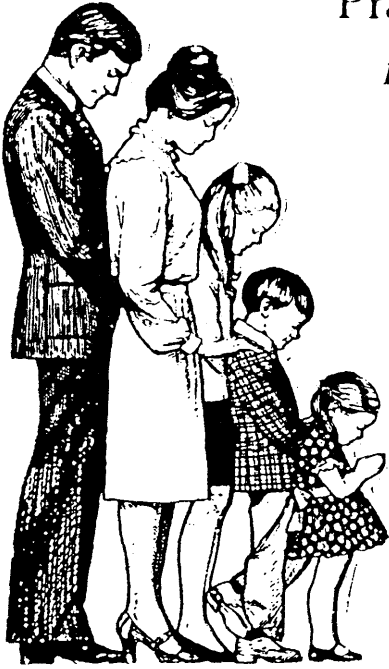


# Prayer: Do Mechanics Matter?

Prof. Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.



## Definition of Prayer:

The petitioning of God for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Jesus Christ, by the help of the Holy Spirit.

## OUR PART IN PRAYER

*Some go to God in prayer  
As though they would be heard  
By merit of their earnestness,  
Or power of their word;  
As though God did not want to bless,  
Or to their crying heed,  
But might be influenced to hear  
If they could prove their need.  
Some go to God in prayer  
With broken, bleeding hearts  
Craving the peace and victory  
Which He alone imparts,*

*They lay their burdens down  
On shoulders that are strong,  
Then take them back upon their own  
And carry them along.  
Some humbly talk with God;  
Confess their helplessness,  
And having laid their burdens down  
Trust Him to do the rest.  
Such go away in peace,  
And with the victor's shout  
To watch with interest, and see  
How He will work things out.*

—Barbara Ryberg

### 1A. The Central Purpose of Prayer:

#### 1b. The terms employed:

#### 1c. Old Testament words:

1d. תַּיִן -- techinnah -- "to incline, to be gracious"

2d. תִּפְחִל -- tephillah -- "to judge"

#### 2c. New Testament words:

1d. προσεύχομαι -- proseuchomai -- general prayer, used of  
prayer to God: Matt. 6-9

2d. εὐχομαι -- euchomai -- general requests: 2 Cor. 13:7-9

3d. δέομαι -- deomai -- a specific request, made to God  
or man: 1 Thess. 3:10; 2 Cor. 5:20

4d. αἰτέω -- aiteo -- making a request from a superior:  
James 1:5; , Mark 15:43

5d. ἐρωτάω -- erotao -- to ask in the sense of a request.  
Used to the prayers of Christ:  
John 14:16

6d. ἐντευγχάνω -- enteugchano -- to intercede, i.e., petitioning  
a king or great person:  
Rom. 8:26

7d. ἱκετεύω -- iketeeuo -- supplication in classical Greek,  
only in Hebrews 5:7 as adjective  
ἱκετερια (iketeria)

8d. παρακαλέω -- parakaleo -- to beseech, entreat appeal:  
2 Cor. 5:8

2b. The truth expressed:

John 14:13 "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

2A. The Common Problems in Prayer:

1b. The addressing of the prayer:

1c. Prayers should be addressed to the Father: Matt. 6:9; Eph. 3:14

2c. Prayers should be offered in the name of the Son: Jn. 14:13; 15:16; 16:23

3c. Prayers should be offered in the power of the Spirit: Eph. 6:18; Jude 20

2b. The content of the prayer:

In prayers, frequently the Father is thanked for His death for our sins and is asked to return soon for the believer, when these are distinct works of the Son.

3b. The conclusion of the prayer:

Prayers should be offered in the name of the Son, though they are frequently concluded, "In Thy name, ie, in the Father's name, we ask it."

3A. The Correct Procedure of Prayer:

1b. The period of prayer

1c. Morning: Mark 1:35

Ps. 5:3 "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up."

2c. Night: Luke 6:12

3c. Mealtime: Acts 27:35

1 Tim. 4:4-5 "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer."

4c. Setting of the day:

5c. Set times during the day: Acts 2:46; 3:1; 10:9,30

Daniel 6:10-11 "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and, his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God."

Psalms 55:17 "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice."

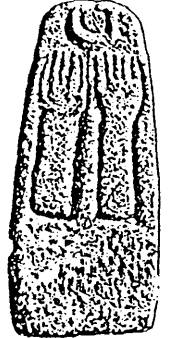
6c. Daily:

Psalms 86:3 "Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily."

7c. Always: Eph. 6:18; Luke 18:1; 1 Thess. 5:17

2b. The posture in prayer:

- 1c. Standing: Gen 8:22
  - 1d. With hands raised to heaven: 1 Kings 8:22; 1 Tim. 2:8
  - 2d. With hands spread out: Is. 1:15; Ezra 9:5
  - 3d. With hands laid on the breast or breast struck: Luke 18:13
- 2c. Kneeling: Luke 22:41; Acts 21:5
  - 1d. Solomon while dedicating the temple: 1 Kings 8:54
  - 2d. Daniel thrice a day: Dan. 6:10
  - 3d. Steven while suffering martyrdom: Acts 7:59
  - 4d. Christ in the garden: Luke 22:41
- 3c. Face to the ground: Matt. 26:39
- 4c. Head between the knees: 1 Kings 18:42
- 5c. Seated: 2 Samuel 7:18
- 6c. In bed: Is. 63:6
- 7c. On land: John 17:1
- 8c. On the sea: Matt. 14:30
- 9c. In the air: Acts 1:10-11



Hazor

STELA BEARING A RELIEF, of two hands outstretched in prayer, surmounted by an emblem of the deity: a sun disc within a crescent. From the 'Holy of Holies' in the Canaanite temple, of the 14th-13th centuries B.C.

