



# Around the FIRE

The Newsletter of the Fellowship of Independent Reformed Evangelicals  
Winter 2007

## An Intimate Hour with God

by Jim Elliff

**T**his plan given below is a simple one and represents my thoughts on how an extended time in prayer may be done. Nothing in the Bible prescribes the exact order or plan I'm suggesting, but I can say that many have been helped by using this simple format. I hope it means something to you and your family. I have often used it for leading prayer meetings as well. - *Jim Elliff*

“Don't just say the words, but actually trust in Christ as your mediator. Express in some detail your dependence on Christ's worthiness and on His substitutionary work on your behalf.”



*Jim is the pastor of Christ Fellowship, Parkville, MO, President of Christian Communications Worldwide, and the author of Pursuing God: A Seeker's Guide and Led by the Spirit. He currently serves on the board of F.I.R.E.*

The Lord invites us to know Him better. What a privilege! If the joy of heaven is in knowing the Lord's presence without any sin to hinder us, surely seeking His presence now must be the greatest possible pursuit.

Do you feel your need to pray? A person who has no need to pray cannot be living by faith. Prayerlessness says, "I am sufficient in myself for everything required of me." But is that so? And do you not grieve God by your persistent self-sufficiency? The Bible says, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." (Heb. 11:6)

The following suggestions are designed to help you spend an extended time in prayer and meditation with God. You may spend this hour alone or with others. The order is not essential, but does provide a helpful way to progress. This tool may be used daily or for special times of retreat with God. Some may wish to follow this hour with more intense Bible reading.

It is sometimes good to kneel or to lie down before the Lord. "Come let us

bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord our God, our Maker." (Ps. 95: 6)  
Walking while praying can also be helpful, or sitting in a comfortable chair so that all the focus can be on God. Be sure and find a quiet place.

### 1. Come in Christ's Name

The audience we have with the Father is entirely based upon the merits of Christ. In other words, it is solely because Christ lived perfectly, died satisfactorily, and rose again victoriously for us that we have the privilege of addressing the Father. Because God accepts Christ, He can accept us in Him. "...He made us accepted in the Beloved." (Eph. 1: 6b)

Don't just say the words, but actually trust in Christ as your mediator. Express in some detail your dependence on Christ's worthiness and on His substitutionary work on your behalf.

"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ...For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father." (Eph. 2:13, 18)

## 2. Delight in Him

Express your wonder and delight in God. Praise Him for His character and His power. Do not thank him at this time for His activity in your life, but focus on the person of God and His attributes: His Love, Patience, Immensity, Strength, Holiness, Grace, Glory, Knowledge, Wisdom, Goodness, etc.

“Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.” (Ps. 37: 4)

## 3. Express Your Longings to Him

Tell God what you desire above all other things. Express your deepest longings for fellowship with Him and for holiness of life, or whatever is in your heart. This is not a time to pray about everything you need, but to make known your deepest, long-term desires. You may wish to personalize Ephesians 1: 15-23 as a guide.

“As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.” (Ps. 42: 1-2a)

## 4. Read a Psalm

You may wish to use one of the “Psalms for the day,” according to the day of the month. Add 30 to the day of the month to arrive at 5 Psalms for the day (i.e. on the 15th, the Psalms would be 15, 45, 75, 105, and 135). It may be helpful to read the Psalm you choose out loud.

## 5. Sing to Him

Use a hymnbook, recall a chorus or hymn from memory, or make up your own song from the Scriptures.

“Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands! Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing.” (Ps. 100: 1-2)

## 6. Intercede for Others

Remember...

Those who have asked you to pray for them  
The leaders of your church  
The missionaries you know

The leaders of our country  
Those who are unsaved  
Your family members  
Your friends  
Those in trouble or grieving, etc.

“Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you...” (1 Sam. 12: 23)

## 7. Place Your Day Before Him

If you are praying in the morning, you may wish to place every aspect of the day before the Lord, one item at a time. “Lord, please give me patience with my daughter when she comes to breakfast, help me show her love and kindness.” “Lord, when I try to make that sale at 2:00 this afternoon, help me to speak as a Christian would speak, and give me wisdom.” By going chronologically through every possible event of the day, you are learning trust Him in the details of life.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.” (Pr. 3: 5-6)

## 8. Petition Him for Other Special Needs

There are matters needing attention in your own life and in the lives of others, the church or your group. Tell these to God and ask for His guidance, deliverance, endurance, wisdom, or whatever it is that you need. It is at this time that you will want to deal with any repentance God is requiring. Expect Him to give you grace to overcome. “Be zealous therefore, and repent” (Rev. 3: 19b) Ask with faith and genuine humility.

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb. 4: 16)

“...Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.” (Jn. 16: 24b)

## 9. Meditate on His Word

To meditate means to ponder, reflect, contemplate, or think over slowly, the Words of God. If this is your only Bible reading time, continue reading the passage that is next for you in your plan. Read at least a chapter

of Scripture. Look for the key verses and meditate on them, asking God to show you what they mean. Mark them in your Bible and ask God to help you remember what He is showing. Pray that He will give you a way to humbly share these truths with others. Read to obey.

If you are in a group, allow a period of quiet so that each person may read the Word. The leader may wish to suggest the passage for use with the group. If there is time, insights may be shared with each other.

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also does not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.” (Ps. 1: 1-3)

## 10. Offer Thanks to Him

Even if there have been difficulties in your life, the Lord has been good to you. Express to God your

appreciation for specific acts of kindness He has done in the light of what you truly deserve.

“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.” (Heb. 13: 15)

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## FIRE NATIONAL CONFERENCE

May 14-16, 2007 • Faith Bible Church, Sharpsburg, Georgia

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## How I Ascertain the Will of God

by George Mueller

1. I SEEK AT THE BEGINNING to get my heart into such a state that it has no will of its own in regard to a given matter.

Nine-tenths of the trouble with people is just here. Nine-tenths of the difficulties are overcome when our hearts are ready to do the Lord's will, whatever it may be. When one is truly in this state, it is usually but a little way to the knowledge of what His will is.

2. HAVING DONE THIS, I do not leave the result to feeling of simply impression. If I do so, I make myself liable to great delusions.

3. I SEEK THE WILL of the Spirit of God through, or in connection with, the Word of God. The Spirit and the Word must be combined. If I look to the Spirit alone without the Word I lay myself open to great delusions also. If the Holy Ghost guides us at all,

He will do it according to the Scriptures and never contrary to them.

4. NEXT I TAKE into account providential circumstances. These often plainly indicate God's will in connection with His Word and Spirit.

5. I ASK GOD in prayer to reveal His will to me aright.

6. THUS, THROUGH PRAYER to God, the study of the Word, and reflection, I come to a deliberate judgment according to the best of my ability and knowledge, and if my mind is thus at peace, and continues so after two or three more petitions, I proceed accordingly.

In trivial matters, and in transactions involving most important issues, I have found this method always effective.

# Prayer...

## The most demanding duty for the pastor

Steve Camp

There is a remarkable process, called plastination, which is a technique used in anatomy to conserve bodies or body parts. The water and fat are replaced by certain plastics, yielding specimens that can be touched, do not smell or decay, and even retain most microscopic properties of the original sample. The deceased body can then be viewed and studied in amazing detail, color, and wonder.

“But now, because of our great salvation, prayer is the driving privilege and the very life-breath of the believer.”



*Steve has been ministering in the Word and Song for 28 years. He has produced 18 CDs and is the author of The 107 Thesis a call to Reformation in the Christian music industry. He is the President and Founder of Audience one Ministries and can be found at [www.a1m.org](http://www.a1m.org) or [stevenjcamp.blogspot.com](http://stevenjcamp.blogspot.com).*

The process of plastination proceeds as follows: the sample is soaked in a solvent such as acetone and the sample's water (under freezing conditions) and fat are slowly replaced by the solvent. Then the sample is placed in a bath of liquid plastics, such as silicone rubber, polyester or epoxy resins. When a vacuum is generated, the acetone starts to boil, and the liquid plastic takes its place. It is then cured, either with gas, light or heat. We have also seen in our day a plastination of the church. A technique developed to “embalm” the faith with artificial preservatives; rendering it only a colorful, lifeless cadaver—a church that had a name to be alive, but is now dead.

