

The Prayer Letter

New Horizon United Methodist Church

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Running on Prayer: Chapter Two (Getting Started)

This "Running on Prayer" letter is the second installment of four parts. The first dealt with "Preparation" or how to get ready for a serious attempt at the spiritual discipline of prayer. This second part looks at "Getting Started." The next two will be "Avoiding injuries and other pitfalls" and "Enjoying the Adventure."

This month we are doing a message series at New Horizon called "in tune." In it we will talk about some of the spiritual disciplines that will help us draw closer to God. But of all the spiritual disciplines, the discipline of prayer is primary because it allows us into the presence of God and it can be practiced throughout all the other disciplines. A good resource to read during this time is Richard J. Foster's classic book, *Celebration of Discipline*. When commenting on developing a prayer life, Foster makes a comparison to developing as a runner. "Occasional joggers do not suddenly enter an Olympic marathon. They prepare and train themselves over a period of time, and so should we. When such a progression is followed, we can expect to pray a year from now with greater authority and spiritual success than at present."

So how do we get started in our "Running on Prayer?"

"You got to begin in order to win." Nike says, "Just Do it." In prayer it is like putting one foot in front of the other. Just start talking to God—even if you don't know what to say. The first thing to do is to simply seek time with God without any real agenda except a desire to be in His presence. God is always with you and you can talk with Him at anytime. This should be a time that you can avoid other distractions.

Through preparation, you have already scheduled the time to pray, you have a designated place to meet God in prayer, you have your Bible and possibly a short devotional to help get you started. Now you simply allow God to have your undivided attention. You may want to begin by saying something like, *"Okay God, here I am and I want you give to you all my attention. I don't know how this will work, but I truly do have a desire to draw closer to you. In James 4:8, Your word promises that if come near to You that You will come near to me. So thank You for meeting with me today."* You may want to just spend the next few minutes allowing God the opportunity to speak into your heart.

One thing that helps me is to take a notebook with me to write down the things that I sense God is saying to me. (I also keep another page ready to write down anything that comes to mind that I need to do later. I write it down and then get back to being with God).

"Go slow at first." Understand that prayer is a learning process. Jesus' disciples asked Him, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). It is in many ways freeing to know that prayer is a learning process because you are freed to try different things to see what works well and what doesn't. So you will need to start out slowly in prayer. You'll need to walk before you can run. Don't expect your prayer life to develop overnight. Start out slow and then begin to increase your time and depth of prayer knowing that it may seem like a lot of work. You may want to start with just five or ten minutes and work up from there.

"Consider working with a personal trainer." There are those in your life that would be willing to pray with you and help you along just as there are better runners who are willing to help a novice runner to succeed. Praying with someone who has the spiritual gift of intercession or someone who has developed the spiritual discipline of prayer over a long period of time can be very advantageous in helping you to become effective in prayer.

"Build endurance, speed and strength over a reasonable period of time." Relationship building with anyone always takes time. The same is true between you and God. Seek to learn God's agenda for your life. Seek to listen to what He is saying to you. This will strengthen your prayer life and will help you to become more confident.

Many treat prayer as a way to give God a wish list. However, a much higher goal of prayer is to get to the point where you can walk with God in such a way that you know His will and direction for your life in any given situation.

Prayer can be a very exciting part of being a Christ Follower. It is the opportunity that we have to spend time with the God of the universe—to have His attention and to know that He knows our needs. We can "run" to God just because we want to spend time with Him and He wants to spend that time with us.

I love you and continue to pray for you,



Seven Days of Prayer
New Horizon Prayer Team
August 2009

*Please feel free to pray for a different area each day of the week.
Thank you for your prayer.*

1) Pray for continued growth of New Horizon—Pray “impossible” prayers for the life, witness and ministry of the New Horizon people (Mark 9:23). Pray for the Holy Spirit to stir us to reach out to include a wide range of racial diversity into our family of faith. Pray for the financial provision of the New Horizon ministries for 2009. Pray for financial security for the families of the New Horizon community.

2) Pray for the families and people of New Horizon—to have a great time this summer with God, family and friends.

3) Pray for passionate worship and prayer and compassionate small groups and outreach—Pray that we will take Jesus’ Great Commandment seriously and allow it to lead us through life (Mark 12:30). Pray that we will understand that our call is to live in the intersection of the cross of passion for God and compassion for people.

4) Pray to be a part of what God is blessing. Ask God to allow us to be the hands and feet of Jesus as we move forward to make an impact for Him in this region and the world.

5) Pray for effective use of the building—Pray that God will continue to use the new addition as a tool to bring many new people of all ages to Him through the ministries of New Horizon. Praise God for the generous hearts that have given \$1,673,537.15 to the **Multiply Your Love campaign** as of August 1, 2009. Pray that the new building will enhance the effective programs of the student and children ministries.

6) Pray the promise of Philippians 4:19 over yourself and those whom God places on your heart.

7) Staff—Praise God for our Staff Team of Kristie, Deb, Mike, Dave, Jackson, Jennifer, Bob, Bryan, Sean, and Roger.

My Prayers for New Horizon:
