

Building a House of Prayer: A Creative Prayer Experience

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Our theme for this past program year for Women's Ministries has been "Welcome Home," and we have spent a lot of time looking at our homes figuratively and literally. COVID-19 has brought many of us into our homes, more than we have ever been. And it appears we are going to remain in our homes for some time to come.

Corrie ten Boom wrote, "The devil smiles when we make plans. He laughs when we get too busy. But he trembles when we pray..." I want to make the devil tremble because I am a woman of prayer.

Prayer is one of those disciplines of the Christian life I find difficult. It isn't that I don't like to pray, but for me it is hard to fit it into my schedule. However, spending more time at home has been a great opportunity to spend more time in God's Word and in prayer.

The Bible commands us to pray. Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 *pray continually*. Cheri Fuller, in her book *A Busy Women's Guide to Prayer* wrote this about praying continually, "Paul's command to continue in prayer means more than just spending a lot of time in prayer; it means sharing a continual dialogue with God wherever I go."

Oswald Chambers wrote, "There is always a suitable place to pray, to lift up your eyes to God; there is no need to get to a place of prayer; pray wherever you are."

I came up with a way that helps me to incorporate pray throughout my day, and to make sure my prayers are more balanced. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus became angry at the merchants turning the Lord's house into a marketplace. Jesus said, "***My house will be called a house of prayer.***" (Matthew 21:13a). Now Jesus was talking about the temple as being God's house and it was to be a place of prayer and not a place for commerce, but each one of us can turn our homes into a house of prayer by linking prayer to the various activities we do in each room of our home. Walk with me through the rooms of a home to see how to develop your own 'house of prayer.'



The Kitchen/Dining Room

Growing up, I was at my grandparents' house often. Grandma and Grandpa never had a dishwasher. When we were there, one of us kids was responsible to help with the dishes, either washing or drying and putting away. Above grandma's sink was a sign that said:

**Thank God for dirty dishes. They have a tale to tell.
For while other folks go hungry, we know we're doing well.
So even when the sink's piled high, we mustn't make a fuss.
For by this stack of evidence, we know God's good to us.**

This little poem is a reminder to be filled with praise and thanksgiving for what you have, so the kitchen/dining room reminds me to pray prayers of praise and thanksgiving to God. Just as we are nourished in the kitchen, our souls are fed and refueled through time simply praising God for who He is and thanking Him for what He has done.

The book of Psalms is filled with praise. It isn't just praising God when times are good, but praising God when times are difficult. Let me share with you just a few of the verses from Psalms that speaks of praise:

I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips. Psalm 34:1

Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you. Psalm 63:3-5

My mouth is filled with your praise, declaring your splendor all day long. As for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more. My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to you – I whom you have delivered. Psalm 71:8, 14, 23

Every time you are in the kitchen take some time while preparing a meal, doing the dishes, or whatever, simply praise God and thank Him for who He is and what He has done.



The Laundry Room

The laundry room is where clothes come in dirty but leave clean and fresh. The laundry room reminds me of prayers of confession. I'll be honest, I don't enjoy doing laundry. It is so tedious, monotonous and never finished. Sometimes I just close the laundry room door and leave the mess hidden behind the closed door. I can't ignore the dirty clothes for long. If I miss a day of laundry it seems like I am ambushed under mountains of dirty clothes and it is quite overwhelming and difficult to get caught up.

Dirty clothes are like sin. Sin happens daily. Just like laundry is never done, our need to confess our sins to the Lord never goes away. Just like laundry is an everyday occurrence in my house, so too, I should be confessing to God daily all those areas where I fall short or miss the mark. Confession acknowledges the truth about our condition before God.

Sin is serious to God. Christian author Jerry Bridges reminds us of how serious sin is: "Sin in any form, be it ever so small or insignificant in our sight, is rebellion against the authority of a sovereign God." The good news is we have the promise of a great stain-remover; God can and will remove the stain of sin from our lives if we will confess to Him. Psalm 130:3-4 says ***If you, Lord, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you.***

Thankfully God doesn't keep a record of our sins. Once we confess them, they are gone. Psalm 103:12 says ***as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*** The east and west never meet, so our confessed sins are forgiven and gone forever.

When I have a mountain of clothes in the laundry room, I can ignore it for a while. But as it grows bigger and begins to smell, I feel awful. No matter how much I ignore the clothes, they don't just magically go away. The pile of clothes makes me feel miserable. Unconfessed sin does the same thing. David recorded the misery of unconfessed sin in Psalm 32:3-4: ***When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.***

But then, David confessed his sin. Confession is simply agreeing with God concerning our sin. We admit what we did was a sin. David says in verse 5: ***Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord." And you forgave the guilt of my sin.***

You know how I feel when I finally get my clothes washed, dried, folded and put away? I feel like celebrating until more clothes appear. When we confess our sins and are forgiven, we too can rejoice. Psalm 32:1-2 says ***Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit.***



The Living Room

living room is where we join together as a family and entertain friends. The living room is all about people. The living room reminds me of intercessory prayer, which is when we have the privilege of praying for others. The dictionary defines intercession as “acting between 2 parties; begging or pleading on behalf of another.” An intercessor is a go-between, representing one party to another.

