



Illuminate

Openers—

Just Another Article on Prayer ... *blah, blah, blah (sigh)*

To read the article, click fmchr.ch/Article-Prayer

Summary: Light + Life Publisher and Free Methodist Church – USA Communications Director Brett D. Heintzman asks a series of questions about the role of prayer in your life. He questions whether we are letting our political agendas influence our prayer. Heintzman contends that we need “real prayer, true prayer, prayer that is rooted in the mind of Christ, prayer that is informed by the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit, prayer that is specific, prayer that is birthed from holy hearts.” He closes the article with a prayer to “eradicate prayerlessness in us.”

1. How were you challenged by the prayer questions, and what new perspective did they provide for your prayer life?



2. Did Heintzman’s prayer resonate with you? Pray the prayer by yourself or together aloud in a group.



Further reading: Matthew 6:9–13, Luke 11:2–4, Ephesians 2:6

Bishops— Two Misconceptions About Prayer

To read the article, click fmchr.ch/Misconceptions

Summary: Bishop David Kendall addresses “two common misconceptions that can make prayer seem difficult.” He envisions prayer as “the life we’re given that pauses to include everything else we experience,” and he encourages readers to “talk about everything with Jesus.”

1. What are the two misconceptions about prayer as described by Bishop Kendall?



2. Do you struggle with not knowing what to say when praying? If not, what advice would you give someone else who is struggling?



3. Ask yourself this question and, if in a group setting, discuss your answers: “What if our awareness of Jesus with us and participating in our lives was the main or primary reality, and the situations and circumstances that fill our lives are opportunities to ‘pause’ our primary conversation to respond with kingdom perspective and power?”



Further reading: Psalm 130, 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

Feature—**Prayer: the Powerful Key**

To read the article, click fmchr.ch/Powerful-Key

Summary: Ted Haggard — the founding pastor of St. James Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado; the founder and coordinator of the Network of Redemptive Churches; and the former president of the National Association of Evangelicals — writes that keys in the Bible represent power and authority, and “prayer is the powerful key.” According to Haggard, prayer can’t override another person’s free will, but it can change the spiritual environment around the person.

1. What did you think about Pastor Haggard’s advice to the mother of the suicidal teenager? Would you have responded in the same way if the woman had called you?



2. What do you think Haggard means when he describes his own teen experience as an “open vision”?



3. Have you ever experienced a negative spiritual environment? If so, what made that environment differ from places where you have sensed the Holy Spirit at work?



4. Do you agree with Haggard that prayer “thwarts demonic activity”? Why or why not?



Further reading: Matthew 9:37-38, 16:19 and 18:15–20; Luke 4:18–19; John 6:44 and 15:7; Romans 8:15; Ephesians 1:16-17 and 2:6; 2 Corinthians 4:4 and 10:3-5

Perspective— The Power of Words

To read the article, click fmchr.ch/Power-Words

Summary: New Life Church (Lynnwood, Washington) Lead Pastor Jeff Fullmer shares about the power of words and why we need to be careful while speaking and listening. He looks at themes in the book of James such as testing and suffering, listening and doing, favoritism in the church, faith and deeds, our speech, wisdom, and discovering the will of God for our lives.

1. Would you have responded as nicely as Pastor Fullmer if you received the shorter-than-expected haircut?



2. How can a person live out being “slow to become angry”? Isn’t anger a natural reaction, and if so, how can you control it?



3. Do you consider yourself a good listener? If so, what strategies do you use to pay attention to what other people are saying?



Further reading: Proverbs 10:19 and 18:21; Isaiah 6:9–10; Matthew 13:15; Luke 6:45; James 1:2–19, 2:1–26; 3:3–18, 4:1–17 and 5:7–12

Perspective—

Who Comes to Dinner Church?

To read the article, click fmchr.ch/Dinner-Church

Summary: Detroit Dinner Church Pastor Mark Cryderman shares about what people experience at dinner church. He states, “At Dinner Church, programs and professionalism quickly give way to telling stories about Jesus. Knowing Him is our highest priority.”

1. Is this your first time hearing about dinner church? If not, have you ever participated in a dinner church?



2. How can a church avoid giving preferential treatment to wealthier people even though their contributions may be key to meeting the church budget?



3. Is your local church reaching “the hungry, thirsty, lonely, those in need, the sick and the trapped”? If not, what are ways to reach people who match that description?



Further reading: Matthew 25:40; Mark 8:35; James 1:2–12, 2:1–17, 5:13–19