

Prayer

02/06

“Prayer is the way and means, given us by our Creator, whereby we can counsel and communicate with him. It is one of the chief cornerstones of pure and perfect worship.” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Ensign*, May 1984, pg. 32)

Prayer Defined

(BD 752-753; Moses 5:4-8)

01 – “Every person here today lived at one time in heavenly realms. We walked with our Heavenly Father. We knew Him. We heard His voice. We loved Him.

And although we were eager to enter mortality and continue our progression, we must have regretted the separation that would accompany it. We must have sorrowed that a veil would cover our eyes and the bright memories of our lives would be cloaked in the forgetfulness of mortality. How we must have yearned to stay close to our father in Heaven. How we must have covenanted to ever reach after Him and commune with Him.

Undoubtedly our separation from our Heavenly Father was softened when He promised that as we sought after Him in prayer, He would reach toward us.

Now we are here. Our memories of our premortal life are dim and dark. We have forgotten those things we supposed we could never forget. Unfortunately and tragically we sometimes even forget our Heavenly Father, whom we loved so dearly.” (Joseph B. Wirthlin, *BYU Speeches*, January 21, 2003, pg. 1-2)

02 – “One of the requirements made of the Latter-day Saints is that they shall be faithful in attending to their prayers, both their secret and family prayers. The object that our Heavenly Father has in requiring this is that we may be in communication with Him, and that we may have a channel open between us and the heavens whereby we can bring down upon ourselves blessings from above.” (Heber J. Grant, *CR*, April 1944, pg. 11)

03 – “Unlike us, God has no restrictive office hours.” (Neal A. Maxwell, *Ensign*, November 1991, pg. 31)

Suggested Pattern for Prayer can be found in ‘the true order of prayer’ (Daniel H. Ludlow, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, pg. 1120-1121)

- 1 - Sacred Language
- 2 - Three-fold Petition
- 3 - Principle of: Ask - Seek - Knock
- 4 - Line of Authority: Father to Son to Prophets to Us

04 – “When we go to worship in a temple or a church, we put aside our working clothes and dress ourselves in something better. This change of clothing is a mark of respect. Similarly, when we address our Heavenly Father, we should put aside our working words and clothe our prayers in special language of reverence and respect...” (Dallin H. Oaks, *Ensign*, May 1993, pg. 15)

Concerning Prayer

(D&C 88:63-65, D&C 42:61; D&C 68:33; D&C 101:7-8)

05 – The message that is most often repeated in all of the revelations is said in many ways but said simply: ‘Ask and ye shall receive.’ I counted them once. There were 700 and some different ways of saying, ‘Ask and ye shall receive.’ ...Begin asking for the Holy Ghost to inspire you and guide you. You will not be denied! I do know that against challenges that come and difficulties that come, if you will invite that Spirit, that gift, to be with you and teach you, then you have the right to have all of the blessings that anyone else in the Church has, including those of us who preside over the Church.” (Boyd K. Packer, *CES Satellite Broadcast*, March 5 2000, 5-6)

06 – “The Prophet Joseph Smith told President John Taylor that if he would pray earnestly every day of his life, he would never apostatize from the Church. I say also to all members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, that if they will attend to their prayers, make the hearthstone of the home an altar for prayer, where the

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words from sincere hearts appeal to our Father in Heaven, pray honestly, morning and evening, with the family and in secret; I promise them that they will never apostatize from this Church.” (Reed Smoot, *CR*, October 1908, pg. 77)

07 – “I have little or no fear for the boy or the girl, the young man or the young woman, who honestly and conscientiously supplicate God twice a day for the guidance of His Spirit. I am sure that when temptation comes they will have the strength to overcome it by the inspiration that shall be given to them. Supplicating the Lord for the guidance of His Spirit places around us a safeguard, and if we earnestly and honestly seek the guidance of the Spirit of the Lord, I can assure you that we will receive it.” (Heber J. Grant, *Gospel Standards*, pg. 26)

Necessity of Prayer

(3 Nephi 18:14-30; 2 Nephi 32:8-9)

