

The Prayer Letter

New Horizon United Methodist Church

Volume 16, No. 9 — September 2009

Running on Prayer: Part Three (Avoiding Injuries and Pitfalls)

This "Running on Prayer" letter is the third of four parts. The first dealt with "Preparation" or how to get ready for a serious attempt at the spiritual discipline of prayer. This second part looked at "Getting Started" or how to begin in the spiritual discipline of prayer. This third part is about avoiding injuries and other pitfalls that can happen while we move through prayer. Next month we will look at "Enjoying the Adventure."

Last year I went out for a cross country trail run in the rain (I never said I was not crazy). Cross country trails can be a lot of fun, but they also have surprises, like streams to cross and steep hills to climb that seem to come out of nowhere. On this particular run, I started up a hill and felt a stabbing pain in the calf muscle of my left leg. I stopped for a minute and it didn't seem injured so I began to run again...you know, like "run through the pain." The trouble with that strategy was that I ended up straining my calf muscle to the point that it ended up bothering me for almost a full year.

Other nasty things can happen while running. You can slip and fall (been there done that), you can run out in front of traffic if you are not looking, or you can get lost. I have a nephew went for a run and got lost. He kept running and ended up in another state! (Actually, they were vacationing in North Carolina near the border of Georgia at the time, but it makes for a cool story when I leave that part out).

So, what are the possible injuries and pitfalls to prayer?

"The Terrible Toos." In running it is too much intensity too soon and for too many miles that can get you injured. In other words, overuse. In prayer the "Terrible Toos" would be the opposite--not enough intensity and too little with not enough use. Ephesians 6:18 says to *"Pray at all times and on every occasion in the power of the Holy Spirit. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers...."* When we follow that directive, and bring intensity as well as consistency to our prayer life, we will not have to worry about injuries of too little and too light.

"Keep Your Balance" In running, it is important to stay on your feet! Slick surfaces or unseen obstacles can cause problems that could lead to injuries by falling or twisting your back or an ankle. In prayer, some of those slick surfaces would be unconfessed sin, unforgiveness and disobedience. Even one of these three things can cause prayer to be ineffective and can do great harm in our spiritual lives. Psalm 66:18 states, *"If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, my Lord would not have listened."* Matthew 6:14-15 states that God forgives us only when we forgive others. And I John 3:21-21 states, *"...If our conscience is clear, we can come to God with bold confidence. And we will receive whatever we request because we obey him and do the things that please him."*

"Drink Plenty of Water" Injuries happen when runners get dehydrated or they do not have enough stored water that the body needs. A prayer in Psalm 42:1-2 demonstrates the need to "thirst" after God, *"As the deer longs for streams of water, so I long for you, O God. I thirst for God, the living God...."* Prayer becomes natural and can even become a craving when we focus on that time away for God's sovereignty in our lives and we will be surrendered to His guidance and leadership. Our lives will be filled with a desire for God and not for other things that can prove to be idols in our lives.

If you are feeling that your prayers have been on the injured list instead of in the finished column, perhaps it is time to look at what might be causing the lack of success. These are just some of the things that can hinder an effective time with God. You may be seeing how these or others things have hindered and injured your prayer life. But remember that the One we pray to is the One can allow His empowerment to help us back to spiritual health and to running on prayer

I love you and continue to pray for you,



"God does nothing but in answer to prayer; and even they who have been converted to God without praying for it themselves, (which is exceeding rare,) were not without the prayers of others. Every new victory which a soul gains is the effect of a new prayer."

John Wesley in Vol. XI, p. 437 (5).

Seven Days of Prayer
New Horizon Prayer Team
September 2009

*Please feel free to pray for a different area each day of the week.
Thank you for your prayer.*

1. **Pray for all the fall programs, classes and ministries that are starting this month.** Pray that the efforts we bring will be help to draw people to God and Christ followers closer to God.
2. **Pray Psalm 42:1-2 over New Horizon. Pray we develop a deeper “thirst” for God.** *“As the deer longs for streams of water, so I long for you, O God. I thirst for God, the living God....”*
3. **Pray for passionate worship and prayer and compassionate small groups and outreach.**
4. **Pray to be a part of what God is blessing.** Ask God to allow us to be the hands and feet of Jesus as we move forward to make an impact for Him in this region and the world.
5. **Pray** that God will continue to use the new addition as a tool to bring many new people of all ages to Him through the ministries of New Horizon. *Praise* God for the generous hearts that have given \$ 1,694,076.18 to the **Multiply Your Love campaign** as of September 1, 2009. *Pray* that the new building will enhance the effective programs of the student and children ministries.
6. **Pray for the financial provision of the New Horizon ministries for 2009.** *Pray* for financial security for the families of the New Horizon community.
7. **Pray for continued growth of New Horizon—Pray** “impossible” prayers for the life, witness and ministry of the New Horizon people (Mark 9:23). **Pray** for the Holy Spirit to stir us to reach out to include a wide range of racial diversity into our family of faith.
8. **Praise God for our Staff Team** of Kristie, Deb, Mike, Dave, Jackson, Jennifer, Bob, Bryan, Barry and Roger.

My Prayers for New Horizon:
