

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

**For the week of July 26, 2015**

### **Developing a Praying Life – part 30 (Final)**

**INSIGHTS from A Praying Life by Paul E. Miller from Part 5: Praying in Real Life, Chapters 31-32**

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#### **REAL LIFE PRAYING (chapter 31)**

Prayer is where I do my best work as a husband, dad, worker and friend. I’m aware of the weeds of unbelief in me and the struggles in others’ lives. The Holy Spirit puts his finger on issues that only he can solve.

I’m actually managing my life through my daily prayer time. I’m shaping my heart, my work, my family—in fact, everything that is dear to me—through prayer in fellowship with my heavenly Father. I’m doing that because I don’t have control over my heart and life or the hearts and lives of those around me. But God does.

[In a typical morning prayer time] I began with childlike praying, reflecting on the previous day and thanking God for specific ways I’d seen his shepherding care for our family....[examples]...My heart was bubbling over with thanksgiving...I date my prayer journal and wrote out a brief prayer of thanksgiving.

In the middle of this I began to think about an online news blog I frequented. Yesterday it occurred to me that...it might feed unbelief in my life. I wrote that out, not so much as a prayer but just some thoughts.

I began to slowly pray through my [prayer] cards. One of the first was a new card I’d written a couple of months ago called “Jill’s pressures.” It had started with four areas but was now up to eight. I prayed the Scripture I’d written on the card.

[After an interruption] I continued to pray through the rest of the family, using the prayer cards, sometimes thanking, sometimes asking. I continued to flip through my prayer cards, praying for my friends, my church, my work—every area of my life. [The total time was about half-an-hour.]

#### **Reflections on a Morning Prayer Time**

{Autistic daughter} Kim’s interruptions give that prayer time a real-life feel. As I pray, I’m dealing not with surface stuff, but with the state of my heart and of the people for whom I am praying. My prayer time is anything but boring. I am thanking, repenting, protecting, and caring. My prayer time is alive with God.

#### **PRAYER PROMPTS**

- Praise the Lord for the lessons learned through these excerpts from Paul Miller’s A Praying Life. Pray for that the Spirit will fill you with a deep desire to walk every closer to your heavenly Father through prayer.
- Reflect on this week’s worship service, the music, Scriptures, and Pastor Dave’s message “Character Commends” (1 Thessalonians 2:1-6). Pray that the Lord will lead you to ways to apply the lessons learned in your own walk with Christ, as you connect with different people this week.
- Continue to pray for opportunities to invite people to our services, and to 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.

\* A podcast of the sermon and other materials will be 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. To be included in the weekly e-mail, use the Contact Us form on the website and request “add me to the Prayer Vigil list.”

#### **UNFINISHED STORIES (chapter 32)**

In the stories I’ve told in this book, we can see God weaving a tapestry. In my experience, as we abide in him, he usually shows us what he is doing. But sometimes he doesn’t. Job is the most famous example. Job never knew why he suffered. We live in many overlapping stories, most of which are larger than us. Each of us will die with unfinished stories. We can never forget that God is God. Ultimately it is his story, not ours.

#### **Not Your Story**

I’ve come to realize that the more distant I am from a story, the less I know what God is doing. God will help me with my story but not someone else’s....There are times when I can see what God is doing in another person’s life, but telling that person would crush his or her spirit. I suspect God is at times silent about stories because we just can’t handle it.

#### **“God Know What He Be Doing”**

A friend of mine overheard a grandmother and her daughter in the supermarket. The grandmother told her daughter, whose son had been murdered just three days before, “Well, izz hard, you know, God know what he be doing.”

Tony Snow, a news commentator and White House press secretary, described [being] told that he had cancer, possibly terminal. Tony’s natural reaction was to turn to God, hoping that God would become a “cosmic Santa,” healing him. But Tony knew that in a mysterious way God was permitting the cancer, using it to draw Tony close to Himself, close to those he loved, and to show him what really matters in life.

A friend of Tony’s, also dying of cancer, told him, “I’m going to try to beat it, but if I don’t, I’ll see you on the other side.” A year later, Tony met his friend on the other side.

#### **Come Quickly, Lord Jesus**

The first time I took Kim with me on a retreat, a little girl came up to her and asked, “Why don’t you speak?” Kim leaned over her speech computer and typed, “I will have a beautiful voice in heaven.” Living in unfinished stories draws us into God’s final act, the return of Jesus. Come quickly, Lord Jesus.

From *A Praying Life*, Paul E. Miller, NavPress (2009), pages 257-68 (chapter 31-32)