08 – “Our modern times seem to suggest that prayerful devotion and reverence for holiness is unreasonable or undesirable, or both. And yet, skeptical ‘modern’ men have need for prayer. Perilous moments, great responsibility, deep anxiety, overwhelming grief—these challenges that shake us out of old complacencies and established routines will bring to the surface our native impulses. If we let them, they will humble us, soften us, and turn us to respectful prayer. If prayer is only a spasmodic cry at the time of crisis, then it is utterly selfish, and we come to think of God as a repairman or a service agency to help us only in our emergencies. We should remember the Most High day and night—always—not only at times when all other assistance has failed and we desperately need help.” (Howard W. Hunter, *Ensign*, November pg. 77, 52)

09 – “Satan trembles when he sees the weakest Saint upon his knees.” (Thomas S. Monson, *Improvement Era*, June 1964)

10 – “I am convinced in my heart that the spectacle of a nation praying is more awe-inspiring, more powerful, than the explosion of an atomic bomb. The force of prayer is greater than any possible combination of man-controlled powers.” (Ezra Taft Benson, *Improvement Era*, December 1956, pg. 954-955)

11 – “If I did not feel like praying, and asking my Father in Heaven to give me a morning blessing, and to preserve me and my family and the good upon the earth through the day, I should say, ‘Brigham, get down here on your knees, bow your body down before the throne of him who rules in the heavens, and stay there until you can feel to supplicate at that throne of grace erected for sinners’.” (Brigham Young, *JD*, 16:28)

12 – “If the Devil says you cannot pray when you are angry, tell him it is none of his business, and pray until that species of insanity is dispelled and serenity is restored to the mind.” (Brigham Young, *JD*, 10:175)

13 – “We may say that our work drives us and that we have not time to pray, hardly time to eat our breakfasts. Then let the breakfasts go, and pray; get down upon our knees and pray until we are filled with the spirit of peace.

It matters not whether you or I feel like praying, when the time comes to pray, pray. If we do not feel like it, we should pray till we do....

There are times and places when all should vocally repeat the words spoken, but in our prayer meetings and in our family circles let every heart be united with the one who takes the lead by being mouth before the Lord, and let every person mentally repeat the prayers, and all unite in whatever is asked for, and the Lord will not withhold, but will give to such persons the things which they ask for and rightly need.” (Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, pg. 44-45)

14 – “Brigham Young once said, ‘Prayer keeps man from sin, and sin keeps man from prayer.’” (H. Burke Peterson, *Ensign*, January 1974, pg. 18-19)

15 – “He is your Father; pray to him. If your life is in disarray and you feel uncomfortable and unworthy to pray because you are not clean, don’t worry. He already knows about all of that. He is waiting for you to kneel in humility and take the first few steps. Pray for strength. Pray for others to be led to support you and guide you and lift you. Pray that the love of the Savior will pour into your heart. Pray that the miracle of the Atonement will

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bring forgiveness because you are willing to change. I know that those prayers will be answered, for God loves you. His Son gave his life for you. I know they will help you.” (Richard G. Scott, *Ensign*, November 1988, pg. 77)

16 – “Prayer is to the soul like the irrigating stream to our dry and parched fields and orchards. Prayer nourishes, strengthens and imparts vitality to the seed. The seed grows under the influence of prayer. But where prayer is neglected, the results are just as we see them when we neglect to irrigate our fields and orchards. That which is planted there begins to wither and dry up.

So it is with the word of God in the human soul; it must be watered by the Spirit of God. Prayer must be exercised in order to invoke the power and blessing of God to rest upon it. Then the seed grows; the tree grows and flourishes; its branches spread abroad and fill the whole man, and he knows that it is the word of God that he has received. He has a living and abiding testimony in his heart concerning it, and doubt has no room within him. But let him neglect his prayers, let him neglect to cultivate the seed and to watch over it, then it begins to wither, and he begins to doubt and to ask himself whether this is indeed the work of God.” (George Q. Cannon, *Gospel Truth*, 1:345)

17 – “**Here’s what I’d like you to do. Get a piece of paper and write on it something very personal that you want from the Lord—something you want very much.** Don’t just pick something easy. The harder it is, the better, so you can have a real experience with faith. Maybe you’re concerned about your spouse. Maybe one of your children has rejected what you’ve taught him, and you’re worried. Maybe you’re struggling with a health problem. Maybe you’re in the midst of great financial troubles. Maybe you just want more faith, more testimony, more strength to be able to repent and change, more ability to overcome a personal weakness. **Write your desire on a piece of paper....**

Don’t think you’re not good enough to receive the Lord’s help. As I travel around the world I meet too many members of the Church who think they can never qualify to receive answers to prayer. They say, ‘Sure, if I were a General Authority or the stake president or the bishop I could get answers, but I’m too....[fill in the blank].’

I promise you in the name of the Lord that if you really desire what you’ve written down, if your desire is righteous, and if you’re asking according to the will of the Lord, he will grant you that desire—if you will learn and obey the principles and the laws that govern what you want. I have no doubt whatsoever about that. I bear testimony that it’s true because the Lord has said so.” (Gene R. Cook, *Receiving Answers to Our Prayers*, pg. 13-14)

Revelation Requires Work

(D&C 9:7; James 1:5-6)

18 – “**I shall not ask the Lord to do what I am not willing to do.**” (Brigham Young, *JD*, 8:143)

19 – “**I believe that while we should ask the Lord’s blessings on all our doings and should never do anything upon which we cannot ask his blessing, we should not expect the Lord to do for us what we can do for ourselves. I believe in faith and works and that the Lord will bless more fully the man who works for what he prays for than he will the man who only prays.**” (Ezra Taft Benson, *CR*, April 1967, pg. 61)

Points Pertaining to Prayer

(1 Corinthians 2:11)

20 – “**It is through the repeated process of feeling impressions, recording them, and obeying them that one learns to depend on the direction of the Spirit more than on communication through the five senses.**” (Richard G. Scott, “Helping Others To Be Spiritually Led,” August 1998, pg. 3)

21 – “**Truth is not to be had through man’s ordinary learning processes. His five senses, sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch, unaided by inspiration, are calculated and adapted to deal only with things of the flesh—that is, with temporal things as we find them. Without revelation, the scientific method is wholly inadequate for the discovery of the ultimate truth with which the gospel deals. It is precisely because man’s uninspired search for truth is thus limited that the knowledge of the gospel, which comprehends things of the spirit, is so limited in the world today....The normal senses of man are sensitive only to the things of the flesh—things as they are—and that only imperfectly.**” (Marion G. Romney, *CES address, Revelation*, July 8 1960)

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22 – “I used to wonder why Nephi didn’t say ‘hear his words.’ Now I know that one doesn’t hear them with ears...but into a person’s mind there comes words...With these words comes a feeling. One actually feels the words just as Nephi said...Anybody who cannot hear to hear by feeling will not go very far.” (S. Dilworth Young, *CR*, October 1961, pg. 116)

Profile of Prayer

How - (Matthew 6:9-15; John 17:1-26; Alma 34:17-27)

A- Address to Father - (3 Nephi 19:18)

23 – “We should develop a feeling that we are talking directly with our Father in Heaven. ‘He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him’ (Hebrews 11:6). **You cannot imagine an effective prayer without visualizing and feeling a personal God.**” (David O. McKay, *Treasures of Life*, pg. 308)

24 – “Jesus was careful to place the petition ‘Hallowed be thy name’ at the very forefront of his prayer. Unless that reverent, prayerful, honorable attitude toward God is uppermost in our hearts we are not fully prepared to pray. **If our first thoughts is of ourselves and not of god, we are not praying as Jesus taught...God must be approached carefully, respectfully, and with great preparation.**” (Howard W. Hunter, *Ensign*, November 1977, pg. 52)

B- Thanks be to God - (D&C 59:7)

25 – “The Prophet Joseph is reported to have said at one time that one of the greatest sins for which the Latter-day Saints would be guilty would be the sin of ingratitude. I presume most of us have not thought of that as a serious sin. There’s a great tendency for us in our prayers—in our pleadings with the Lord—to ask for additional blessings. Sometimes I feel we need to devote more of our prayers to expressions of gratitude and thanksgiving for blessings already received. Of course we need the daily blessings of the Lord. **But if we sin in the matter of prayer, I think it is in our lack of the expressions of thanksgiving for daily blessings.**” (Ezra Taft Benson, *New Era*, November 1976, pg. 5)

C- Asking - (3 Nephi 18:20; Mark 11:24; Moroni 7:26)

- 1- In My Name
- 2- Which is Right
- 3- Believing that Ye shall Receive

26 – “Perfect prayers are those which are inspired, in which the Spirit reveals the words which should be used.” (Bruce R. McConkie, *MD*, pg. 586)