The proper way for man to pray,  
Said Deacon Lemuel Keys,  
The only proper attitude,  
Is down upon your knees.

No! I should say the way to pray,  
Said Reverend Doctor Wise  
Is standing straight with outstretched arms.  
And rapturous upturned eyes.

It seems to me His hands should be  
Devoutly clasped in front,  
With both thumbs pointing toward the ground,  
Said Reverend Doctor Blunt.

Last year I fell in Hodkin's well,  
Head first, said Cyrus Brown,  
With both my heels a 'stickin' up,  
My head a pointin' down

And I made prayer right then and there -  
Best prayer I ever said  
The prayin' est prayer I ever prayed  
Was standin' on my head.

3b. The person in prayer:

Prayer is to be offered in the name of Christ: John 14:14; 15:16; 16:23-27

In the name of Christ speaks of the fact that we have access because of Him and authority through Him to enter the Holy of Holies, the very presence of God.

4A. The Comforting Partner in Prayer:

1b. The prayer of Christ:

1c. Intercession: John 17

Hebrews 7:25 "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

2c. His advocacy:

1 John 2:1 "My litte children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

2b. The petition of the Spirit:

Romans 8:26-27 "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

5A. The Comprehensive Promises of Prayer:

1b. The encouragement to unceasing prayer

1c. The omniscience of God:

1d. God answers before we call:

Is. 65:24 "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."

2d. God knows our needs before we voice them:

Matt. 6:8 "For your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him."

Matt. 6:32 "...for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

2c. The omnipotence of God:

Isaiah 59:1 "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear."

3c. The providence of God:

James 4:2b "Ye have not, because ye ask not."

Some things are not possessed by the believer because of his failure to pray, while God grants other matters to believers, regardless of their prayers.

The prayers I make will then be sweet indeed  
If Thou the spirit give by which I pray:  
My unassisted heart is barren clay,  
That of its native self can nothing feed:  
Of good and pious works Thou art the seed,  
That quickens only where Thou say'st it may:  
Unless Thou show to us Thine own true way  
No man can find it: Father! Thou must lead.

Do Thou, then, breathe those thoughts into my mind  
By which such virtue may in me be bred  
That in Thy holy footsteps I may tread;  
The fetters of my tongue do Thou unbind,  
That I may have the power to sing of Thee,  
And sound Thy praises everlastingly.<sup>3</sup>

(Wordsworth, cited by Hastings, p. 99.)

2b. The expressions of scriptural promises:

1c. Depended promises -- conditional

1d. The will of God: 1 John 5:14

2d. The name of Christ: John 14:14

3d. Abiding in Christ: John 15:7,16

4d. Faith: Matt. 21:22

5d. Keeping the commandments:

1 John 3:22 "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."

6d. Seeking first the kingdom of God: Matt. 6:33

7d. Being in fellowship:

Psalms 66:18 "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

Prov. 15:8 "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight."

2c. Dispensational promises -- chronological

Some promises are for us by application, but not to us by interpretation:

1d. Physical healing:

Ex. 15:26 "And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee."

2d. Physical healing of the land:

2 Chron. 7:14 "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

- 3d. Physical prosperity and life:  
Prov. 3:1-4 "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart. So shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man."
- 3c. Declarative promises -- corporate, including all believers at all times  
Having met certain conditions, the believer may assume that all his prayers will be answered: Luke 11:9-10 (Matt. 7:7-8)  
"And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."
- 1d. Promises for wisdom:  
James 1:5 "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."
- 2d. Promise for strength: Col. 1:9-11; Ps. 138:3
- 3d. Promise for workers: Matt. 9:37-38
- 4d. Promise for peace and order: 1 Tim. 2:1-2
- 5d. Promise in time of trouble:  
Ps. 50:15 "And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."  
Phil. 4:4-6 "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."  
1 Pet. 5:9 "Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."
- 3b. Explanation for unanswered prayer:  
Prayer is not the manipulation of the wonderful power, but the petitioning of a wise person. When the answer is not immediately given, it may be due to the following factors:
  - 1c. Unscriptural requests: John 15:7
  - 2c. A sinful heart: Psalm 66:18; Isaiah 1:15; 59:1-2; Luke 18:11-14
  - 3c. Selfish petition: James 4:3
  - 4c. A delayed answer: 1 Samuel 1:5-19; 1 Kings 18:42-45
  - 5c. Disguised answers: Romans 1:9-10  
Paul prayed that he might get to Rome. He came to Rome, but as a prisoner.

6c. Denial of the answer: 2 Cor. 12:7-9; Ps. 106:15

6A. The Crucial Possibilities of Prayer

1b. The proof of efficacious prayer:

Psalm 116:1-2 "I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live."

James 5:16 "Confess yours faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

energoumenous -- "The saints' prayers prevail when their earnestness is divinely inspired."

