

## But when you pray . . .

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### DAY 3—BE SPECIFIC

“And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him” (Matt. 6:7, 8, NKJV).

#### Pray Specifically

Our son, Ovidiu, purchased a house at an extremely low price, but the house was in poor shape and quite small. He had to remodel and expand it to accommodate his family’s needs. However, prices had gone up considerably. He mentioned repeatedly that he would most likely not be able to complete the work due to lack of finances.

I asked Ovidiu to present his needs before God because He cares for them. He responded that he had prayed about the house, in general.

I then asked him to be very specific in prayer, to present one need at a time, not to pray today for what he would need next month or tomorrow, but to pray today for the need of today. God answers specifically to specific requests. God does not answer generic prayers.

Do not go to God and say, “Lord, save my neighbors.” Instead, you might say, “My Father, I intercede for my neighbor John. Please touch his heart. Also, please give me wisdom and opportunities to build a friendship with him and reach him with the good news of the gospel.”

Mark 10:47 presents Bartimaeus asking Jesus for help. He cries out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” That is a generic request. In verse 51 Jesus asks him to be specific: “What do you want Me to do for you?” Bartimaeus responds, “Rabboni, that I may receive my sight” (NKJV).

Back to my story—our son started praying specifically. He asked God to help him find a team that would dig the hole for the foundation of the house. Then he began searching. However, all teams he contacted were scheduled months in advance, and they all charged somewhere between \$18,000 and \$22,000. Eventually he managed to negotiate with one team to lower the price to \$16,000 and come the following week to dig.

The leader of the team came, but the heavy machinery did not show up. After waiting all morning, the leader lost his patience, said he couldn’t come back for three months, and left. Our son was devastated. He didn’t have any solution.

Finally, Ovidiu asked God specifically for a team to dig a hole fast, and at a good price. As he finished his prayer, his next-door neighbor approached.

Neighbor: “How are you doing?”

Ovidiu: “I’m OK. Just looking for a team to dig the hole for my foundation.”

Neighbor: “Well, I have a team digging the hole for my house right now. Ask them. Maybe they can do yours too.”

Ovidiu instantly ran next door and asked.

The team leader responded: “Well, since we’re already here with our heavy equipment, as soon as we finish here, we can come and do your job.”

Ovidiu: “Can you come and give me an estimate?”

Upon looking, the team leader said, "I will do it for \$2,500."

What joy! Ovidiu saw that God had already prepared an answer, and He was waiting for Ovidiu to ask for it.

"Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 93). God is calling you to have an open conversation with Him, to present your needs in a clear and specific way. He wants you to have faith in Him, to expect an answer based on His love, wisdom, and promises. He will answer in His time and way, but if you wait upon Him in faith, you will know that His answer is the best answer.

Let's pray together.

### **Prayer Time (30–45 Minutes)**

*All prayer groups have different ways of praying together. We encourage you to spend the next 30-45 minutes in united prayer, in whatever way the Holy Spirit leads. We encourage short conversational prayers (1-3 sentences). This allows for more people to pray multiple times. Below are some examples of praying through Scripture based on the theme. You may pray through other passages also and include other subjects in your prayer time. See the Leader's Guide and World Church Prayer Requests for prayer ideas.*

#### **Praying God's Word — Matt. 6:7, 8**

"And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him."

#### **"Do not use vain repetitions"**

*God, teach us to talk to You as a Friend. Sometimes our prayers fall into monotonous patterns, and it seems that our words go no higher than the ceiling. Wake us up spiritually! Help us to sense the reality of Your presence right beside us.*

#### **"Your Father knows the things you have need of"**

*Dear Lord, You already know everything about us. You know our fears, our hopes, our strengths, and our weaknesses. We often ask for simple desires like food or money or success, but You know our deepest needs. Thank You that the Spirit intercedes for us with groans that our words cannot express. We trust You to answer in ways that we cannot imagine!*

### **More Prayer Suggestions**

**Thanks and Praise:** Give thanks for specific blessings and praise God for His goodness.

**Confession:** Take a few minutes for private confession and thank God for His forgiveness.

**Guidance:** Ask God to grant wisdom for current challenges and decisions.

**Our Church:** Pray for regional and world church needs (see separate sheet with requests).

**Local Requests:** Pray for current needs of church members, family, and neighbors.

**Listen and Respond:** Take time to listen for God's voice and respond in praise or song.

### **Song Suggestions**

*SDA Hymnal:* Standing on the Promises (#518); I Know Whom I Have Believed (#511)

*Other Songs:* Give Thanks; Thank You, Lord, for Saving My Soul; Count Your Blessings; He's Able