27 – “We cannot, for the purposes of real prayer, hurriedly dress our words and attitudes in tuxedos when our shabby life is in rags. More than we realize, being honest with God in our prayers helps us to be more honest with ourselves.” (Neal A. Maxwell, *All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience*, pg. 96)

28 – “Now I differentiate between saying prayers and praying. I would like to draw an example which some of you have heard. It is a common place. We have a cow....I had not been home in daylight hours for three weeks. One day I was catching a later plane and went out to see the cow. She was in trouble. I called the vet and looked at her, testing her, and said, ‘She has swallowed a wire and it has punctured her heart. She will be dead before the day is over.’ The next day the calf was to come, and the cow is important to our economy. Also, she kind of ‘belongs’—you know how that gets to be. I asked him if he could do anything, and he said he could but it would ; likely be useless, money down the drain. I said, ‘Well, what will it cost me?’ He told me, and it did. I told him to go ahead. The next morning the calf was there but the cow was lying down gasping, I called the vet again, thinking the calf might need some attention. He looked the cow over and said she would be dead within an hour or so. I went in to the telephone directory, copied down the number of the animal by-products company, put it on the nail by the phone, and told my wife to call them to come and get the cow later in the day.

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We had our family prayer before I left to go to Salt Lake to catch the plane out to the Gridley Stake. Our little boy was praying. It was to be his calf, you see. In the middle of saying his prayers, after he said all that he usually says, asking Heavenly Father to ‘bless daddy that he won’t get hurt in his travels,’ ‘Bless us at school,’ and so on, he started to pray. There is a difference, and this is the point I should like to make. He then said, ‘Heavenly Father, please bless Bossy so that she will get to be all right.’ He said ‘please,’ you see. While I was in California I remembered that story, and when we were talking about prayer I told of the incident saying. ‘I am glad he prayed that way, because he will learn something. He will mature and he will learn that you do not get everything you pray for just that easy. There is a lesson to be learned.’ And truly there was, but it was I who learned it, not my son; because when I got home Sunday night Bossy had ‘go to be all right.’ She still is.” Boyd K. Packer, *CES address*, The Ideal Teacher, June 28, 1962)

29 – “This element of our blueprint can be taught to children when they are yet young. When our oldest son was about three, he would kneel with his mother and me in our evening prayer. I was serving as the bishop of the ward at the time, and a lovely lady in the ward, Margaret Lister, lay perilously ill with cancer. Each night we would pray for Sister Lister. One evening our tiny son offered the prayer and confused the words of the prayer with a story from a nursery book. He began: “Heavenly Father, please bless Sister Lister, Henny Penny, Chicken Licken, Turkey Lurkey, and all the little folks.” We held back the smiles that evening. Later we were humbled as Margaret Lister sustained a complete recovery.” (Thomas S. Monson, *Ensign*, October 1999, pg. 2)

D- Closing in the Name of ‘The Son’

30 – “**We pray to the Father not the Son; but according to the law of intercession, advocacy, and mediation, our answers come from the Son.**” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Promised Messiah*, pg. 335)

E- Amen

31 – “**The presiding Brethren of today have counseled as follows: ‘A noticeable decline in voicing the word amen at the close of prayers and talks is apparent among congregations of the Church. Amen should be voiced audibly by all members to indicate their agreement and approval of what has been said. A re-emphasis on joining in the amen is needed in all meetings and gatherings throughout the Church.’** (Priesthood Bulletin, October 1973, pg. 4).” (Robert F. Clyde, *Ensign*, I Have a Question, January 1976, pg. 67)

Principles With Prayer

1- Vocal (D&C 19:28, D&C 20:47, 51; D&C 23:6; JS-H 1:14)

32 – “Prayer is such a privilege—to speak to our Father in Heaven. It was a prayer, a very special prayer, which opened this whole dispensation! It began with a young man’s first vocal prayer. **I hope that not too many of our prayers are silent, even though when we cannot pray vocally, it is good to offer a silent prayer in our hearts and in our minds.**” (Spencer W. Kimball, *Ensign*, November. 1979, pg. 4)

33 – “**He knows your desire, but there is a power in express prayer or uttered prayer.**” Brigham Young, *Juvenile Instructor*, May 1 1900, vol. 35, no. 9, pg. 263)