How do we guard against spiritual plastination? We must first begin by being men of prayer. It is the most difficult and isolated of all spiritual disciplines; for we must go into the closet, shut the door, be alone with God, and on our knees in humility, be servants prostrate before the Lord. It is no small thing that the duty and calling of any pastor is “prayer and to the ministry of the Word” (Acts 6:4). It is a work of grace; it is heaven's charge; it is the complete dependency upon God for all things. James was called after

his death, “the camel-kneed” because of the thick calluses that covered his knees due to the long hours he spent in prayer before the Lord Jesus. It is no coincidence that he penned these most familiar words on prayer, “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

It's been said that, “before our salvation, we were Christless, stateless, covenantless, hopeless, and godless. Our minds were given to futility; our understanding was darkened. We were cut off from the life of God, ignorant, hardhearted, callous, immoral, impure, and greedy. The only thing we were qualified to receive from God was His wrath. And that is what we would have received, if not for God's mercy toward us.”

But now, because of our great salvation, prayer is the driving privilege and the very life-breath of the believer. The church, brothers, marches on her knees.

How are to pray? We are to pray without ceasing beloved.

As we breathe without ceasing, so we must pray without ceasing. Never

give up on praying not even though Satan should suggest to you that it is in vain for you to cry unto God. Pray in his teeth - pray fervently!

*Pray on*, though devils attack you;

*pray on*, though trials overwhelm you and flood your soul;

*“Pray on when you think you are too busy to pray—for this too is a great mistake for prayer is a saving of time. Remember the words of Luther when he said, “I have so much to do today, that I shall never get through it with less than three hours of prayer”*

*pray on*, when the heavens seem as brass to you;

*pray on*, when you think your prayers go unanswered and have been miscarried continue on to draw near to God;

*pray on*, though others you love may wound you, hurt you, gossip about you, and abandon you;

*pray on*, though your heart be cold against spiritual things - pray until the Spirit of God warms it again;

*pray on* when the philosopher tells you all in life is a matter of chance and natural law, do not be discouraged, for God has given you a wonderful opportunity to show grace to that one through prayer;

*pray on*, when you are on the mountain top of blessing or in the ease of worldly graces;

*pray on*, when all is taken from you and you are stripped of this earth’s possessions and comforts;

*pray on*, though you only see a cloud in the shape of a tiny hand in the distance—pray until the clouds are many—full, black and pregnant—ready to burst their showers upon you;

*pray on* when you think you are too busy to pray—for this too is a great mistake for prayer is a saving of time. Remember the words of Luther when he said, “I have so much to do today, that I shall never get through it with less than three hours of prayer;”

*and lastly, pray on*, for no other reason than it brings glory and honor to God for us to be dependant upon Him and bow the knee in worship to Him in all things.

*Pray with contrition*- brokenness before the Lord never is unfruitful;

*Pray with confession*- for if we cherish iniquity in our hearts, the Lord will not even hear our prayer;

*Pray with commendation*- for the Lord is worthy to

be praised;

*Pray by commandment*- for when we pray with an open Bible we are delighting in the things that the Lord has sovereignly designed for us;

*And pray with communion*- for He is our God, our Lord, our Savior who is not ashamed to call us His brethren.

The beloved fourth century early church father, John Chrysostom of Antioch, wrote near the end of his life after being exiled by the Empress Eudoxia for confronting her extreme materialistic and opulent lifestyle these words of prayer and adoration,

“A monarch vested in gorgeous habiliments is far less illustrious than a kneeling supplicant enabled and adorned by communion with his God. Consider how august a privilege it is when angels are present and archangels’ throng around. Where Cherubim and Seraphim encircle with their blaze the throne of God that a mortal may approach with unrestrained confidence and converse with Heaven’s dread Sovereign. Oh, what honor was ever conferred like that? How inestimable is the privilege of entering into the throne room of God surrounded by the hosts of His heavenly angels to commune in simplicity and with rapt attention with the One who is devoted to us. If prayer were nothing more than that, it would be the highest honor to pray without ceasing!”

*continued on page 7*

# Here We Stand

## Planting Gospel Roots in Post-Katrina

Eddie Exposito

As 2006 comes to a close, the second year of the recovery from Hurricane Katrina is only a few months under way. When we look back, we are humbled by God's grace through many of you who have come alongside and helped in so many ways. As we look forward, we see the challenge of persevering with the Gospel in a climate where most people, including many in ministry, talk of life getting "back to normal."