The book of Psalms is a songbook and so many of the recorded psalms are prayers. It is easy to take the verses as they appear in the Bible and pray them on behalf of someone else. I often don't have the words to pray for others, so I like to quote back God's Word to Him as intercessory prayers.

In Psalm 106, the psalmist recalls an event that happened in the nation of Israel's history. Verse 7 says: ***When our ancestors were in Egypt, they gave no thought to your miracles; they did not remember your many kindness, and they rebelled by the sea, the Red Sea.*** The psalm goes on to in essence retell the events of Exodus – how God saved them in some way, and then they quickly forgot about Him. In verses 20-23 it says: ***They exchanged their glorious God for an image of a bull, which eats grass. They forgot the God who saved them, who had done great things in Egypt, miracles in the land of Ham and awesome deeds by the Red Sea. So he said he would destroy them – had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in a breach before him to keep his wrath from destroying them.***

This is a reference to what happened in Exodus 32, while Moses was on the Mount of Sinai with God, the people were down below building a golden calf to worship. God was furious with their behavior and was going to wipe them out. But Moses immediately stepped in on their behalf. Because of his willingness to intercede for the people – to stand in the gap between God and them – God did not wipe them out. Just like Moses, our interceding for others make a difference!

As I am in the living room I am reminded to pray for various people in my life – my family, friends, the Amazon delivery man when he rings my doorbell, my neighbor. Now, as I watch church on Facebook, usually in my living room, as I read the names of people who are watching church with me, I lift them up in prayer.



The Bedroom

The bedroom is our private sanctuary. No one else goes into it. The bedroom reminds us to pray for ourselves. It is okay and important to bring our own needs to the Lord – those pertaining to our personal lives, our spiritual condition, our health or finances, any aspect of our existence.

Psalm 55:22 tells us that we are to ***Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.*** The word cast is like casting a fishing line – you throw it out. God is saying we are to throw our concerns to Him. If we don't pray about our own personal issues, we will be more likely to try to carry the weight of them on our own, and that is not what God ever intended. He invites us to give our concerns to him.

Psalm 62:8 says ***Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.*** He is encouraging us to pour out our hearts to Him; He already knows what we are experiencing or feeling, but He wants us to pour out all that is in our heart to Him. Psalm 68:19 says ***Praise be the Lord, to God our Savior, who daily bears our burdens.*** He can handle whatever our burdens are!

This time of pandemic has been a time of high stress for all of us. And you might find yourself needing to spend time praying for yourself. The book of Psalms has personal prayer requests throughout it. Let's look at just one Psalm which is a personal prayer. It is a great prayer to pray personally especially when the concerns of life are keeping you from sleeping. Psalm 3:1-8 says,

Lord, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me! Many are saying of me, "God will not deliver him." But you, Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high. I call out to the Lord, and he sustains me from his holy mountain. I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the Lord sustains me. I will not fear though tens of thousands assail me on every side. Arise, Lord! Deliver me, my God! Strike all my enemies on the jaw; break the teeth of the wicked. From the Lord comes deliverance. May your blessing be on your people.



Prayer is a gift. Not a duty, not an obligation, not another burden or a thing to scratch off our to-do list, but a gift. Richard Foster wrote, “The important thing about prayer is to believe that God can reach us and bless us in the ordinary junctures of daily life... You see, the only place God can bless us is right where we are... Carry on an ongoing conversation with God about the daily stuff of life.”

I hope that making your house a physical reminder of prayer will be helpful to you, to become women of prayer. As you go throughout your day, into the various rooms in your house, may you remember to pray prayers of praise, confession, intercession and prayers for yourself.

Elizabeth George in her book, *A Woman’s Call to Prayer*, wrote, “Prayer is the key! Prayer is the answer! Prayer is the way! When you answer God’s call to pray you become the woman He designed you to be – one who walks with Him in faith, wisdom, order, and understanding, one who walks confidently and graciously in His will.”

May our homes be houses of prayer and may we be women of prayer. In closing, I want to read a prayer by Terry Glaspey.

**Lord,
Awaken in us the realization that we need to call on You continually...
Teach us to have hearts that pray.
Teach us to keep ourselves focused on You, to set up an altar in our hearts, where our soul might
call out to You continually.
Amen**

~Terry Glaspey~