2- Short

34 – “**How often do we hear people who wax eloquent in their prayers to the extent of preaching a complete sermon? The hearers tire and the effect is lost, and I sometimes wonder if perhaps the dial of the heavenly radio is not turned off when long and wordy prayers are sent heavenward.**” (Spencer W. Kimball, *TSWK*, pg. 119-120)

35 – “**‘Lord, we thank thee for this johnnycake and ask thee to send us something better. Amen.’ Shortly, someone knocks on the door, and there stands a man with a ham and some flour. The Prophet jumps to his feet and says to Emma, ‘I knew the Lord would answer my prayer.’”** (Joseph Smith; Truman G. Madsen, *Joseph Smith the Prophet*, pg. 32)

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36 – “They servant is weary. In the name of Jesus Christ Amen.” (George A. Smith)

3- Repetition (Matthew 6:7)

37 – “In our day the English words thee, thou, thy, and thine are suitable for the language of prayer, not because of how they were used anciently but because they are currently obsolete in common English discourse. Being unused in everyday communications, they are now available as a distinctive form of address in English, appropriate to symbolize respect, closeness, and reverence for the one being addressed.

I hope this renewal of counsel that we use special language in our prayers will not be misunderstood. Literary excellence is not our desire. We do not advocate flowery and wordy prayers.... Our prayers should be simple, direct, and sincere...I am sure that our Heavenly Father, who loves all of his children, hears and answers all prayers, however phrased. **If he is offended in connection with prayers, it is likely to be by their absence, not their phraseology.**” (Dallin H. Oaks, *Ensign*, May 1993, pg. 15)

38 – “Our prayers should be meaningful and pertinent. Do not use the same phrases at each prayer. Each of us would become disturbed if a friend said the same few words to us each day, treated the conversation as a chore, and could hardly wait to finish it in order to turn on the TV and forget us.” (.Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, May 1977, pg. 33)

4- Self-Reliance (D&C 58:26-27)

39 – “Each of us must accommodate the mixture of reason and revelation in our lives. The gospel not only permits but requires it. An individual who concentrates on either side solely and alone will lose both balance and perspective.” (Boyd K. Packer, *BYU address, I Say Unto You be One*, February 12, 1991)

40 – “Listen to this sentence if you don’t hear anything else: If we foolishly ask our bishop or branch president or the Lord to make a decision for us, there’s precious little **self-reliance in that. Think what it costs every time you have somebody else make a decision for you.**

I think I should mention one other thing, and I hope this won’t be misunderstood. We often find young people who will pray with great exertion over matters that they are free to decide for themselves. Suppose, if you will, that a couple had money available to build a house. Suppose they had prayed endlessly over whether they should build an Early American style, a ranch style, modern style architecture, or perhaps a Mediterranean style. Has it ever occurred to you that perhaps the Lord just plain doesn’t care? Let them build what they want to build. It’s their choice. In many things we can do just what we want.

Now, there are some things he cares about very much. If you’re going to build that house, then be honest and pay for the material that goes into it and do a decent job of building it. When you move into it, live righteously in it. Those are the things that count.

On occasions I’ve had to counsel people that the Lord would probably quite willingly approve the thing they intend to do even when they want to. It’s strange when they come and almost feel guilty about doing something because they want to, even when it’s righteous. The Lord is very generous with the freedom He gives us. The more we learn to follow the right, the more we are spiritually self-reliant, the more our freedom and our independence are affirmed.” (Boyd K. Packer, *Ensign*, August 1975, pg. 89)

41 – “We are expected to use the light and knowledge we already possess to work out our lives. We should not need a revelation to instruct us to be up and about our duty, for we have been told to do that already in the scriptures; nor should we expect revelation to replace the spiritual or temporal intelligence which we have already received—only to extend it. We must go about our life in an ordinary, workaday way, following the routines and rules and regulations that govern life.

Rules and regulations and commandments are valuable protection. **Should we stand in need of revealed instruction to alter our course, it will be waiting along the way as we arrive at the point of need.**” (Boyd K. Packer, *Ensign*, January 1983, pg. 53-54)

42 – “On an outing when he [Matt] was about twelve, he had his first experience with feeling personal revelation.

