayer is so important, it should even be taught in school. Learning to pray is as important as learning the alphabet. Yet public schools refuse to teach it. People say that prayer is the responsibility of the church; but since so few people go to church, who learns to pray? This element of basic education is greatly neglected.

Because Unificationists have committed themselves to accomplishing God's will, prayer automatically becomes crucial and an important aspect of life; we *must* learn how to pray.

Make prayer a way of life. Once you do, it ceases to be a burden and becomes what it really is—the fulfillment of a need. If you are like me, you have a longing for God which can only be satisfied by talking with Him.

Each of us needs a great amount of prayer power. Things will happen once we add to our reserve stockpile daily. When we can be thankful for everything we have received, God will be free to use all the efforts we invest.

Prayer must become a habit. There are so many evil things to which

people become addicted. Let's revolutionize this by becoming addicted to prayer life! If you keep on praying several hours a day and are suddenly forced to taper off because of increased responsibility, you will find that you miss it. You will hunger for it, and then whenever you do have the chance to pray for a longer time, you will experience a veritable feast. Try it—you'll see!

Prayer Preparation

It is essential that you prepare your heart before speaking to God. That way you can open your heart wide as you begin to pray. Whether the opportunity lends itself to going before God on bended knee, or you are able to take only a small moment to pray sometime during the day, season your heart: display humility by bowing your heart before the Eternal.

Go into prayer with a loving heart and an open mind. That is the best foundation—it is fertile ground in which God can plant the seed of His love. Eventually it will take root and sprout. Yet if you don't allow your tears of repentance to flow and cultivate that garden which God plants, your heart will be as sand and stony ground.

It is imperative to prepare for the next day through the contents of the prayer you offer at night. If you want to achieve a certain result in fundraising, witnessing, or any work, focus on that during your evening prayer. Doing that gives the spiritual world the chance to activate and prepare people or situations you will confront the next day. And that has a direct bearing on the result you desire.

Be constant in your prayer life. Preparing to pray is an important step in accomplishing this. For instance before you pray, you could look at a world map and imagine what life must be like in countless countries. Or visualize the faces of people—weather-worn and wrinkled from hard work and their own personal search for a better life. It will help your heart focus on envisioning the other side of the world and make you realize that millions of people are struggling just to stay alive. Realize that in the Principle we have been given a tremendous gift, and also recognize our obligation to share it with them—even if it is only by praying for them.

None of us are newcomers to prayer life. We have been praying more or less intensely since we began to live a spiritual life. Yet if we work to deepen it, one thing we will no doubt discover is that we fluctuate in both intensity and power during our prayer. We fluctuate in prayer when we do not prepare ourselves beforehand. Become calm inside. Cut off the influences of the world and leave them behind. Let God know that you would like to meet Him.

You breathe best when you are most relaxed. Spiritually it is the same; don't tense up spiritually when you pray. Realize that when you come before God, you may face the incredible heat of His passion. But to feel that love you must relax, have faith, and *know* with surety that you are going to meet God. There is no reason to fear that encounter.

Think of preparing to pray in scientific terms. A rocket filled with fuel has incredible thrust to go far into space. The amount of fuel ejected determines the speed, the length of flight, and even the height a rocket will go. If you were to launch a toy rocket, it may go a few meters into the air but would soon come down; it does not have a large capacity for fuel storage and the supply would run out quickly. According to the dynamics of jet propulsion, it is much easier to fly after being in the air for ten minutes. After half an hour, there is quite a bit of thrust, and a great deal of speed has been gained.

The same is true with prayer. Because God's heart is in the highest spiritual realm, you need quite a bit of spiritual "fuel" to project yourself there. If you pray for only five minutes, you most likely will not be able to reach Him simply because that is not enough time to propel yourself very far. Yet as you pray ten minutes, thirty minutes, one hour or more, it becomes easier and easier to pray. There is a simple explanation: you come ever closer to God. And then the magnetism of His love pulls you even nearer to His heart.

Think of the spirit world as a pyramid. You stand at the bottom but desire to project yourself to God who resides at the top. You will need tremendous thrust to get there. If you have only a little fuel, you will be able to reach only a certain stage. More fuel will allow you to go further, faster. Once you reach the higher stage, you will feel the response of the angels and the saints in the spirit world. But if your fuel capacity is unlimited, you are able to make it to God Himself, and could even land directly in His heart. You have to make the initial connection. God is at the top of that pyramid, therefore in order to reach Him, you first need to prepare yourself.

How to Pray

We have to learn how to talk, walk, write, and sing—so many things. And just like any of them, we have to learn how to pray.

Prayer is like ingesting a meal of spiritual food. And it is like breathing spiritual air. When we pray we inhale God, and drive out the devil as we exhale. That is part of the purification process prayer affords us.

How should we pray? The simplest way is to walk into the temple of God. Become quiet and calm; sit down. Close your eyes and open your heart. Stand right in front of God's throne. See it? Good! Project yourself there. Bow before Him—physically and spiritually. Visualize Him—there He is!

Once you catch that first glimpse of Him, an overpowering magnetic force will pull you even closer. It is awesome to be in front of the Almighty, the Eternal, the Creator. But take a deep breath. What you inhale is so refreshing, so stimulating you want to hook up to that respirator. It is the love of God which you breathe.

Our Creator looks into our hearts to see how much we desire to connect with Him. When He can discern that we want to create unity and harmony with Him, the compassion of His heart lifts us up, and brings us still closer. How much do we love Him? That is something He both tests and observes. Through our own voice we are able to understand how much we love Him through the words we use. Prayer is the measuring stick we can use to determine the amount of our love for Him. And prayer is one of the ways He can reach us and whisper His words of love.

Your reverence, heart, emotion, and sincerity are expressed much better when you speak normally rather than in clichés or as if you learned lines from a script. The language you speak brings forth a picture which is first formed within your heart. But it is not easy to paint the same picture in words that you so vividly sketched there. If you simply rattle off words, the picture in your heart might resemble pieces of an unassembled jigsaw puzzle. But God does not necessarily have the time to put together that puzzle, so it is best that you learn how to construct with word images the beautiful picture which you see reflected in your mind's eye.

If you begin your prayer by speaking slowly and deliberately, your impressions will become sharper and you will be able to talk faster. Words

will flow from your heart and make a great impact. You can slow down and push the entire portrait of all your feelings into the one word prayer—"Father." There are no rights and wrongs to prayer speed and volume. They can vary as do the contents of your prayers.

When lovers talk, they generally speak so softly that no one outside their world can distinguish even one word. And the closer they come in their embrace, the less they talk. It is the same with God. If He is far away, you may have to talk fast to bring Him near. But once He comes closer, you will not feel so compelled to say as many words. And if He becomes so close that you breathe together in one accord, you may not need to say anything.

Pray what your heart commands, and don't get stuck in formalities. There is no reason to be timid. Be a powerhouse: ignite yourself. Ignite God. To turn up the intensity of your prayer, it is necessary to sacrifice yourself. To do that, put aside your pride; change your ways. Forget *completely* about your past and start living with God again from this very moment. Welcome any hurt; welcome anything.

Maybe you have been too subjective or domineering in your life. Maybe you need to become a little more humble and deep. Put both superficiality and officiality on the shelf. You certainly don't need them if you are going to God. Travel the route of expressing gratitude in your prayer. And I find that the best way to do that is by starting off with repentance.

I feel that some people who have problems praying, talk in a much too sophisticated and organized way. They pray step by step. They have a list of topics in their mind. Starting at the top of their list, with regimented precision, they tick off each one until they get to the bottom. They pray for the world first, then the nation, their mission, and so forth down the line. There is nothing wrong with developing prayer priorities, and to start with the world and end with yourself is absolutely the right order. But can you pray that way on days when you are consumed by pain and really in need of God's love? I would say to turn everything around. Start from the bottom. Don't say anything sophisticated at all. Just begin by humbly coming before your Heavenly Father and honestly telling Him, "Father, I am in trouble. I need You. I admit I need Your forgiveness, and I also need Your love. Where are You? Please come into my heart!" Talk to Him about your problems, even if you have to go on for an hour or so. Sing to Him. Even cry

with Him. But whatever you do, make sure you genuinely feel what you say. Ask Him to alleviate the burdens weighing heavy on your heart.

Unless you are secure in your relationship with God and honest enough to pour out your troubles, do you think that a well-organized prayer stated in logical sequence will mean much to Him? Remember that He is our parent and He is waiting for His children to return home. A methodical prayer does not hold much weight when He is actually looking for your repentance. He already knows your vulnerabilities; He just wants *you* to recognize them so that He can begin to pack His love in the holes and crevices.

How should you pray? Pray in the name of the only mediator between God and man—the Messiah. That is the key to opening the heart of God as well as heaven. When you pray, do not be abstract or think of God as being far away. Project your heart into the center of the spirit world: God is there!

Pray in an honest way. Pray in a forthright way. Pray with humility. And especially pray with love.

How can we pray to God? Let me count the ways.... There are times that a journey of prayer takes us on steep mountain passes, when it feels that to make one false move could mean disaster. Sometimes while walking the path of prayer we feel invited to kneel down next to a pool of God's tears and with our own tears, fill that reservoir to the rim. Sometimes we may cry or even yell because we feel absolutely nothing. Sometimes we "pray" by singing God a love song.

Your voice adjusts to the emotions you feel within your heart. Your voice could be melodious and bright, or tempered with determination and resolution. But believe that whatever voice you use, you *can* communicate with your Heavenly Parent.

If you find yourself fighting to conquer your tiredness in prayer, keep on speaking even if you do not feel anything. If you keep on talking, God *will* hear you. Speak loudly enough that you are able to hear your own voice. Speak dynamically enough that you are not lulled to sleep by your own monotone. Eventually your spirit will cooperate and your heart will get involved—then your spirit will soar. But if you are so tired that you cannot break through, it is better to pray a mechanical prayer than none at all. Even if you pray an intellectual prayer for ten minutes, eventually your heart will "click in." Speak the words that come naturally; ultimately those words will get you someplace.

