

## **“First Watch” Touch Points for Evangel’s Prayer Vigil team**

**For the week of January 18, 2015**

### **Developing a Praying Life – part 3**

#### **INSIGHTS from A Praying Life by Paul E. Miller**

*from Part 1: Learning to Pray Like a Child / Chapter 4: Learn to Talk with Your Father*

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**Asking Like a Child...**Let’s do a quick analysis on how little children ask.

What do they ask for? Everything and anything....  
How often do little children ask? Repeatedly....  
How do little children ask? Without guile...  
Jesus tells us to watch little children if we want to learn how to ask in prayer. After introducing the idea of bold asking in the Sermon on the Mount (“Ask, and it will be given to you”) he tells us why we can boldly ask. “Which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ... If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!” (see Matt. 7:7-11)

Our kids’ requests, no matter how trivial, tug at our hearts. God feels the same.

**Believing like a Child...**Children are supremely confident of their parents’ love and power. Instinctively, they trust...If you know your parent loves and protects you, it fills your world with possibility. You just chatter away with what is on your heart.

...If you learn to pray, you learn to dream again. I say “again” because every child naturally dreams and hopes. To learn how to pray is to enter the world as a child, where all things are possible.... But as we get older, we get less naïve and more cynical.

Disappointment and broken promises are the norm instead of hoping and dreaming. Our childlike faith dies a thousand little deaths....

**Learning to Play Again...**How can [the short attention span of children] teach us to pray? Think for a minute. How do we structure our adult conversations? We don’t. Especially when talking with old friends, the conversation bounces from subject to subject. It has a fun, meandering, play-like quality. Why would our prayer time be any different? After all, God is a person.

When your mind starts wandering in prayer, be like a little child. Don’t worry about being organized or staying on task.... Remember you are in conversation with a person. Instead of beating yourself up, learn to play again. Pray about what your mind is wandering to. Maybe it is something that is important to you. Maybe the Spirit is nudging you to think about something else.

**Learning to Babble Again....**When you stop trying to be an adult and get it right, prayer will just flow because God has done something remarkable. He’s given you a new voice.\* It is his own. God has replaced your badly damaged prayer antenna with a new one—the Spirit. He is in you praying.... You’ll discover your heart meshing with God’s.

You’ll discover that prayer is a feast. As you get the clutter off your heart and mind, it is easy to be still in God’s presence.

\*throughout the book, Miller uses illustrations from his autistic daughter Kim, now in her 20s, who uses a speech computer and struggles to use her own voice after years of therapy.

From [A Praying Life](#), Paul E. Miller, [NavPress](#) (2009), pages 37-42 (chapter 4)

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#### **PRAYER PROMPTS**

- If you (or someone you are concerned for) have experienced the pattern Miller suggests, where “our childlike faith dies a thousand little deaths” because of unanswered prayers, pray that the Lord will help you discover that “prayer is a feast.”
- Reflect on this week’s worship service, the music, Scriptures, and Pastor Dave’s sermon from Exodus 13, “Let My People Go—The God Who Redeems and Remains.” Pray that the Lord will lead you to ways to apply the lessons learned in your own walk with Christ and as you connect with different people this week.
- Continue to remember one family from your circle of influence for intercession. They could be a neighbor, coworker or relative. Pray for their struggles to be resolved, their health improved and their relationships strengthened. Ask the Lord to bring them to a fuller, closer relationship with Himself in faith and obedience.
- Continue to pray for opportunities to invite people to our services or become engaged in spiritual discovery with the people of Evangel in other ways as well. Ask the Lord to open doors of conversation, connection or compassion with others to enable that engagement this week.

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\* A podcast of the sermon and other materials are normally posted on the website by Monday.

Touch Points is e-mailed every Friday, posted on the website ([www.evbapt.org](http://www.evbapt.org)), with printed copies available in the lobby.