Charles H. Spurgeon: "If there is any fact that is proved, it is that God hears prayer. If there is any scientific statement that is capable of mathematical proof, this is it." (Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 437)

The power of prayer is so great that a single efficacious prayer can change the entire course of a nation: 1 Kings 18:37-39

"Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God."

2b. The prompting to efficacious prayer:

Luke 18:1 "men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

Luke 21:36 "Watch ye therefore, and pray always"

Col. 4:2 "Continue in prayer"

1 Thess. 5:17 "Pray without ceasing"

Rom. 12:12 "continuing instant in prayer"

1 Pet. 4:7 "watch unto prayer"

Eph. 6:18 "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit"

1 Tim 2:8 "I will therefore that men pray every where"

7A. The Consummate Patterns of Prayer:

1b. Classic Old Testament prayers:

1c. Prayer for repetition at the feast of first fruits: Deut. 26:5-15

2c. Prayer given at the dedication of Solomon's temple: 1 Kings 8:23-53

- 3c. Joshua's, the high priest's, prayer after the captivity: Neh. 9:5-38
- 2b. Classic New Testament prayers:
  - 1c. The Lord's prayer: John 17:1-16
  - 2c. The disciples' prayer: Matt. 6:9-13
  - 3c. The apostle's prayer: Phil. 1:3-11

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER

##### Blessings of Prayer

What various hindrances we meet  
In coming to the mercy-seat!  
Yet who that knows the worth of prayer,  
But wishes to be often there!

Prayer makes the darkened cloud withdraw;  
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw;  
Gives exercise to faith and love;  
Brings every blessing from above.

Restraining prayer we cease to fight;  
Prayer keeps the Christian's armor bright,  
And Satan trembles when he sees  
The weakest saint upon his knees.

Were half the breath that's vainly spent  
To Heaven in supplication sent,  
Our cheerful song would oftener be,  
"Hear what the Lord has done for me."

--William Cowper.



## HOW NOT TO PRAY:

Dear Father: We thank thee for this opportunity to study the Word of God in relation to the important subject of prayer. We pray that the blessing of God may be our portion during this hour. We ask thee, Holy Spirit, to illumine our minds to thy truth, so that our prayer lives might be enriched.

Our Savior, teach us to pray as we ought! And now, our Father, we thank thee for the love wherewith you have loved us in eternity past. We are grateful for thy saving grace which was manifest when thou didst die for us on the cross for our sins. We love thee and serve thee and look forward to the day when thou wilt come for us to take us to our eternal home. Bless us now and be with us, for we ask it in your name. Amen

## WHAT IS WRONG WITH THIS PRAYER?

## 1. The address of the prayer is wrong:

- a. The problem: within this prayer both the Son and Holy Spirit are addressed.
- b. The principle: a true biblical prayer is addressed to the Father:  
Mt. 6:9; Eph. 3:14.  
"When ye pray, pray, Our Father. . ."

Prayers should be offered in the name of the Son:  
Jn. 14:13; 15:16

Prayers should be offered in the power of the  
Spirit: Eph. 6:18; Jude 20

It is the Father who hears and answers our prayers. We come in the name of, that is, by the authority of Christ, helped by the Spirit.

## 2. The doctrine of the prayer is wrong:

- a. The problem: according to this prayer the Father died for us on the cross. This common mistake in our prayers is really akin to the early Christian heresy called patripassianism, that is, that the Father died. It would be unthinkable for us to preach a sermon on the death of the Father for our sins. Is doctrinal orthodoxy less important in our prayers than in our preaching?

Another doctrinal error, likewise a frequent one, is that God the Father will come back for us.

- b. The principle: Unless we are Sabellians in our theology, namely, that there is one divine person which assumes three different forms called Father, Son and Spirit, we dare not attribute works to one person of the Trinity which belong to another. The Son returns for us to take us to the Father!

## 3. The conclusion of the prayer is wrong:

- a. The problem: many prayers end like this one, in the name of the Father.
  - b. The principle: since prayers are to be addressed to the Father and we have access to Him not by the Father's authority but by the Son's, we need to pray as Christ commanded us, in his name Jn. 14:13; 15:16. We come to the Father because Christ gives us the right through His death.
4. The requests of this prayer are wrong:
- a. The problem: sometimes we pray for something that we do not need to request. When we say, "teach us to pray" we imply that Christ never taught us, when in fact much of Christ's teaching relates to prayer. We need to ask for faithfulness in prayer.  
Another common but superfluous request is, "be with us." Christ is with us" unto the end of the age" Mt. 28:20 and He said "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" Heb. 13:5. It is, of course, a commendable request to ask God for His special presence or enablement.
  - b. The principle: We need to know which promises are ours and which we need to claim in prayer (see pp. 5-6). Some promises are dispensationally conditioned. To pray "the sinner's prayer," "God be merciful to me a sinner" would show bad theological judgment. The prayer of Luke 18:13 actually requests, "God be propitiated to me, a sinner." But this occurred at the cross. The glorious truth of the cross is: God has been merciful, He has been propitiated (I Jn. 2:2). Now we simply ask God to apply the blood of His Son to our need.
5. The phrasing in the prayer is wrong:
- a. The problem: when we approach God we are talking to a person and should not switch to third person speech. A proper phrasing of the first paragraph of the prayer should be: "Father: we thank thee for the opportunity to study thy Word (not, the Word of God) . . . We pray that thy blessings (not the blessings of God) may be our portion."
  - b. The principle: If we are consciously aware of approaching a person, our expressions will indicate that. If our prayers are no more than a string of pious phrases, then our prayers are mechanical and thus meaningless.
6. The style of the prayer is wrong:
- a. The problem: Consistency is a problem in many prayers. We may address God as "thee" in the King James Version phraseology or as "you" in modern English. The one is not any more disrespectful than the other. But we should be consistent. The phrase of paragraph two should be either: "we thank thee for the love wherewith thou didst love us" or "we thank you for the love wherewith you didst love us" or better yet, "we thank you for the love with which you loved us."
  - b. The principle: Consistency in prayer is rare but commendable. It is the highest form of conversation as we converse with the eternal God. Should we be any less cautious here than in our preaching or daily conversation?

Yes, in prayer mechanics do matter. They tell us how much we understand about that holy privilege. They show us how well we understand the functions of the persons of the Trinity. They demonstrate whether our prayers come from the head or heart, whether they are based on routine memory of pious phrases or regular meditation on precious principle. How does your prayer life measure up? How does mine?

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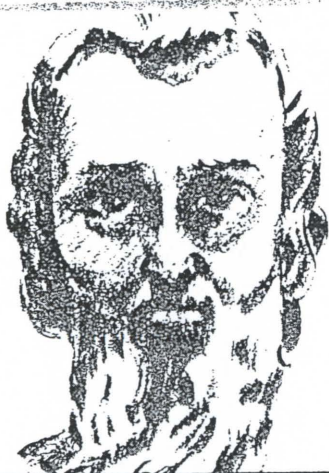
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# Bold Entrance into a New Forever



# "Lord, Teach Us To Pray" — Luke 11:1





*The Saint of  
the Impossible*

## *your generosity...*

... does so much to further the devotions of St. Jude and to make many more people aware of his powerful intercession. The person with a problem can receive the same help that others have obtained. Remember, with St. Jude, all things are possible.

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Catholics pray to St. Jude because they believe in his powerful intercession.

He has been recognized down through the centuries as the Patron of desperate and hopeless cases, and Devotion to St. Jude is growing in popularity in the United States. Unsolicited reports of favors received prove that St. Jude does help those who pray to him.

St. Jude was one of the twelve Apostles. According to tradition, he was sent by Jesus to cure the King of Edessa from leprosy. He approached the suffering King with a cloth on which Our Lord had impressed His image. This is why St. Jude is generally pictured with a medallion of our Lord in his hand.

Following the Resurrection of Our Lord, St. Jude brought Christianity to Mesopotamia, Libya and Persia. Like the other Apostles, he was fearless in preaching the Gospel. Hardships and persecution did not dampen his zeal. He was so successful in making converts, that the enemies of Christianity plotted to kill him. On the appointed day, he was physically tortured and brutally beaten with clubs. Death came when someone smashed his head with a broad ax, as his bleeding body lay unconscious on the ground.

Today St. Jude's body rests in a tomb in the Vatican Basilica of St. Peter's. This Baltimore Shrine has arranged to have a daily Mass celebrated on the Altar above the tomb for the intentions of those whose names are registered at the Shrine.

# Majority of Iowans are prayers, poll finds

## Poll finds Iowans pray religiously

■ Most say they do it, and most say their prayers are answered.

By **THOMAS A. FOGARTY**  
and **TRACY DEUTMEYER**

REGISTER STAFF WRITERS

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Becky Orte, 36, of Clinton prays daily for the people she knows, and for those she reads

about in the newspaper.

"I have to talk to God on a daily basis in order to be where I am today," says Orte, a factory assembler.

According to a recent Iowa Poll, Orte's habit of daily prayer is fairly typical. Forty-nine percent of Iowans pray daily, according to the poll, which is based on a scientifically drawn sample of adults in

**PRAYER** Turn to Page 2M

report that their prayers are answered all the time, and another 58 percent say they're answered at least occasionally. Five percent say they're rarely answered, and just 1 percent say they're never answered. The rest are unsure.

Geraldine King, 41, a Mount Ayr housewife who prays daily, says she's not frustrated by the fact that God answers her prayers only occasionally. To be so would be to question God's wisdom. "We look at it through man's eyes," says King.

Ronald Meyer, 67, Cedar Falls, says he rarely prayed until a relative's cancer made him an occasional prayer. "I just got the enthusiasm my wife had for prayer," he says.

Meyer says he believes his prayers are always answered, although not necessarily in the way he wanted.

Jean Lubbock, 65, a clerical worker from Cedar Rapids, isn't a church-goer, but she prays daily.

"I believe in the power of prayer," says Lubbock. I am actually not religious, but I have friends and family

that need help."

She says it can take a long time to see the results of her prayers, but occasionally they are answered.

Overall, half of Iowans say religion is about as important to their daily lives today as it was 10 years ago, the Iowa Poll says. Forty-three percent say it's more important today than a decade ago. Just 6 percent say religion has slipped in importance to them over the last 10 years.

The Iowa Poll last polled on the prayer habits of Iowa in 1996, and the new poll found no significant changes since then.

The Iowa Poll, conducted Jan. 31-Feb. 4, asked the following:

I'd like to ask about religion now. How often would you say you pray — daily, several times a week, several times a month, less often than that, or never?