There are those who seem to chatter incessantly during prayer—sometimes repeating the whole of history to God, sometimes promising Him the world. While that is a beautiful expression of dedication and commitment, I would advise you to start off by speaking slowly and with feeling. If God's record player is set at 33 1/3, it will be too strenuous for Him to have to listen to you talking at either 45 or 78 rpms.

It is also important not to "pray" a broken record; just as much as we tire of playing the same song too often or listening to someone tell the same story over and over, if you force God to listen to a recording which you play every day, He will become weary of it. Pray something new every time.

I have found that there are three main stages in prayer. One involves making your way through a labyrinth; the second stage entails experiencing the breakthrough; and the third is feeling the liberation. You will not necessarily experience all three each time you pray, nor will you find your experience exactly the same within each different stage.

All of us need a little while to adjust from the dynamic of daily life before engaging in a quiet meeting with God. This period is rigorous and tough; for that reason I term it "the labyrinth." Outside influence is quite difficult to tame, but if you persevere through the maze, you will eventually find the exit or begin to break through in prayer.

If you have previously prepared your heart, you may find it very easy to leave the environment of the physical world and break through to God quickly. But sometimes you are so tense that your mind races far ahead of you; you find it nearly impossible to slow down. It is like being out on a boat all day long. Because you experience waves constantly rolling back and forth you still sway a bit once you are back on land. Your intellect and nervous system need a bit of time to quiet down and stabilize before you pray.

If a housewife decides to stop during her daily routine and pray for a short time, she may sit down only two minutes before something distracts her. Satan is a great manipulator. He likes nothing more than to see us break off our prayer to God. After she answers the doorbell and the telephone, she finds she has to change her baby's diaper, then must feed him and play with him before once again lulling him to sleep. At that point, she has just enough time to make dinner before her husband comes home. She may shrug her shoulders, sigh, and at the same time, completely shelve the idea of praying.

Good intentions to pray are easily blocked. For that reason, it is neither easy nor matter-of-fact that a breakthrough is inevitable. Breakthroughs do

not happen when we quit too soon or only half-heartedly feel that we can reach God.

But when you *do* happen to break the spiritual sound barrier and land in that realm of God's heart, you will feel tremendous freedom. That is the moment when you will feel relief permeate your heart. Some of what you feel is the liberation of God's emotions. Allow yourself to shed some tears; surrender to Him and finally make a pact of loyalty and fidelity with God.

I have noticed that some people have a tendency to recite the entire Principle in prayer. I would urge you not to do this. Our God is intimately involved in the intricate points of the Principle—it is His creation. Yet it is also not necessary to tell Him the methods He should use to restore the whole world. He knows this all too well. What He is most concerned about is *you*—how you feel, what you are doing, how committed you are. So if you are struggling, be honest about it. Tell Him, "Father, I feel so bad because I just don't feel You. What is the matter with me? Please give me a hand!"

The first thing to do as you pray is to break free from your cocoon of rigid concepts. Once you do, you will find you are no longer a caterpillar but have metamorphosed. Then make it your goal to become a beautiful butterfly. Soar on your gossamer wings—so graceful, so free. You can fly anywhere! You may even alight on the landing strip in God's heart. That is a great place to be.

Developing a Prayer Life

Take the time and the initiative to develop your prayer life. Unquestionably, it is one channel through which you will receive acknowledgment or confirmation. If our prayer life is not strong enough, we will tend to see things only in a superficial or horizontal way. That is why we sometimes understand things only intellectually, but our heart is unable to accept them.

A strong prayer life is not formed in an instant. It takes both time and practice. Therefore, be patient with yourself; you are able to learn more about prayer as you continue to pray. It is only natural that you would rather withdraw and be on your own. It is sometimes hard for new members to acclimatize themselves with the practice of unison prayer. However

developing the ability to break through to God even in unison prayer is definitely one of the best ways to become spiritually free, as well as to build up spiritual power. By developing a strong prayer life, you *will* experience breakthroughs.

The first step in cultivating a powerful spirit is to develop a very strong prayer life. We should pattern our prayer life after Father's—praying to restore the world "in the shoes of a servant, with the heart of a father, shedding tears for man, sweat for earth, and blood for heaven."

Jesus taught us to pray the Lord's Prayer. "Our Father who art in Heaven." (You arc Almighty; You represent all that is beautiful and mighty and divine.) "Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come." (We proclaim that Your realm is the one we long to live in.) "Thy will be done." (We want to live under Your rule, Your dominion, and to be engulfed by Your love.) "On earth as it is in Heaven." (We acknowledge that the Kingdom is already with You in heaven, but we proclaim that we want the result here on earth.)

The words of the Lord's Prayer are almighty ones. Our prayers are most probably more down to earth. Yet we can learn many things from prayers which Jesus and True Father have prayed. From the standard of their prayers, we can detect that it is important to cultivate the utmost respect for God.

Perhaps the biggest problem we face in prayer life is maintaining constancy. If we had an intense prayer life, we would have fewer personal problems. But why is it so hard to cultivate a strong prayer life? We know many things about God and True Parents. Intellectually, we know that we should pray in order to develop an intimacy with God, but *still* we don't do it. Why? There is one great force that holds us back. Logically there is no other explanation. Anyone who really walks with God experiences a multitude of miracles. On the other hand, the forces of Satan are subtle yet so strong, that a person must be perceptive and exert incredible spiritual force to break through them.

If we are reluctant to do something, we just waste our time if we only pray about it. That is a powerful statement, and one that *Satan* certainly is reluctant for us to incorporate into our set of personal beliefs.

One of the most natural desires is the yearning to feel God. Even the atheist can't help secretly wonder if that Absolute Being actually exists. And even the agnostic must sometimes speculate if he reached out with long enough arms, *might it* be possible to touch this unseen force? Ali, the secret

for any and all of us to do just that is prayer! Whether audible or inaudible to the human ear, our words are definitely loud enough for God to hear.

It took each of us some time to adjust to living our life of faith. We were like children in a new environment and we had to test out and try different things. Somebody had to show us how to live a life of prayer. Learning to pray takes time and patience.

I feel that whether or not a person has been loved by his parents and peers will reflect in his prayers. Our background and present environment both have great influence on our prayer life. Some people were brought up with a greater religious orientation than others. Obviously they might find it easier to pray. But an entirely new world will open to someone who has never prayed before. Perhaps it was not encouraged or allowed in his home, and suddenly he is faced with its splendor *and* its ardor all at once.

Prayer life is something that develops through stages, through trials and difficulties. That is why it is crucial to have patience with yourself in learning concentration and fortitude. Also have patience with those around you; they are also learning to pray. Just push yourself forward. If you make effort, God will ultimately reveal Himself to you. Prayer is a daily commitment. Don't think that it is not necessary to pray every day. While you may be able to talk yourself into that conclusion, it is the easy road but it won't lead you home to God.

If we really mean what we say and are totally sincere, eventually God has to come and help us. Any barrier you feel with God just has to be broken down. Persistence helps. If you take a sledgehammer and knock against a steel door long enough, you will definitely make a hole. And if you keep pounding, after some time you might have made a hole big enough to climb through. Prayer is similar. We create a powerful base when we pray for others. It is like knocking a spiritual sledgehammer against any of the barriers that keep us from God. That assures everyone will be taken care of—from the members of your family to those behind the Iron and Bamboo Curtains. That is the moment all of us can surround God's throne and gaze upon the brilliance of God's face reflecting and shining through our own.

We know the validity of prayer; we also know that spiritual growth results through a strong prayer life. The necessity of prayer has been proven to us time and again. Father has given us the global view to spur us into action. Yet how do we go about strengthening our prayer life and accomplishing the will of God? How do we offer the best possible prayers to God?

The basic formula is to relate to God through True Parents. When we talk about Heavenly Father standing in front of His mansion wanting to embrace the children who come home, we are also talking about the desire True Parents harbor.

Prayer is a personal conversation with God, yet Unificationists should always relate the contents through True Parents. Since we cannot be physically close to True Parents too often, we must rely on our spiritual connection to them. Prayer to God only makes sense in relationship to the Messiah.

We should pray for the higher purpose. And we should always begin by praising God. We should next ask for protection, good health, power and love for our True Parents and everything God has to offer them and the True Family.

Although it is not necessary to use the same order each time, it is also important to pray for each of Father's ventures in detail—from witnessing work to business, to the associations of ministers, professors, to our relief and social programs, and the infinite variety of projects he has initiated in order to steer this world back on a course toward God. We should always offer prayers that all leaders surrounding Father may be the best supports and mediators. After these worldwide concerns have been covered, pray for work on the national level. Pray for all members. Pray whatever comes into your heart and mind. Pray for your own family. Prayer for your spouse and children is also public. Yet I urge you to consider not to spend too much time praying for yourself unless you ask for wisdom to fulfill your mission, as well as for love and power to accomplish it.

If everybody prays, then everybody will be prayed for. Just as you begin, you can end by glorifying God—thanking Him for all that He has accomplished through others and yourself. You will no doubt then enter a realm where you feel His presence more strongly than when you began praying. As you open your heart to Him in a sincere way, He will also reveal His heart to you. And if He does that, your prayer will become most beautiful and meaningful to you. You may not even want to stop.

Breaking through in Prayer

If you are really connected to God, you will be able to pray for anybody. And once you break through, you *will* pray for everybody. I find

that the closer I come to God in prayer, the further my heart stretches to reach the ends of the earth.

When you are close to God you will even dig into the mud spiritually. You will feel that you want to embrace even the dirtiest little child living in a thatched hut in Mozambique. Close your eyes a moment; can you visualize her? Yes, those are tears. Yes, she has fears. She has no one to care for her. Her parents have gone; they died while looking for food in their hope to keep her alive. Can you recognize that she needs love? Can you see her? Reach out your hand. Reach out your arms. Embrace her in prayer. You automatically embrace God at the same time.

What have you experienced in prayer? When you praised God you no doubt got an overwhelming response of His love flooding your heart and bathing your spirit. But if you ever delved deeper with your heart, you may have experienced something that nearly knocked you out! Tears might have run down your cheeks; you may have spoken with the tongues of angels. That is because God was there. And God experienced it with you, even *through* you!

This experience is much more rewarding than anything you ever imagined. Your target was His heart, and you hit the bull's-eye. The effect of that kind of prayer—mature, yet tender—is both spectacular and breathtaking!

When we pray, we should curb our tendency to tell God what to do. Don't tell Him how much He should give you. He knows; after all, He is your creator. He is your Father and Father knows best! He knows best what you can and cannot handle. And He can see whether your container becomes larger or contracts from day to day.

Once you can forget about yourself, you will be able to cry about your brother and sister. And once you can do that, you will come to cry for humanity. The people of this world—whether they live in the slums or the palaces—will seem incredibly near to you. Your heart may melt just thinking about them. That is an experience you share with God. That is an experience with love. You can then embrace the people who live in the desert, and those who live on the plains. In your prayer you will spiritually pick them up in your arms. They will become so close that you can almost feel their protruding bones against your skin. You can look into their eyes and see the blank stare of hunger and thirst—both physical and spiritual. And that is the moment tears may begin to spill from your own eyes. You realize

that they cannot even utter words to tell you what is wrong. But you know. You know. For that is the moment that you have connected with God in heart. You then begin to realize that those tears you shed are *His* tears, and the arrow of sorrow ripping your heart in two, already pierced His heart long ago.

What does it mean to "break through?" In my understanding, it entails driving away evil forces, and burning away the spiritual influence of Satan. Yet at the same time, it encompasses attracting good spirits. But once you are constantly surrounded by good spirits, what could be left to "break through" to reach God? If you are conscious that God is with you at all times, it will not be necessary to spend a long time preparing to meet Him. You can just start talking right away—He is there.

Before we meet with God in prayer, we should follow the rules of common etiquette that we naturally extend to others. Make sure that externally you are well groomed and properly dressed. Internally, prepare the gift of heart. Just as you ponder beforehand what you plan to talk over with your parents, friend, or others you meet, think over what you want to talk about with God. Speak to Him with eloquent frankness.

When we pray and feel the deep longing to meet God welling up within our heart, He *will* manifest Himself to us. We must *believe* that we will meet Him, showing Him the sincerity of our desire. And that is when He will be able to respond.

Experiencing a breakthrough in prayer is usually followed by a certain liberation because your heart begins to open. Your true nature emerges; you feel peace and freedom. You will probably step into a higher realm and feel the heart of God in extraordinary ways, something apart from your everyday experiences. Try to lace such an encounter with true homage to our Maker.

What obstacles hold us back from a real meeting with God? Who creates them? By kneeling before God we must create a base for Him to come. We build a foundation to meet God when we address Him as "Father," and by doing so we reject the premise that Satan holds that position. It is important not to create a base for Satan in our daily lives, especially during prayer. Even small thoughts or feelings, seemingly superficial and inconsequential, might be just enough to give Satan the chance to invade. His invasions are pretentious and unwarranted. But when we pray, we can penetrate so deep into the heart of God that we become impervious to Satan. If that happens, he will have no recourse but to leave us.

It is not necessary to take time to meditate. You need an object in order to experience some form of give and take of love. The greatest experiences come when you go into the battlefield. But if you just withdraw and sit in the corner for an hour or so, you only succeed in turning over again and again all that is within your mind and heart. To experience a spiritual breakthrough and generate new experiences, give and take with someone or something is necessary. And that can be done in prayer.

Religious leaders generally encourage us to pray strongly. But what does that actually mean? My understanding is that a "strong" prayer is one of authority; we Unificationists *do* have a certain credibility. As children of God who are following the Messiah, we are already afforded a certain status.

When a person touches the perimeters of God's heart, he will be able to assume authority from God. The force of your prayer can activate spirit world. Some people only touch the bottom of a low spiritual realm when they pray. Some can't even reach that far. When they hear the resonance of their own voice, they may give up because they cannot believe it can reach the spirit world. Accepting that false assumption makes it easy for people to disband a life of prayer and even cause them not to bother starting again.

It takes courage to keep on persevering in prayer when you are not sure where your prayer goes. You must realize that when we bow before God and pray, we absolutely *do* come before Him. Breaking through to meet Him does not always take an abundance of effort. If you aim to activate the good spiritual world, you must do it for a higher purpose. Since the highest purpose is True Parents, it is best to pray to help them fulfill their mission.

This is an age of great tension on earth and in spirit world. Therefore it is not to be expected that if you break through to God in prayer, you are automatically guaranteed a wonderful or uplifting feeling. But once you meet God in prayer, you don't want to miss such an experience again, even if it means you must share His sorrow. The time for glorification and happiness *will* come. Yet during this time, you will no doubt feel His pain once you break through in prayer.

If you pray only a short or weak prayer more out of obligation than desire, you may only reach one of the bottom realms of the spiritual world. Of course the spirits that live there may offer you little things, such as park-

ing places when you need them, or help you notice bargains when you shop. But the results prayer can attain are far more glorious once you break through these more fragile spheres of the spirit world.

It is up to you. If you have a strong but sincere prayer, shoot right through the spiritual world, and shed tears of desperation, you will definitely meet God Himself. That will make the difference in your prayers. You yourself determine whether you will experience certain sensations and satisfactions. But if you really want to reach to God, I can assure you that He *will* meet you in prayer.

There is a definite problem connected with prayer. The problem is, after entreating God for an answer, we may get one we don't like! And that is precisely why some people refuse to pray.

There is a great danger in praying to God. Things happen! You will probably become more spiritually sensitive and attuned to the feelings of others. You may begin to hear things, see things, and feel things like never before. But once you encounter such spiritual experiences, you will be obligated to do certain things. If you pray simply to find happiness and joy, you may end up experiencing tears and a feeling of anguish. We talk about breaking through, feeling exhilarated, or discovering the ultimate spiritual bliss. Yet have you ever had a breakthrough and then spiritually visualized people who live in the slums of Bangkok or Haiti, or political prisoners doing forced labor in the vast tundra of the Soviet Union? Such an experience makes you weep, but that is one of *the* most real confrontations with God you could ever have.

Communication with God

Prayer is the most powerful mode of communication to reach God and the spirit world. Through the path of prayer, we are able to exalt our God. After enduring such an eerie silence throughout the centuries, any words of love we extend must ever-so-tenderly and gently, grant Him tremendous relief.

Once we become one with God, we will no longer have to pray. We will simply feel Him, act and speak His words, and accomplish His will. If God is always with you, you will find that you talk to Him constantly because you feel His goodness floods your very soul. Your thinking be-

comes like His. You merely think of God and you feel Him near. In other words, at that time it is not just you but also God who feels; it is not only you, but also God who speaks and God who loves.

Prayer becomes much more difficult once we separate from God. Yet the reverse is also true: the closer we go to God, the fewer problems we will have praying. If we deviate from our responsibility and allow obstacles to block our relationship with Him, we will have to pray in order to once again refuel and reestablish communication.

But at this point, we are not perfected and all of us are in dire need of communicating with God in prayer. We visualize the distance between ourselves and God and feel that we have to "shoot high" in order to reach Him. In reality though, we should penetrate to reach the core of our own soul, for that is where He can meet us. To pray silken words with quiet reverence is a very different concept and practice from pounding the floor and yelling for God to come down. But He is our true love. And we certainly would not pound the floor in order to attract our lover's attention; we would offer soft words of love.

In many ways, we live in a world so different from God's. But there is a reason. The story is the oldest in existence: God and man were separated from each other through the fall. And it was our fault. In a sense, man turned on his heel and walked away from his Father. But that places the next decision with us as well. Are we willing to take that all-important step and walk back home to God? Were we to ask Him, He would not hesitate to tell us that He desperately desires to reconcile and reconnect. The depth of our prayers tells Him how much our desire matches His.

Don't allow any unnecessary gap to develop between you and God when you pray. Be conscious of your closeness to God; strive to make skin contact with Him. Be so close that you can feel His arms enfold and caress you. That takes purifying your heart, but realize that your willingness to do so is precious to Him. You have to abandon that outdated concept that you can only have a king-servant relationship with Him. God must become your bridegroom or bride. And when He does, you will naturally embrace Him at every possible moment. You can do that through prayer.

Only when we allow space to grow between ourselves and God will we find it necessary to walk through the spiritual bush and bramble to meet Him again. But if we ask God to be with us through the day and don't entangle ourselves with Satan, He will comply.

Our God is there. We can talk to Him at any moment, at *every* moment. Prayer assists us in finding harmony with the Eternal. He is as constant as

the moon; even when from our vantage point that moon appears only as a quarter moon, it is still there. It is just that part of it is blocked from our view.

It is perfectly fine to set prayer conditions and speak to your Heavenly Father at a certain time or for a certain number of minutes. But be careful in limiting your communication to only those times. I also urge you to dialogue with God when you see the pictorial vistas of nature's dawns and twilights, or as you listen to the concert of God's voice in the warbling sparrow and even the howl of the wolf. He is there. He is there. Become entranced and mesmerized by the many mutations of His character and notice Him everywhere. Respond to Him—by mouthing words or allowing your heart to project pictures of your feelings. Both are types of prayers—your heart and feelings are able to penetrate the core of His soul. It is not necessary to only consider "prayer" the verbal exchange you have with God as you sit on your knees. It is a great deal more. Affinity and accord that you reach with God through prayer runs the gamut—from those thoughts which remain in your mind, to the ones that are accompanied by tears and shouted in desperation.

Some Unificationists have developed the unseemly habit of using the word "Father" just to fill in time during prayer. I urge you to think of how God feels when you do that. If you were talking to your friends, I doubt that you would say *their* names after nearly every breath. Were you to do so, your conversation would be unnecessarily stiff and formal and not at all comfortable or enjoyable. You would probably even come to dislike communication.

How do *you* feel about prayer? If you make it rigid and ceremonial, it is little wonder that you may be averse to or even shun it. Of course there may be times in prayer when you can best express yourself just by saying "Father" or "How wonderful You are, Father." Such expressions can emotionally elevate you and enmesh your heart with His. But those instances are different from the times you use the word "Father" over and over in the same few sentences.

Prayer is a spiritual experience. It is a vehicle you can use to talk to God. Because it has the power to open numerous avenues of heaven, try not to make it difficult or abstract. It should become as normal as breathing and need not be arduous. Don't look for prayer strategies. The best method is to be humble before God and simply open your heart. Just be His child. Sometimes we talk about breaking through certain stages in order to liberate ourselves in prayer. But it is not absolutely necessary to wait for half an

hour to break through. If you are looking for a way to break the ice, try sitting down and simply saying, "Let's talk." Honesty is the best policy—even in prayer.

