

# (South West Baptist Church 2008) Praying It Through

by Gerhard Du Toit

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*Praying through is essential for effective ministry and requires commitment and perseverance.*

**Duration:** 28:01

**Scripture:** Romans 8:26

**Topics:** "Prevailing Prayer"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of prayer and spending time in the presence of God. He encourages the congregation to gather in small groups and ask each other if there is anything they can pray for. The speaker shares a personal experience of praying for a community and witnessing the power of prayer. He also discusses the importance of developing a personal relationship with God and the commitment to spend time alone with Him. The sermon highlights the significance of prayer in ministry and the need to rely on God's guidance.

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## Transcript

So that Robert said, if you have a mobile phone, and he didn't say, if you have a mobile phone and a baby. Because if he would have done that, we would have excommunicated him out of the service. You know, I once spoke in a place in England, and there were six babies in the service, and they all began to cry at the same time.

And you know, it was quite a choir that we had, and I felt, well, if I could not speak to them while they are doing that, then why would Jesus say, let the children come to me, you know? So I was able to survive that. But we are delighted to have you with us this evening. There were about 30 of us this morning that came together for our two hours as we were focusing on the subject of prayer.

And if you are free, we only have these two mornings that we are able to do that. And so tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock, we are going to meet again till around 12 o'clock. And I think, unless I'm mistaken, there's going to be some refreshments afterwards.

So if you want to stay for that, it could mean that maybe you don't need lunch. You know, I live in North America, and food is a tremendous important thing, especially for the Americans. We are in Canada.

And someone asked me some time ago, and he said, what do you think is our problem in North America? And I said, well, I think we are digging our graves with our teeth, you know? But if you want to stay with us tomorrow morning, that would be great. This morning, you know, we hardly have been able to scratch the surface because we were dealing with the Old Testament as it relates to prayer. And what I did this morning was taking a different aspect of Old Testament prayer that we did during the weekend, at Easter weekend.

I think we spent Saturday in the Old Testament, and all of Sunday in the New Testament. But let me just say to you, because some of this material we go pretty deep in some of the clarifications of what prayer is all about. And if you are interested in this, we will be able to give you the material.

And also, there are sets of CDs available as a result of the weekend that we spent together at Easter weekend. And so, if you are interested in that, we would love to put it in your hands. People often come and say, you know, we really would like this material.

And sometimes when we are in seminaries, you take 24 hours, or 32 hours, or sometimes 70 hours with these seminary students. And then people have often said, is there a way? Because then you have time to really go deep into the whole understanding of what prayer is about in the Scriptures. And I long to see that, you know, people sometimes want that.

The other thing that I would like to mention to you this evening is that we have material available that we would like just to put into your hands. And one of the things that we are doing in different countries is to help people, Christians, and to help people in leadership, and to help pastors and missionaries, how to develop a personal and a private prayer life. We said last night, we cannot take people further spiritually than we are ourselves.

We can only impart to people that which we possess. And one of the things that we are adamant about is to help people to develop a relationship of accountability. And to be accountable to someone means that there is someone that you can trust with your relationship with God, and you would allow that person to ask you questions about where you are in your relationship with God.

You know, I hate to say this to you, but it is true that in North America where we live, the average pastor spent about three to five minutes alone with God, something like three, four, sometimes five times a week. And so they study at our seminaries and our Bible colleges, but they never learn how to walk with God. And they never develop a personal relationship with Christ.

And so, after six months in the ministry, they run out of material, they run out of everything, and then they come to us in a state of desperation. And they say, it is possible that you can help us. And then what we do, we help them with the reasons why they should develop a personal relationship with God and a life of prayer.

And we share with them about the requirements, the tools that they would need. And then we share with them about the regulations. How do you go about once you are going to do that? And one of the things that I do with them, I get them to make a commitment.

And I say to them, if you want me to hold you accountable, I want you to make a commitment that you are going to spend four mornings of the week, 30 minutes alone with God. I said, it doesn't have to be in the morning, but in every 24 hours there are 96 slots of 15 minutes each. And I said, I want you to make a

commitment.

And so when they make that commitment, and we help them, and we hold them accountable, and I let them ask me anything about my own relationship with God, if they have been consistent over a period of six months, then I would meet with them and say, okay, now I want us to consider the possibility, instead of spending 30 minutes with God, four mornings of the week, do you want to go to five or six mornings, 30 minutes alone with God, or do you want to stay at four mornings and spend 45 minutes alone with God? And you know, I am almost hesitant to say this to you, that out of every about 100 of these men who are in the past threat, if you would start with them, quite often after six months to a year, about 60% of them would just say, you know, I don't think I can do that. And then we sit with about 40 left. But I tell you, those men have learned the secret of walking with God.

