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A YOUNG WOMAN’S GUIDE TO PRAYER
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Talking to God about the issues of your life is important…and prayer is the key! But if you’re like most women—old or young!—you can use a little help with your prayer-life. That’s why I’ve written this practical book—to help you make your desire to pray regularly a reality.

The journey to a dynamic and authentic prayer-life is an exciting adventure! First, you’ll find out what God says about prayer in the Bible. It’s awesome! You’ll also enjoy stories from the hearts and lives of Bible characters. These people learned to pray…loved to pray…and witnessed the mighty effects of prayer and its impact on their relationship with God. Along with insights from my own prayer journey, I share inspiring examples of others who have answered God’s call to prayer. You’ll discover tips for revolutionizing your own personal prayer-life, including…

...12 practical ways to become a woman of prayer—You’ll discover what to do…and what not to do. And you’ll understand why prayer can be so difficult to do!
…“My Checklists for Prayer”—Each chapter gives three immediate prayer-steps you can take—today!—to make your dream of becoming a woman of prayer come true.

…“Would You Like to Know More?”—If you want to “put the icing on the cake” of prayer, you can grow even more by interacting with a few additional scriptures and questions. They are tailor-made just for you!

…“Things I Don’t Want to Forget”—Every chapter has exciting life-changing suggestions for your everyday life...if you don’t forget them! So to help you remember what speaks most to your heart, I’ve added a special page at the end of each chapter for you to journal or record your thoughts and “take-away truths.” Your written personal insights will become a testimony of your spiritual growth, a cherished keepsake you can refer to in the days, months, and even years ahead.

…“My Prayer Calendar”—I’ve also put a reproducible prayer calendar at the back of this book. It will help you see how you’re becoming a woman of prayer. Be sure you make a photocopy because you’ll want to use it year after year…and share it with your friends!

Dear praying friend, as you grow in prayer, and as prayer becomes more and more a part of your life, you’ll find God becoming your closest friend. And you’ll find He
can help you with *everything* that’s important in your life right now and always—your family, your friends, your school, and your dreams for the future.

So journey on! Read and study this book alone, or go through it with a friend, a mentor, or in a group. Whichever way you choose, you’ll be blessed. Why? Because prayer is the “highest activity of which the human spirit is capable.”

Through prayer you…

—worship God…and express your love for Him,

—bring your needs before God…and see how He answers, and

—talk one-on-one with the God of the universe…about your life.

My precious new friend, I am praying for you right now as you answer God’s call…to pray!

In His great and amazing love,
Your friend and sister in Christ,

Elizabeth George
Making Your Desire to Pray a Reality
Prayer.

Just say the word and I begin to yearn and squirm at the same time. As a woman after God’s own heart, I yearn to pray. My soul longs for it. My spirit craves communion with my heavenly Father. My heart sings with the words of King David found in the Old Testament:

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God….My soul thirsts for you; my body longs for you” (Psalm 42:1; 63:1).

And yet I also squirm at the thought of prayer. Why? Because even though prayer is a blessing, approaching our holy, holy, holy God is also an awesome thing. Then there is the search for time to get alone with God to talk with Him.

What a battle! I know that I need to pray…and I want to pray! And yet the work and the discipline praying calls for
is quite real! Do you, my dear new friend, share these same mixed feelings? Then let’s decide to answer God’s call to us to be women of prayer…no matter what! Let’s embark on a journey together to learn more about prayer. Let’s seek to live our lives “on bended knee.”

Hearing God’s Call to Prayer

On any journey, a first step must always be taken. What will your first step be? I remember my first step into seriously learning how to pray. It was on Mother’s Day, May 8, 1983. My daughter Katherine (age 13) gave me the gift of a tiny wordless book. It was purple…and I still have it because it’s a real keepsake to me. It’s special, first of all, because my daughter gave it to me! (That really touches a mother’s heart! Trust me on this one.)

Anyway, Katherine had the idea for the gift and arranged with Jim (my husband and Kath’s dad) to do extra work chores to earn the money to purchase it for me. Then the two of them went off together to shop for just the right present for Mom. The little treasure was then inscribed by Katherine on the bookplate in her careful handwriting, lovingly gift wrapped, and proudly given to me on that Sunday morning so many years ago.

Oh, believe me, I screamed! I squealed! I did everything but turn cartwheels to express my thanks to my sweet daughter. But then I faced a problem—what to do with a wordless book. For several months I let the small book lie on the coffee table so my dear Katherine would know how much I truly appreciated it. Then one day, not knowing
exactly what to do with it, I moved it into the bookcase...and it was gone forever....

...until September 12, four months later. That day was my tenth birthday in the Lord. As I sat alone before God, I looked back over my first ten years as God’s child. Of course, that led to a time of thanking Him for His mercy, His grace, His care, His guidance, His wisdom, my salvation through Christ....

On and on my prayers of appreciation to God gushed. Then after dabbing my eyes with a tissue, I turned my thoughts forward and I prayed, “Lord, as I start a new decade with You, is there anything missing from my Christian life that I should focus on for the next ten years?”

Oh, dear friend, I can only report to you that before I put the question mark on the question, I knew in my heart what the answer was! It was prayer! And suddenly I knew I had “heard” God’s call to prayer in my heart. And just as suddenly, I knew what to do with that tiny purple wordless book. I ran to the bookcase, pulled it out, opened it up, and wrote on the very first page:

I dedicate and purpose to spend the next ten years in the Lord, Lord willing, developing a meaningful prayer life.

