

The Way of Prayer

Roderick D. Belin

The Way of Prayer is sometimes like climbing a trail. It is a beautiful journey but not an easy one. Prayer really can be strenuous. Trying to get rid of distracting thoughts and concerns, pushing past our fears and getting away from the demands of the day really *is* hard work. But, the most challenging part of prayer is, perhaps, overcoming our unwillingness to pray. We do not always want to pray...

To pray is, too often, to be confronted with unresolved issues OR problems we have been avoiding OR failures we are trying to forget OR various conditions of suffering, pain and misery OR mistakes we've made OR the lack of something OR broken relationships OR some other unpleasant situation. Then, if we are praying for others, we are carrying additional weight as we climb in prayer. Prayer really can be strenuous.

Some challenges to the way of prayer are caused by the wrong focus. Prayer is focused on God



and not problems. A problem may lead you to pray, but God is the focus of prayer. God is the Focus of prayer, the Words of prayer and the Answer to prayer. When God becomes our primary desire and focus, prayer becomes more meaningful and more powerful and more transformative. Prayer *is* the essential means of nurturing our relationship with our God. We cheapen prayer when we think of prayer as our way of getting something from God. In prayer, our hope must be for more of Him and a closer relationship with Him. This life-giving relationship yields answers and solutions and healing and wholeness.

Still, prayer really can be strenuous because life pulls at us from many different directions. But we have to keep climbing that trail because there is nothing like reaching a place while you are climbing and stopping to look out at the view. When we focus too much on the challenges and difficulties of

the climb, we miss the beauty of the space we have reached. When we look out, we look out from a new perspective.

The next climb will be challenging too, but our prayer-legs will have gotten stronger and our stamina will have increased. The more we climb the more we learn that we must not only take care to ensure that our footing is secure as we climb, but our anticipation of the view from the place we climb to in God make this strenuous climb irresistible. More than this, the secret place of health and wholeness to which God welcomes us in Himself is a place of love, joy and peace.