There are some of them, if I want to phone them five o'clock in the morning and want to talk to them, they are just not available. They just say, no, I am spending these times alone with God. And so if you are the husband, a husband and you want to meet with another father and a husband, or a young fellow and you want to meet with someone else, or a young girl and you want to meet with someone else, or a mother, then we make these questions available.

Where are you presently in your relationship with God? And we discuss it with one another. What have you been reading in your daily devotions this last week? What has God been saying to you in those times of reading? Are you making notes with what God is saying to you? Have you been consistent in your times of prayer? Which areas of your relationship with God do you experience resistance? Are there any unresolved issues in your walk with God? What specific things are you praying about? What habits are you struggling with as a Christian at this time in your walk with God? How are you doing in your relationship with your wife and your children? Or your husband and your children? You will be amazed how few fathers are really praying and spending time with their children and praying with their wives. I once stayed in a house in South Africa, and I was playing with the children in the carpet in my bachelor days, a young fellow out in the ministry, and as I was playing with him, I turned to the little boy and I said to him, Is your daddy a Christian? And so he said to me, Oh yes, my daddy is a Christian.

And I said to him, How do you know that your daddy is a Christian? And he said to me, I know that my daddy is a Christian because he plays with me in the carpet, and he prays with me in the carpet. And so then the little girl was around, and I turned to her and I said, Is your mummy a Christian? Oh yes, my mummy is a Christian. And I said, How do you know that? How do you know your mummy is a Christian? And she turned to me and she said, I know my mummy is a Christian because when she makes a mistake, she would come to me and say she is sorry about what she has done.

And I thought, Well, that's an interesting one. I remember once seeing a sign behind a washing dish in the kitchen, and there was the sign saying, Divine service conducted three times a day. And I thought, Man, I'm glad I'm not a woman.

But if you are interested in this, we would love to be able to put this material in your hands. You know, we were speaking about prayer this morning, and I was reminded this afternoon as I was praying for this evening, that when I went into the ministry in my homeland of Southern Africa, the first three years I was in the Western Cape, and then I was asked to go to the land of Namibia. Those days it was called Southwest Africa.

And I was asked to work under a godly man who was a missionary in that beautiful land of Namibia. And when I came into the city of Bintuk, he came into my room the afternoon and he said to me, Gerard, he said, I need to explain to you my philosophy of ministry. And so I said to him, What is it? And he said, Well, we don't do anything in this province of Southwest Africa unless we spend 16 days in prayer.

And so I looked at him, you know, I had a great interest in prayer, but I've never been able to spend 16 days lingering in the presence of God to that degree. And so I said to him, Well, you know, we've learned to spend nights in prayer with the African people. I said, But I've never done that.

And I said, How do you go about? And so he turned to me and he said, Well, there are nine Christian farmers and their wives and my wife and myself and you will go to a campground. And as we will go to this campground, we're going to spend 16 days waiting upon God. And he said, We don't go into this province unless we have prayed through for that which God wants us to do.

You know, the term praying through is something that we don't hear anymore in the times in which we are living. And so I will never forget this. We went to this campground.

There were about 21 of us altogether, the nine Christian farmers and their wives and him and his wife and myself. And we began to spend those days in prayer. You say, How did you go about? We would get up in the mornings to have our own devotional times.

Then we would have breakfast together. And about 9 o'clock we would meet for the first session that goes until about 12 o'clock. And then we would have a break until about 2.30 for lunch and some time just to rest a little bit.

Because, you see, prayer is not necessarily a weapon. Brethren and sisters, prayer is a battlefield. And so around 2.30, 3 o'clock, we would meet again.

Into the afternoon, say about 5 o'clock, and then the evening from about half past seven, we would meet until about 9, 9.30. And so that's what we did for 16 days. And I remember it was the third afternoon when this man, he was a Scotsman, his last name was McLeod, when he turned to us and he said to us, he said, God has given me a special burden to pray for the community and the town of Walthus Bay. I knew about that coastal town as it were.

Never been there before in my life. And he said, we are going to climb underneath the burden of God. And he said, we are going to spend extended times waiting in the presence of God to pray for that community.

And my brethren and sisters, that afternoon we began to pray. Now, if you ask God to give you a burden, and that burden of God will come upon you, and you will learn the secret of how to dissect the burden of God. We never got to it this morning, but if you study the Hebrew word Masah, you will discover how the burden of God brings brokenness, how brokenness brings purity and cleansing in your relationship with God.

And now as a result of that, you will discover that God gives you a spirit of prayer. And the spirit of prayer would lead you into the will of God in prayer. And the will of God in prayer is surrounded by the promises of God in prayer.