How often would you say your prayers are answered — all the time, occasionally, rarely, or never?

Compared to 10 years ago, would you say that religion has more importance in your own daily life, less importance, or has it stayed about the same?

Do you happen to believe in angels?  
The Iowa Poll, conducted for The Des Moines Register by Selzer & Co. Inc. of

## Prayer

■ About half of Iowans pray daily, the Iowa Poll says.

■ How often would you say you pray?

Daily	49%
Several times a week	18%
Several times a month	13%
Less often	12%
Never	5%
Unsure	3%

■ Compared to 10 years ago, would you say that religion in your daily life has...

... more importance?	43%
... less importance?	6%
... stayed about the same?	50%
Unsure	1%

SOURCE: Based on interviews with 800 Iowa adults.

TOM WEINMAN / THE REGISTER

## PRAYER

Continued from Page 1M

the state. Another 43 percent of Iowans pray, but less frequently than every day. Just 5 percent never pray, and the rest say they're unsure.

Iowa's percentage of people who pray daily compares with the 55 percent of Americans who said they pray daily in a 1996 poll sponsored by the Lutheran Brotherhood. In that poll, 9 percent of Americans said they never pray.

### Women, Men

According to the Iowa Poll, women (59 percent) are more apt than men (38 percent) to pray daily.

Iowans 55 and older (67 percent)

and born-again Christians (69 percent) are among those most likely to offer daily prayers. Catholics and Protestants are about equally likely to offer daily prayers, the poll says.

Fifty-two percent of Iowans with annual household incomes less than \$50,000 pray daily, but just 41 percent of higher-income Iowans pray that often.

With all that prayer wafting heavenward from Iowa, what's happening at the other end?

Iowans who pray at least several times a month — and that's four-fifths of them — say their praying is pretty effective.

### Answered Prayers

Thirty percent of Iowans who pray

THE DES MOINES REGISTER ■ FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 1998



Des Moines, is based on interviews of 800 Iowans age 18 or older. Interview contacted households with randomly selected telephone numbers. Percentages based on the full sample may have maximum margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. Individual responses are considered confidential and poll participants who are quick to agree to a subsequent interview with Register reporter. Republishing the copyrighted Iowa Poll without credit to The Des Moines Register is prohibited.

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Reporter Tracy Deutmeyer can be reached at deutmeyert@news.dmreg.com or (515) 699-7043.

# OUR PART IN PRAYER

*Some go to God in prayer  
As though they would be heard  
By merit of their earnestness,  
Or power of their word;  
As though God did not want to bless,  
Or to their crying heed,  
But might be influenced to hear  
If they could prove their need.  
Some go to God in prayer  
With broken, bleeding hearts  
Craving the peace and victory  
Which He alone imparts,*

*They lay their burdens down  
On shoulders that are strong,  
Then take them back upon their own  
And carry them along.  
Some humbly talk with God;  
Confess their helplessness,  
And having laid their burdens down  
Trust Him to do the rest.  
Such go away in peace,  
And with the victor's shout  
To watch with interest, and see  
How He will work things out.*

—Barbara Ryberg



Paul not only believed in praying for others, but humbly solicited their prayers on his behalf. The Lord Jesus Christ and the early apostles, by example and precept, emphasized our text that "Men ought always to pray."

### Fundamentals of Prayer

One of the most familiar and yet abused and misunderstood words in our vocabulary is the word PRAY. What is the real power of suggestiveness contained in this word, as used by the Lord Jesus Christ? Taken in its fundamental simplicity and intention, it means (and this is not complete, but it will help us to reach the complete thought) that prayer is *to wish forward; to desire toward the ultimate*. Or, if you will take the word as used by Paul in his letter to the Colossians, it means the seeking of things "which are above": "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (3:1).

The Christian is to be seeking the upper things, concentrating his thoughts upon them; everywhere and everywhen he is to be hoping for, and endeavoring after, *the ultimate*.

This is the simplest definition of prayer: Spiritually reaching forward; willing forward; wishing forward; desiring forward; seeking the upper, the higher, the nobler things that content one's heart; desiring above all, the perfection and acceptability of the will of God which bows the soul in worship and adoration of God and His way of life.

In prayer the supreme attitude of the life becomes that of submission. The supreme effort in life is that of cooperating with God toward the ultimate, upon which God's heart is set. Prayer forevermore says, when it asks for anything, "Not my will, but thine be done." This means that if the thing I ask for—however much I desire it—however good it may seem to me—will hinder or postpone, even by a hair's breadth or a moment, the ultimate victory, let it be denied me.

To pray is *to desire forward, to seek forward, to endeavor after*. On its higher level of suggestiveness, it is that the suppliant have a new vision of God, and the ways of God; also to be overwhelmingly convinced of the immutability of God and the perfection of all He does in our lives.

### Unceasing Prayer

There is a word in this command which fell from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ that the average Christian either ignores or resents—it is the word "always." To live a godly life of personal prayer in this present age of stress, strain and demands, may to some be seemingly impossible. The common excuses are: "I am a busy man; I do not have time; I cannot stop and take time." But some tried suggestions are here offered as a help toward maintaining an incessant attitude of prayer—they have been tried by many who found them workable, and have testified to the reality of the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ because of having taken "these moments" to pray.

### Suggestions of Times for Prayer

**Meeting the new day:** The rising-time in the morning is characterized by many as when the ugly and hated tidal wave of impure thoughts sweeps up to the threshold of the mind to tempt it before it is fully awake and prepared to grapple with them. It is then that some use the "expulsive power of a new thought" by uttering a simple prayer, such as "I thank thee, O Lord, for the gift of a new day. Help me to keep it pure for Thee." Others quietly sing the doxology.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise Him all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,  
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

The second opportunity for prayer is when one is shaving or doing one's hair. The mind will lay hold and retain those thoughts that make us conscious of the fact that we are going out into the world as representatives—ambassadors—of the Lord Jesus Christ. Such thoughts conduce strength for the new day.

**Noon hour:** The third period comes at lunchtime. These are moments when the noises around us cease. It is then that one can lift the soul to God and say—even if no more than this—"I am Christ's servant and friend, His man, His woman, living in the same sort of a world as He did. He is depending on me to witness for Him!"

**After work hours:** The fourth period is when we are on the way home from work in the evening, by foot, bus or automobile. It is possible then to grasp that opportunity for reflection: allow the mind to go back over the busy day; ask forgiveness for everything unkind, impure or unworthy; then one can realize the cleansing power of God's forgiveness and experience a return of peace to the soul.

**At bedtime:** The fifth period is the time between the getting into bed and actually falling asleep. Then is an opportunity to think about Christ in such a way as to determine one's waking thoughts the next morning. It is psychologically true that our latest, conscious thoughts at night determine the flow of the unconscious river of psychic life during sleep—on the direction of which so much future activity depends—also the waking thought of the next morning.

### Conclusion

Without taking up additional space let me emphasize these suggestions by simply saying that in them is to be found an experiential reality of the transforming power of the presence of the only Friend who can make us what we want to become—five times during the day! Many spiritually-minded souls find the value of these suggested practices as a result of obeying the injunction of the Lord Jesus Christ—"Men ought always to pray and not faint."

The shadow comes and casts its length  
Across their lives today.  
Tomorrow is a land unknown,  
And dim may be the way.

But these, as choicest saints of God,  
Do not, will not, despair.  
For now, just as they ever did,  
They go to Him in prayer.

This then is not an alien land;  
But a place they know so well.  
For day by day at God's own throne,  
They do serenely dwell.

His Word they love; it has first place;  
They hide it in their hearts.  
Now they're not strangers to His grace—  
To them, God peace imparts.

How blest to be close to our God,  
To know His grace and love;  
To honor Him in all of life,  
And all his mercies prove.

Then when the day is difficult,  
And we would see His face—  
It is no problem for we're never  
Strangers to His grace.

—Florence Olson

"If you can't pray, worry."—Anon.

"Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." (Luke 18:1b)

This command fell from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ and is as binding upon the child of God as any one of the Ten Commandments.

At the very beginning of this study let us be reminded of a fact that may be surprising to some—that the Lord Jesus Christ was a man of prayer! He homed His soul in the atmosphere of prayer. It may be said that if ever there was a person who lived on this earth who did not need to pray it was the man Christ Jesus. But the startling, arresting fact is that He was a man of prayer. He prayed in the desert. He prayed on the mountains. He prayed all through the night. He prayed before every great undertaking. He prayed as He breathed. I repeat, His very soul was homed in prayer.

In our text the Lord Jesus Christ tells us it is our duty—a practice due from us, to self, to man and to God—that we as believers should always pray. And He circles all our praying around Himself. Jesus admonishes us never to pray a prayer the wide world over, even to the end of time, without invoking His name. His answer to prayer must accord with the relationship it bears to Himself. Here are His words: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7).

#### The Model Prayer

The Lord Jesus Christ did not leave church government with a model for preaching, but He did give us the Model Prayer: "After this manner therefore pray ye..." (Matt. 6:9). That model prayer—intercessory in character—is so wide in its range that it touches everything between daily bread and the Kingdom of God. And yet one can pray it in less than a minute!

Not once is the singular found in the Model Prayer, only the plural. Note: "Our Father ... give us ... our daily bread ... forgive us our debts ... lead us not into temptation ... deliver us from evil..." (vss. 9-13). That prayer sounds as though Jesus Christ could not conceive of a Christian ever praying solely for himself but that he would always bear in mind the thought of the Saviour—that the essence of prayer is intercessorial in nature. The early Christians understood this, for we read that when Peter was imprisoned by Herod, the church gave itself to ceaseless prayer for his deliverance (Acts 12:1-19).

#### Prayer Given Priority of Importance

That the apostles also so understood this of Jesus is evidenced in their saying, "Look ye out among you seven men ... whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:3, 4). Observe the order: prayer before preaching or the ministry of the Word.

James, the brother and servant of Jesus Christ, tells us—for our great encouragement—that if we lack wisdom we should ask of God who giveth it to all men liberally and upbraideth not—or without any chiding. James further explains why we receive not—it is because we fail to ask. And then he triumphantly adds, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. ... Is any sick among you? ... let them [the elders] pray over him. ..." And to the unspoken objection

# PRAYER

## *The Christian's Lost Art*

by Harold L. Proppe, B.D., M.A., Ph.D.

that God may not be able to alleviate the suffering, or heal the sick, James says that "Elias [Elijah] was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not ... [for three and a half years]. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain. ..." (James 5:13-18).

