

Teach Me to Pray

By: Elder Frank Tochterman

“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”

-Matthew 6:6

When you were young, did your mother teach you to pray, “God is great, God is good . . .”? Or, “Now I lay me now to sleep . . .”? My mother did. Then, when I became older, I learned that there was much more to prayer than saying a few words than that rhyme. “Prayer is the opening of the heart as to a friend.” It is having a conversation with God. It is us talking to God and, then, listening to God talking to us. It is that essential part of the Christian life that connects us to God.

Years ago, the disciples of Jesus asked “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1). Sometimes we think that the disciples were asking Jesus “how” to pray. But notice, the request is “Teach us TO PRAY.” This was their great need. This is our great need. “Lord, teach me TO PRAY!” Teach me to take the all-important time I desperately need each day TO PRAY. Teach me to take the time to connect with You each day.

In Scripture, Jesus is the NUMBER ONE teacher of prayer. And He who years ago taught His disciples TO PRAY, still today teaches His disciples TO PRAY. In Matthew 6:6 Jesus explains four simple steps to developing a successful prayer life.

“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”

Step number 1 – “Go into your room”. Choose a special place to meet with God each day. It can be in your bedroom, at your desk, in your car, or even in the bathroom. It can be any place, but must be some place. The same place. The special place you will meet with God each day.

Step number 2 – “Pray.” Choose a time you will meet with God each day. Some people are “morning” people, some people are “day” people, and others are “night” people (they don’t start functioning until 10:00 p.m.). It can be anytime, but it must be sometime. This is the time of your appointment with God each day.

Step number 3 – “Shut the door.” Isolation is a valid rule of a successful prayer life. Shut yourself in, shut the world out. This is the time each day that you spend with God alone. Just you and God. This is your appointment with the Great God of the Universe. He waits for you there.

Step number 4 – “Pray to your Father.” Remember, prayer is opening of the heart as to a friend. We worship an all-loving God. One who knows us completely, yet loves us with an everlasting love. He longs for us to have fellowship with Him, to share our lives with Him, to express our needs, to seek His counsel, and to express our gratitude and worship to Him.

The results of this – of developing a prayer time with God each day – is life changing. He says, “And your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.” Wow! This is a promise! We go to Him in secret, He hears in secret, but the results are never secret! Secret, personal, private prayer will change your life. Not only will God answer your prayers, but others will see Jesus in you. This is what prayer is all about. ■



Together - United in Prayer

By: Pedro Perez

“...they were all with one accord” - Act 2:1

Prayer is one the ways that God unites His people.

Have you found this to be true? When we pray with other people, it unites us; it brings us ... TOGETHER.

Think back to the book of Acts, chapter 2. This is one of the highlights of the early church – Pentecost. It was a time of people coming together to pray and seek God’s will for their lives. It was a group of believers who took seriously what Jesus told them to do and to ask for the Holy Spirit to come upon them.

The Bible states that in the early church God’s people were in “one accord.” They were ... together. They were of one heart and mind (Acts 4:32). They were united by faith that God would use them to do something amazing.

Wouldn’t you like to see that happen in our lifetimes? In our conference? Youth and youth leaders united. Together. Churches united. Ready to be radical. Ready to let go of selfishness and pride. Ready to put aside differences for the sake of God’s kingdom. Ready to let the Holy Spirit have absolute control and authority in their lives. Ready to do whatever God asks them to. Ready to pray and ask God to make this happen.

That is what these Ten Days of Prayer are all about ... praying. Praying that God would unite us. Bring us together. Praying for God to help us see past our differences. Praying that we would live surrender lives with yielded hearts and wills. Praying that we would care more about God’s kingdom than our wellbeing. Praying that lost young people would matter so much to us that we will do anything to help them know Jesus and come to understand His matchless love. Praying that as leaders we would get it – that we would see that we are stronger when we come together. That we need to partner with each other like never before to accomplish things we have never accomplished.

Praying that God would bring healing and restoration and help us resolve our differences. Praying that God would restore the hearts of the children to their parents and parents to children. Praying that God would pour out His Spirit on us so that we can catch a new glimpse of God and have a renewed vision for our personal lives as well as for the ministries where He has us serving.

Do you want these things? Then pray.

Pray every day, for the next Ten Days. Pray like you have never prayed before. Pray with an earnestness and confidence that God wants to do something amazing in us, among us and through us. Pray that we would get out of the way and let God do what He wants to do through us. Pray that God would unite us. That He would help us see that... Together We’re Stronger. Pray that He would open our eyes to new ways to work together, to be stronger, for His honor / glory.

Pray by yourself. Pray with others. Call up another leader/adult to pray. Pray with your pastor. Pray with your Adventurers. Pray with your Pathfinders. Pray with your youth and/or young adults. Encourage them to pray by themselves and with others. Send someone a prayer through an email or text message. Pray in groups. Just pray!

How About You? Has it been a while since you prayed a deep heartfelt prayer? Has prayer been reduced to a meaningless ritual in your spiritual experience? Connect with God. Right now. Where ever you are. Stop. Pray. Ask God to make us one. To be united in heart and mind. Are you ready to commit to praying for the next 10 days? It could be the beginning of the you that you have always wanted.

Prayer – God, it is so easy to just get caught up in the flow of life and forget our life line ... prayer. We need You. We need You to do what only You can do. Make us one. Bring us together. Help us to join forces and to move your Kingdom forward in 2010. Pour out your Holy Spirit on us we pray. Change us. Renew us. Use us. Make us stronger, together. Amen. ■



“In order to commune with God, we must have something to say to Him concerning our actual life.”

Do you talk to God about your actual life? The “stuff” that makes you happy; that worries you; that happens to you?

I like this quote because it reminds us to be real with God.

I will never forget the phone call I had with my three sisters. We were all trying to understand what it meant that our dad was diagnosed with cancer. We were all shocked. One of my sisters suggested we should pray. They asked me to pray. I started giving a very “pastoral” prayer. But half way through, I got choked up. This was my dad and I just found out he might die from cancer. I couldn’t speak. I couldn’t finish the prayer. One of my sisters had to jump in and close the prayer.

I wasn’t being very real with God or my sisters. I was trying to be strong. How much better would it have been to just say it like it was. “We think this stinks. We’re scared. This isn’t what we wanted to hear today. We don’t know what to do. Help us sort all these crazy feelings out. Thanks for being with us through this mess. Amen.”

Today, make sure that in your prayer time you listen to yourself and make sure that you are being real with God.

He is not fooled by our words or impressed by us not being real with Him

Think about and pray for someone that you know? How can you be more real with them? How can you help them to be more real with God in their prayer time?



The Abundant Life

By: Pastor Bill Wood

*“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy;
I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”*

- John 10:10

She had been a camper since she was old enough to come to camp. We always looked forward to Mary and her sister coming to camp. They looked forward to camp from the day they left the year before. They had an unusual way of coming to camp. From time to time their dad would fly them in to camp in his float plane. He would land on the lake and let them off at the boat docks.

When Mary became a teen camper something changed which is not unusual for Teen Campers. One day I could tell that Mary was really not a “happy camper.” Her counselor was having some challenges with Mary that summer. Mary seemed to have come to camp with an “attitude.” When I saw what was happening I talked to both Mary and her counselor to try to work things out. After a few moments it appeared that Mary had calmed down and that things were going to be ok. The next day, it was the same thing. Mary was very unhappy and almost angry. I spoke to Mary again and reminded her that she has always loved camp and what was the difference this year. She told me all that she didn’t like about camp, the food, the counselor, nobody liked her, etc.

After listening to Mary tell me everything she didn’t like about camp and I said to her that she could either choose to be happy or choose to be miserable. It was her choice. Guess what? She told me “I choose to be miserable!” Well, with that I suggested that if she made that choice than it might be best that she go home and she agreed. So, I called her dad and he came flying into the camp to pick her up.

Young people, that is one choice we all have. We can choose to be happy or we can choose to be miserable. The great news is that God wants us to be happy. How do I know this? John 10:10 states that Jesus came to this earth that we might have life and life more abundantly. Wow, that says a lot. Jesus wants each of you to enjoy life to the fullest. He wants you to be happy and not miserable.

Yes, I suppose we can acknowledge that there is a lot be miserable about. Some youth have issues at home, at school, with their friends. Some youth are dealing with issues such as drugs, alcohol, cheating in school etc. They seem to do this because they are unhappy and they feel that if they try the things of the world that are appealing they will enjoy the “abundant life.” NOT! The only way we can really enjoy the abundant life is to give our lives over to Jesus. When Jesus lives in the hearts of our youth, they are the happiest Christians in the world. So, young people, why don’t you choose to be happy and enjoy the abundant life that Jesus has promised?

Guess what, Mary came to me a few months latter and apologized, she wanted to be happy! ■



Together We're Stronger

By: Pedro Perez

Many years ago two farmers were standing together discussing the strength of their draft horses. They decided it was time to have a small competition to see how much each horse could pull (and see who had the stronger horse!). Each horse was hitched to a load and each horse pulled about 750 pounds. That is a lot of weight!

As the contest went on a small crowd had gathered and began speculating. How much could the two pull together?

Estimates from the anxious spectators ranged from 900-1500 pounds. Obviously, together they should be able to pull more weight than they were able to pull by themselves. The two horses were hitched up to the same load and to the amazement of all present, together the horses pulled a surprising 2500 pounds! Together, they pulled almost twice the combined amount that they could each pull individually. Amazing! Each horse by itself, 750 pounds. But TOGETHER they were able to pull 2500 pounds. TOGETHER WE'RE STRONGER.

This year in the Youth Department our theme is "Together We're Stronger." We believe that our strength comes from joining forces, working together, collaboration, cooperation, and being united in purpose. Together with God. Together with each other in community and fellowship. Together in mission and purpose. Together as one youth department. United in our goal of connecting kids lives to Jesus Christ as their Savior and involving them in service to humankind.

We believe that there is no limit to what God could do in us and among us when we come together, united by His Spirit to partner with each other/God to accomplish His plans through our lives.

As we conclude these Ten Days of Prayer, I want to take you back to the story of the draft horses at the beginning of today's devotional. There is an even more incredible discovery that has been made. While each horse could pull individually about 750 pounds and together they could pull about 2500 pounds, they have found that if a team of horses is *properly trained and accustomed to working together*, they can pull in excess of **4500 pounds!** Now, that is truly amazing. There is power in working together. We are stronger when we work together. What an amazing reminder that "Together We're Stronger".

Let's use all of our strength in 2010. Strength that comes from being connected to God. Strength that comes from working together. Together We're Stronger.

Let's continue praying all year long for God to show us ways to continue to partner with Him and each other.

How About You? – Are you using all of your strength? Have you tapped in to the power that comes from linking our lives to Jesus Christ and allowing His Spirit to work in us? Have you tapped into the power that comes from having a team to work with and bringing various departments together?

Prayer – God, please help our families, help us as individuals, help our churches, help us all to get it. Help us all to realize that together we're stronger and that when we unite we honor you. Please bless each home, each family, each church, each club, each youth group, every event, bless the Youth Department, and bless our conference. We need you. We give you access to our lives to accomplish Your will. In Jesus' name, amen. ■



Ten Days of Prayer
Day Ten Steps to Christ Quotes

“There is necessity for diligence in prayer; let nothing hinder you. Make every effort to keep open the communion between Jesus and your own soul.”

What if we made it our goal to stay focused on Jesus? To keep open communication between us and Him?

Do you think our lives would be different if we were that intimately linked to Him?

Start off by trying to keep yourself focused on God and in an attitude of prayer for a minute, then two, then 5 minutes. Then an hour. Then two, then five, then 10, then all day.

It will take some effort. It will be worth it.

Jesus, constantly before us, in our minds and thoughts.

If you find yourself disconnected, don't quit. Re-connect.

Keep re-connecting every day, as often as it takes.

One friend taught me to use the everyday flow of life to help us keep focused. Every time we switch to a new activity, train yourself to intentionally remind yourself that Jesus is with you. Talk to Him about what is on your heart/mind and what is coming up next.

This isn't something you should do because you feel you have to; it should be something that we do because we want to stay in constant connection to our Savior, our Friend. To hang out with Him and to enjoy His constant presence in our lives.

This is the Jesus that the Scriptures declare, came to be WITH US. All the time!

Let these Ten Days of Prayer be the spark that ignites your prayer life and takes you to a new level of closeness to Jesus.

Thanks for joining us on this journey.

Keep praying for great things! ■



Together We Make a Difference

By: Eric Fraticelli

“All the Israelite men and women who were willing brought to the LORD freewill offerings for all the work the LORD through Moses had commanded them to do.”

