

# This Could Be Why It Feels Your Prayers Are Bouncing off the Ceiling

Aren't you tired of the methods of prayer we've been taught that promise to bear fruit, as if we had to get the words just right for God to move? Have you found that words don't have all the power you were told they did? Doesn't trying to figure out what God needs to hear kind of wear you out?

Twenty-five years ago, I served on the teaching team at my father's ministry, Elijah House. For a time, I traveled the world teaching inner healing, a term we always hated. We prefer transformation. Inevitably, in every session, someone looking for a method asked how they should pray for this or that bitter root, stronghold or emotional wound.

My answer never varied.

"Just talk to your Father about your brother or sister," I'd say.

He won't deny us because we didn't get the formula right. It's not magic. God isn't like that, yet somehow the idea persists that we must learn or study how to do what should come naturally.

Walking in the power of the kingdom and the presence of God won't be found in the method you learned at a conference or because you got the words right or because you followed the right steps. It comes from, "Our Father ... Your kingdom come ... as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:9-10). We access it through our submission to Him and from being in alignment with who He is.

This is the heart of the Lord's Prayer. It's a prayer of trust, submission, alignment saying, "I trust You for daily

bread. Align my character by cleansing my sin. Align my character by cleansing my heart toward others who've wounded me. Align my character by taking the sin and brokenness out of me until I'm no longer so vulnerable to temptation or prone to harm others in any way."

This kind of holiness is so much more than "Don't smoke, don't get stoned and don't fornicate." It's how I react when my wife has a computer problem again, and it's the thing I've told her how to deal with over and over again, and I ask her if she did it, and she says she did again, and I say, "No, you didn't, because if you had done it, then it would work." My anger and impatience rise again, and pretty soon she's in tears again. At that point, I know that my heart is out of alignment with God's.

Consequently, my prayers are hindered: "Likewise, you husbands, live considerately with your wives, giving honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they too are also heirs of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered" (1 Pet. 3:7).

I have just an hour to get something done that needs to happen for the sake of my job. If I don't get it done, there will be a price to pay; but my son needs me at the same time, and he can't wait. A choice lies before me, and which way I choose will tell me something of the state of my heart's alignment with the kingdom of God. On the basis of that choice, power will be released or diminished. God will love me either way. I'll still be saved either way because that's a gift, but power doesn't flow if the pipes aren't connected. Power flows best through things that look, feel and resonate like God Himself.

When we come together to pray, are our relationships healthy? Are we aligned with God and one another? Am I thinking less than edifying thoughts about someone who is present to pray with the group? Is it the Father's heart in Jesus that informs

my words, and does His heart infuse the spirit of those words when I speak them?

Jesus is the perfect and full revelation of the Father. In Matthew 11:29 Jesus says He is “meek and lowly in heart.” God humbles Himself, stoops low to come to us. He abases Himself; He gets Himself dirty to come to us. One who is humble makes himself small in order to exalt others. That was Jesus, and it needs to be us, even in prayer.

Let our words spring from His heart: “Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10) and “let a part of that be that my inner self is aligned with Your will, forgiven and forgiving, cleansed and delivered at the depths of who and what I am.” Finally, above all, as Jesus prayed in Matthew 6:13, let the Lord be glorified: “For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.” {eoa}

**Loren Sandford** is an author, musician and the founder and senior pastor of New Song Church and Ministries in Denver, Colorado. He has a bachelor's degree in music and a master of divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary. In addition to pastoring, Sandford has an international teaching and worship ministry. Married since 1972, he and his wife, Beth, have two daughters and one son. They live in Denver, Colorado. This passage is an excerpt from his book, Yes, There's More.