Paul, our great apostle to the Gentiles, was a man who had learned in the school of Christ how all-important is prayer. If we notice the introduction to his Epistle to the Philippians we will find him—the great soul that he was, a man of meticulous intellect—expressing prayerful concern for those in the church at Philippi:

... In every prayer of mine for you ... I have you in my heart. ... I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment (Phil. 1:4, 7, 9).

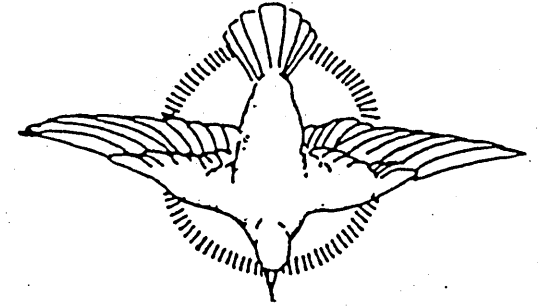
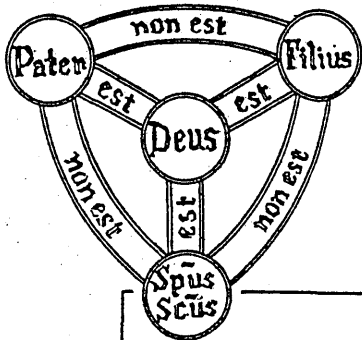
And more wonderful still he says in Colossians:

Continue stedfastly in prayer ... withal praying for us also, that God may open unto us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ ... that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak (4:2-4 A.S.V.).

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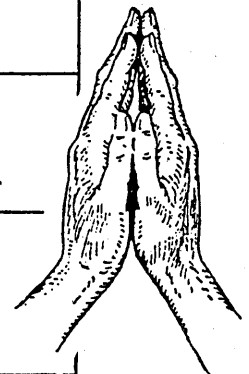
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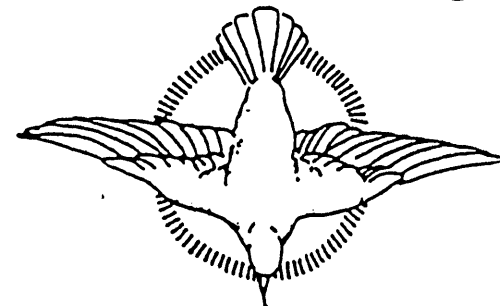
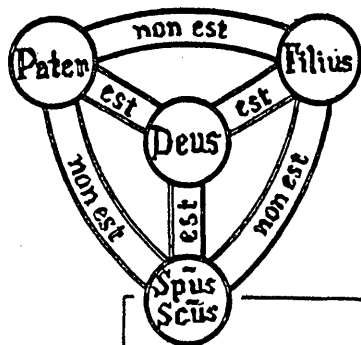
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## THE TRINITY AND PRAYER

JOHN	ADDRESS	AUTHORITY	ANSWERS
14:13	<i>Father</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>Christ</i>
15:16	<i>Father</i>	<i>Christ</i>	<i>Father</i>
16:23	<i>Father</i>	<i>Christ</i>	<i>Father</i>
16:24	<i>Father</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>Father</i>
16:26	<i>Father</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>Father</i>
<b>CONCLUSION:</b> Prayer is directed to the Father, in the name of the Son, by the power of the Spirit.			

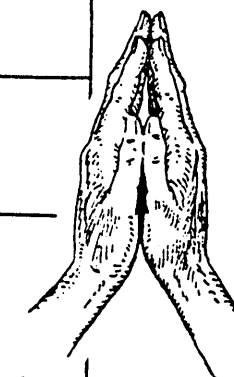


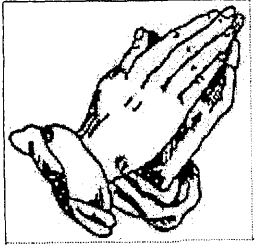


## THE TRINITY AND PRAYER

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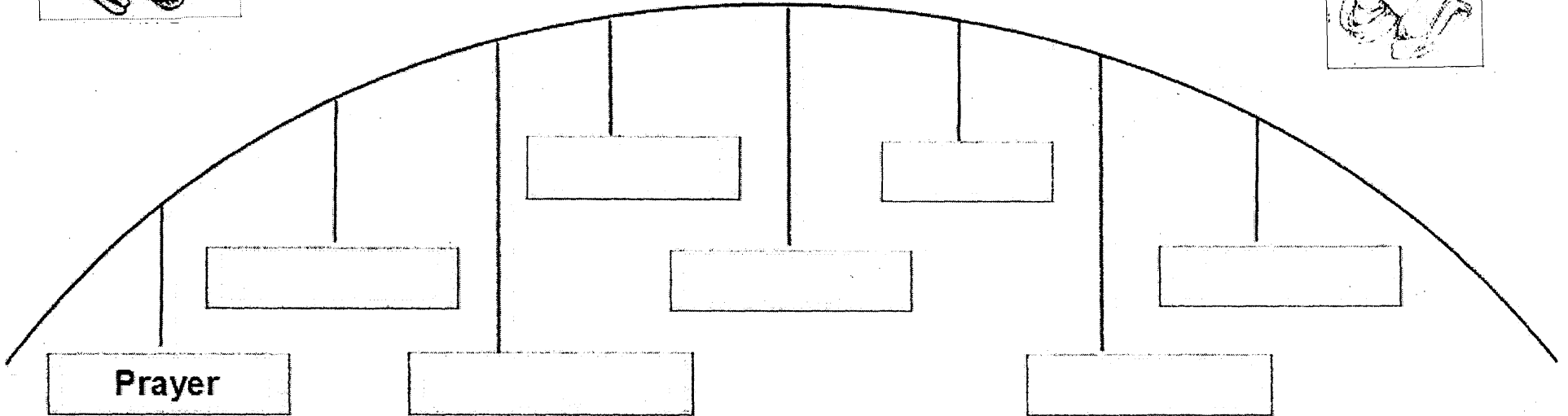
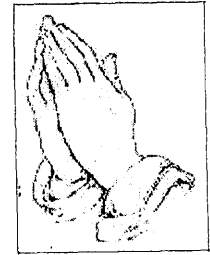
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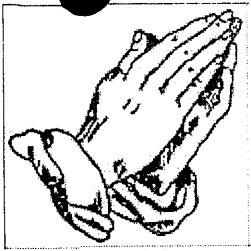