-Exodus 35:29

In Exodus 35:4-29 we find Moses being commanded by God to gather up some materials to build a tabernacle. He goes straight to the community and says “From what you have, take an offering for the Lord. Everyone who is willing is to bring to the Lord an offering of gold, silver and bronze.” He also asks for special yarns and fine linens as well as other specific materials (see Exodus 35:4-9). Then Moses says that “All who are skilled among you are to come and make everything the Lord has commanded.” Then he begins to describe how the tabernacle is going to be built with very specific details. After the tabernacle was built everyone continued to bring offerings. The best part of building this tabernacle is that everyone came together to build something that was going to be a place of meeting, services and sacred garments. Every skilled person came together for the service of the Lord.

What are your skills? What are your talents? If you were to get together with your friends at church and talk about your skills and talents, you would be able to reach hundreds and hundreds of young people. Now is the time to do this; we must unite together and explode as young people to reach as many other young people as possible. We cannot keep waiting for anyone else to do this for us. If we want to see a growth in the church we must start working together. You have nothing to be afraid of. We must be like the community that Moses led to build the tabernacle, they all came TOGETHER and TOGETHER they built a tabernacle for the Lord. They were not afraid, they did not complain, they did not come up with any excuses, they just came TOGETHER and they were able to build something for the Lord.

My prayer is for you to get together with other young people and use your talents for the Lord.■



Together With a Shared Purpose

By: Pedro Perez

“Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.” -Proverbs 19:21

Another way God brings His people together is when we have a shared purpose.

We have been praying about the direction the Youth Department will take in 2010 for awhile. We have been asking God how He wants to lead us and what He wants to accomplish through us. We believe that God wants to send us a message this year ... Together We're Stronger. We believe that God is honored by unity. We want to honor God. We believe that when we have a common shared purpose, we are stronger.

Part of that shared purpose and vision for 2010 is to strengthen families, to strengthen local church ministry, and finally to focus on the city of Hartford as our Impact City in October (together we're stronger).

The other morning I was watching the news. The report showed a video of some people walking up to the drive-thru area of Chik-fil-A fast food restaurant and walking off with the Christmas decorations! They just took off with the items. Although the thieves were caught on tape, the authorities had not been able to find them. A local resident had heard the report of the hoodlum's activities and decided to take action. One man began a mission to gather holiday ornaments, from his own yard, and set them up at the restaurant. Soon others were joining in with him, contributing additional items and helping re-decorate the outside of fast food place. (The restaurant may have even looked better than it did before).

The thought came to my head, “there is a group of people united in purpose.” People that were strangers before the incident had now become friends. They had bonded. Their joint mission fused them together. What started with one man, ended with a whole team. A team on a mission.

It also made me think about youth ministry. It often starts with one adult who loves kids and loves God. They see the need. They take action. Adventurer clubs. Family Life ministry. Pathfinder clubs. Youth groups. Young adult ministry. A leader (or in some cases, a willing adult) gets someone to help them. They pray. They build their team. They are on a mission. They want to make a difference for God. Each time another person joins the team, they get stronger. The new leaders bring creativity and fresh talent. The youth are better served. United by a shared purpose, to reach our kids for Jesus. God is honored.

Did you know we all have something in common?

I believe that deep inside of all of us there is a desire to do something for God. To be a part of something significant. Something relevant. Something bigger than what any one of us could accomplish on our own. Even bigger than what we could humanly do. Something that could be successful only if GOD showed up.

Am I right? Do you ever talk to God about being a part of something that's going somewhere? To be a part of a “team” that is on a championship run? A team of leaders that know where God wants to take them and trusts that He will get them there? I believe that we have that opportunity. Right now.

I believe that 2010 is the year to go to another level. To reach out to God in an unprecedented way so that we see things we have never seen. One of our big purposes for 2010 is to work together. Together in our families. Together in our churches. Together in our clubs. Together in our events. To partner. To collaborate. To join forces. To utilize all of our strengths.

How About You? Are you ready to let God take you personally to another level? What about as a leader? God wants to share with us a vision for 2010. A vision for our lives, families, and the ministries where we serve.

Prayer – God, please help us to see your vision. To partner with you. To reach new heights. To work together to do more than we ever could by ourselves. Show us Your plans. Fill us with your Spirit. In Jesus name, amen. ■



**TOGETHER WE'RE
STRONGER**

Ten Days of Prayer
Day Two Steps to Christ Quotes

“Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend.”

Have you ever compared how you talk with your friends to how you talk to God?

Is there any difference?

When we talk to our friends we share our life. We talk about what has happened to us. How we feel? We comment on casual things. We open up and get into the deeper areas of life. We laugh. We cry. We do all kinds of things.

What about when we talk to God?

Do we ever go through some of those same experiences? Or do we often just repeat the same phrases? (you know what I mean, “thank you for this wonderful day” – even though it’s cloudy; “help me to be good” – we have every intention of doing whatever we want; “be with me” – then we forget He is with us as soon as we say amen).

No wonder prayer is seen as boring.

What if we really thought about what we were saying? What if we really opened our heart wide to God and talked to Him like a friend? Try it. ■



I Can Do All Things

By: Kyle Slingo

***“I Can Do All Things Through Christ Who Gives Me Strength.”
- Philippians 4:13***

Have you ever thought that you were no good? That you couldn't do anything right? I know I used to feel like that every day. I used to not care about anything. I would get made fun of daily. I wondered why would God put me in this world? It surely had to be for something, but I couldn't figure out what. I would go to church, but I wouldn't get much out of it. I felt like no one cared. I felt like I was alone, but low and behold I wasn't alone! There is someone who loves me very much. I just didn't know who he was yet.

I started attending Camp Winnekeag when I was 10 (I believe) and that place really turned my life around. It was the place where I first found Jesus. It was the place where I decided I wanted to be baptized. On July 25, 2009, I was baptized in the beautiful waters of Lake Winnekeag. Now that I am baptized, my life has become a lot better. When I was younger, I was very angry. I would smash a lot of my things. Now that I am older and understand that someone loves me very much, I don't get angry that often. So what am I trying to get here? I'm just trying to say that don't give up on your life. If you think your life is so bad, try bringing Jesus into your life by praying, going to church, having worship with your family or starting a prayer journal. And if you don't think you can do anything, refer to the text at the top of the page. ■



Together...Makes Life More Fun

By: Pedro Perez

“It is not good for the man be alone.” - Genesis 2:18

We were created to be ... together. Together with each other and together with God.