You can even invite God for a coffee break. I am sure He wouldn't mind sharing your drink or snack. Don't think of prayer as only something official. It isn't. Remember that you talk with your Heavenly Father in prayer. Conversation with friends is usually fulfilling and satisfying, not organized and regimented. As friends, we often say and do things together that are totally spontaneous. Conversing with God can be the same way. He is, after all, our best friend.

If you have never talked to God as you would talk to your own parents, why not try it. Should it really be any different? If we claim that God is our Father and we want to communicate with Him, why do we act in such an abstract and stilted way when we talk to Him? Why do we push Him behind the clouds and regard Him as a fictitious and mystical being? We surely don't view our physical parents in any superstitious or mysterious way. We talk with them using everyday words. Simple and straightforward. Nothing artificial. It is my firm conviction that God longs for us to talk to Him in that way.

To do so may take revising your concept of prayer; approach Him as you would another person. Respect and love will come automatically, once you see Him in the right perspective. Yes, of course we should look up to Him, just as we should revere our own parents. But He is much more than that. He is King—our Creator; beyond that, He is so close to us and our hearts. He becomes a *real* father-figure to us. The parent/child relationship is the closest possible union because it is an association of solid oneness. We come from God. We are part of Him, and when we pray, there is no need to be so abstract and purposely consider that He is so far away. We do not need to yell as if He lived millions of miles from us. We only need to go within ourselves, for that is where we can find Him!

I encourage you to refrain from using the words, "I want You to..." in your prayers. Realize that it is not proper to give God orders. Even preceding your request with "Please" is not enough. God follows the universal spiritual laws. One of them is the law of attraction. And captivating God's attention is precisely what you should work on each time you pray. When you become a magnet of love, He will definitely be pulled toward you and then your dialogue can begin. Otherwise, *He* may begin to put conditions on your relationship, turn around and start commanding *you*.

If at the beginning of your prayer you connect with God and heaven, you will come to experience what God feels. Priorities in your mission and even in your prayer life will be revealed to you once you are able to perceive the heart of God. It is a one-way ticket from there. But if you have only an intellectual exchange of ideas with God, you will not be on the right road and will not be able to encounter Heaven. The formula and secret is to connect with God and offer everything in the name of True Parents. Whatever else you do, make sure that you place God in the center of your life.

Some people begin to pray, but unfortunately have not invited God. They force Him to stay on the outside looking in. They go down on their knees and start talking but become so wrapped up in the concepts they wish to talk about that spiritually they are not really "there." Perhaps their personal problems become tangled up in their hearts; they cannot break through to meet God. They may get stuck in superficial things or influences from the environment. The contents of their prayers may be embellished with lovely words, but might even be contrary to the will of God. Prayer should never be for show or public display. It should be for the benefit of God, the public purposes you pray for, as well as yourself.

In prayer we also have to overcome physical problems, fatigue, environmental influences, jealousy, anger, even resentment. No matter what we do in prayer or action, everything will turn out better if we first relate to God.

No matter how much God may want to communicate, *we* must initiate the dialogue. But soon enough God will speak through us, and the words we hear will no longer solely be our own.

If all day long we are primarily involved with secular matters and are coarse and gruff spiritually, how can we all of a sudden begin to chat with God? It may feel too incongruous if you have been angry or negative to suddenly become gentle and spiritually elevated enough to manage a deep talk with Him. It is much easier to pray to God at any given time if you are in constant communication with Him already. It is best to leave the house with a prayer on your lips and with a longing for God in your heart. Keep a meditative and prayerful attitude throughout the day.

When we make prayer a way of life, it will become as normal as breathing. Communication with God can be tremendously intoxicating, even making us feel physically heady. But if we think of it as something we are

forced to do at certain points of the day or evening, it could become laborious and exhausting.

If we inhale and exhale spiritually, we automatically pray in all that we do. That is when we will be in continuous communication with our God, either consciously or subconsciously. Even though we may not form the exact words on our lips, "Father, do you feel that, too?" every time we feel something, through our prayer we can become one with Him and eventually He will dwell within us. It is when we can project true love that we will experience just what God feels. Look upon prayer as a celebration!

Just as every day is different, each prayer is also unique. You could depict a particular experience in prayer as one tremendous and overwhelming feeling, while you might describe yet another prayer with such words as "poetic," "beautiful," even "apocalyptic." Still another could be recalled as a great battle. Yet we cannot help admitting that there are those times when we roll our eyes toward heaven and say, "Well, here I am. Now what?"

Try as we might, it may be virtually impossible to make each prayer exceptional or outstanding. Yet we can attempt to make each one full of vitality and textured with variety and spice. To do this, I find it best to start slowly. Say a few words, a sentence; stop a second. Then go on. Grope through any spiritual darkness and detect where God is. Discover what God might be feeling at the moment. Even though this might seem like an unusual concept, I believe His moods change as often as our own. What you speak with your heart must not be vetoed by your body. If the emotions in your heart are rather quiet and not so vibrant or exuberant, then just go slowly. The fiber of such a prayer could nicely complement God's temperament at the time.

God wants to be approached in various ways and under different circumstances. For the sake of both of you, He doesn't want your prayers to be routine or tedious. If you are in the mood to love Him, then use silky words; He will cherish them. Smile. Light up His life. But if you feel really alive and full of energy, you might want to sing Him a song. Then again, you might wish to invite Him to dance the waltz or even the Charleston with you. Go ahead. Be a bit daring. Most important is not just *what* you say, but also *that* you communicate with Him. In the intimate relationship of prayer, you can do most anything!

How must God feel when a person says, "Good evening Heavenly Father, I welcome You..." He is already there. After all, wherever you live

is actually His home. If you don't have a good relationship with Him, He may only come once a month. *Then* you should say, "Welcome God. Long time no see." But watch out! He might turn around and say, "Oh, you. I almost forgot about you."

Pray with your heart. Although it is perfectly natural to use your mouth, tongue and lips as you pray, the most important thing is to pray with your whole heart. Stand and face your God as you pray. No matter what else is going on around you, just be concerned about meeting Him. After you say, "Father, it's me." He'll say, "I know." And then it will be your turn again. But what should you do once the introduction is done? He may help you along by expressing, "I am so glad you came." Why not respond by stirring up all the sincerity from the very bottom of your soul and admit, "You know that You are the one I want to be close to. I really love You. Experiencing Your love is much better than anything else in the world. I don't want to leave You ever again. When I am around You, I feel value as Your child. I wish everybody knew You as well as I do."

Such words may sound quite "gutsy" and down-to-earth, but they really communicate. Soon enough you will find out that He is more than your friend. He will not only respond as your companion, but also as your colleague, ally, and parent.

It is possible to talk things over with God in prayer. You are able to report to Him what you did during the day. You may even argue with Him, saying You really need His help in such-and-such a situation.

Your communication with Him can take many forms. God is the head of the biggest corporation—the universe—and He has absolute power to activate a host of resources. You are one of the board of directors and must report to the chairman of the board—God. But once you do, He has the power to send down a "labor force" of spiritual beings. And the best part is that they don't belong to a union and won't go on strike. As soon as He merely pushes a button, they all respond. If necessary, tell Him that you need a legion of spirits to help you achieve your goal. If you are sure to impress upon Him that they can't just bring pick axes but that bulldozers are necessary to get the job done, He'll also see to that! Communication with God can bring amazing results.

During my first years in the movement, I really learned what it is like to pray constantly. I would lay on the cement floor with only a blanket

covering me. But I also covered myself with a blanket of prayer, and subsequently had the most beautiful visions. I could hardly sleep because I was praying all the time; I even woke up from the sound of my own voice in prayer. I was so used to praying that sometimes it became hard for me to stop.

At that time, very few people responded to my witness. Although I tried every day to talk to people, I found that by far it was God who gave me the greatest response. I felt like the Lone Ranger—just looking up at the stars and the sky and talking to my love, my God. I felt as though I lived in another world, a world far different from the one occupied by the people I passed on the street.

If you feel similarly, I want to warn you that it is very difficult to reenter the "real world" again once you experience the taste of such intimate and real communication with God. Religious people live *in* society but try not to be *of* society. Guard against falling back into your old habits and customs or becoming entrapped by the lures Satan uses to break down your resistance. The best way to do that is to continuously include God in your life at all times.

When I pioneered, I had a daytime job in a bookstore and went witnessing in the evenings. But I found that before going out witnessing, I needed to pray for an hour. I needed to "sew" my cloak of prayer protection. Even this one hour gave me the breath of life I needed in order to sustain the spiritual pain I experienced when witnessing. I was so often rejected as I walked through the streets every evening. I wanted to talk to people; I wanted to pray with people. But they turned a deaf ear. The only one who did not reject me, the only one who was always ready and willing to listen to me, was my Heavenly Father. And that is why I prayed to Him with such constancy and such longing. Without that communication, I don't know what would have happened. The feeling of love in my heart was tremendously scintillating. And year after year it increased as did the intensity of my prayer life.

Become spiritual. If you allow your prayer life to wane, you will just have to climb up the ladder to God once again. But each time you try, Satan may succeed in shaking it so hard, you could fall off completely. Change the way you talk throughout the day. Speak about more spiritual things than secular things. What you are having for dinner is important, and which team won the series is interesting, but you won't succeed in getting to Heaven by discussing those things. Realize that whether talking to your spouse, children, brothers and sisters, or neighbors, you actually see the face of God

and communicate with Him. Try to discover what things are important to God and even in the "prayer" of normal conversation, do your best to minister to Him.

Even a non-believer reverts to prayer during a war. When the bullets come from all sides, and in his mind the person already hears the strains of the requiem for his own funeral, he may proceed to yell to God, Allah, or Yahweh from the deepest part of his own soul, "Help me!" At that moment, he becomes extremely serious. Even though such a person might have professed previously that he was anti-religious, it is amazing what lung power he has when he cries out for the Divine One. All of a sudden, God becomes his last hope.

