

PRAYER as Fellowship with God

by Pastor Scott Boerckel

I want to invite you to a joyous, holy place. It is a place of both kindness and improvement. It is kind because the company is kind. It improves us because the company will not leave us to mediocrity.

The place where I am inviting you, of course, is the place of prayer. As we meet with the Lord in prayer, we will receive both His kindness and His improvement.

Consider first the kindness of the Lord. Our Lord Jesus beckons us to prayer fellowship with Him because He is gentle and lowly of heart. There, we find rest for our souls (Matthew 11:28-30). The sons of Korah challenged their own souls in this song: *"Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God."* Psalm 42:11

(continued on page 2)

A spiritual discipline is a practice identified in the Scriptures as a means of promoting spiritual maturity among believers in Jesus. This edition focuses on "Prayer." Prayer was a regular practice of Jesus. Praying is one way that we are "Growing in Christ," one of East White Oak's three Vital Signs.

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Prayer as Fellowship with God, continued

Are you feeling blue, out of sorts, or a bit lost as you begin a new year? Look unto your Savior, dear one. He is good; He is kind. He wants to hear your prayers!

Consider next the work of the Lord in the improvement of our souls. We tend to begin the new year with all sorts of plans for improvement, whether in diet, or in exercise, or in relationships. May I commend to you the act of prayer as a means to improve your soul? It is as we pray that the Lord impresses upon us our need of Him, our sinful condition, and His great means of transformation.

We do not have to
be afraid that we
don't know what to
say in prayer.

It is true that the devil can get us to think that, while we are in a state of distance, rebellion, or apathy toward God, we should stay away from God until we “get our act together.” Nothing could be further from the truth. It is just at these moments that we most need time in prayer before the Lord. The verse often used to describe national revival also is applicable to personal revival: *“If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”* 2 Chronicles 7:14

So, run to the Lord in prayer. This is fellowship that you need. You need it to receive the Lord's kindness. You need it to receive the Lord's improvement. God has opened the door for us to access Him. He has made it easy. The devil wants to keep you from prayer. He tries to make it hard. Prayerlessness will keep you needlessly discouraged. Go to the Lord in prayer.

Jesus Christ died to provide you access to the throne of God, now and forever. Jesus continues

as our advocate so that our prayers are an offering to the Lord, acceptable and pleasing to Him. This is why both Revelation 5 and Revelation 8 describe the throne room of God as having the prayers of the saints before the presence of God. Jesus makes our prayers so holy that they are preserved in some way in the throne room of God. *“And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.”* Revelation 5:8 *“Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel.”* Revelation 8:2-4

The Holy Spirit stands ready to help our weakness in prayer. We do not have to be afraid that we don't know what to say in prayer. As J. C. Ryle notes, “The Spirit will give us words if we seek His aid.” *“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”* Romans 8:26-27 What encouragement is this! The Spirit of God intercedes for us in exact accordance with the will of God.

We eat; we drink; we sleep; we rise; we go to work; we return home; we breathe God's air, see God's sun, walk on God's earth, enjoy God's mercies. (This paragraph is a paraphrase from J.C. Ryle) Those are all wonderful. We have dying bodies. We have judgment and eternity ahead of us. Those are painful. Whether painful or wonderful, I invite you to speak with God. He is kind. He will improve you.

This invitation is for you: *“Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.”* Colossians 4:2

Warmly in Christ,
Pastor Scott

Prayer as Worship

by Meg White

Walking deep into our woods over the weekend, I am in awe of the smells, the sights, and the sounds of creation. These woods are a place of rest for me.

I did not create them, but have the privilege of enjoying and experiencing them. The more crackling steps I take, the more I am in awe of my Creator. The intricacy, the color, and the sounds of creatures I do not yet know the name of.

I experience those same feelings as I watch my baby sleep, or observe the spreading wings of my ever growing children.

It stirs in me, the same awe—awe of my Creator. Awe of my Savior. And I am led to worship—a whisper of thanks to God.



worship

verb

wor·ship 'wər-shəp

: to honor or show reverence for as a divine being or supernatural power

If this definition is true, as Webster tells us, then this can happen in the most ordinary and extraordinary of days and situations and moments. When you see God in this way, that worship most often results in a prayer, a whisper, a shout—song of thanks—a prayer of humility—recognizing He is God and we are not. There is so little in life we can truly control, but our worship—well that is one.