Together ... makes life more fun. Imagine all the things that are more fun when we do them ... together.

Eating. Do you like to eat alone? Aren't meal times more fun when we are together? Holiday meals with family/cousins all gathered together. A banquet with a table of friends. Can you imagine eating lunch alone every day at school or for your lunch break at work? Not a lot of excitement there. Eating is more fun when we do it together!

Games. Anyone want to play UNO by themselves? What about Hide-n-Seek? Sound like fun? No! Even electronic games (Nintendo/Wii/etc.) are more fun when you have a friend(s) to play with you. Get a group of people together for a tournament ... way more fun. Games were meant to be played ... you guessed it ... together. It is so much more fun.

Sports. Imagine playing a sport by yourself. Sure we have tossed a ball in the air to ourselves or exercised by ourselves, because no one else was around, but it is not near as much fun as getting a group of people together to play. Even taking a bike ride is more fun when we are with someone.

Worship. Have you ever been singing with a group of people and stopped to listen to how amazing everyone sounds when lots of voices join together in praise to God? Have you ever been together with a group of people that is praising God? When we gather together with others in worship it is very different from sitting alone with God (we need both, but I am talking about together right now). Can you imagine being in Sabbath School by yourself? No one else with you. Just you. That doesn't sound fun. But bring your friends along and it gets better real quick.

Service. Doing things for God by serving others is more fun when we are together. It can be discouraging, trying to make a difference for God alone. But add a friend, or lots of friends, and all of a sudden, serving God feels more fun, more enjoyable. When you have a youth group that is supporting you and cheering you on and it can feel like you are unstoppable. Serving others is more fun when we do it ... together.

God looked at Adam and concluded “it is not good that man be alone” (Genesis 2:18). God created us to enjoy life together. If you are trying to live life alone or serve God alone, think about the difference together can make.

Life is more fun ... TOGETHER. We were made to be TOGETHER.

How About You? - Are you having much fun in life? Maybe you need to have some other people more involved in your life? What plans could you start making that would involve you / some friends / an adult to play or to serve the people in your community ... together? Make a list of all the things you are already doing with others; reflect on how being together makes those activities more fun. Thank God for the people that make life more fun.

What is one thing you could do together with someone today? Pray? Play? Help?

Prayer – God, thank you for creating me to connect with You and others. Thank you for making life more fun when we come together with others. Help us to find ways to do things together with others. Help us to include others in our activities so no one is left out. ■



Ten Days of Prayer
Day Three Steps to Christ Quotes

“He directed them to present their daily needs before God, and to cast all their care upon Him. And the assurance He gave them that their petitions should be heard, is assurance also to us.”

Do you have the confidence that what you pray about matters to God and that it actually reaches Him?

We are reminded to bring our daily needs to God and to share whatever is on our heart with Him. Then we are told to trust that He has heard us.

A young person once told a pastor, “I feel like my prayers never even make it past the ceiling!” Guess what the response from the pastor was? “Then go outside and pray!”

Have you ever felt like your prayers weren’t connecting or being heard? Don’t let your feelings be stronger than your faith. God says he hears.

Praying outside might just help you connect with God. Looking into the stars and reminding ourselves of how BIG God is and how small we are.

And yet, God still hears our prayers. ■



Together is More Fun

By: Pedro Perez

Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.
- Ecclesiastes 4:12

Together ... gets more done.

Not only is together more fun, but we can get more done.

Have you ever had to work on a project by yourself? Not so much fun. And it takes a long time. But get your mom, dad, a friend, or co-worker involved and progress doesn't feel so slow.

The other day we had a big mailing to send out from the office. The job looked like a giant for one person. Piles of paper. Stacks of envelopes. Hours of stuffing and stamping. But instead of one person spending half the day by themselves we got a crew together. Each one had their part to accomplish and together we got the job done in less than an hour! (We got more done, and we had fun).

The saying is true ... "many hand make light work." When we all work together, we get lots done.

Have you ever been on a trip and you were the only driver? That makes for a long trip. However, when there is more than one driver, the drivers can take turns. One can rest while the other drives. Then they change places. They get further, faster ... together.

Take a look around Southern New England. There is too much to do for us to try to do it alone. We have to come together. To help one another. To support one another. To pray for one another. Together We're Stronger.

Our conference is too big to work alone. We cannot get all the work done by ourselves. We need each other.

Imagine one person trying to run all the Adventurer/Pathfinder clubs and Youth groups in our conference. No way. Impossible. But when we have team in local churches of leaders and staff, all of a sudden it looks doable. And when we all work together we share the load/weight and no one person gets overwhelmed.

God says that two is better than one. And then the verse finishes by saying that three is even stronger than two. What if one leader got together with another leader (that's two) and they prayed to God (that's 3) and asked Him to do amazing things through us and in us in 2010? Think we could get more done for God? I do.

Our imagine a young person, partnering with another young person (that's two) and making a deal between each other and God (that's three) that 2010 will be different. A year of prayer and dedication to God.

What if this happened over and over again around our conference, leaders, youth, couples, coming together ... to pray and dream about what God could do in us and through us. We need each other. We need to work together. We will accomplish things we could never do on our own. Together We're Stronger.

How About You? - Do you tend to have a Lone Ranger mentality? Do you think you can do it all ... by yourself. If so, ask God to help you gather a team of individuals around you to partner with you, to help shoulder the load. Whenever you are about to do something alone, ask yourself, who could I invite to be with me? Not only will it be more fun, we will get more done!

Prayer— God, please bring even more people into my life that I can partner with so that together we can make a bigger difference for you. Maybe it is someone in my church, school or work? Someone that is looking for a friend to join forces with so we can make a bigger impact for you. Help me see that we can get more done ... together. ■



Ten Days of Prayer
Day Four Steps to Christ Quotes

“And if the Savior of men, the Son of God, felt the need of prayer, how much more should feeble, sinful mortals feel the necessity of fervent, constant prayer.”

Amazing!

Jesus when He was here on earth felt the need for prayer, the need to be in communion, constant connection with His Father. Jesus, the Son of God, felt a need to pray.

What about us?

Why do we think we can get by on our own? What makes us think we can make it through life by ourselves?

Let's try to spend a day in constant prayer. A day long conversation with God.

Try it. You might like it. For more ideas on how to do this (spend a day in prayer, see Day 10 – Prayer Quotes). ■



Renewal Starts With Me

By: Pastor Warren Ruf

Ask the Lord for rain in the time of the latter rain. The Lord will make flashing clouds; he will give them showers of rain, grass in the field for everyone.

-Zechariah 10:1

How do you see God's great and final work of revival and reformation taking place among His people? Ellen White visualized this way: "There seemed to be a great movement—a work of revival—going forward in many places. Our people were moving into line, responding to God's call" (Testimonies to Ministers, p. 515).

While we are anxious for revival and reformation, we've learned that it doesn't come from voted church initiatives as well-intended as they might be. A revival takes place only when we as individuals really begin to seek the Lord, turning to His Word, taking time for prayer, repenting of our indulgences and sins.

The bestowal of heavenly power will never come upon those who neglect present opportunities for Bible study, for meditation, for prayer, for service. It will never come to those who, while sitting in idleness, wait for something miraculous to happen to them. The divine anointing comes only to those who seek it, and who make the most of present opportunities.

"Let us with contrite hearts, pray most earnestly that now, in the time of the latter rain, the showers of grace may fall upon us. . . . As we seek God for the Holy Spirit, it will work in us meekness, humbleness of mind, a conscious dependence upon God for the perfecting latter rain. If we pray for the blessing in faith, we shall receive it as God has promised" (Testimonies to Ministers, p. 509) ■



Together...Lesson from the Rainbow

By: Pedro Perez

“The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body.”

- I Corinthians 12:12

Together ... Lesson from the Rainbow

Each of us has something unique to contribute. When we each bring our part, it makes the whole even better.

Take a rainbow for example. Individually, each color in a rainbow is pretty. However, when all the colors of the rainbow join together, they are even prettier.

Here is a poem, [A Rainbow Reading](#), based on I Corinthians 12.

Christ is like a single rainbow, which has many colors: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet. It's still one rainbow, even though it's made up of different colors.

For the rainbow it self isn't made up of only one color like red or green, but it's made up of many colors.

If yellow were to say, "Because I'm not violet, I don't belong to the rainbow," that wouldn't keep it from being a color of the rainbow. If the whole rainbow were only orange, how could it be as beautiful? And if it were only blue, how could it show up in the sky?

As it is, however, God put every color in the rainbow just as He wanted it to be. It wouldn't be a rainbow if it were only violet – or yellow – or red – or blue – or green – or orange.

As it is, there are many colors, but one rainbow.

All of you are part of one rainbow in Christ and each one of you is a special color in it!

What an incredible idea! The rainbows beauty comes not from its' individual color, but rather from the combination of all the colors. A great reminder that it is not our part (color) that makes us significant. Rather, it is what we are a part of (the whole). When each of us brings our uniqueness, the combination of our individuality is enhanced by the coming together. The end product is far superior to the parts that make it up. This is what makes the church, the body of Christ so beautiful.

One person has put it this way ... “no one of us is as strong as all of us.”

Let's come together this year like never before and see what God can accomplish in us, through us, and for us in 2010. Let's let God take our uniqueness and add it to others uniqueness to make a rainbow of beauty. Our combined efforts will look better and last longer. In the end God will be better reflected to the world.

Together We're Stronger.

How About You? – Are you ready to look for the strengths that others have? Those positive traits that could complement your weaknesses? Imagine a team where everyone is doing what they are good at, wouldn't the team be stronger. Let's discover the “colors” (strengths) of those on our teams?

Pray – God, thank you for making each of us unique. Help us to see this as a plus (strength). Help our team to focus on the variety of talents/gifts that we have and see them as the colors that make our team (rainbow) beautiful. We thank you for helping to make us stronger as we come together. ■



Impressing Your Children

By: Pastor Robert Sierra

“You shall teach them diligently to your children...”

-Deuteronomy 6:7

King Manasseh is described in scripture as being “evil.” The leader of God’s people offered his own children as sacrifices to foreign gods. According to the account, “Manasseh led Judah and the people of Jerusalem astray...they did more evil than the nations the Lord had destroyed” (2 Chron. 33:1-20).

Today, we may think that we are wiser than Manasseh. We may reason, “I would never offer my child as a human sacrifice!” But the truth is, we do! Recent studies show that many parents are oblivious to the whereabouts and activities of their children.”

We “sacrifice our children to foreign gods” when we fail to provide the leadership they require. Instead of offering instruction and creating opportunities, we allow them to make decisions that they are not capable of. In this critical stage of their development we abandon them for the sake of gain or pleasure.

We “sacrifice them to foreign gods” when we shower them with electronic games, iPhones, MP3 players and unlimited “social networking time.” When children are not being taught to seek first the Kingdom of God, these modern day idols replace family and devotional time with God.

As the coming of Christ draws near, we need to spend quality time with our children, teaching them how to choose their friends wisely, but above all, how to experience God. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 provides a useful guide.

In these passages, Moses reminds the Israelites that their existence revolves around loving God. He also tells family leaders how to transfer truth to their children. Note the principles Moses develops:

Relationship comes before rules (v. 5).

Truth must be in you before it can be in them (v. 6).

Each day offers natural opportunities for teaching (v. 7).

When you sit at home: meal or downtime.

When you walk along the road: drive time.

When you lie down: bedtime reading.

When you get up: morning devotional.

Repetition is the teacher’s best friend (vv. 8,9).

Make use of all these opportunities. Decide on issues you can discuss and ask questions of each other. Pray about your priorities together (Maxwell Leadership Bible).

In the end, God delivered Manasseh and restored his kingdom, but only after the king humbled himself and prayed. I cannot think of whom better to pray for than our own children. Listen closely to these inspired words:

“The last mediatorial work before laying off His priestly garments is to present the prayers of parents for their children. I saw a mighty angel sent out and thousands of children will remember their early training and be brought back just before probation closes. *E.G. White, R & H 1890*

Since God’s promises are sure, I want to encourage all parents to reconnect with Jesus and to pray. When we ask, believe and claim His promises, He will respond in miraculously. He will save both our children and us! ■



Ten Days of Prayer
Day Five Steps to Christ Quotes

“Our heavenly Father waits to bestow upon us the fullness of His blessing.”

Do you know that there are things that God is waiting to do for us, if we would only ask?

And if we never ask, they will never happen.

Unbelievable.

God has so much more in store for us, but we rarely tap into this limitless resource!

What are we thinking?