But I don't believe God can be happy if we call upon Him only in times when our stomachs are quivering in fear and we can't do anything about the situation. No, He is our Father and He needs us to communicate with Him at all times, not just in our dire need.

One problem we may have in praying is that we always desire to feel something. We may always want to cry or feel God embrace us. Yet it is best if we could realize that whether or not we feel something, prayer is prayer.

To me, God is such a reality. Even if I just say, "Father," I *know* He is there. Whether my eyes are closed or open, does not matter. I know He is there; I feel Him touch my soul.

Try to keep in mind that the tone of voice you use in prayer *does* make a difference. Think how you react to a person's voice. Your heart can be soothed or turned upside down just by the intonation or inflection you detect in the person's voice. Shouldn't it also make a difference to God?

Since we build up daily experiences with God and people as we witness, we should use the time of our evening prayer to report everything to Him.

God actually expects and waits for each of us to communicate with Him every day. He becomes disappointed because some people don't go to Him regularly, and some not at all. Realizing this, why not start to pray with much more enthusiasm and endearment from the very next time. If from now on we make a more conscious effort to live our prayer life conscientiously and do not try to cheat God, I am sure He will forgive our past digressions.

There are many ways to talk to God. But whatever else you say, don't forget to thank Him for being so instrumental in any success that was achieved. And then you both can shed tears of joy that He could truly claim the day.

Remember the byword—we. No matter what was accomplished, it was because God joined your team; each of us makes a powerful unit when we allow Him to participate and especially when we ask Him to be captain. Some result is gained each day due to a partnership with God—either tangibly or through the payment of invisible indemnity. And that is something to praise Him for daily.

Some days you may not feel as though you are able to offer Him any tangible results. Yet He will rejoice if in spite of the circumstances, you were grateful that you could pay some indemnity.

When you come before your Heavenly Father, it is normal to want to report only the most beautiful things. And that is one motive to make you strive to do your best. If you did not do your best for God, it is only natural that you would feel uncomfortable reporting to Him in the evening; you would feel pangs of conscience as well as anguish. But don't let that matter. God wants to hear from you anyway.

As described in Acts, the people at Pentecost prayed and fasted together. If we desire the same spiritual outpouring that occurred at Pentecost to happen in our lives, we must not consider prayer life as something done for a few minutes in the morning and perhaps an hour in the evening. We must keep communicating with God during the day as well. We need prayer until we reach perfection. And as long as we still need to pray, we must pray constantly. If you pray for only a minimum amount of time, you will eventually use up the power you generated, and become weaker as a result. You need to replenish your supply of spiritual fuel. In order to stay constant as a powerful ambassador for God, you have to refuel all the time. As the Bible urges, each of us should "pray without ceasing."

We have to be a "walking prayer" and come to the point that we can talk to God without getting down on our knees, closing our eyes, or folding our hands. We need to include Him in whatever we are doing at all times. Know that wherever you are, He is right beside you and embraces you. We must consciously pray with our whole being—all our faculties must be in unison and concordance. We must feel harmony within ourselves, and in harmony with the Eternal.

Attitude and Prayer

I would suggest to pray for yourself *only* when it is to fulfill a higher purpose. It is fine to pray, "Father, I ask for the power to subjugate Satan so that I can ultimately serve and love many people and fulfill Your will." Asking for wisdom for the same purpose is also a responsible attitude. But if you pray to have certain feelings, personal benefits, or spiritual experiences, make sure that is the last item you mention. The best formula is focusing on God and True Parents in prayer. Pray that you can help alleviate the burden of their mission and their responsibility. That is definitely the higher purpose.

When you pray, give it all you've got! Rather than expecting something in return or praying out of a certain duty, pray with the attitude of wanting to pour out your heart as a payment to allow God to touch the hearts of others.

Don't pray just to experience emotional release. If it happens, accept it as a bonus, but it is best to concentrate on praying to serve God. Pray to bring glory to Him. Pray to console His heart. Report to Him. Offer yourself in prayer. When you are totally one with the words of your prayer, you sacrifice yourself on the altar of God. That is the attitude of "offering" a prayer.

I think that some people have a misconception about praying for their families, perhaps even feeling that it is wrong to do so. But if you regard your spouse and children as belonging to the world, then to pray for them also encompasses the public purpose. However, start by praising God and praying for True Parents. End up by praying for your family and lastly for yourself.

All of us like to receive praise and compliments. Is God any different? Tell Him, "Father, You are really wonderful." That will catch His interest and He'll say, "Oh? Keep on talking! Tell Me more!" When you continue your praise and adoration, all of heaven opens up. The highest spirits in the spirit world and the angels in the angelic world have the mission to glorify God; when they hear you pray in such a way, they will naturally respond and chime in.

God must be given the credit He deserves. Always be sure to offer Him any praise you have received, rather than keeping it for yourself. While you might deserve a pat on the back, realize that you accomplish something *only* because God worked through you. Give God the credit for sending True Parents, and then commend Him for all results that they have achieved.

When we pray to honor God, and we respect all things with a proper attitude, God will be touched and may even shed tears. It is not often that He hears words of tribute. But we can ease the pain in His heart by praying to Him with accolade!

Even when Father was in prison and undergoing the worst torture, he never prayed for himself. What an example he is! If you say, "Heavenly Father, I want to do great things for You," and you mean it sincerely, God will acknowledge your commitment. You need to talk with such honesty that God accepts what you pray for. He can ascertain quickly whether you want it for your own glory or His. And God can tell if you will keep it for your own personal gain or whether you will multiply it many times over. Both our attitude and motivation are very apparent to Him.

We must consecrate whatever we offer to God in prayer. It is only natural that you feel good when you have something gratifying to report. If you have great success, you feel so good it may be hard to contain your joy. But if you have no tangible result even though you worked hard, you probably feel quite spiritually drained and would rather not pray. Offer even this feeling in prayer. If you have to repent for a lack of results each and every time you pray, you could easily feel discouraged. And that is just enough to give Satan the opportunity to take whatever results were achieved. The attitude we bring and hold in prayer determines who is able to make claim.

Having nothing at all to report is shameful; doing nothing for God after He has given you His truth, is painful for both of you. If something sad or unfortunate happened in the course of your work, report it in prayer. At least *some* action came about; you and Heavenly Father can cry together.

Bringing visible results is not of utmost importance. What matters most is that you pour yourself into your work, and that you develop sincerity and the right attitude. If you can do that, don't be concerned whether or not tangible results were achieved. You can be assured that you did your best; God will view and accept that as success. The most important thing is that you kept active and made some progress toward perfecting your heart.

Even though many people may not respond visibly, we naturally influ-

ence them when we witness or fundraise. Many people are exposed to the word of God through our efforts. As well, spiritual beings receive benefit. On the days we do not bring God an impressive result, we should keep in mind that by being active we *did* pay indemnity, which contributes to restoration. Indemnity is demanded for any kind of progress to occur. Yet we must realize it can be lost to Satan if it is not consecrated with either a prayerful attitude or prayer itself.

We must realize that if we decide to go to bed or rise without praying, we run great risk that our day can be taken by Satan rather than God. God has tremendous understanding. If you are sometimes extremely tired or in a great rush in the morning, just admit it. He is gratified when He sees how hard we work, and under such conditions He is more than willing to forgive our inability to pray an intense and long prayer. Again, the key word is attitude. If we take even a small moment to pray in sincere offering, He has the grounds to claim it.

If you go through the motions of praying for a specific amount of minutes simply because others around you are doing that, do not expect to reach the heart of God. But if you pray because you have a great desire to meet God and are pushed by His spirit, you will summon incredibly deep feelings for Him and from Him.

Go to your place of prayer—whether in your home or in church—with that kind of attitude. Don't be concerned with the environment or with the person to your right or left. Go only with the intention of meeting your God. Begin your prayer by announcing that you *must* talk to Him. Tell Him things directly; it does not matter if anyone else listens to you. We each have a personal relationship with Him. If you focus on God, in a few seconds you won't hear anything and the influence of the environment will fade away. When you are deeply involved in prayer, you will not be interested in what is going on around you.

As we pray, we must have the attitude of wanting to offer something to God, not just receive something for ourselves. Even though we may feel no response to our prayer, when we persevere, we succeed in praying without compromise.

The proper attitude is to pray for the sake of others and not for ourselves. We should make our prayers public ones, not ones which are childish or selfish. If we really want to meet God, we must disclose the depth of our longing for Him. Truly, prayer is both indemnity and a real battle. But it is a daily ()tiering each of us should make to God.

The Role of Heart

Our heart must pray—not only our mind and will. Once we close our eyes, we should try to meet Him in that realm, not needing to look for Him in anything external; He abides right inside the home of our heart.

I cannot stress enough how prayer must be a heartfelt, not just an intellectual, process. The emotions flowing from the heart should revolve around God, and *involve* Him.

When we pray with humility and honesty, we will retain our integrity as a child of God. We don't need to utilize certain methods or patterns to relate to God. Our spirit can relate to His spirit. It is as simple as that.

Just tell Him, "Father, I have had a really tough time meeting You to-day." When you do that with an open heart, He will scoop you up in His arms. Even if you aren't completely sure He is there, if you feel a slight rocking motion, realize that He is cradling you.

When spoken from the heart, even the simplest of prayers can elevate us. But as long as we attempt to hide something or try to approach Him without candor, it is as if we keep the door to our heart blocked. We have to offer our lives to God, constantly giving and surrendering ourselves and our hearts to Him.

Prayer conveys that part of our heart that is imbued with the tenderness of God's own. Our voice and the words we speak are merely symbols and vehicles to divulge the emotions living within our heart. How do we do that? We should line up the conveyor belt of prayer and direct it toward God. Then we should set it at a certain speed, and push all the packages of love from our heart straight up to Him. Our words of prayer just assist in getting something across to Him, but the important thing is what is behind them. What do they communicate? Since the voice is the carrier of the heart, it must cooperate in order to convey the message properly. If the voice goes too fast, the heart cannot keep up with or accompany it.