# Prayer is Asking

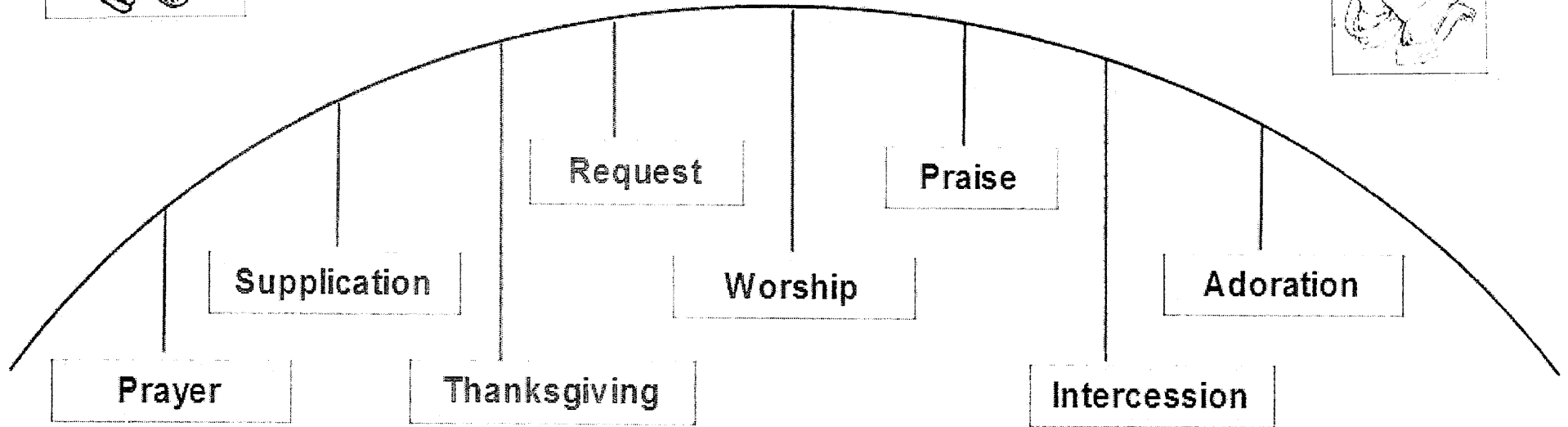
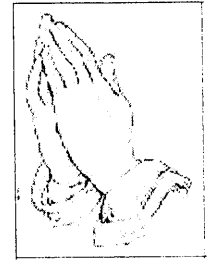
Lk 18:1





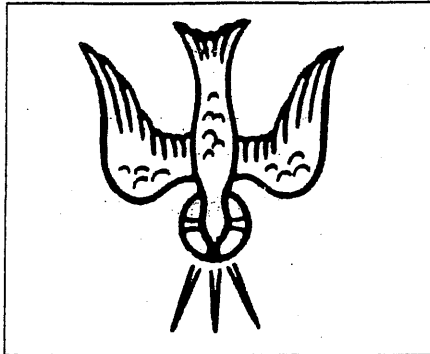
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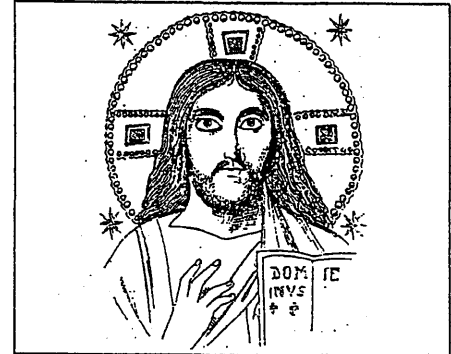


# HELP IN PRAYER

## HOLY SPIRIT



## CHRIST



### PREVENTION OF SIN

#### ASSISTANCE

##### In Requests

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Rom. 8:26

##### In Relationships

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Rom. 8:15

#### ADVOCACY

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 1Jn.2:1

I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are mine. Jn. 17:9, also v.15, 17-20

### PETITIONS FOR SUPPLY

#### INTERCESSION

And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. Rom. 8:27

#### INTERCESSION

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yes rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Rom. 8:34

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Heb. 7:25

Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