In these woods, where I walk on an almost daily basis, I see the fingerprints of my Creator all over everything. Creation calls out as Romans 1 tells us. I'm reminded that He is in control even if the world feels like it's splitting at the seams and I breathe deep, a sigh of relief, a whisper, a prayer of "Thank you Jesus—Thank you for these woods. Thank you for Your word. Thank you for breath."

Just being here in this place reminds me He is God and I am not. That fact makes me rejoice with relief. Prayer is deep worship; a gift. And in creation, in these woods, might just be the very place I worship most.



Meg is wife to Jason and mom of 8. As a photographer for over two decades, she is passionate about documenting the beauty of real, ordinary life and living awake to the one life we have been given. She is a lover of words and the garden. Together, Meg and Jason are working to restore the home and land they live on which they have fondly named Haven Hill.



Prayer in Children's Ministry

by the Children's Ministry Team

“Now I lay me down to sleep...”

A bedtime prayer can be a wonderful place for children to begin to experience prayer for themselves. But our East White Oak Children's Ministry Team is committed to moving children along in their personal prayer lives. Jesus was a prayerful man and, as children *Grow in Christ*, we want them to know that God wants children to talk to Him; that prayer is more than asking God for things; and that God's people have always prayed. But more than knowing about prayer, we want children to be pray-ers. So, our children's ministry programs include times of prayer.

Below you will find a few prayer stories recently gathered from our Children's Ministry Team...

- When one of the little girls in our Bible Fellowship found out that one of the boys in class had MANY more siblings than she did, her face crinkled in concern and she blurted out, “I'll pray for you!”
- Prayer time has become the time when we are best able to get to know the kids in Children's Church and when we are most consistently able to teach them a lot about God's love. During prayer time we've been able to discuss things like adoption, death, missions, homelessness, and chronic illness.
- One of our kids asked that we pray for a classmate who he had never met because the classmate from the beginning of school had been sick and in the hospital. The children were faithful to pray. The sick child eventually was able to attend school a few days a week. Twenty kids prayed for a child that they had never met, and they saw God work.

- Our Children's Bible Fellowship came up with an association for each child. The association is a helpful reminder to us to pray for each other. Here's how it works...Haley loves hot sauce. So, whenever any of us sees hot sauce, we pray for her. We may pray that she would listen to the Spirit of God, or that she would be faithful in spending time with God, or that God would protect her. Since each of the kids has an association, we are always being reminded to pray for one another.

It's no longer unusual
for our kids to pray for
anyone in the church who
doesn't have a personal
relationship with Jesus.

- Every Sunday morning our Children's Bible Fellowship stands in a circle for prayer time. Not everyone prays out loud, but most do. It's easy to get into a prayer “rut”...prayer for someone who's sick or that God would help us have a good day. But one Sunday a girl prayed that Jesus would touch the hearts of everyone in the church! She asked Jesus to open their hearts, forgive their sins, and become their Savior. It's no longer unusual for our kids to pray for anyone in the church who doesn't have a personal relationship with Jesus.

What a blessing it is that our children are cared for and nurtured by such wonderful Christian men and women who comprise our Children's Ministry Team. They are giving themselves to discipling the next generation of worshipers who are maturing in Christ.



East White Oak
Children's Ministries

Join the Children's Ministry Prayer Team

"When we work, we work. When we pray, God works."
Hudson Taylor – China Inland Mission

What a simple way to describe intercessory prayer and explain its purpose. Prayer is God's plan for humanity joining Him in the work that only He is capable of doing. Prayer is not a manmade strategy. It's the God-ordained way of making it possible for us to have a role in the building of His kingdom. God responds to the prayers of His people.

Each week the faithful servant-hearted volunteers who make up the Children's Ministry Team pour themselves into lesson preparation. When they are with the children, they model the love of Christ and

teach the truths of God's word in age-appropriate ways. If information transmission was the goal, then that would be enough. But the goal is life transformation and that requires a supernatural work of God.

Jesus put it this way when discussing with the disciples His soon return to the Father, "I am going to the Father, and I will do whatever you ask in my name." The disciples would ask. Jesus would act. That's the powerful partnership of prayer. Jesus committed Himself to action in response to the disciples' prayers so that their ministry would be fruitful.

If you will pray, Christ will work. The Children's Ministry Team is desperate for the work of Christ in the lives of our East White Oak children.

To join the Children's Ministry Prayer Team you must be committed to regularly praying for our children and the Children's Ministry Team. Simply e-mail Pastor Traig, (traig@eastwhiteoak.church) and write, "I am committed to praying for the children of East White Oak and the Children's Ministry Team."

We have a gift for you!

As a reminder to pray, we would like to give the first 50 to respond a stuffed acorn.





Engaging Your Neighbors Through Prayer

by Pastor Justin Waples

Doc McStuffins is a children's cartoon premiering in 2012 about a young girl named Dottie who is a doctor to her toys and stuffed animals.

The series chronicles freckled, seven-year-old Dottie "Doc" McStuffins, who decides she wants to become a doctor like her mom. She practices for her dream job by fixing toys and dolls. When she activates her magic stethoscope, it causes toys, dolls, and stuffed animals to come to life. They can move, speak, sing songs, pick up things, hear, see, and smell odors, and she can interact with them.

With help from her stuffed animals Stuffie the Dragon, Hallie the Hippo, Lambie the Lamb, and Chilly the Snowman, Doc helps toys recover by giving them check-ups and diagnosing their fictional illnesses with an encyclopedia called "The Big Book of Boo-Boos". Problems include Loose-Tooth-eosis (AKA broken tooth), Can't-squeak-otis (AKA broken squeaker), Stuffanemia (AKA Stuffing leaking out), and Left Behind-itis (AKA being left alone). These are just some of the many challenges she faces.

Sometimes we can get a case of what we call Insider-itis (AKA not seeing our neighbors as people God has called us to pray for). There are several symptoms of Insider-itis, such as a lack of compassion, busyness fever, ministry myopia, spiritual amnesia, swollen head, lack of humility, and fiery tongue. However, our Lord, the true Physician, has equipped us to see beyond the needs of our own lives to notice the needs of others around us. So, what should we do, and how can we pray?

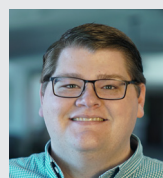
First, we need to pray for wisdom to rethink how we act toward outsiders. Colossians 4:5 says, "Walk in

wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time." Consider praying for each home out your front window or down your country road and fervently ask God to allow you to serve them and for you to be open to their care.

Consider praying for each home out your front window... and fervently ask God to allow you to serve them.

Second, we need to pray for compassion. Jesus says in Matthew 9:37-38, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." God's love for us will overflow to our neighbors if we trust Him and lift them up in prayer, but our indifference will find an excuse to leave them alone.

Lastly, we need to pray for availability. 2 Corinthians 5:20 says, "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ." We are designed to be ambassadors for Christ, the very aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. We can't pray for and connect with our neighbors if we're unavailable. Consider how you could engage with your neighborhood through prayer and ask God to help you become more available to your neighbors in times of need.



Pastor Justin Waples is East White Oak's Outreach and Discipleship pastor. He is married to Abigail and they are blessed with four children. Justin is passionate about equipping the saints for ministry and helping each member reach out to their neighbors and community.

Prayer for your Pastors

by Richard Verdery



A May 2022 article in the *Christian Post* had some alarming statistics regarding pastors and their world view.

A study from the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University found that just 37% of Christian pastors in the United States have a biblical worldview! The nationwide study of about 1,000 Christian pastors found that just slightly more than a third (37%) of the U.S. pastors hold a biblical worldview. The majority (62%) possess a hybrid worldview known as Syncretism.

Among the pastors surveyed, only 41% of senior pastors have a biblical worldview and the numbers went downhill from there. For associate pastors it was only 28%, and only 13% for teaching pastors. Sadly, among those pastors who are teaching children and youth, only 12% have a biblical worldview!

So, while we can rightly be concerned about the decline of biblical Christianity in the United States, we need to be in much prayer for those to whom we look to fill our pulpit!

God's Word has much to say about our need to pray.

Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Romans 12:12

*Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, **and also for me**, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel.* Ephesians 6:18–19

We should note that in this passage from Ephesians, Paul himself requested prayer that he might proclaim

the gospel boldly: *for I know that **through your prayers** and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, as it is my eager expectation and hope that **I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.*** Philippians 1:19–20

In this letter to his beloved Philippian believers, Paul sought their prayers that he might not be ashamed but have full courage and, thus, honor Christ.

As Ephesians 6:12 reminds us, we are in a spiritual battle and **so are our pastors!** It is imperative that we cover these precious gifts from God in our prayers.

Here, then, are some specific ways to pray for our pastors here at East White Oak Bible Church:

1. Ask the Lord to give fresh joy to them in each and every area of their ministry.
2. Ask the Lord to help them be men who rightly handle the Word of God.
3. Pray that the Holy Spirit would give them wisdom and discernment for all issues they may be called upon to deal with.
4. Pray for God's protection over them, their families, and their marriages.

As we pray regularly for our pastors, may the desire of our hearts be that their ministry to us be a joy and not a burden.



Richard Verdery serves as the teacher in the Builders ABF. He is married to Beverly. They have three grown children and 6 grandchildren. He retired from the Illinois Farm Bureau where he was Advertising Sales Director of FarmWeek Newspaper. Richard is an avid cyclist and volunteer at Carle BroMenn.



*Can't join
us in person?*

E-mail info@EastWhiteOak.church
and request to receive a zoom link.

You're invited to pray with us each Wednesday.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT PRAYER MEETING

6:30 PM in the Worship Center

Why do we have a prayer meeting?

- God is worthy to be sought by His people.
- The New Testament displays the church praying together, not just alone.
- We have many needs.
- Corporate prayer is the pathway to revival and renewal.

What do we do?

- We worship, sing and ALWAYS give praise and thanks to God.
- We learn about prayer.
- We pray, individually and together.
- We encourage one another.

What we strive to NOT do:

- We do not embarrass anyone or put anyone on the spot.
- We strive to not have the same old, same old, but have variety and freshness.
- We do not have disjointed or unplanned meetings. We always have a theme and a purpose.

Prayer in Moments of Crisis

by Jeff Fritzen



The end of Laurie Sieben's workout on January 29, 2018 was different than usual. She experienced some dizziness and had pain in her neck. She rested a bit, making sure she felt well enough to leave the gym on her own.

Arriving home, her husband Larry noticed a different Laurie than usual. He sensed something was wrong but was assured a pain reliever and rest was all she needed.

Within a matter of hours, what she most was in need of was prayer. Laurie's health had taken a turn for the worst. She was rushed to the hospital where a nurse and past Bible study acquaintance was on duty in the emergency room. She told Larry, "Laurie is in trouble and needs prayer right now."

Laurie had suffered a brain bleed, was in grave condition, and would spend the next two weeks in an extremely controlled intensive care environment. She received exemplary medical care but, more important, complete prayer cover.

While Larry contacted only a handful of acquaintances, it didn't take long for word of Laurie's situation to spread. As people in their Builders Adult Bible Fellowship became aware, earnest prayer would abound. Primarily made up of Baby Boomers, it's not unusual for Builders to share urgent prayer requests. If anything, Builders understands the need for prayer.

Laurie miraculously recovered, leaving the ICU on February 18 and coming home on the 23rd; her health restored to such a degree the neuro interventionist

When called to action, people prayed... They prayed God's will would be done and for the strength to accept the outcome.

who treated her was giddy. "You have to understand," he explained, "we don't get to see this very often."

When called to action, people prayed. They prayed for healing. They prayed for those attending Laurie. They prayed God's will would be done and for the strength to accept the outcome.

Larry says, "we literally got to see prayer in action." Laurie still is comforted when she considers all the prayers on her behalf, saying "It's unbelievable the love and support of the praying community that is our ABF."

While all the outcomes aren't as joyous as this, we pray on, confident in the knowledge we have a God who has invited us to bring our needs to Him, trusting He has the perfect answer.



Jeff and his wife Judy were married at East White Oak in 1978. They have three adult children and seven grandchildren. Jeff works as Executive Vice-President of BOPI, a commercial printing company in Bloomington. He also served as a Normal Town Councilman for 32 years. Here at East White Oak, Jeff has been an elder, ABF leader, pastoral search committee member, and mission team leader for many trips to Medellin, Colombia.



Prayer for Refreshing Our Building and Our Hearts

by Dave Rowden

On September 29, 1996 the East White Oak Bible Church worship center was dedicated to the glory of God. It has served the congregation well these past 27 years.

Our worship center is significant because of what happens in that space: we assemble to worship and glorify God. If you've attended a recent worship service, you know that we have been praying about our building "Refresh" plan, which is intended to help people see better and hear better as well as improve seating and aesthetics so that our worship is unhindered and enhanced.

As we pray about the worship center refresh, a good place to start is asking the question, "should we do it?"

We should pray...that our church will reflect the love of our precious Savior even if we disagree.

We want to do what God wants us to do. There is a good reason to pray about this. For a variety of reasons we will have different opinions about the refresh. We want wisdom from God, not from our own experience and reasoning. To get wisdom we pray. James 1:5-8 assures us that God gives wisdom generously and without reproach when we pray with faith. Let's all resolve to pray for wisdom leading to God's will, not for the outcome we want.

We should also pray for the team working on the project, for God's wisdom as work continues toward a functional, attractive, and cost effective design, and for wisdom dealing with the many details required to complete the estimate of cost and the timeline required to complete the project.

Before and after the congregation votes, our prayer should be for unity in our church body. We should pray, however we vote, for each other and that our church will reflect the love of our precious Savior even if we disagree.

If the outcome of the vote is to go ahead with the project, we should pray for those tasked with making it happen. There is a lot of work dealing with contractors, timelines, and the unexpected problems that will come up as the work progresses. Please be in prayer about the finances of the project and how God wants you, individually, to be involved.

Regarding prayer, Colossians 4:2-4 tells us to pray steadfastly with thanksgiving, at the same time praying for the progress of the gospel. Pray not only for the physical work, but that God will use our efforts for His glory, among us, the next generations of our congregation, and those yet to be reached who come into our building.



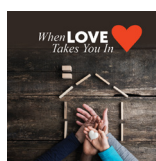
Dave Rowden serves as an elder at East White Oak, and has served as a children's Sunday school teacher. He is married to Karen. They have two grown children and six grandchildren. Dave is retired from a career in machine design engineering. He is an enthusiastic outdoorsman who enjoys fishing, boating, hiking, and hunting.

Winter Electives

Sundays Mornings through March 12

Each winter we pause our Adult Bible Fellowships to offer six-week elective classes to help you grow in your faith. It's a unique opportunity to connect with others at East White Oak, while learning about a topic that interests you. All adults are invited, whether you usually attend an ABF or not.

9:00 AM



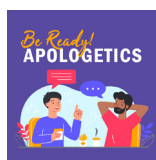
When Love Takes You In / Room 170

Led by Pastor Justin Waples. Explore Adoption/Foster “sideline” ministry and/or discover resources for prospective adoptive or foster parents. Instead of asking, “Am I called to do something?” ask, “What’s my something? And how can I use that to care for children as well as adoptive and birth families?”



Discovering Missions / Room 172

Led by the East White Oak Missions Team. What is missions, really? Learn about the rich heritage of East White Oak Missions and our involvement today. Are you interested in a short-term missions trip or becoming a missionary? Start here.



Be Ready! Apologetics / Room 181 (Banquet Room)

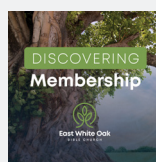
Led by Wyn Boerckel. Do you want to be better equipped to give truth-filled answers to sincere questions from those who don't believe in God? Join us as we prepare ourselves to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; and do it with gentleness and respect. (1 Peter 3:15)



Your Work and Career Matter to God / Room 171

Led by Pastor Jeff VanGoethem. What are the biblical teachings about work, the work ethic, and Christian behavior in the workplace? It is possible to glorify God in a multitude of jobs (even “secular” jobs) and make an impact for Christ. Come and find out how.

10:30 AM



Discovering Membership / Room 170

Led by the EWOCB Elders. Examine the mission and history of the church, doctrine, ordinances, and the devotional life. This is the next step for anyone pursuing church membership.



Essays by A.W. Tozer / Room 171

Led by Dirk May. “Man—The Dwelling Place of God” We must never get over the fact that it is the desire of Almighty God to commune with people and to reveal Himself to people in profound and powerful ways. What influence and impact can God dwelling in you have on your life? Join us for the journey.



Recovering Lost Treasure / Room 172

Led by Jeoff Jenkins. Many have seen their children or other loved ones stray from the faith. We call these precious people “Lost Treasures.” Gain insights from the Bible to pursue your Lost Treasure and be encouraged with testimonies by those who have recovered their own Lost Treasure.



Praying for Prodigals

by Jeff Jenkins

Our prayers should acknowledge...that God is seeking our lost treasures as His own.

When we hear the word “prodigal” we think of the story of The Prodigal Son. We think of a child who has left the faith or is estranged from the family.

However, the word prodigal means “lavish or spending resources freely and extravagantly.” If our son or daughter has left the faith, we would likely not think of them in this way. Many here at East White Oak refer to our loved ones who have strayed as “Lost Treasures.”

Several years ago, our son Josh was struggling and was not walking with God. We knew something was seriously wrong but did not know what it was. We believed that God would eventually bring him to faith, but we did not want Josh to waste decades before doing so. We prayed that God would speed up the process. Our prayers were fervent, and we had many people praying for him, including many from East White Oak. Often when we pray, the situation gets worse before getting better. This was our experience.

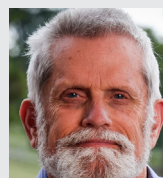
There were times when we did not know where Josh was or even if he was alive. Josh was shot at while driving in Chicago. A buddy in his car took a bullet in the back. We then discovered that Josh was a heroin addict. Prior to our prayers, Josh had never been arrested. During a long process leading to recovery, Josh was arrested three times for possession of heroin. He then entered a Christian rehab facility (His Mansion in New Hampshire). He was a resident there for over a year. God did a miracle in his life. Josh gave his life to God and was baptized with other recovering addicts. He later returned to the rehab center as a leader and soon became one of their department heads. Josh and his wife Amelia have now served at the facility for over a decade. East White Oak is one of their supporters.

How do we pray for our lost treasure? In Luke Chapter 15 Christ told the parable of the lost son after sharing two other parables about seeking and finding other lost things.

One of those other parables was about the lost sheep. The shepherd leaves the ninety-nine to look for the lost one. Later in the book of Luke, Christ says that He came *“to seek and to save that which was lost.”* In the book of Ezekiel, God speaks to the nation of Israel using the phrase *“... your sons and daughters whom you had borne to Me.”* So, our prayers should acknowledge God’s love for our lost treasures and that God is seeking our lost treasures as His own. We should acknowledge this in our prayers: “Lord, your children have strayed and need to find their way back. Bring your children home.”

But we too have strayed; we should acknowledge what we learn in the book of Isaiah: *“All we like sheep have gone astray.”* Even King David acknowledged that he had strayed. He finishes writing Psalm 119 this way: *“I have wandered about like a lost sheep; search for Your servant, for I do not forget Your commandments.”*

We should pray for God to seek us and find us. Then we pray for God to seek our lost treasures, find them, and bring them back.



Jeff serves as a substitute teacher in the Builders ABF, sings in the choir, and has been on several short-term mission trips. He has 6 grown children and 19 grandchildren. He had a career in Police and Public Safety work, and currently operates a tax preparation business.

Praying in Jesus' Name

by Pastor Jeff VanGoethem



I think we all realize that praying in Jesus' Name has to be more than just a formula we add to our prayers.

In fact, Jesus remarked one time that praying in His Name was an innovation for New Testament era Christians. It had not been done before:

"Truly I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask and you will receive that your joy may be full. (John 16:23-24).

So this doctrine of praying in Jesus' name was a mighty advance in prayer. Our prayers come through the mediation of our Savior. This is new ground upon which the believer stands. It adds a wholly new character to prayer, since it demands that we bring our prayers into conformity with the mind of Him in whose name prayer is made.

There is a powerful and astonishing promise attached to such praying. "Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (John 14:13).

We come to God in prayer not to invoke His name so that we may get what we want, but to stand in His place and pray in a way that will give glory to the Father, as He did. We pray as Jesus prayed. We pray as He would pray. We stand where He stood, interceding as He interceded. The foundation of our praying is His life, His teaching, His resurrection, His ascension into glory, His intercession for us, and His mission in the world. This is where we find the power and fruitfulness of prayer (John 16:15). Our prayers must be caught up in the greatness of the Name of Jesus.