What is important in prayer is not the amount of words that are spoken, or even the speed and volume. It is the intensity of heart that we permit to flow. Quality, not quantity. Slow down. Let your heart speak rather than your intellect. Try to steer away from using formulas. Sometimes you may

be so determined to pray certain things which are timely and consequently you pray about every day, your tongue may become tied as you try to remember the words you think you *have* to speak. But God is always ready to hear new things—challenges and ideas, experiences, or feedback from the revelations and inspirations that He bestows upon you. *These* are the things which He hopes you will talk about with Him. Therefore, be more serious than too carefree. Aim every word you pray to reach the heart of God. He has been waiting to feel that love from you for a long time.

Do you use the vernacular when you pray? Or do you try to impress God by incorporating words you heard other people use? When you are natural, your heart will shine and He cannot help but be attracted to you.

The core of our love penetrates heaven as we pray. God is love, and love is the only way to connect to Him. Our heart sends, God's heart receives, and vice versa. Since prayers are begun with either heart or intellect, it is most important to season your heart before you pray. You may start off stumbling at first but you will build up momentum to walk and then run; eventually you can even fly!

Many times we may have problems to formulate our thoughts and feelings. Our heart may not be able to cooperate quickly enough and unfortunately, that is the moment when our intellect may take over. But that is also when the problems start. The heart should be like the main generator and the intellect, an auxiliary one. The intellect is not as adequate or powerful as the heart, nor does it shine as brightly.

Prayer and Our Position

Have you ever said, "Oh Father, I just want to tell You that You are magnificent. All I want to do is glorify and praise You. You are so great! You did this so beautifully...." That is a prayer prayed from a position of authority, not simply a prayer of petition. When you pray in such a way, God recognizes you as His child. And you yourself feel that you are His child, but competent enough to evaluate what He is doing. You are already a somebody, not a slave or a beggar. If you stand up and say, "Praise God!" you do it from the position of victor.

As Messiah, Father pleads for the world. Because he intervenes, God has postponed a certain level of judgment. Yet God and True Parents hope

that we will follow that same pattern and stand in as arbitrator for many others. You can plead and make bargains with God. You can even argue with God. Abraham did. Why not inspire God! Tell Him, "Let's make a deal! I'll do this and that if You do that and this."

Prayer is an open hearth in which many kinds of spiritual fires can be started. Prayers of pleading can ignite God's heart as well as our own. Prayers of promise can be offered. Prayers of battle can be undertaken and fought.

Your place of prayer could be considered a courtroom in which God is the judge, Satan the accuser, and the Messiah acts as defender. In prayer, you take the position of a messiah—or defender—and plea bargain for people in the name of True Parents. You say, "Yes, Father, I know they have sinned, but please remember that the circumstances were such-and-such. Look, they have already turned back to You." God listens and nods in agreement. Even Satan has to concede. When you present your case thusly, your prayer comes to take on great meaning. Sometimes you can proclaim to both the judge and the accuser that you are willing to pay a certain price for a person. For example, you can offer to fast or pray on his behalf. And when you are victorious, the accuser may feel dejected but must admit, "Since you have already paid so much, I am forced to let the person go." According to God's law, Satan must release the person, or the individual will at least receive a lesser punishment. It is like a court battle. When you pray and want to stand in for all of humanity or for a certain person, be sure to visualize God—not Satan—as the judge. A judge has to uphold the law. This is something Satan cannot do. He can only accuse; God is the only one who can judge by the law of Heaven.

At some point during the trial the accuser might pipe up, "But that person is terrible. He did this and that. Don't forget that he abandoned You, God! By rights he's still mine!" Even if the tone of voice Satan used makes you shake and your knees knock, stand up and claim, "Yes, it's true that he did that. But look at how much he paid in retribution for that mistake! And if that's not enough, I want to pay part of his debt." If you make such a commitment, God is then free to make a decision or pass sentence accordingly. Although invisible, those kinds of deals are going on constantly when we witness. When we can do that with confidence, our prayer will begin to have great impact and influence in the spirit world.

Have you ever listened to the prayers offered by a child? They are so sweet and simple. "Dear God, bless Daddy and Mommy. And bless me too, please! Please bless grandma and auntie and my friends. Amen." Most of the time children don't offer their prayers in the name of Christ.

A more mature person has no doubt advanced in his vertical relationship with God and Christ and therefore prays for a wider spectrum. He may pray for his neighbor, for his church and minister, and usually even offers his prayers through Christ.

Where do Unificationists stand? I believe that in our position we should work on consoling the heart of God. We should be so involved with God, True Parents, and the rest of the world that we want to help Him distribute the blessing to others, not wanting to receive it ourselves. We know that the heart of God has suffered for many thousands of years. And our prayers should reflect this knowledge and our deep desire to help alleviate that pain.

Prayer and Action

The greatest part of prayer is battling against Satan and standing in for other people. Prayer is an indemnity condition. It is a building block used to erect the Kingdom of God. We know that we should always bring a substantial offering. But by itself, prayer is not effective. Prayer and action must be one. It is similar to the foundation of faith and the foundation of substance (as explained in the Principle) which work together to create the foundation to receive the Messiah.

It is a waste of time to pray if you don't act after you pray. We can make substantial gain if we talk to God as we work. Working can even be looked upon as prayer.

I consider the time I spend talking to you as prayer. The words I express do not come solely from my mind or my heart. I communicate with God at the same time I talk with you. Even if I am physically exhausted, the more I talk to you, the more I am vitalized with spiritual power and energy.

Sometimes I have worked until I felt completely dead tired. When you are that tired physically, it is difficult to even think straight. I have been so tired that I just couldn't pray. I went to Father and confessed, "Father,

"I'm on the go all the time. Sometimes I am so tired that I cannot even pray anymore. What should I do?" His answer really surprised me. He said, "Well if that's the case, you don't have to pray."

Prayer is a condition and action its realization. If you work harder but pray less, you may achieve even more results. Perhaps you think that if you don't pray enough, you won't be able to work well. I have found that with a substantial quantity of prayer, it is possible to just go on. In such a case, act more and even pray less. But make the prayers you pray, ones of quality.

In our evening prayer we might promise certain things to God, yet the next morning we may find it hard to get out of bed. Do you automatically have more energy when you spend a lot of time praying? Of course it is available and the spirit world will cooperate with you, but if you pray so much that you become completely exhausted, then you will be unable to work enough to fulfill your prayer. Pray as much as you can, but do much more than you pray. Use common sense, and even beseech God to share His insight with you.

Prayer and action are interwoven. Prayer without action cannot be accepted by God. When you make promises to God, you have to keep them. The only way that is possible is through action. If you do not strive to accomplish what you pray about, your prayer life will become shallow. Try to live with the same intensity you developed during prayer. You will see the confirmation of whatever you received in prayer infused throughout your activities during the day. We must be constantly acting on God's behalf and then report to Him.

If you make big promises in prayer but don't act on them, God will be forced to cast wary eyes upon you. But I am sure that none of us wants to become a person God cannot trust.

The Power of Prayer

If you feel completely worn out at the end of the day, your cloak of prayer power was not thick enough; Satan was able to penetrate it with his arrows. If you got hurt or became spiritually paralyzed, I suggest you spend some time reweaving a heavier lining in your cloak of prayer.

All of us need to develop a stronger prayer life, not just during the times specified for prayer. It is during the moments between our designated

prayer times that we must continuously communicate with God. We are exposed to satanic aggression through our work. In one sense, it is a miracle that we are all as spiritually strong as we are. But we need to be protected spiritually in order to be the channels God can use.

It has been my experience that any question I have will be answered through communicating with God. We all are deluged with problems and dilemmas every day. In order to discover solutions to our problems, we should make the greatest possible effort to relate to God and True Parents in prayer. If we pray many short prayers during the day, we will have an ample supply of spiritual power from which to draw.

All of us struggle in prayer. Perhaps not every day, perhaps to different degrees, but nonetheless, we each must do our best to overcome the difficulties attached to sustaining a healthy life of faith. When we banish the satanic forces through prayer, we will be able to feel God. But if we have had a miserable day, it is hard to pray with calmness and act as if nothing bad happened. We are still in pain, and we have to do everything we can to gain back our inner perspective. If we burn with the desire to be liberated through prayer, it *can* happen. But if we always pray only out of duty, we may no longer believe that we can be exonerated of our sins. Rather, we should approach God even with our pangs of conscience and toss them on the flames of His bonfire of love. By our asking for forgiveness, He can purify all that is dirty and evil. We can accuse Satan and chase him away. You misunderstand if you think prayer is just a soothing experience. Once you have chased the evil away, received forgiveness, and felt the presence of God, any mistakes which you made during the day are forgiven through a prayer of repentance. *Then* calmness comes. But don't stay in the swell of calmness. Stir up the ocean of spirit world again: keep fighting on behalf of someone else.

Don't waste time praying just to feel good. It is fine for a few minutes, but then get desperate again. Just lower your head and ram through any battlements that stand in your way; suffer for other people. Once you eliminate your own problems, remember the millions and billions of others who have problems.

Yet once you have acquired inner composure, you will find that a bonus is the spiritual power and strength you feel. Once you get rid of your own problems, you will have the capacity before heaven and hell to go out and fight on a higher level. You will feel the surge of power going through you and may even experience the amazing invincibility of God. The more you pray for the higher purpose, the more God will remain and work with you. And your capacity can increase from moment to moment.

When you have a strong and consistent prayer life, you will naturally build up a prayer cloak around yourself. But if you do not wrap it around yourself properly, Satan will have a much easier time to rip it off your shoulders, penetrate, and even reach the core of your heart. The vibrations you feel at those times may cause you to suffer greatly. He would much rather have you wrap *yourself* around yourself than a cloak of prayer, and he will wage war against you in hopes that you will do things his way. Yet you can diffuse this kind of suffering through cultivating prayer power.

When we find ourselves in environments which feel evil or make us fearful, we may eventually suffer from overexposure. A cloak of prayer will protect us from becoming hurt, but we will continually have to repair any rips and tears made by Satan. Make yours out of thick material which is both water-resistant and tear-proof, not just to protect yourself but also so that when your cloak touches another person, you will burn away the evil forces from around him, and he will feel the impact of God's love and hope.

Sometimes you have such a powerful prayer you can't believe it really happened. But all of a sudden it's over and you wonder what hit you. You may even need to pinch yourself to discover if you are still awake. Even after that kind of experience, you may think your prayer was still quite insignificant, and that it did not even penetrate the spirit world. Yet in the sight of God, you may have made an impact which had more effect than you think.

The more people for whom you are responsible, the more you need to pray. If you are a leader and cannot pray, you won't be able to accomplish much nor will you be able to spiritually "carry" those people. A leader who prays diligently and constantly, gains both spiritual power and physical energy to lead his people.

The power of prayer is remarkable. Learn how to pray, how to project yourself close to God. Great benefits can be received from prayer. Believe that heaven responds whenever you talk to God.

The power of prayer is tangible. If you become a powerful personality, a person recognized as having a strong prayer life and being active for God and True Parents, a host of spirits will work and cooperate with you, supporting and inspiring you. They will create all kinds of miracles to help further your work.

If you work for God each day, you will accumulate great spiritual power. You may help people just by coming close to them. You may even be filled with the power to drive away evil spirits or take away physical illness. You will actually be able to command legions in the spiritual and angelic worlds to do many great things here on earth—from protecting Father to furthering the global mission.

Cooperation of the Spirit World

Through prayer we can become sensitive to spiritual beings, enabling them to guide us what to do, where to go, and even where *not* to go. But for them to cooperate with us, we must pray. Take for granted that the spirit world works with you. You need that kind of solid confidence. Before something can happen, you have to *believe* it can be so.

Have you ever considered that prayer is a kind of witnessing? You are not just talking to God. At the same time God hears your voice, there are thousands and millions of spirits who listen to your prayer. In fact, they are mobilized to help answer your prayers. But in order for them to be activated, you have to touch their hearts with your sincerity and honesty. And once you do, they will pour out their compassion and assist you. So many of them know that they are able to spiritually elevate only through their cooperation with us.

But if your prayers are superficial, you will find it nearly impossible to touch the hearts of spiritual beings. If that is the case, realistically you cannot expect much help at all. However, if you give everything you have and move away the mountains blocking your spiritual path, legions of spiritual beings will be only too glad to help you. Be a mountain mover!

Righteous spiritual beings will definitely cooperate with us. Many such spirits will be inspired even to pray along with us. Yet they will also respond by acting upon the requests we make in our prayers. If we pray in determination to witness to many people, they will do their best to influence people to respond to us. Spiritual beings are definitely with us—igniting, cooperating, responding—especially as we pray.

Believe in spirit world. Perceive how our prayer vigils and prayer life

affect it. Believe that spiritual beings hear, pray, and work with us. Prayer is the means through which we announce our cooperation with God and True Parents. And it is the vehicle that drives away evil forces. Through our prayers, millions of waves of spiritual fire purify the spiritual environment. Even when we don't feel the effect of that heat, many spiritual beings do.

Project your prayer into the spirit world. We have to realize what goes on in spirit world when we pray. An incredible amount of energy is generated by us. But this does not simply dissipate into nothingness. We affect spirit world by our work and our prayer. The energy of our prayers may be used in our own immediate work or elsewhere. But that is up to God, not us.

If we have faith that spirit world is with us when we go to God in prayer, a host of spirits will be waiting to receive our request. As we pray, we must be in the position to direct and elevate those spirits who unite with us. Even though the spiritual world itself is not governed by time and space, spiritual beings begin to expect you if you pray at the same time every day.

We should pray out loud so that heaven will understand our proclamation to restore the world. When we acknowledge spirit world, spiritual beings are able to activate and lead people by influencing them through dreams, visions, or experiences.

As we go deeper and deeper into prayer, we'll feel more love for people, even for those on the other side of the world. What was perhaps superficial in the beginning becomes more intense. We merely looked at the surface before. Through deep prayer, we dig into the cells of God's heart and mind—into the vast expanse of God Himself. The response from heaven can be so great that we may even have spiritual experiences. We may feel tremendous heat, hear things, see things, or encounter other manifestations from spirit world. The spirits want to make their presence known to us. They want to cooperate with the contents of our prayers. And through some experiences they may just let us know that they stand with us in unison before God.

God's Response to Prayer

If we pray out loud, we receive the grace of God even through our own words. When those words resonate, God lavishes His mercy upon us. We may hear the words of another person during unison prayer, but even through them God may shower certain blessings upon us. And they may

bring us to tears, helping us to cultivate and nurture a closer relationship with Him.

If you hear someone praying from the depths of his heart, you cannot help but be touched. That is how the grace of God works. We have great power to inspire each other even through our prayers. We may even receive more inspiration than the person who speaks those words to God.

Cherish all the ways God uses to reach you. As you do, you construct an additional room on the pavilion of your heart. And with a much greater capacity, you will find it that much easier to respect and love others.

God has tremendously sensitive ears. No matter how loudly or how quietly you speak—even those moments you are silent—God can hear the very beating of your heart's vibrations. Yet it is best to pray loudly enough to hear your own voice. If you do that, you can more easily concentrate on forming word patterns and through the resonance of your own voice, you will receive the windfall of God's benevolence. In fact, have you noticed how often He answers you in your own voice?

Because of the stain left by the fall, all human beings are impure; we all shelter a certain amount of impurity which we try to shield from the eyes of others. But we are never able to successfully hide this from God; no matter what we do, God's keen insight always sees those specks of dirt within us. However, He does not appreciate it if we dwell on our impurities as we pray. He notices when we constantly berate ourselves for being sinners. But such filth clogs our spiritual pores and makes us tense up; we then become less able to inhale the spiritually refreshing air of God's love which He attempts to breathe into our lungs. We may feel ashamed and unworthy, but when we try to sweep the grime under the carpet of pretense, it becomes much harder to nurture a mutually beneficial and open mode of communion with God. Besides, His eyes can ignore that grime when we speak more with resolution to do great things than belittle ourselves for what we have *not* done.

There is no need to be tense. Kneel before God. Have you forgotten that if you are blessed He has already forgiven your sins? Even if you are not yet blessed, be assured that it is just a matter of time.

God desires to respond to our prayers, but we must set the condition of

daily repentance and seek forgiveness for any small mistake we make. Who has the right to keep you away from God and block Him from replying to your prayers? No one. Absolutely no one.

Every word of prayer is concurrently a proclamation to God *and* Satan. When you profess your loyalty is to God and not Satan, God has a base to claim you. Every word of prayer is like taking one step on a ladder that you continue to climb toward Heaven. Cut off from the secular world and talk to God from the depths of your heart. If you really begin to disclose to God the secrets you have tucked away from all others, you will experience God gathering you in His arms and cradling you. And isn't that exactly the response you were praying for?

You will find that each prayer you pray is different—depending upon the time, place, mood, and circumstance. Even if you pray about the same basic things, you still have a unique experience each time you pray. Although it can be due to you or your environment, it can also be because of God. At certain times the spirit world is much closer and involved in our activities. Sometimes amazing progress is made in spirit world and if we pray at those times, we will be showered with unexpected blessings. Therefore the more we pray, the more we will be able to perceive. But I have discovered that if we are not spiritually attuned and just concentrate on the menial duties of our daily work, we can unconsciously forfeit our chance to receive God's blessings because we perceive nothing but the ordinary.

We each have a radar station inside our heart; make sure you never turn yours off. Through it, you can detect the spirit world. Of course if your device malfunctions, it is imperative that you have it repaired quickly. But when it works well, no matter what you do, you will perceive whatever is happening in the spirit world. If God wants to talk to you in response to your questions or prayers, but you have shut down your listening apparatus for the day, how will you ever be able to hear His voice?

Prayer is never exclusively for ourselves but rather should be directed toward the public purpose. Sometimes we are tested by God and don't immediately feel any great emotions during prayer. He wants to see how unconditional we are and whether we are still willing to fulfill our obligation, despite the obvious lack of any response from Him.

Let God take the efforts and energy you offer Him through prayer. Let

Him do with them what He wants, when He wants. Even when you do not see instant results, have faith that God will use the energy you invested.

Praise and acknowledge God as the King, the center of heaven. Begin to pray and keep on praying whether or not you feel anything. Don't worry whether anyone around you is listening to what you say. The sound of your voice creates a resonance which returns spiritual power to you. And through it, God can speak to you.

When you pray in the evening, thank God for all the results and blessings He has bestowed upon you during the day. And then offer everything back to Him. Instead of keeping all your witnessing contacts to yourself, place them in His hands. Share the victory and the responsibility, but promise Him that you will take care of those people in His stead. If we are truly active in expanding our foundation, blessings *will* come about — plenty of them.

How can we be assured that God listens to us? The quickest way to reach God is to go away from yourself. When you pray, you have to be sure of what you say. If you ask Heavenly Father to take your life and do with it as He pleases, make sure you mean it. You only need to say this once. You have only one life to give and once you give it, remember it then belongs to God.

Satan's Response to Prayer

If we have a strong prayer life, we will find it difficult to be superficial. Satan is always ready to attack us, but if we develop a solid life of faith through prayer, he could continue to pound his hand against an impenetrable cloak of prayer that surrounds us. There is no question: he wants to invade, but if we talk to God and True Parents throughout the entire day, how can Satan come close?

Once you engage in deep prayer, you will be able to recognize the battle that is being waged between God and Satan. You will not only catch a glimpse of God, but you may also see His suffering children. When you comprehend the turmoils which plague humanity, you can discern clearly that it is Satan who dominates people and wants to pull them away from God. Any public prayer is a battle. As you fight against Satan, you defend both God and people. That is the struggle: a fight against evil. Even to stay awake during your prayer entails combat with Satan or the forces of evil.

Have you ever gone so deep in prayer that you felt all realms of the good spirit world engulf you? You no doubt became completely inspired, but the very next moment you might have looked down and in your horror silently exclaimed, "Oh no! Do I *really* have a hole in my sock? I wonder if anyone noticed." In the flash of that one second, the good spirits vanished and all the "hole in the sock" spirits encircled you. And that one tiny diversion could succeed in starting you off on a spiritual wild goose chase. You could mentally visualize yourself repairing that sock, and then remember you have to do your laundry. Then just *thinking* about all the work you have to do may make you hungry, and your stomach could start rumbling, so then you think about finishing your prayer quickly in order to get something to eat. Then another thought darts into your spiritual vision and you wonder if you left the stove on!