May God help us to see our need to connect constantly to Him in prayer and may we experience His blessings like never before. ■



One

By: Pedro Perez

“I pray ... that all of them may be one” - John 17:20-21

One? One!

For most of my life, one, has seemed like a pretty small number. Almost insignificant.

Take a penny for example. One penny. It's not worth much. It has very little buying power. In fact, most people don't even want their pennies. (Did you know that the government actually considered removing pennies from our currency? Would we have missed them?). People don't care much for pennies. Most people won't bend over to pick up a penny if they were to drop it and a lot of people just dump their pennies in the spare change cups next to the cash registers so they don't have to mess with them.

However, put some pennies together and soon you have a nickel. Get even more pennies and you are up to a quarter. Gather 100 and you have a dollar!

But is one dollar worth much, is it? That depends.

I will never forget listening to some youth tell the story of how their youth group decided to go around the neighborhood trying to exchange a one dollar bill for whatever a stranger at a house would give them. They were supposed to try to get something of greater value every time. At each home, they would explain what they were doing and ask the person at the door what they would give them for their dollar at first and then for the items they were trading/exchanging after that. One youth did exceptionally well. By the end of the game he had traded up to a car! That's right. A car (true it wasn't a new car, but it worked, and he got it for a buck!). How cool is that!

Too often we underestimate the value of one. I am convinced that the reason is because we forget that when one comes together with another one, then all of a sudden, both are getting stronger.

Have you ever asked yourself what number is the biggest number? You might be thinking ... infinity. That is a pretty big number, but I think there a number that is bigger/stronger than infinity. Have you guessed it? One.

Think about this for a moment. Reflect on how powerful one really is.

One avalanche. It is made up of thousands of tiny snowflakes that joined together are a dominant force.

One tsunami. It is made up of millions of innocent drops of water individually that collectively carry crazy power.

One.

When the many are organized and become one, watch out.

One is potent. One is powerful. Impressive.

Imagine a youth group that decides they want to do service projects, mission trips or make a difference in their church or community. What they couldn't accomplish on their own, as a team, as one, they can.

How About You? – Are you feeling like by yourself you can't do much? Like it's not even worth trying? Well, think about what happens when one gets together with another one. And then work together (as one). Ask God to help you want to do something for Him and to put people around you to be one with.

Prayer – God, thank you for helping us to understand the power of one when we think about the Father, Son, Holy Spirit. Make us one, just as you are one. Help us to realize how big and strong one really is. Help us to be one in our families, clubs and youth groups. Help us to model to the world your oneness through our lives. Amen. ■



Not a Chance!

By: Pastor Pete Maldonado

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”

-Acts 4:12

Have you ever considered yourself good enough to do something great? Being a great basketball player, a famous singer or the next President of the United States of America. I can say that I often think that I have what it takes to do many things and to accomplish what I set out to do. On several occasions I have had the opportunity to challenge large crowds of young people to a one on one basketball game. For anyone willing to take my challenge, I tell them that basketball is really not my sport, but that I am going to win anyway. About 20 young men between the ages of 15 to 25 have taken me up on my challenge. I have come to the realization that although I feel I can do a lot there is not a chance that I can do it all. Really, if you have ever seen me play basketball you would understand where I am coming from. I am a wrestler and I have never truly developed my talent in basketball. That is not to say that miracles can't happen. But to try to beat 20 young men one after the other in a game of basketball takes great skills, stamina and motivation. I have the motivation, a whole lot of energy, but man there is not a chance that I have all the skills to accomplish this task.

Just the other day I was reading *Revolutionary Parenting* by George Barna where he reports some disturbing findings from a recent survey that was conducted among our nations children. According to this survey most of our kids are willing to entertain the idea that Jesus Christ sinned while He lived on earth. Only 44% dismiss this idea. That means that 66% believed that Jesus sinned, if that was the case there is not a chance that any of us can be saved. The fact of the matter is that there is not a chance that Jesus sinned; the Bible tells us: “For God has made Him who had no sin, to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2Co 5:21).

It is one of Satan's plans for today's young generation to have them believe that he does not exist, that Jesus cannot save us and that we can do anything we want on our own, including saving ourselves or beating 20 young men at basketball. A few facts that we ought to realize are, first that there is not a chance that Satan does not exist. The reason we are in a sinful situation is because he is real and he is out to get us. Second, without Jesus in our lives we have not a chance for salvation. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Third, there is not a chance that we can do anything on our own, especially save ourselves.

How important for us as believers to make sure that our young people will come to the knowledge of God and of His son Jesus. We ought to prompt them to have a true and meaningful relationship with the only one who can save us. If we make a daily commitment to Jesus there is not a chance that He will not take us to heaven. Our desire should always be to seek God with our heart, soul and mind, and to bring others to the same realization that without Christ in our lives we have not a chance. ■



Ten Days of Prayer
Day Six Steps to Christ Quotes

“What a wonder it is that we pray so little! God is ready and willing to hear the sincere prayer of the humblest of His children, and yet there is much manifest reluctance on our part to make known our wants to God.”

Ever heard the phrase, “Little prayer/little power; Much prayer/much power.”

God is ready and willing to do more than we can ask or imagine.

All of heaven is ready and waiting to be more involved to do more to help us.

Let’s pray!

Let’s make known our wants to God.

What do you want Him to do in your life in 2010? Tell Him. Write it down. Pray about it everyday until you see something happen. ■



Come Together to Spread the Gospel

By: Eric Fraticelli

“The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.”

-1 Corinthians 12:12-13

What is it about young people that this world loves so much? Is it their energy? Is it the power that they have? Perhaps it is how they get people to listen to them? Take a look at the world today - everything seems to be influenced by young people for instance clothing lines, sneakers, music and movies. This just shows that young people have the power to make a difference. The time has come for young people to use their talents to change the world. If your talent is music, use music as part of your ministry. If you love to act, then use your acting skills to create spiritual dramas. Jesus himself used parables to explain to others about the kingdom of heaven, He was trying to make it easier for others to understand. This is what our youth must do. You must use your talents to show others what Jesus can do for them.

"Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

- Luke 15:8-10

This woman had 10 silver coins and she lost one. She spent all her energy trying to find this one coin and when she found that one coin, she called all of her friends and neighbors and together they all rejoiced with her because she found that one lost coin. As children of God we need to reach as many souls as we can. Even if we reach one young soul we must also rejoice. My prayer is that we all come together and spread the gospel as God intended for us to do. ■



Together is...Attractive

By: Pedro Perez

Together is ... attractive

We had just landed. Everyone began scrambling to gather their belongings from the overhead compartments and make their way to the baggage claim area to wait for their suitcases. Seemed like the normal travel routine.