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Returning from an exploring trip on back country roads, he and his father came to an unexpected fork and could not remember which road to take. It was late in the day, and they knew darkness would be enveloping them in unfamiliar territory. Seizing a teaching moment, Jeffrey Holland asked his son to pray for direction. Afterward, he asked his son what he felt, and Matt replied that he felt strongly they should go to the left. Replying that he had felt the same way, his father turned the truck to the left. Ten minutes later, they came to a dead end and returned to take the other route.

Matt thought for a time and then asked his father why they would get that kind of answer to a prayer. **His father replied that with the sun going down, that was undoubtedly the quickest way for the Lord to give them information—in this case, which one was the wrong road. Now, though the other road might not be familiar and could be difficult in places, they could proceed confidently, knowing it was the right one, even in the dark.**” (Don L. Searle; ‘Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,’ *Ensign*, December 1994, pg. 13)

Where - (Alma 34:20-21, 26; 3 Nephi 18:16)

Fields = Work Place

Houses = Homes

Closets and Secret Places = Personal Places

Church = Place of Worship

When - (Alma 34:21; Daniel 6:10)

Morning - Mid-day - Evening

43 – Dedication of the SLC temple.

“Heavenly Father, when thy people shall not have the opportunity of entering this holy house to offer their supplications unto thee, and they are oppressed and in trouble, surrounded by difficulties or assailed by temptations, and still turn their faces toward this thy holy house and ask thee for deliverance, for help, for thy power to be extended in their behalf...” (James E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord*, pg. 142)

Emphasis Placed on Morning Prayers - Alma 37:37; Psalms 5:3; Psalms 55:17; Psalms 88:13; Mark 1:35)

Family Prayer

(3 Nephi 18:21; Moses 5:4; D&C 68:28)

44 – “I am convinced that one of the greatest things that can come into any home to cause the boys and girls in that home to grow up in a love of God, and in a love of the gospel of Jesus Christ, is to have family prayer, not for the father of the family alone to pray, but for the mother and for the children to do so also, that they may partake of the spirit of prayer, and be in harmony, be in tune, to have the radio, so to speak, in communication with the Spirit of the Lord. I believe that there are very few that go astray, that very few lose their faith, who have once had a knowledge of the gospel, and who never neglect their prayers in their families, and their secret supplications to God.” (Heber J. Grant, *CR*, October 1923, pg. 7–8)

45 – “Family prayer is the greatest deterrent to sin, and hence the most beneficent provider of joy and happiness. The old saying is yet true: ‘The family that prays together stays together.’” (Thomas S. Monson, *Ensign*, November 1988, pg. 69)

46 – “I know of nothing that will so much help to ease family tensions, that in a subtle way will bring about the respect for parents which leads to obedience, that will affect the spirit of repentance which will largely erase the blight of broken homes, than will praying together, confessing weaknesses together before the Lord, and invoking the blessings of the Lord upon the home and those who dwell there....

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This practice, a return to family worship, spreading across the land and over the earth, would in a generation largely lift the blight that is destroying us. It would restore integrity, mutual respect, and a spirit of thankfulness in the hearts of people.” (Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, February 1991, pg. 5)

47 – “How many families of the church...have regular night and morning family prayer? Those who neglect to do so are displeasing the Lord.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 5:48)

Answering Our Prayers

(John 11:41-42; D&C 124:49)

48 – “I believe that in the whole history of the world God has never failed to answer a humble, sincere prayer—no matter who offered it, whether male or female, young or old, weak or strong, member or nonmember. That’s the way the Lord is. He is so kind. He is so anxious to respond. Of course, his answer might have been ‘No.’ Or he may have said, ‘Yes, but not now.’ Or he may have responded in a still, small voice that the person failed to hear. But answer he did, and I believe when we pass through the veil and see more clearly how prayer and revelation work, we will humbly fall upon our knees and ask the Lord’s forgiveness for not more fully recognizing his hand in our lives.” (Gene R. Cook, *Receiving Answers to Our Prayers*, pg. 11)

49 – “I cherish as one of the dearest experiences of life the knowledge that God hears the prayer of faith. It is true that the answers to our prayers may not always come as direct and at the time or in the manner that we anticipate; but they do come, and at the time and in the manner best for the interest of him who offers the supplication.” (David O. McKay, *CR*, April 1969, pg. 152-153)

50 – He is our perfect Father. He loves us beyond our capacity to understand. He knows what is best for us. He sees the end from the beginning. He wants us to act to gain needed experience:

When He answers yes, it is to give us confidence.