*"... are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?"*

~ James 2:20

*Eddie was born and raised in the New Orleans area. He has a degree in Pre-law/Philosophy from the University of New Orleans and is Pastor of Sovereign Grace Fellowship. A Husband of 14 years he is the father of four daughters, residing in the Slidell area.*

The fact is, a new normal has been defined. While some ministries have stopped helping and have returned to what one pastor described as "business as usual," we believe the soil has been prepared and that "business as usual" only comforts the flesh and breeds complacency.

On a community level we live in a continual one act play that never seems to end where the insurance companies are the producers, FEMA and the local governments are the main characters, and the everyday citizen is in the supportive role that few notice. Though most of the media hype is gone, there is much left to do. Many are still not in their homes and are wrestling with getting the funding they need. Some are simply overwhelmed. It is our prayer that we can continue to bring the hope of Christ to the lost and depressed and the needy during this historic time in our region by the establishment of two central missions:

### Sovereign Grace Homeland Missions (SGHM)

Through the benevolence of a few key churches within our FIRE fellowship we have nearly completed a 1200 sq. ft building called Sovereign Grace Homeland Missions. Inside will be three small offices, a shower and bathroom, washer and dryer, and a benevolence outlet where we give out clothes and

food on a daily basis. Until the building is ready, we continue operating out of our sanctuary building where we currently receive about twenty-five families per week seeking various kinds of assistance. We are thankful to the Lord for sending other churches to help and

for providing us with such a tremendous ministry opportunity here in the greater New Orleans region. We are presently working with local stores to secure a steady flow of goods to supply our work.

### The Master's Workshop (TMW)

As a subset of SGHM we are establishing The Master's Workshop as a permanent fixture for the training up of young men in the Scriptures, evangelism, and building trades. We have not obtained any property yet but have begun initial training and work with about four men so that we can put our hands to the



plow while we wait on a building. Our current project involves putting in insulation and drywall into a widow's home who had enough money to buy supplies but not enough to have it installed.

Last month we received commitments from two men to be trainers in woodworking, building, electrical work and plumbing as well as a man willing to help us finance the acquisition of our first property. This will allow us to build and live in the neighborhoods that we wish to serve.



- Gifted men willing to follow up evangelistically with those whom we have met in the area including biblical counseling
- Additional funding for workers living support until our work load matures.

- We need single men to commit to work with us in our inaugural first year. They can find more information and an application/inquiry form at [www.sgfellowship.org](http://www.sgfellowship.org)

- Tool and equipment donations suitable for our work.

- Other skilled men to help train our workers.

## Prayer Requests and Needs

- Our main prayer request is that the Gospel will be our main focus and the hands-on work the conduit. It is easy to become just another community group.

### Contact information

Sovereign Grace Fellowship  
(985) 643-8215  
[homeland@sgfellowship.org](mailto:homeland@sgfellowship.org)  
SGF Admin: Laura Hudson

*Prayer...*

*The most demanding duty for the pastor continued...*

## How To Pray for Others

In Colossians 1:9-14, through the superintending work of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul has given us the most comprehensive guide to prayer found anywhere in his epistles. May it be a faithful reminder of how we are to pray for God's people and becoming men of prayer.

### 1. Fervent in Prayer

"For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you" (v.9a)

### 2. Filled with His Word

"and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding," (v. 9b)

### 3. Faithful to Walk Worthy

"so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects," (v. 10a)

*a. fruit bearing*

"bearing fruit in every good work" (v.10a)

*b. fully increasing*

"and increasing in the knowledge of God;" (v.10b)

*c. fortified for longsuffering*

"strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience;" (v.11a)

*d. forever thankful to God*

"joyously giving thanks to the Father," (v.11b-12a)

### 4. Fit for the Inheritance

"who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light." (v.12b)

### 5. Free from the Penalty of Sin

"For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son," (v. 13)

### 6. Forgiven of Sin

"in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." (v.14)

May we seek to do His will above all things and may we begin by being men of prayer.



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## About FIRE

FIRE seeks to assist local churches in projects and activities such as:

- sending full-time missionaries
- short-term missions projects
- church planting
- caring for the needs of the poor
- publishing books, pamphlets, tapes and educational materials
- family camps and conferences
- pulpit exchanges
- regional and national conferences

To request an application form or for more information, call 1-800-405-3788 or visit us online at [www.firefellowship.org](http://www.firefellowship.org).