When you study the unfolding of the biblical understanding of this burden, and so day after day, you know sometimes when God gives you a spirit of prayer, my brethren and sisters, hours become like minutes in

the presence of God. And so day after day, we were prevailing as we were praying for that community of about 4,000 people. And there was an afternoon, I can't remember if it was three or four days later, when this man stopped us and he turned to us and he said to us, God has given to me a sense of assurance that we have prayed through for the community of Walthus Bay.

And he stopped us and he said unto us, all that we are going to do the rest of this afternoon and this evening is we are going to thank God for what He is going to do in that community. Now I had no idea what was going to happen, you know. But after those 16 days, we went back to the city of Vintook.

And when we went back to the city of Vintook, he came into my room and he turned to me and he said to me, Gerard, he said I want you to go to the community of Walthus Bay. I was doing evangelistic work. And he said, I want you to go there and I want you to do a series of evangelistic services.

And I said, why do you want me to do that, sir? And he said, because we spent 16 days in prayer and we prayed for that community and I want you to go there and I want you to preach the gospel of Christ in that community. And so I said to him, how many Christians are there? And he said, I have no idea. I said, where will I stay? He said, I know one Christian couple who's got a caravan in the back of their yard and he said, maybe you can stay with them.

And I said, where will I have the services? He said, I don't know. He said, you need to find a school hall or a church or something and you need to invite the people and the churches and I want you to go and preach the gospel. And he turned to me with his typical Scottish eyes and he said to me, and you can't come back until the Spirit of God broke through in the community.

You know, I was just a young fellow out in the ministry, you know. And he turned to me, you know, we were part of a faith mission which means, to me, it's never a question of money. It's always a question, is it the will of God? And if you do the will of God, God will undertake when it comes to your own personal needs.

And we didn't get in a salary, we got an allowance every three months. And he turned to me and he said, the funds in the missionary organization is very low and he said, I want you to use your allowance for petrol, but he said, I would be able to give you a little vehicle. And he said, I don't want you to come back until God broke through.

Oh, I tell you, I remember it was a 1967 little red Volkswagen. I was driving up about 400 kilometers to this community of Walthus Bay, a coastal town of about 4,000 people. And brother and sister asked, I was driving up, there was only one verse of scripture that was ringing through my heart.

You say, which one was it? As a sheep I was led to the slaughter. I mean, that's the only thing that I could think about. Because I thought, what is going to happen to me, you know? And the man said, you're going to go and you're not coming back until the Spirit of God broke through.

So he said, what happened? I came into the community of Walthus Bay, I couldn't find a house of these people and in my desperation, I just stopped the other car, I got out of the vehicle, I knocked on the door of the house and the lady opened the door and I said, well, madam, I'm looking for Mr. and Mrs. Newman were the names of these people. And so she turned to me and she said, oh, they just live around the corner. And I said, madam, I'm an evangelist and I'm coming to preach the Gospel of Christ in this community.

You wouldn't believe this, brother and sister. She just brightened up. And she said, I'm a Christian.

I said, oh, that's wonderful. I said, what's your name? You know what she said? My name is Lydia. I mean, you talk about the Bible, you know.

I said, that's great, Lydia. I said, you can come to these services. I left that house, came into the house of this couple, discovered that this lady, Mrs. Newman, was suffering from a nervous condition and I have a tender heart for people, you know.

The more sensitive you become towards God, the more sensitive you become towards the needs of people. And someone once said that he that often speaks to God about people will often speak to people about God. And I sat in this house and when I discovered she wasn't well, I said to God in my heart, what am I going to do? I mean, I need a place to stay.

And about five minutes later, the lady in whose door I knocked walked into this house and she turned to me and she said, I just talked to my husband. And she said, my husband is not a Christian. In fact, she turned to me and she said, my husband is a German.

But she said, I just talked to him and she said, we have an apartment in our yard and my husband said, you can come and stay with us. You see, she wanted him to become a Christian. And oh, brother and sister, we had these notices and we went with two little African lads through that whole community.

I was able to rent a school hall for these special evangelistic services. I still remember those invitations. All-time gospel meetings.

I like that, you know. And we were giving it out to these people, inviting them. And I was seen there, and I was not allowed to go back until the Spirit of God broke through.

And so you say, what happened? Thursday night was the first service. I took Thursday and I spent the day in prayer and fasting. And God gave me a message for that Thursday night.

And the service started about 7.20 and about 6.30, 6.15, I was excited. We spent 16 days in prayer. And God gave me a message.

And we told the community about our evangelistic services. I went to the school hall, put about 70 chairs out. We sold some Christian literature, put out our song books, and I was waiting for people to come.