When He answers no, it is to prevent error.

When He withholds an answer, it is to have us grow through faith in Him, obedience to His commandments, and a willingness to act on truth. We are expected to assume accountability by acting on a decision that is consistent with His teachings without prior confirmation. We are not to sit passively waiting or to murmur because the Lord has not spoken. We are to act.” (Richard G. Scott, *Ensign*, November 1989, pg. 30)

51 – “In view of these tutorials, **God cannot, brothers and sisters, respond affirmatively to all of our petitions with an unbroken chain of ‘yesses.’ This would assume that all of our petitions are for that ‘which is right’ and are spiritually ‘expedient.’** (3 Nephi 18:20; D&C 18:18; D&C 88:64–65) **No petitioner is so wise!** Paul even acknowledged that we sometimes ‘know not what we should pray for as we ought.’ (Romans 8:26; D&C 46:30).” (Neal A. Maxwell, *Ensign*, May 1991, pg. 90)

52 – “**The Lord would not guide us in a selection that made no difference. No answer is likely to come to a person who seeks guidance in choosing two alternatives that are equally acceptable to the Lord. Thus, there are times when we can serve productively in two different fields of labor. Either answer is right.** Similarly, the Spirit of the Lord is not likely to give us revelations on matters that are trivial. I once heard a young woman in a testimony meeting praise the spirituality of her husband, indicating that he submitted every question to the Lord. She told how he accompanied her shopping and would not even choose between different brands of canned vegetables without making his selection a matter of prayer. that strikes me as improper. I believe the Lord expects us to use the intelligence and experience he has given us to make these kinds of choices.” (Dallin H. Oaks, *BYU Speeches, Revelation*, 1982, pg. 26)

53 – “**In all the important decisions in our lives, what is most important is to do the right thing. Second, and only slightly behind the first; is to do the right thing at the right time. People who do the right thing at the wrong time can be frustrated and ineffective. They can even be confused about whether they made the right choice when what was wrong was not their choice but their timing.**” (Dallin H. Oaks, *Ensign*, October 2003, pg.10)

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54 – “Answers to prayers come in a quiet way. The scriptures describe that voice of inspiration as a still, small voice. If you really try, you can learn to respond to that voice.

In the early days of our marriage, our children came at close intervals. As parents of little children will know, in those years it is quite a novelty for them to get an uninterrupted night of sleep.

If you have a new baby, and another youngster cutting teeth, or one with a fever, you can be up and down a hundred times a night. (That, of course, is an exaggeration. It’s probably only twenty or thirty times.)

We finally divided our children into ‘his’ and ‘hers’ for night tending. She would get up for the new baby, and I would tend the one cutting teeth.

One day we came to realize that each would hear only the one to which we were assigned, and would sleep very soundly through the cries of the other.

We have commented on this over the years, convinced that you can train yourself to hear what you want to hear, to see and feel what you desire, but it takes some conditioning.

There are so many of us who go through life and seldom, if ever, hear that voice of inspiration, because ‘the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned’ (1 Corinthians 2:14).” (Boyd K. Packer, *Ensign*, October 1979, pg. 19-20)

Improving Our Prayers

(1 Nephi 3:1; Ether 2:14-15; James 5:16)

55 – **“As you feel the need to confide in the Lord or to improve the quality of your visits with him—to pray, if you please—may I suggest a process to follow: go where you can be alone, go where you can think, go where you can kneel, go where you can speak out loud to him. The bedroom, the bathroom, or the closet will do. Now, picture him in your mind's eye. Think to whom you are speaking, control your thoughts—don't let them wander, address him as your Father and your friend. Now tell him things you really feel to tell him—not trite phrases that have little meaning, but have a sincere, heartfelt conversation with him. Confide in him, ask him for forgiveness, plead with him, enjoy him, thank him, express your love to him, and then listen for his answers. Listening is an essential part of praying. Answers from the Lord come quietly—ever so quietly. In fact, few hear his answers audibly with their ears. We must be listening so carefully or we will never recognize them. Most answers from the Lord are felt in our heart as a warm comfortable expression, or they may come as thoughts to our mind. They come to those who are prepared and who are patient.”** (H. Burke Peterson, *Ensign*, January 1974, pg. 19)