Making a Commitment

Why did I pick ten years for my commitment to develop a meaningful prayer life? Probably because it was my tenth birthday in Christ. And those ten years have come and gone. And I want to tell you right now—I am still learning how to
pray! You know, you and I don’t just wake up one day at the point where we can mark “learn to pray” off our to-do list! No, no one prays enough. And no one prays as passionately as she would like to pray or should pray. And no one prays for as many people as need to be prayed for.

And so we must continue on our journey into prayer until we “get it,” until we can even say that we’ve begun to know even a little bit about prayer. And until that happens, a lot of Christians pray what I call “Christopher Robin” prayers. He’s the little boy who struggled with his evening “Vespers.” Little Christopher became so distracted by anything and everything that he couldn’t remember who or what to pray for. So he ended up praying “God bless _______” prayers, filling in the blank with the names of his family and friends.

Boy oh boy, can I ever relate to Christopher Robin’s “prayer” experience! And maybe you can, too! That’s exactly how I prayed...that is, before my commitment to answer God’s call to pray. Yes, that’s how I had prayed. And, like Christopher Robin, my mind wandered. I didn’t know who to pray for...or how to pray for them. So my prayers basically consisted of lame efforts, until they finally wound down to a muttered “God bless me and my family today.”

But, praise God, I can say that some progress has been made! I believe that my prayers and my prayer-life have improved. But I want to quickly say, “No, I have not yet arrived.” Being a woman of prayer is still a daily challenge and constant struggle for me. And I imagine it will be that way until I see my Savior face-to-face.
In the chapters to come, we’ll go deeper into what it means to answer God’s call to prayer. But for now (and at the end of each chapter), I want you to pause and consider some practical steps you can take right now. They will help you to grow a heart for prayer and grow in your heart-relationship with God. I left some space for you to write your answers.

**My Checklist for Prayer**

✔ _Pray now!_—It’s one thing to read about prayer. And oh, how we love to talk about prayer! And oh, how we dream about being women of prayer! But it’s quite another thing to actually pray. So Step 1 is this: Put your book down, grab a kitchen timer, and go somewhere where you can shut the door or be alone. Then pray for five minutes. Use these five golden minutes to pour out your heart’s desire to your heavenly Father. Tell Him how much you love Him. And tell Him how much you long to answer His call upon your life to become—and be!—a woman of prayer. Then share here a little about what happened.
Get organized—Round up some kind of notebook. It can be anything—a spiral pad, a three-ring binder, even a little wordless book. Whatever it is, do what you can to make your notebook personal and fun. Make it something you want to use. For instance, is your favorite color purple? Then make your prayer notebook a purple one! (And don’t forget to include a pen with purple ink!) And don’t worry about your choice being permanent. Also don’t get hung up on needing to make the “right” choice. Just choose something—anything!—that will help you and inspire you to take your first steps down the path of your journey into prayer.

I just looked in my own little purple wordless book, and based on dates, I used it for ten weeks. Ten weeks is a l-o-n-g time, which means that little book was enough to launch my commitment to learn to pray. That also means using my book for ten weeks was long enough to show me I needed a different kind of notebook.

This will probably happen to you too, as you begin your prayer efforts. But be excited when it does! Praise God you are growing in your prayer skills…and look forward to creating a fresh, new, made-by-you prayer notebook.

Describe your current notebook or journal. What do you like about it? Do you need to make any improvements?
Look ahead—Look over...and pray over...the next week on your calendar. What is the pattern of your life, your daily routine? What are your school and work commitments? What kind of time do you need for family and friends? Then mark on each day for the next week the exact time you will schedule as your prayer time. It can be the same time each day, or it can be customized to fit the demands and flow of each individual day.

Next mark your prayer appointments in ink on your calendar. Then, of course, be sure you keep them...just like you keep your dates with your friends! As one of my prayer principles says, “There is no right or wrong way to pray...except not to pray!”

For a place to record your prayer progress, I’ve provided a “My Prayer Calendar” in the back of this book. Just shade in the squares for the days you do pray, and leave those blank when you don’t pray. And then, my dear praying friend, one picture is worth a thousand words! All you have to do is glance at the “My Prayer Calendar”...and the tale of your times in prayer will be told! Now, what tale will your efforts in prayer tell?
What do you dream will be true of your “Prayer Calendar”? And what can you do today to make your dream a reality?

**Answering God’s Call to You**

Prayer is truly the queen of all the habits we could desire as women of faith. As we leave this chapter about “Beginning Steps in Prayer,” I want you to take this thought with you.

He who has learned how to pray has learned the greatest secret of a holy and a happy life.3

I’m sure you caught the word “learned.” But I hope and pray you also caught the reward, too. All of your learning and efforts in prayer will help lead you to “a holy and a happy life”! And the beautiful miracle is that a holy and a happy life can be yours each day…one day at a time…as you answer God’s call to pray. So let the outpourings of your heart begin now—today! The opportunity and privilege of talking to God through prayer is yours…if that is the desire of your heart and if you act on that desire.

Now, what will your beginning steps be?
Would You Like to Know More?  
Check It Out!

We’ll look at these topics later in our book, but for now, what do these verses from the Bible tell you about prayer and your prayer-life?

Matthew 6:6—

Matthew 7:7-8—

Luke 18:1—

Romans 12:12—
Ephesians 6:18—

Philippians 4:6-7—

Colossians 4:2—

1 Thessalonians 5:17—

1 Peter 3:12—
My Commitment to Prayer

What commitment to prayer will you make? Write it here. (And remember, it doesn’t have to be long. Just a few sincere words can change a life…and a heart!)

______________________________________________

(Signed)

______________________________________________

(Date)
My List of Things I Don’t Want to Forget…
…from This Chapter