

# Prayer in the Church:

## *Moving outward in fully engaged friendship*

Quick review of “prayer in the closet – the move inward and upward into intimate relationship with our Abba...Now for a new image...

- Film clip (*Braveheart*)  
What’s the connection with prayer?  
“Manly” example of fully engaged friendship  
(Hymn “My God and I” – it’s not going to cut it for men’s ministry!)
- The marvel of the incarnation – Jesus became a *man*  
“There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the *Man* Christ Jesus...” (**a[nqrwpo" Cristo;" jhsou"**)  
**John 1:14** “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...”  
**1 John 1:1-4** “we saw, we heard, we touched, we felt...”
- The point is we have a “hands on” God who seeks “hands on” fully engaged friendship with us. Prayer is the arena in which he gets his hands on us, and we on him, and then through us gets his hands on others.

## Jacob’s story

Favorite NT character: **Peter** (we so identify with his big claims & weak showing); Favorite OT character: **Jacob** (18 times “God of Jacob” in OT – echoes of the wide “door” to prayer!)

Tell Jacob’s story (quick review from Abraham through Isaac)

- **The Birth** (the prophecy, the delivery, early glimpse)
- **The Barter** (bowl of tomato soup for birthright)
- **The Deception** (pulling the wool over Dad’s eyes)
- **The Escape & the Dream** *Genesis 28:10-22*

Ge 28:10 Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. <sup>11</sup> When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there (*from the place*), he put it under his head and lay down to sleep (*in that place*). <sup>12</sup> He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. <sup>13</sup> There above it (*or by him*) stood the LORD, and he said: “I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. <sup>14</sup> Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. <sup>15</sup> I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” <sup>16</sup> When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it.” <sup>17</sup> He was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.”

<sup>18</sup> Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. <sup>19</sup> He called that place Bethel, though the city used to be called Luz. <sup>20</sup> Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear <sup>21</sup> so that I return safely to my father’s house, then the LORD will be my God <sup>22</sup> and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God’s house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth.”

This presents the first essential requirement and the ongoing fruit fruit of fully engaged friendship with the Lord:

## VISION !μ/qM;h' ar™:/NAhm'

Seeing more than meets the eye, what is called in the New Testament “in Spirit” (**en pneumati**). It is...

- with Elisha seeing a mountain full of the “Lord’s army” when all anyone else can see is the enemy.
- with David seeing a mere dog to be whacked upside the head with a rock when all everyone else saw only a towering giant to run from.
- with Jesus seeing the “Rock” when everyone else just saw “Simon”

## *Jacob's Story continues...*

- **Deceiving and deceived** (adventures with uncle Laban)
- **Not exactly Ozzie and Harriet** (tale of two wives)
- **On the run again** (heading home to face the music)

Ge 32:1 Jacob also went on his way, and the angels of God met him. <sup>2</sup> When Jacob saw them, he said, "This is the camp of God!"

There's that "vision thing" again – but it's immediately forgotten as messengers are sent to Esau with greetings and (hopefully) finding favor – it's been 21 years, maybe he's forgotten all about it. Instead they find Esau on the move with his own little army, right towards Jacob. Jacob freaks, assumes the worst, splits his family into two groups (if he gets one, perhaps the other can get away) and he prays...

"O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, O LORD, who said to me, 'Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper,' <sup>10</sup> I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two groups. <sup>11</sup> Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children. <sup>12</sup> But you have said, 'I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted.'"

Jacob waits for response...nothing. God is silent. Jacob takes matters into his own hands and hurriedly makes arrangements to appease his angry brother – he sends at least six huge gifts out ahead of him, each with a healthy space in between – goats and bulls and cows and donkeys and camels, each hopefully slamming into his brother like hammer blows of grace. Encamped by a stream, he then sends both family groups over along with all of his possessions. And...

<sup>24</sup> So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak.

<sup>25</sup> When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. <sup>26</sup> Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." <sup>27</sup> The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. <sup>28</sup> Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome." <sup>29</sup> Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there. <sup>30</sup> So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared." <sup>31</sup> The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip.

Here is the second key element of fully engaged friendship with the Lord:

## **VIGOR** (*Spirited force or energy*)

Empowered friendship, when prayer ceases to be a perceived means of bending God's hand and twisting his arm, and it becomes the place from which we begin to move in concert with his strength (our arm moves with his) – his power being made perfect in our weakness.

Prayer is not about becoming a towering spiritual giant in the closet and doing great things for God out of it; it's about seeing (**vision/en pneumati**) your Abba and where his hand is and what it's doing, and placing your feeble hands inside his (**vigor/strength**).

*New Testament Amplification:*

## **Ephesians 6:10-18**

<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power (**vigor**).

<sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

<sup>13</sup> Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup> and with your feet fitted and ready to stomp on injustice and escort peace in. <sup>16</sup> In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. <sup>18</sup> And **pray** in the Spirit (**vision / en pneumati**) on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

***That's*** prayer in the church!

# Prayer in the church...Opportunities

Opportunities to “come out of the closet”

## PRAYER VIDEO CLIP

We have some great ways to get involved with prayer, a wonderful prayer macro team led by John & Nancy McFadyen.

Six prayer ministries highlighted on back of “Prayer Connections” in the bulletin...three requiring our training, three not.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Prayer and Healing** service tonight, 6PM
- **National Day of Prayer Rally**, Capitol steps, Thursday at noon.  
*(they still need Bible readers between midnight and 6am)*
- **Global Day of Prayer Rally**, BVCC, May 15<sup>th</sup> at 2 PM
- **Vineyard prayer training** (Kevin Thienes) at the Barnabas Center on Friday and Saturday, May 20-21<sup>st</sup>
- **Prayer Home Group** starting Wednesday, May 18

The **BOTTOM LINE** of the past two week’s teaching:

Come to the table! He calls you – all you Jacobs, you **ptwcoi!** He longs to fully engage you, to unleash your spiritual imagination, give you eyes to see the unseen and move in the church and in the world with the hand of his grace.