These are plots and ploys of none other than Satan. He is out to get us. Unfortunately, too often he succeeds. When we submit to him, we get distracted and cannot break through. The smallest noise can throw us off and disconnect our wires to spirit world. The connection is *that* delicate.

Let those thoughts come, but then let them leave again. When you persevere, Satan gets frustrated and he feels at a loss what to do next. If you don't succumb to his tests and trials, he has no other recourse but to eventually leave you alone. At the end of that long string of strange thoughts and unusual distractions, God's pure light still shines. And He desires to beam that light on you. You will experience Him if you probe deep within His heart and listen for His voice rather than watch the frantic antics of Satan.

Whenever you want to break into the higher realms, always expect that Satan will attempt to stop you. But whenever you do something that upsets Satan, watch out! He is always on the lookout to hit you from behind. Especially be careful when you drive. Be careful in whatever you do—he wants to catch you unawares.

The greatest shield in prayer is the name of True Parents. As we strengthen our faith and sincerity, and unite and develop a strong prayer life, we will become sensitive to how Satan is working. Our best defense against him is a strong prayer life. We need a great amount of prayer power to prepare ourselves to fight Satan. It is not necessary to fear him, but we should never underestimate the power of the enemy. We are able to counter his attacks through a strong prayer life. Spirit world will cooperate and help

us when we do. We have given our lives to God and according to His laws, Satan has no right to reclaim our lives unless we violate the laws of love.

Despite the many miracles that God performs in our individual lives, it is all too easy to reject Him and continue to live with Satan. We occupy such an historic position. There are just a few of us, yet in essence we have accepted spiritual responsibility for the entire universe. We must cling to God, the True Parents, and the Principle. We need to build up our prayer life. Satan attempts to rip us away from every stronghold. He would like nothing better than to destroy each of us. That is why he went after Jesus. That is why he has gone after the True Family, and most especially True Father. And that is why he doesn't easily give up on any of us.

Responsibility of Prayer

Once you are close to God and pray on behalf of another person, you may nearly fight for his life in prayer. You may pray so fervently that you offer your own life to bring the person closer to God. Through tears you implore Him to appear to the person, come into his heart, and help him overcome obstacles. Great love can develop through such a prayer. If you plead before God with such intensity that you even begin to tremble, you may find it hard to talk. But this deed pays indemnity which will move God to forgive the person. And God may then be able to reach the individual's heart.

Evil forces are diminished through prayer. If you do not see any results of prayer in your daily life, it may be that God uses those energies somewhere else—perhaps Vietnam or the Soviet Union. It is not for us to know. Because prayers help take away the evil forces from this world, they should never be focused toward self-satisfaction. If you really become involved and take the position of a messiah, you will discover you have drawn closer to God.

Prayer is a responsibility all of us must accept. Fighting against Satan abates evil forces; that is why prayer is considered an indemnity condition. How can you be serious if you fall asleep or "space out" during prayer? It is our duty to pray for the salvation of the world and that all mankind will be restored. If you do that, you *will* meet God. But don't be self-centered or timid. Be outgoing and active. Go into battle for mankind. Wrench people away from the grip of Satan's fingers.

When you pray for a person, you automatically battle with the evil spiritual influences around him. You send benevolent spirits to that person through good thoughts and warm love. If you pray that Heavenly Father embrace that person with His love, the person may suddenly feel uplifted even if he had been in the throes of depression. He may come alive again, and feel good about himself and life. Praying for another fulfills a great responsibility—one that each of us has toward all humanity.

I am sure you often pray for each other. When you pray for someone else, you may have amazing insights about how God views that person. I find that praying for another person gives me a personal barometer to discover something about the person's connection to God, and hence I am much better able to perceive how God feels about him. Knowing that God loves him makes accepting responsibility for the person much easier.

Begin to take responsibility in prayer. You can do that by praying public prayers for the benefit of others.

Many Christians have never uncovered the true identity of Jesus. The concept of Jesus they sheltered in their minds is different from the real Jesus. And despite the fact that those people use His name, Jesus cannot always identify himself with them. People may use or even *abuse* the name of Jesus Christ in order to justify what they do or what they ask in prayer.

Unificationists pray in the name of True Parents. When we do, God recognizes the authority and power of our prayer, and will stand behind what we ask if it is within the framework of the Principle. The responsibility of prayer is serious. Each of us must follow certain spiritual laws when we pray, and we definitely must use wisdom in what we pray for.

It is best not to be timid or self-centered in prayer. We should not primarily pray for ourselves, but rather for the sake of the world. We each have the responsibility to pray for the salvation and restoration of the world and all mankind. We don't pray merely to have a spiritual experience or for self-satisfaction; we pray to abate evil forces. We pray for the sake of the world. It is in desperate need of purification and it is our responsibility to chase away Satan and evil through the means of prayer.

Prayer is an indemnity condition—a serious one. Although it *is* indemnity, it is also our obligation. Through prayer, heaven can be activated, thus enabling people everywhere in the world to receive salvation.

If you go to pray and are not very stimulated spiritually, sit down and

pray anyway. Do it to fulfill your duty in reporting to God. Eventually your heart will become involved. Don't be timid or insecure. Believe that God is already there. Focus on Him as the central point of your life. Even if your heart is subdued, it *will* blossom if you persevere.

If we really live each day with a prayerful attitude toward God, myriads of spirits will be with us. So will God's divine power. With this power we can help free anybody. That is what the witnessing process is all about. We help people to wrestle free from Satan and evil spiritual forces, and encourage those individuals to grow and develop in heart. We each have an original mind; its greatest desire is to come back to God; people want to be free from Satan. It is our job to help them.

Effect of Prayer

When we connect with God in prayer, we will become more of a listener than a talker. The value of words will become more evident to us and we will realize that our words can either inspire people or kill them. If we become more quiet and try to relate to God at all times, then the words we speak will no longer be totally our own.

Sometimes we must really be careful about what we pray. Sometimes our hearts are completely swayed in reaction to someone's words or actions, but we should guard against carrying those emotions into prayer. Resentment or bitterness, even jealousy *must* be left out of prayer. Revenge is not to be sought in prayer. Even in the wordless prayers we offer to God in our pain, we often say or think negative things about the people who offend or in some way hurt us. But we must really be careful; this is a sensitive and difficult point. Since no prayer is ever really lost, we must understand that even the thought of hatred or desire for spite we might project in prayer does not go unnoticed. And spiritual law dictates that we could receive backlash from our own prayers and actions of malice.

The effect of prayer varies depending upon who prays. For example when Father prays, something definitely happens. What happens when we pray? It basically depends upon the content. If we pray for the universe, then something of universal magnitude can happen. If we pray for strictly selfish things, very little might happen. It is only by focusing on

a higher purpose that we are able to gain great benefit. Yet if we are only content to stay within our personal sphere, nothing will move. Spirit world has a hard time listening if we do not pray for a purpose higher than self.

A prayer replaces the negative energies in spirit world with positive ones. But none of us can always expect immediate, visible results to our prayers, no matter how cosmic-oriented they are. Understand that any sincere prayer ultimately will bring an effect.

You can focus your prayer upon a certain person. That is what I did when I pioneered the movement in Austria. I would stand in front of a person, talk to him, and spiritually embrace him by sending waves of love. The next time we met, I noticed that he had a much warmer response and did not erect as many defense mechanisms.

When you pray for a person, have him in front of your spiritual eye. You can even talk to him. When you do, he *will* feel something. Do the same when you pray for Father and Mother. Visualize and talk to them as if they were sitting right in front of you.

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught and claimed that those who followed certain spiritual laws would be fortified against the aggression of Satan. He taught people how to pray. Later St. Paul encouraged his own congregations to pray without ceasing to protect themselves from Satan's attacks.

When we build up a protective wall of prayer around ourselves, Satan has a much more difficult time to invade, but if that wall crumbles, we will find ourselves in a very vulnerable position.

Prayer is like food. If we don't eat for a long time, we become undernourished and weak, and even our resistance against disease goes down. We experience the same kind of thing in the spiritual sense. We become spiritually feeble when we pray very little or not at all.

I learned a great deal about prayer from my parents. I saw both my parents pray every day and I witnessed that their prayers sometimes seemed to turn fate around! I began to have absolute confidence that whatever my mother prayed for *would* happen! All of my brothers and sisters and I experienced how God helped our whole family. I am sure it was due to the prayer efforts of my parents. But they prayed for more than just our family—they also prayed for our neighbors and our town. And it worked, because I saw how others were also helped through the prayers of my family.

Prayer *does* change things!

The way to keep the initial inspiration you receive from God in the morning with you throughout the day, is to pray with desperation. When you begin your day with a strong prayer, you will receive revelations and inspirations that will uplift your heart. Sometimes we may find that our morning prayer is on the superficial side—we may be trying to wake up and still in a "gray" zone. Nonetheless, morning prayer is crucial, decisive in determining the quality of our day. As you go to work, let the effect of this prayer linger with you. You may need to refresh the initial spirit of your prayer at some point, and should take a few minutes to have another strong and intensive prayer at some other time during the day.

The best thing is to be connected consciously to God at all times, even if it is just in thought. When you are, you will find that you can feel Him. It is when you cut off from Him during the day or only pray during specified times, that you may find yourself in spiritual muck and mire.

Pentecost will occur if there is unceasing prayer and effort exhibited by all members of a unified congregation. Once such a foundation is created, each member will feel the embrace of God.

Is our prayer selfish or for the public purpose? If our individual prayer is for a self centered purpose, then we should not expect any immediate return. Whatever *does* come back should then be regarded as an extra bonus.

Prayer changes the spiritual atmosphere. Although every prayer may not be answered in the way desired by the one who prays, prayer automatically diminishes satanic forces. Prayers widen the span of good energy in spirit world. No prayer is ever lost. Every kind of prayer is beautiful. Whether a person is Jewish, Christian, Moslem, Unificationist, or any other religion, his prayer has tremendous power and goodness. The reservoir is the same: God is that Eternal Being who is addressed in many languages, many tones of voice, and in many ways. And one more invisible effect of prayer is that through it, we succeed in filling up God's reservoir.