Have we considered that our prayers are too often self-styled and not Jesus styled? It is a great temptation to

view prayer as a means of gratifying our desires (James 4:3). This is why repentance has to be such a big part of prayer. In prayer we constantly bring ourselves back to the place of submission and devotion to the great Name of Jesus.

Submitting ourselves to the Name of Jesus in prayer is a pathway of humility and devotion. There is no glory for God in selfish praying. But there is glory in praying in Jesus' Name. Let our prayers be conformed to the Word of God and the way of Christ.

Now of course, in the process of life, we must often pray about many things in which we do not know the will of God or the will of Christ. Would Jesus pray this prayer? Would Jesus pray this way? It can be hard to say. We do not know. This is part of being human. So we pray as best we can and leave such things with God.

But let us remember, we can certainly pray with confidence as we conform our prayers to Jesus' desires and meditate upon the Name of the Lord Jesus and what matters to Him.

Let our prayers be tempered by the person of Christ. His love, His mission, His mercy, His peace, His joy, His will, His purposes. Keep coming as He would come. Keep asking as He would ask. Live and pray in harmony with His will and desires. This is where the power and glory of prayer lies.



Pastor Jeff VanGoethem has been in pastoral ministry for 40 years, including nearly twenty as Senior Pastor of East White Oak. He has returned to East White Oak after pastoring for some years in Dallas, Texas to serve as Associate Pastor of Spiritual Development and Missions. He is married to Karen. They have four daughters and four grandchildren.



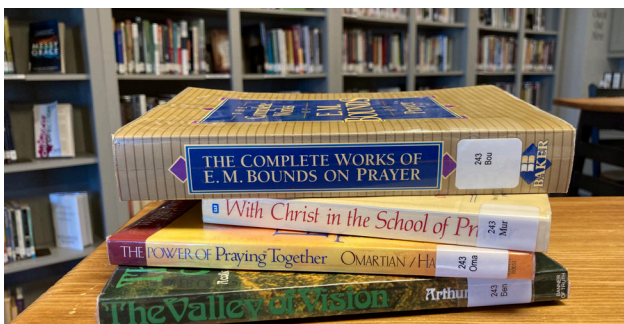
Resources for your Prayer Journey

by Monica Ball

Prayer is undoubtedly a precious gift from the Lord, and yet it seems to be something we often struggle with.

The church library has resources that can be beneficial in encouraging you in your prayer life. Stop by and peruse the various books on prayer (Look for the label **243 Prayer**).

For those who want to dig deep, some classic books on prayer are With Christ in the School of Prayer and Teach Me to Pray by Andrew Murray and The Complete Works of E.M. Bounds on Prayer.



A more contemporary author who has focused much of her writing on prayer is Stormie Omartian. She has written several books on this topic: The Power of a Praying Husband, The Power of a Praying Wife, The Power of Praying Together, and many more.

Many of you remember Pastor Scott's daily Facebook prayer times during the Covid shutdown. It was his practice to read a prayer from The Valley of Vision, a

collection of Puritan prayers. Although these were written long ago, they reflect the common journey we all as believers experience in learning to walk closely with our Lord.

Some other books that serve as guides in prayer include Rosemary Jensen's book Praying the Attributes of God, which guides the reader in meditating on God's awesome character and worshiping Him in prayer. I have found Jodi Berndt's book on Praying the Scriptures for Your Children to be very helpful. She includes many examples of scripture that you can pray specifically for your child. Another helpful guide is Operation World. Author, Jason Mandryk, takes the reader around the globe, giving prayer points to pray specifically for all the nations of the world.

Finally, I have been so encouraged about prayer through biographies, especially missionary biographies. **(267.1 - 267.4)** Read about George Müller, who prayed daily for God to provide for his needs as he was caring for children in his orphanage, and how God faithfully provided in miraculous ways. Or read about Praying Hyde, Elisabeth Elliott, and others who walked their walk of faith, and have given testimony of God's faithfulness in answering prayer.

Stop by the church library to check out any of these books and more. It's our prayer that God uses them to encourage you in prayer and in your spiritual growth.



Monica serves on the Library Team. She is married to Mark. They have three grown daughters and three grandchildren. Monica is on staff at East White Oak as the Office Manager. She also serves at the Welcome Center and in Children's Ministry. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, cooking, and spending time with friends and family (especially those adorable grandchildren).