But as I came around the corner, there they were. There was a group of people holding up several home made signs that said "welcome home." As I got closer, I could hear them cheering. I turned the corner it all made sense. Walking down the ramp was a young man dressed in military fatigues. They were welcoming home a young soldier! As they hugged, laughed, snapped pictures, I found myself being drawn towards them. It was like a magnetic force pulling me to where they had gathered. I almost ran over to them just to be in the middle of all the excitement, fun, and love. Seeing them enjoying being together made me want to be a part of their group. I wanted to be a part of what they had. They were together. And it was attractive.

I ... was alone. No one was waiting with signs at the airport for me. No crowd had gathered to celebrate my arrival. No one was waiting to take pictures with me. No laughter. No hugs. No joy.

The lesson was very clear, and, unexpected.

Together is attractive.

When we see people together, enjoying each other, it makes us want to get closer. To investigate. To see if we can get in on the action. It makes us want to be a part of ... being together.

Have you ever been in a situation where you are with a group of people and all of a sudden another group of people looks like they are having more fun than your group? What is our natural instinct? To get check it out! To find out what is so fun or funny (and hope we can get in on the action).

What if our families, our clubs, our youth groups, our events were so alive and people were having so much fun that we actually looked attractive? Other people that weren't a part of us would be curious. They would want what we have. They would be attracted to ... Together.

Together We're Stronger is all about praying that God would make us stronger ... stronger as we come together. And, that others would see us enjoying each other, getting along together and having a great time together. Who knows, they may even want to join us!

How About You?— Do you make being together look attractive? Do you enjoy the company of others? Let's look for and create opportunities to be together and let's make together look attractive. Next time you are with others ... enjoy it and watch how it makes a difference.

Prayer: God, please help us to get along. Help us to enjoy being together. Help us focus on what unites us and not on what divides us. Help us make being together so much more attractive than being alone that others want to join us. ■



Ten Days of Prayer
Day Seven Steps to Christ Quotes

“The darkness of the evil one encloses those who neglect to pray. The whispered temptations of the enemy entice them to sin; and it is all because they do not make use of the privileges that God has given them in the divine appointment of prayer.”

WOW!

When it comes to temptations, God is ready to come to our side and help us resist, but if we are not praying, it is almost as if we tie God’s hands and He cannot help us.

That should make us want to pray.

Have you ever given in to temptation? (We all have.)

What if we would have prayed? What if we would have prayed when we were tempted? Would the outcome have been different? Better?

Pray to avoid temptation. Pray to resist/stay strong. ■



Somewhere

By: Pastor Omar Jarvis

*“We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard,
so that you also may have fellowship with us.
And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.”
- 1 John 1:3*

You would think they'd have caught it sooner! The whole day was enshrouded in an atmosphere of spiritual excitement, amongst friends and family seen only once a year, they were heading back to their separate destinations and this was their last chance to share stories, to remark at how the boys were growing up, and give updates on how the business was doing. They could not see him, but they were sure he was not far behind; he had never left their side for too long. It was nightfall before they began to worry. Joseph and Mary had lost a whole day of fellowship with Jesus because they assumed he was still with them... somewhere.

Yet, how many of us are traveling to our heavenly home assuming that Jesus is in our company, even though we have lost sight of him. We take it for granted that He has never wandered off before, and He is here...somewhere.

Today, we see the emergence of an empty religion where spiritual excitement is used to disguise the fact that we can't see Jesus. We target issues such as worship and music, to suggest "that's why we can't hear Jesus!" We criticize people's clothing, and determine "that's why we can't see Jesus!" So along the journey we become divided amongst ourselves, we classify them as unrighteous, not realizing we have become self-righteous, until eventually some determine to walk away from it all.

But the bible tells us that our "walking together", our fellowship with one another, as Christians is the result of our relationship with Christ, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another..." (1 John 1:7).

Could it be that our problems in the church have everything to do with *our* relationship with Christ? Maybe it's time to stop assuming that Christ is traveling with us, and deliberately seek him out. What is needed more than anything else are godly people, who do not give up when the "going gets tough", or when the gossipers get to talking, or even when the hypocrites get to... well you've seen them at work.

The church needs people who will help others to see Jesus again. People who with kind words, loving actions, and even sometimes a stern rebuke (when needed), people who will let them know that Jesus is not somewhere, but He's here, waiting to live in you and through you. ■



Strong is Something We Do... Together

By: Pedro Perez

“And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God.”

- 1 Samuel 23:16

Every one wants to be stronger.

Have you ever heard someone say that they wish they were weaker? Not me.

Even little kids are quick to flex their little muscles to convince the adults that they are STRONG. Ask a little kid to show you their muscles. You will see.

We like to be known for our strength (guys especially). No one wants to be known as a weakling.

But what if we have the whole concept of strength wrong?

We tend to think of being strong as something we do individually.

What if we began to think about be strong as something we do ... together.

Together We're Stronger.

In the Bible verse for today we find a secret to true strength. It happens when we come together. David just learned that King Saul was trying to kill him. Jonathan decides that it would be a good time to show up to encourage/strengthen his friend, David.

Have you ever had that happen to you? Some one showed up when you needed a friend?

A college classmate did that for me. A particular class discussion had been disturbing. When I left the classroom I had so many thoughts in my head. So many questions. Usually I went to the cafeteria for lunch after class, but that day, I didn't feel like being in line, in a crowd. So I went to my dorm room. I stretched out on my bed ... thinking. A few minutes later I heard a knock. It was Aaron, a fellow theology student. He asked if he could come in and for the next 45 minutes he just listened. He came to be with me in a time when I needed someone to help me sort my thoughts out. He made me stronger because he was willing to be with me. Before he left, he asked if he prayed with me. I still thank God for what He did for me through Aaron that day.

How About You? – Are there people around you that are in need of a friend? That need someone to help them be strong? Another adult? A young person? We all can be strengthened by the support and encouragement and prayers of others. Who can you be a “Jonathan” to today?

