

SOUL FOOD

July 2015



*...the tree of life bare twelve manner of fruits
Rev 22: 2*

8 Ways My Prayer Life Has Been Transformed

by Bronwen Henry

"Knock, and the door will be opened to you." (Matthew 7:7) *I have always known the value of prayer. For years, I prayed before meals, I prayed before bed, and I prayed when I was in a tough situation. Those prayers brought a sense of peace, and occasionally some real clarity. In the last few years, though, a variety of experiences have altered the way I pray, and have helped crack open much more of prayer's powerful potential.*

1) I Began Offering Prayers [Or "I Learned That the Prayer is in the Pause"]

One of the most powerful paradigm shifts I experienced around prayer happened as result of a training offered by my church. We were learning skills related to emotional support; we learned ways to effectively care for those who needed a listening ear. After this training period, I was given an opportunity to offer encouragement for one particular woman. At the end of each meeting I would ask her, "Is there anything I can pray for, for you?" Then she would pause. I noticed that in that moment - in her pausing, in her considering what in her life needs prayer - that her true prayer was spoken. Then she would tell me whatever she needed, whether patience, courage, strength or other God-driven qualities. I then had the chance to add more language to her desires. Still, the prayer I offered felt like an echo to the true prayer: the prayer of the deep, soul-searching pause.

2) I Write Out My Prayer for Others

Anytime someone asks me to pray for them, I ask them for details: "How can I specifically pray for you?" Then, although I do carry the person in my heart with whatever they are holding in prayer, I also take the time to concretely write out a prayer. I have heard from my recipients that these written prayers are powerful; certainly, the process is powerful for me as well.

3) I Stopped Assuming That Prayers Don't Change Anything

I have long rejected the notion that prayers for others could effect any change. Otherwise, why would there be suffering in the world? What about

all those people we've prayed for to be free from illness and who end up dying? Were our prayers not heard? Yet I recently had a very challenging experience. I was taking a radioactive treatment for thyroid cancer and had to be in isolation for 7 days. I decided to put out a message to my Facebook friends, asking for prayer. That was the first time I'd ever asked a large group of people to pray for me, and now I was asking hundreds! The prayers came rolling in that week, and each prayer helped me feel and know that I was being loved and carried. The prayers gave me courage and the reminder that I was not alone, and I felt an inner peace that I had never imagined possible.

4) I Not Only Pray About My Job, But I Ask Others To Pray About it Too

In my work for my church I have organized prayer teams to help pray for the work that we are doing. In some ways this effort always feels awkward. It feels awfully bold to put my efforts at the level of needing prayer. And yet what I notice is that by having people ready and willing to pray for our efforts, I am personally reminded that what we are doing is worthwhile, and good, and worthy of prayer. I am reminded to breathe, to spend time in scripture, to hand over everything I'm doing in my work to the Lord.

5) I Learned To Pray For Others When I Can't Pray For Myself

I remember once sitting in doctor's waiting room feeling a need to pray. And yet, I was in such fear and anxiety that I just couldn't find the words to pray. Then a thought came to me: Could I pray for other people in this waiting room? In other waiting rooms? Could I open my heart with compassion to others? Yes. I could. And in opening my heart to the suffering of others in waiting rooms I felt the warmth and immediate relief of prayer.

6) I Do a Breathing Prayer

When I'm in physical pain, when insomnia strikes, or when I am being confronting with challenging conflict, I pray with just my breath: Inhale. "Lord help me." Exhale. "Lord, help me remember others." Inhale. "Acknowledging." Exhale. "Opening to Freedom."

7) I Acknowledge What The Lord Is Already Doing

One time, I asked an elder that I deeply respect to pray for me. I was at a state of loss and confusion and inner distress. The prayer he offered has changed the way I pray forever. Instead of praying, "Lord, please comfort Bronwen." He offered, "Lord, I know you are already comforting Bronwen."

Each prayer was an acknowledgement of all the work the Lord is already doing. Rather than using words that describe the Lord as far away, it was a reminder of acknowledging that the Lord is as close as can be. He had a confidence about the Lord's plan and care for me that I will never forget. With this in mind, I love the prayer, "Oh Lord, may we open to your warm embrace."

8) I Keep It Simple

I've learned to keep a simple structure to my prayers so that my mind doesn't wander all the way to grocery lists, future worries and past regrets. I love Anne Lamott's prayer: "Help, Thanks, Wow." I use this structure to help me focus. I might say, "Dear Lord, I need your help now more than ever. I thank you for the beauty of your creation, for the gift of life. Lord, I am in awe of your work and the hope that you can breathe into dark times." Sometimes the "wow" part is simply the breathing, the being, the fully acknowledging with breath, body, mind, and heart the gift that is life.



June 19th Celebration was enjoyed by about 20 of us who were enlightened by Rev Michael Gladish's sermon "A whole review of the book of Revelation" accompanied by overhead slide images to illustrate the visions of John. Followed a three course meal during which the tree of life took centre place and we wrote out on "cut out fruits" concepts of charitable works. These fruits were then hung on the tree by the children. (see front cover) Many thanks to all the helpers who contributed in so many different ways to our celebration that "The Lord God Jesus Christ doth reign"

July Calendar

<p><i>Sunday 5</i></p>	<p>10.30 Worship <i>Sunday School</i> <i>Shared lunch</i></p>	<p><i>McDougall House</i> <i>Clydesdale St, Como</i></p>
<p><i>Sunday 12</i></p>	<p><i>No worship as room is being used by another group</i></p>	
<p><i>Sunday 19</i></p>	<p>10.30 Worship, <i>Sunday School</i> <i>Shared lunch</i></p>	<p><i>McDougall House</i> <i>Clydesdale St, Como</i></p>
<p><i>Sunday 26</i></p>	<p>10.30 Worship <i>Sunday School</i> <i>Shared lunch.</i></p>	<p><i>McDougall House</i> <i>Clydesdale St, Como</i></p>

News

Our dear friend Val is still in hospital (Mercy hospital) but is looking a lot better than a week ago. We all send her our love and prayers.

There will be no Divine Providence classes in July.

Birthdays Lots in July! *Happy birthday to Kayla 6th, Moira 14th, Bernice 15th, Genevieve 23rd, Pauline 24th, Lorna 25th.*



***We are all created to become angels of Heaven
which is a kingdom of communities.***

*Based on the Holy Bible, **The New Church** gains further inspiration and understanding through the Heavenly Doctrines revealed by the Lord and published by 18th century scientist and theologian **Emanuel Swedenborg**. In the 35 volumes of this new Revelation we see the Lord's plan for a rebirth of Christianity, a clear vision of God in His own Word, and what that means in our lives.*

*Worship Services are held weekly at 10.30am
McDougall House, 20 Clydesdale St, Como.*

Sunday school concurrently

<http://www.newchurch.org/societies/perth/newsletters>

<http://newchurch.net.au/locations/perth-aurora-circle>

www.newchurch.org

Aurora Face book page was created in 2007 by the young people at a Saturday afternoon gathering. Here is the address.

www.facebook.com/aurora.circle

Book orders: www.swedenborg.com.au

*We sponsor **"The Loving Arms Mission"** in Nepal,*

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