Prayer Questions and Conundrums

by David Congdon

I'm writing this article on prayer not because I have prayer all figured out, but because I don't. I have more questions than answers on the subject.

I'd like to tell you two stories. By contrasting these two stories, perhaps you'll be compelled to ask the same question I have about prayer.

Story number 1 – A few years after my dad passed away, I was at the bank. I was just making conversation with the tellers when one of the employees mentioned that she had a CD with a recording of her father's voice. I told her I thought that was wonderful, that she should really treasure that CD, and that I wished I had a recording of my dad's voice too.

I didn't mean for that conversation to be a prayer, but God heard it! A few days later, I was at home searching for a postage stamp. I couldn't find one, so I emptied out a basket in which we kept envelopes and cards. Just dumped it out on the kitchen table. At the bottom of the basket was a cassette. It was a recording of my dad's voice. I realized that he must have left it there the one time he visited our Lexington house before he got sick. That was back in 2005.

The incident I've just described tells me several things about God.

1. God is always listening, even when we aren't speaking directly to Him.
2. He has foreknowledge. He had prompted my dad to leave that cassette many years ago, knowing in advance when I would express a desire for it.
3. God's timing is perfect.
4. God cares about the smallest things in our lives.



Story number 2 – There is a situation about which I have prayed a thousand days in a row now. Every day. Sometimes several times a day. I have brought this situation to God relentlessly, like the widow who brought her petition before the judge over and over. (Luke 18:1-8) I have prayed about this matter passionately, like the man who begged for bread at midnight. (Luke 11:5-15) I know that the answer I seek is consistent with the stated will of God in His Word, but after a thousand days of prayer the answer seems no closer. Perhaps a tiny bit closer. I'm not sure.

So...my question about prayer is this: Why does God answer a prayer stated casually just the one time, and do so in a way that clearly demonstrates His power and love, but withhold the answer to a prayer repeated relentlessly for over a thousand days? Are the things I said about God in the first instance not true in the second?

I'll end my article as I began...I admit to not having prayer all figured out. Despite my best effort at a theory on the free will of man and the sovereignty of God, I admit that unanswered prayer prayed in accord with the stated will of God is a mystery. Despite what I don't know, there are a few things that I do know...God is good, and He invites me to pray. So, though my intercessory prayer goes unanswered, I'll commit to another thousand days. And another after that...



David serves on the Safe/Secure Team at East White Oak. He spent 17 years living and working in Africa, the Middle East, Central and South America. He runs a small security consulting firm, operates a guest house, and helps out at the Johnson/Jacobs farm partnership. His wife, KC, is a conductor. (On stage, not on a train.) David and KC do not have any children of their own, but have had the great privilege of acquiring three daughters, Catie, Trisha, and Kendall. They suspect these children were dropped off by Amazon.



Annual Meeting

Sunday, March 26 / 12:15 PM

Unlike the calendar hanging in your kitchen, our church calendar runs from April to March.

Toward the end of every church year the congregation gathers at the Annual Meeting. It's a gathering to conduct church business but perhaps more importantly it's a chance for us to look ahead to the next twelve months and give thanks for the past twelve months. We would like to invite you to be a part of a special look back happening at this year's Annual Meeting!



Can you share a few words in a selfie video?

"I'm thankful for the ministry of _____"

It's just 3 easy steps!

1

Think of an East White Oak ministry that has impacted you this year.

Some suggestions might be: my ABF, my women's Bible study, AWANA, Small Groups, preaching, youth volunteers, etc.

2

Use your phone to record a 10-15 second video saying "I'm thankful for the ministry of..."

An example might be, "I am thankful for the ministry of AWANA. It has encouraged my children to memorize God's word."

3

From your phone, click the link on our website to upload the video.

You'll find the process quick and easy. Your video may be included in our presentation at the Annual Meeting!

*****We would like to ask that you not name individuals. Although some person may have had an extraordinary impact on you, every ministry of the church is a team effort.***

Thank you for taking a few moments to help us be "abounding in thanksgiving" (Colossians 2) as we celebrate the things God has done at East White Oak this year!



East White Oak
BIBLE CHURCH

Upload your video at this link:
EastWhiteOak.church/annualmeeting