Prayer – God, thank you for the times that you have sent someone to strengthen us; help us to open our eyes today to someone that we can strengthen. Help us to see that we are stronger together and that you can use us to help each other to be stronger. May we look to You for strength today also. In Jesus' name, amen. ■



Ten Days of Prayer
Day Eight Steps to Christ Quotes

“...prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence”

Keys become more and more important as we grow older. Babies don't have to worry about keys. But adults do. Have you seen some people's key rings? They are huge. Tons of keys.

Keys are important because they open things. Without keys we cannot get in.

God is telling us that He has given us the key to all of heaven. That key is called prayer. Use this key daily to take advantage of all that God is offering us.

Every time you use a key, let that be a reminder to pray! ■



Seeking Praise from God, Not People

By: Pastor Keith Goodman

“But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.”

- Romans 2:29

I was reading Romans 2 again this morning. It's really good. In verse 4 we are reminded of how wonderfully kind, tolerant and patient God is with us and that His kindness is intended to turn us from our sin.

Romans 2:6 reminds us that God will judge everyone according to what they have done. Verse 7 follows by saying that God will give eternal life to those who keep on doing good, seeking after the glory and honor and immortality that God offers. And verse 8 says that He will pour out His anger and wrath on those who live for themselves, who refuse to obey the truth and instead live lives of wickedness.

Verse 11 lifts up the wonderful truth that God does not show favoritism. He is just. He is fair. Verse 16 speaks of the Judgment Day when God through Christ Jesus will judge everyone's secret life.

As the chapter concludes Paul defines to his Jewish readers what it really means to be a Jew. He says in verse 29 that true circumcision is not merely obeying the letter of the law; rather, it is a change of heart produced by God's Spirit. And a person with a changed heart seeks praise from God, not from people.

It was the last phrase that made me decide to write on this chapter this morning. "A person with a changed heart seeks praise from God, not from people."

I believe that's a major challenge for so many of us today. God is real, but we don't see Him or hear Him like the people we live with, shop with, work with or even worship with. As social beings we find ourselves working hard to be accepted by other human beings. We want to be liked, loved, celebrated. We want to be a part of the "in" crowd and NOT a card-carrying oddball. That's human nature. Even people who like to live on the fringes find fellowship and acceptance with each other. Even weirdos want to be accepted and celebrated by other so-called weirdos.

That desire for acceptance by other human beings can sometimes put us at odds with the One whose opinion matters the most. The Word is emphatically clear that life as we know it is going to cease. Human history got derailed by the disobedience of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. God is going to bring this sin saga to a close. Those who after seeing the woeful results of trusting the devil still choose to follow his deceptive leadings have made their choice and "are storing up terrible punishment" for themselves (Romans 2:5). On the other hand, a day of vindication is coming that will open before the righteous the promised time when the wicked shall cease from troubling and the weary shall be at rest.

I want the Lord to be pleased with my life. How about you? If I lose the applause of men, if I never get another award, never win a Nobel prize, Grammy, Oscar, Dove or Stellar award, if I am criticized and booed, I'll be alright. As long as I can "hear" the hands of God clapping for me, I'm alright. He's my audience. I just want to hear Him say, "Well done."

So if people like you, praise God. But if you're doing what's right and they don't like you -- guess what? -- praise God! Stay focused. Seek praise from God, not from people. ■



Stronger Because We are Not Alone

By: Pedro Perez

“I am with you always.” - Matthew 28:20

What is it about being alone that makes most of us weaker?

Have you ever taken a walk alone at night? It can be pretty scary when you are all by yourself. What was that sound? What is making that noise? But go with a friend and all of sudden we feel much braver. Kids especially have fears of the dark.

At night when we tell our kids to go upstairs and get ready for bed, they often ask if we will go with them. Why? Because they are scared to go up by themselves. We try to remind them that there is nothing upstairs to be afraid of, but they are still hesitant. Many times one will start heading upstairs if their sibling will join them. They feel more courageous when they're together. They may walk up the stairs slowly and turn as many lights on as possible on the way, but they'll go.

It is quite a different scene if mom or dad go up the stairs with them. Their steps are more sure. Their confidence is high and the fear factor is low. They feel safer. And act noticeably stronger.

Together We're Stronger.

Growing up we had a dog. We got him as a puppy and he was a good companion for us as kids. He always hung around our yard (we grew up in the country with no fences, just wide open fields). One day, a family friend gave us their dog. Now we had two dogs. We soon noticed something very different. When there was only one dog, he stayed around our property. But now that he had a friend (another dog), the two of them would disappear for days at a time. Sometimes they were gone for more than a week. Often they would come back with their ears torn or some other minor injury. We would invent stories to explain their wounds and make up in our minds the adventures they must have encountered during their absence from our house. But we never worried much because they were always ... together. They had each other.

Whether its animals or people, we are stronger when we are together.

Something happens when we are together that gives us more courage. Makes us more confident. Motivates us to be stronger; bolder.

Maybe that is why Jesus promised us that he would be with us always. To make us stronger. Knowing that we are never really alone and that Jesus is always with us should make us bolder, more willing to dare to do bigger things, to accomplish more for Him, His kingdom.

Together We're Stronger. Stronger because we are not alone. Stronger because God and others are with us.

How About You? – Do you feel stronger when someone is with you? Especially if you are in the dark or facing a tough situation? Wouldn't you rather have someone with you than face life alone? Who around you could use a friend? Who around you needs someone to help them be stronger? How could God use you to help someone be the person God planned for them to be? Keep your eyes open for God to bring friends into your life to help you.

Prayer – God, thank you for always being with me. Help me to be brave and bold for you. Help me to stand up for you. Give me the courage to do what is right so that others can be stronger because of my decisions. I want you to use me to motivate others to be strong. Please put people in my life that can help me to be strong too. ■



Ten Days of Prayer
Day Nine Steps to Christ Quotes

“If we take counsel with our doubts and fears, or try to solve everything that we cannot see clearly, before we have faith, perplexities will only increase and deepen. But if we come to God, feeling helpless and dependent, as we really are, and in humble, trusting faith make known our wants to Him whose knowledge is infinite, who sees everything in creation, and who governs everything by His will and word, He can and will attend to our cry, and will let light shine into our hearts.”

Do you ever try to wait until you work things out and then come to God?

Our need is to go to Him early on and get Him involved in what is happening to us so that He can help us sort it all out.

God sees things that we cannot see. It makes sense that we would come to Him in faith, trusting that He will help us.

Our perspective is too limited. God’s is unlimited.

Prayer helps us see life from God’s point of view and helps us see what is really matters. ■