And so, you know what happened? Quarter to 7, there was no one. 7 o'clock, there was not a soul. I mean, not even a cat, you know.

There was just no one. Quarter past 7 came, and brother and sister, there was no one in my service. We spent 16 days in prayer, you know.

I spent the day in prayer and fasting. I had this message burning in my heart for this evangelistic service. And 20 past 7 came, and no one was in the service.

But you know what I did? I did something which I've never in my life done before, but you know what I did? I had a service. You say, what did you do? You see, God gave me a message. And brother and sister, I had a service.

I made the announcements. I sang the hymns. I mean, thank God He was the only one that heard me singing.

And because He gave me a message, I preached my message. And I was not discouraged, you know. I mean, you know, we spent 16 days in prayer.

The man said, we prayed through. So, if you don't preach to anyone, that doesn't change the fact that you've prayed through. You say, what happened? Service was over anyway.

Pack up the books. I went back to the little apartment, and I was in this apartment about 10 minutes when there was a knock at the door. And when I opened the door, this big, tall, German gentleman stood at the door.

His name was Fred Phillips. And he stood at the door, and he looked down at me, and he said, I haven't met him before, and he said to me, my wife said you should come for a cup of coffee. And so I look at him, and I said to him, thank you, Mr. Phillips.

And as we were walking down the pathway, this German turned around right in the middle of the pathway, because Lydia told him there was a service. And he turned around right in the middle of the pathway, turned around, and he looked at me, and I think just to be courteous or interested in what I was doing, he said, by the way, how did it go with that service tonight? And so I looked him straight in the eyes. That's what you do with Germans, you know.

I looked him straight in the eyes, and I said to him, Mr. Phillips, I said God was there. And he looked at me, and he said, so how many people came tonight? And I looked him straight in the eyes, and I said to him, Mr. Phillips, there was no one. I thought afterwards, you know, I should have said to him, for the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, and me.

But you know, I didn't have enough theology, brother and sister. Maybe that was a good thing, you know. I don't know.

Anyway, I said there was no one. I will never forget this German. He looked down at me, and he said to me, what did you do? And I looked at him, and I looked him straight in the eyes, and I said, Mr. Phillips, I preached tonight that there were 100 people.

And I will never forget this, you know. This German turned around, and he just walked towards the house, and as he was walking, he just shook his head like this. I mean, I could see him saying, the elevator is not going to the top.

There's some ants floating around in the attic, you know. Hey, you know what happened? That night Fred Phillips couldn't sleep. One o'clock in the morning, Lydia woke up and she said, what is it? He was just rolling, turning around in his bed.

He said, I can't sleep. She said, what's wrong? He said, it's this man. She said, what about this man? He said, he preached when there was no one.

What do you think? And she said, Fred, what do you think? He said, I think we should go. Listen, brother and sister. Friday night, we had two people in the service.

Fred and Lydia Phillips. And Friday night, God came from heaven and saved him. And he was gloriously saved.

Word got out into the community that Fred Phillips was converted. He was a highly respected man. And as it went into the community, you know, about 14 days, 11 days later, we had about 70 people at these evangelistic services.

And brother and sister, I'm not one of these people that easily make invitations for people to come to Christ. In North America, men and women walk down the aisle to give their lives to Christ with a smile upon their face, and you think they are doing God a favor. That's not the kind of gospel that we are speaking about.

But you know what happened? On the 14th night of those services, God, the Holy Spirit, broke into that service. You know what happened that night? There were 35 people gloriously saved. You know what, folks? I never counsel one single one of them.

You know, the Holy Spirit is the best counselor. You say, what happened? Well, in Walthers Bay today, there's a Baptist church of about 250-300 people. They've been after me for years to come back.

And I don't want to go, you know, because this is the work of God. But if I ever go back, I don't think those people will remember me because there wasn't much to remember. But you know what they will remember? That there were 16 people.

There were a group of people that spent 16 days in prayer. You see, brethren and sisters, if we can't get through to God for people, how are we going to get through to people for God? So you say, what is it? It's a life of prayer. Let's turn around.

And those of you who have not been with us last night and this morning, one of the great things that we have been doing has been tremendous is that we have been spending time in prayer. And so this is what I want you to do. I want you to find four other people.

And because we have the blessing of chairs here in the church, I want you to find four other people in a group here. And we meet at different places all over the sanctuary. Turn your chairs around.

And then I want you to ask those people, is there anything that I can pray for you about? We take some time to share one another. Now I want to ask you, when you share, don't be too long. Because you're not the only one that's got a problem.

Secondly, when you pray, don't be too long. Because others also want to pray. So we want to respect our time and we want to pray together.

So let's do that. Just break up in little groups of five or so. And then we spend some time in prayer together.

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