



Oak Grove church of Christ  
 9203 Thixton Lane  
 Louisville, KY 40291

**Oak Grove  
 Church of Christ**

(502) 749-9209

**Sunday**

Bible Class: 9:30 AM  
 Morning Worship: 10:30 AM  
 Evening Worship: 6:00 PM

**Wednesday**

Bible Class: 7:30 PM

**Evangelist:**

Bruce J. Dehut  
 Home Bible Studies Available  
 Upon Request

# OAK GROVE ENCOURAGER

**"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works" Hebrews 10:24**

*AUGUST 13, 2006*

## THE HEART OF PRAYER

I was listening to a prayer my cousin was saying before we went to sleep that night fourteen years ago. She was about half way through. For some reason I just didn't feel comfortable with how it was going, the tone in her voice as she said the words, and the way they rhymed.

"And if I die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take. Bless Mommy and Jim (my cousin's younger brother) and Jeremy, and thank you for my birthday. Amen."

There! That sounded a little better towards the end, but even then it sounded, how could I describe it, practiced. Like she was just reading the words off of some script she had been given for a prayer audition.

Now it was my turn. This was the first time I'd heard my cousin's bedtime prayer, and I couldn't remember how it started! So I began my prayer in my usual way. "Dear heavenly Father, thank you for letting me stay the night at Rachel's," and so I progressed, just speaking to God about what I had on my mind. I thanked Him for the slide I had used that day, which led to me thanking Him for the playground it was on, the car that had taken me to the playground...and I kept on going.

I heard my cousin whisper to my Aunt, "How come his prayer is so long?"

So I started wrapping it up. Thanking God for the dinner I had just eaten, (which just happened to be one of my favorites) and the bed I was sleeping in. I ended my prayer by saying, "in Jesus name I pray; Amen."

I was about five years old when I first felt odd listening to someone "pray" to God like my cousin had. I still can't remember the beginning of that prayer, only the end. The way my cousin prayed represents a trend among some people who share a mentality about life in general; I've heard some call it the "Sesame Street" syndrome. They want everything fast! Their food, their cars, everything is prepackaged. Their attention span is very short as well. This mentality is seen in preaching, in worship, and in our prayers in that it becomes canned, and depersonalized.

Don't get me wrong, I love doing things fast! I like getting my chores done fast! I like not having to wait a forever for a great meal. I confess I even find it hard to concentrate on some things for very long. But when it comes to God and worshipping Him, we should take our time. When we pray, we should take the time to

talk to God about what's on our minds. It's personal time between you and your Creator!

In public worship we offer a different kind of prayer than what we give to God in private. We speak to God as a collective body, not as individuals. We need to be conscious of how much time we take and the kind of needs we should be praying about because they're different.

When we start using "lyricy," prepackaged prayers, it's no longer a personal supplication between a believer and his God. It's just someone offering God a drive-through window version of obeying the command to pray.

"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" (Matthew 6:7-8).

There's nothing wrong with repeating yourself in your prayers. You just need to mean what you say every time. Because God knows what you should pray for, He knows when you're not really thinking about what you're saying. Sometimes it's hard to express to God what you're feeling or thinking. For example, sometimes you know you need to speak to God, but you don't know how to say it. God understands that fact and in His wisdom prepared for it.

"For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit

Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26).

When you're not sure what to say or how to say it, just by bowing you head and admitting that to God and asking for His help, He'll know what you need. The Holy Spirit makes that intercession for us.

Just because God knows what we need before we ask, He still wants us to ask for it! He is our Father! And what father doesn't like to hear from his children? Don't send Him a pre-recorded message. Speak with Him real time! The avenue of prayer is a wonderful help in our spiritual life.

Making our prayers more personal and really speaking to God about what's on our minds is something that will take introspection, honesty and emotion! Emotion truly is at the heart of offering prayer and supplication to God. Look at David when he prayed for his son that was dying (2 Samuel 12:16). Recall Jesus as He asked God for some other way to save mankind (Matthew 26:39-44). Imagine the enthusiasm and the forgiveness that came from Stephen's lips as he made his final petitions to God (Acts 7:59-60).

