



*The Power of Prayer
around the World*





Lord, teach us to pray . . .

—LUKE 11:1





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of Prayer*

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Prayer is talking to God and at the same time some inner view of the things that are being prayed for. Answering to this there is something akin to an influx into the perception or thought of the person's mind, which effects a certain opening of his internals towards God. But the experience varies according to the person's state and according to the essence of what he is praying for. If his prayer springs from love and faith, and if he prays about and for heavenly and spiritual things, something like revelation is present within his prayer. This manifests itself in his affection in the form of hope, comfort, or some inward joy.

—EMANUEL SWEDENBORG





Preface



This small book is offered as a gift to all who want to participate in an active, prayerful life. This does not involve changing your lifestyle, although that may eventually happen. It does not involve following any particular discipline, although that might happen, too. You may find that by setting aside time for prayer and gratitude you will be led to develop a spiritual practice that supports growth and positive change. These changes will not come from the outside in, but from the inside out.

We are writing from a Christian viewpoint, in particular from our backgrounds in the Unity Church and Swedenborgian understanding. Our goal, however, is to honor the

diversity of ways of prayer and the common humanity of all people who are looking for ways to grow, to become more loving, more wise. In fact, Unity Church itself does not have a conclusive unitary method of prayer, although there are common elements among its various practices.

One of the Unity Church's most nearly universal elements is that the time of prayer is called "the silence." The silence is a frame of awareness entered into for the purpose of putting ourselves in touch with Infinite Wisdom so that our souls may listen to the "still small voice" (I Kings 19:12). Another element is the spirit of thankfulness for answered prayer. Since we may not know going into prayer what is best for us, we are grateful for the answer, whether it is "yes," "no," or "not now." A thankful heart helps to create an open mind to whatever next step of good may be available to us and to those for whom we pray. We include in our praying the health, happiness, abundance, and peace for all humankind.

It is often helpful to begin the silence by reminding ourselves that the Presence that we know as God does not *have* what we need. Rather God *is* what we need. This third common element of Unity prayer serves as a reminder that it is not necessary to inform God of needs during our times of prayer. The Unity Church believes that we are never separate from God and that our time of prayer is either to establish or to re-establish our awareness of that Truth. We pray to know God more fully; we believe God already knows us.

To enter the silence we need to lead ourselves into a tranquil state and ultimately be silent so that we can hear and feel what the Presence would have us know, and therefore do. Since this is an appointment with Holy Spirit, it is important that we be more aware than at any other time. Because physical discomfort can impede awareness, we must take the time to be comfortable. Often this can be achieved by simply repeating the word “relax” or the phrase “relax and let go” until we are truly relaxed. The purpose of this is to present

ourselves to God as empty vessels. As the Psalmist wrote, “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). For the Unity Church, such stillness is a truly important step in the silence because we believe stillness is a major pathway to true union with God. Whether we say this Scripture aloud or silently, we must take time to experience stillness, and to return to an awareness of our oneness with God.

When we go into the silence we enter “the secret place of the most High” (Psalm 91:1), a kind of interior closet where we may pray and commune with God. Then we listen so that we may hear what God has to say to us or, as answered prayer is often experienced, to *feel* what guidance God provides. In that peace, we may pray for specific needs and people, but we also pray for the benefit of all humankind. Finally, we express our gratitude to God.

For all the seen and yet unseen blessings You provide and that You are, God, we are grateful. Thank You. Amen.