56 – **“Petitioning in prayer has taught me that the vault of heaven, with all its blessings, is to be opened only by a combination lock: one tumbler falls when there is faith, a second when there is personal righteousness, and the third and final tumbler falls only when what is sought is (in God’s judgment, not ours) ‘right’ for us. Sometimes we pound on the vault door for something we want very much, in faith, in reasonable righteousness, and wonder why the door does not open. We would be very spoiled children if that vault door opened any more easily than it does now. I can tell, looking back, that God truly loves me by the petitions that, in his perfect wisdom and love, he has refused to grant me. Our rejected petitions tell us not only much about ourselves, but also much about our flawless Father.”** (Neal A Maxwell, *New Era*, April 1978, pg. 6)

57 – Be wise. Develop the skill of learning by what you see and particularly by what the Holy Ghost prompts you to feel. Ask in faith for such help. Live to be worthy of it. Seek to recognize it. **Write down in a secure place the important things you learn from the Spirit. You will find that as you write down precious impressions, often more will come.** Also the knowledge you gain will be available throughout your life.” (Richard G. Scott, *BYU Magazine*, Summer 2001, pg. 58)

Fasting

02/06

“(In all ages the Lord has called upon his people to fast and pray and seek him with all their strength and power. (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mortal Messiah*, 2:152)

Fasting Defined

(Alma 5:16; Alma 17:13)

01 – “Periodic fasting can help clear up the mind and strengthen the body and the spirit. **The usual fast, the one we are asked to participate in for fast Sunday, is for twenty-four hours without food or drink.** Some people, feeling the need, have gone on longer fasts of abstaining from food but have taken the needed liquids. Wisdom should be used, and the fast should be broken with light eating. To make a fast most fruitful, it should be coupled with prayer and meditation; physical work should be held to a minimum, and it is a blessing if one can ponder on the scriptures and the reason for the fast. (Ezra Taft Benson, *TETB*, pg. 33)

Facts on Fasting

(Matthew 17:21; D&C 59:13-20; Isaiah 58:6-12)

02 – “Fasting we may well assume is a religious custom that has come down from the beginning of time, and [is] always associated with prayer. (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 1:88)

03 – “I say to my brethren, when they are fasting, and praying for the sick, and for those that need faith and prayer, do not go beyond what is wise and prudent in fasting and prayer. The Lord can hear a simple prayer, offered in faith, in half a dozen words, and he will recognize fasting that may not continue more than twenty-four hours, just as readily and as effectually as He will answer a prayer of a thousand words and fasting for a month.” (Joseph F. Smith, *CR*, October 1912, pg. 133-134)

04 – You haven’t really called upon the Lord so that you can reach him intimately if you don’t fast occasionally—don’t be fanatical, but remember to pray and fast.” (Marion G. Romney, *CES address, The Value of a Well Informed Faith*, April 10, 1975)

05 – “Do not think that there is not a spiritual significance in the little principle of fasting. Do not think, parents, that you are favoring your child when, out of compassion, you say, “Oh, give him his breakfast; oh, let us have breakfast; let us have dinner; I have a headache; the little boy is too young to go without his meal, and so on. You do not know what you are doing by such teaching as that. I want to tell you that the children of our Church can be so taught this principle of self-denial that they will set worthy examples to their parents in the observance of it (David O. McKay, *CR*, April 1915, pg. 105-106)

06 – “All the principles related to fasting seem to point to the fact that it produces (1) physical benefits; (2) intellectual activity; and (3) spiritual strength, which is the greatest of all benefits. This fine spiritual strength is derived by the subjection of the physical appetite to the will of the individual....

If there were no other virtue in fasting but gaining strength of character, that alone would be sufficient justification for its universal acceptance.” (David O. McKay, *Improvement Era*, March 1963, pg. 156)

07 – “Periodic fasting can help clear up the mind and strengthen the body and the spirit. . . . To make a fast most fruitful, it should be coupled with prayer and meditation; physical work should be held to a minimum, and it’s a blessing if one can ponder on the scriptures and the reason for the fast.” (Ezra Taft Benson, *CR*, October 1974, pg. 92)

08 – “I think we should be very generous and give, instead of the amount we save by our two meals of fasting, perhaps much, much more—ten times where we are in a position to do so.” (Spencer W. Kimball, *CR*, April 1974, pg. 184)