

# INTRODUCTION

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If there is one sin that hurts us more than all others, it is surely the sin of not praying. We are meant to live in the Spirit of God—to live joyously, vibrantly, and lovingly in the world. But if we do not pray, we cannot live in the Spirit. It is as simple as that. We lack the daily connection to God that would make such a wonderful life possible.

How many resources for happiness and power we squander this way. How many of us never reach the fulfillment intended for us. How much frustration and sorrow we endure all because we do not really know how to pray and live in the Spirit.

And how much poorer the world is because of it!

This is not because we do not believe in prayer. We do believe in it. If a poll were taken of all the Christians in the world, it would show an astonishingly high percentage of belief in the power and efficacy of prayer. The world has changed greatly in the last few years, but nothing has happened to eradicate our faith in prayer.

The problem is that we simply do not know *how* to pray. Many of us do not know the first thing about praying. We do not even know how to begin. We are like babies who are given lectures on the glory of walking, and shown movies about the places to which we can walk once we are ambulatory, when what

we really need is someone to take us by the hand and help us to put one foot in front of the other.

There are many wonderful books about prayer. Some describe the bliss of the experience of prayer. Others deal with the psychological benefits to the person who prays. Still others treat the more difficult question of intercessory prayer, and how our prayers are helpful and supportive to those for whom we pray.

But those are books for the person who already knows how to pray, who has had at least an introduction to the actual experience of prayer and merely needs encouragement to keep at it or some word about refining his or her technique.

This book is different. This book provides a very basic introduction to what one does when he or she begins to pray. It assumes that the person reading it knows very little about the experience of prayer; that he or she really wants to learn how to pray; and that he or she is ready to take the first fumbling steps and get the feel of what prayer is all about.

This is simply a book of suggestions about where to begin.

About *attitude* in prayer.

About *times of the day* for praying.

About *the best place* for prayer.

About *posture*.

About *mood*.

And then, most importantly, about *specific methods* for beginning to pray.

Some of the methods may be ones you have tried before. In that case, you may wish to skip them and go on to the other methods.

The point is, this is a book about mechanics. It is a simple how-to book, a book written for the novice and real beginner. It

assumes no experience at all on the part of the reader. Its accent is on very basic and practical matters.

If you are already beyond this stage and are looking for something more inspirational, then you would do well to look elsewhere. Here we shall be dealing with fundamentals.