Prayer is a beautiful thing that God has blessed us with. When you speak with God, don't try to hide anything from Him because it's impossible to do. Don't thoughtlessly repeat the same prayer you gave last night either. Instead, lay your heart open before God, tell Him what you've been worried about, and what you perceive your needs to be. That's the kind of prayer that's beautiful in God's ears.

- Jeremy J. Dehut (December 18, 1998)

## Predestination

A school teacher on the first day of class told his students that some would pass and some would fail the course they were about to take. He then described the things necessary for one to be of those who would pass. At the end of the school year, just as the teacher had said, some passed and some failed. Since the teacher predestinated the outcome before he began, it did not mean that he caused each individual to either pass or fail and there was nothing they could do about it. Likewise, God predestinated the outcome before the beginning. (Rom. 9:22-24). From Eph. 1:4-6, God predestinated before He made the world that He would choose those "in Christ." It is up to us to be of those who are "in Christ."

- Author Unknown

## Tribulation

In the pictures of the ancient Roman method of threshing grain, one man is always seen stirring up the sheaves while another rides over them in a crude cart equipped with rollers instead of wheels. Rough bits of iron were attached to these cylinders to help separate the husks from the grain. This simple cart was called a "tribulum" from which we get our word "tribulation." When great afflictions come, we often think of ourselves as being torn to pieces under the cruel pressures of adverse circumstances. Remember, no thresher ever used his tribulum for the mere purpose of tearing up the sheaves but to disclose the precious grain. Likewise, God tries the righteous (Psalm 11:5; 1 Pet. 1:7), but He never puts them under the pressure of sorrow and disappointment needlessly.

- Author Unknown

## Keep At Your Work

The Lord has given to every man his work. It is his business to do it, and the devil's business to hinder him if he can. So surely as God has given you a work to do, Satan will try to hinder you. He may present other things more promising, He may allure you by worldly prospects; he may assault you with slander, torment you with false accusations, set you to work defending your character, employ pious persons to lie about you, editors to assail you, and excellent men to slander you. You may have Pilate and Herod, Ananias and Caiaphas all combined against you and Judas standing by ready to sell you for thirty pieces of silver; and you may wonder why all those things come upon you. Can you not see that the whole is brought about through the craft of the devil, to draw you off from your work and hinder your obedience to God?

Keep about your work. Do not flinch because the lion roars; do not stop to stone the devil's dogs; do not fool away your time chasing the devil's rabbits. Do your work. Let liars lie, let sectarians quarrel, let corporations resolve, let editors publish, let the devil do his worst; but see to it that nothing hinders you from fulfilling the work that God has given you.

He has not sent you to make money. He has not commanded you to get rich. He has never bidden you defend your character. He has not set you at work to contradict falsehood which Satan and his servants may start to peddle. If you do those things, you will do nothing else; you will be at work for yourself and not for the Lord.

Keep about your work. Let your aim be as steady as a star. Let the world brawl and bubble. You may be assaulted, wronged, insulted, slandered, wounded, and rejected. You may be abused by foes, forsaken by friends, and despised and rejected of men. But see to it with steadfast determination, with unfaltering zeal, that you pursue the great purpose of your life and object of your being, until at last you can say, "I have finished the work which You have given Me to do."

- Author Unknown

## THE LORD'S DAY PRIVILEGE LIST

### Sunday Morning Service

Announcements: **J.O. Smith**

Song Leader: **Brian Shepherd**

Opening Prayer: **Larry Runner**

Lord's Table: **Wayne Runner  
Kenny Case  
Jr. Alford  
Andy Milliner**

Scripture Reading: **Mark Sharp**

Sermon: **Bruce Dehut**

Closing Prayer: **Brandon Yates**

### Sunday Evening Service

Announcements: **J.O. Smith**

Song Leader: **Brian Shepherd**

Opening Prayer: **Doug Smith**

Sermon: **Bruce Dehut**

Lord's Table: **Wayne Runner**

Closing Prayer: **Arvil Young**