

# PRAYER AND FASTING

## by Denis G Clark

### Prayer is dangerous

Prayer and fasting is a subject that is dangerous to study. Knowledge makes us responsible. Failure to obey makes us hypocrites. There is probably no subject which is spoken and taught about more yet so feebly practised. Perhaps the challenge is so great that this part is relished but it is quickly accompanied by fear, for if not properly handled and understood it can shake the very foundations of our faith.

Some have been known to launch out into prayer, sometimes with fasting, with great enthusiasm, but when God did not respond in the way they thought He should, they are attracted into atheism or agnosticism. What does it is this, to take one example. John 15:7 states, *"if you remain in me and my words remain in you, then you will ask for anything you wish and you shall have it."* Either those words are true, or they are a horrible hoax. The eager beavers take hold of it as they would take hold of Aladdin's lamp, which has always been the human dream, and when God doesn't respond, simply because they have not fulfilled the conditions, their only protection is in some brand of atheism. And there is no brand worse than what we shall call "Evangelical atheism", because it is always practised secretly. It is a great folly, and God agrees in Psalm 14, where he says, *"The fool has said in his heart, There is no God"*.

### What is prayer?

The word that we use in English, Prayer, embraces a big number of differing meanings in the Hebrew and Greek. Consider them as we list them, and as it would take too long to say where they are found, I recommend the use of either a Young's or Strong's concordance for further private research. Prayer can mean: "petition", "entreat grace", "make supplication", "to come up", "to strike against", "to intercede", "to judge self", "pray habitually", "bend", "bow down", "meditate", "ask", "smooth down", "deprecate", "to want", "beseech", "interrogate", "to wish", "to call for", "to call alongside of", "to whisper", "song of praise", and lastly, "pouring out".

One thing is certain, that one who is going to approach God in prayer is going to have to pour out his heart, be sincere, be clean, and believe that God hears him. And so much depends on the state of the person who is engaging in prayer.

For instance, if a deeply-dyed sinner calls upon God for salvation from the depth of his heart, God will hear him. But that same sinner is not in any position at that stage to pray for national problems, and expect God to answer his request. It will not occur to him to do so, probably, being now just a babe in Christ. But when those great answers were given on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:19-46), which affected the whole Israeli nation, and brought a measure of revival and restoration of the rainfall, the scripture tells us this about the man to whom God listened, *"Elijah was the same kind of person that we are, he prayed earnestly that there would be no rain, once again he prayed and the sky poured out its rain and the earth produced its crops."* (James 5:17-18) Was there no difference between Elijah and any other believer? Yes there was, not in standing, but certainly in state. And that is why the verse previous to the one above quoted says, *"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much"* (James 5:16). We are also told that when Jesus wrestled in prayer at the end, *"He was heard*

*in that He feared" (Heb 5:7), which means "he was heard for his piety". When we pray, God not only listens to the words, but looks at the person who is praying.*

### **Prayer needs divine faith**

Prayer should not be conducted haphazardly, if success is expected, and so we shall examine several aspects as revealed in certain scriptures.

Mark 11:20-26. The section begins with Peter drawing the Lord's attention to a tree, that is withered because of a curse Jesus placed upon it. Verse 22 lays the foundation stone, and it should be read according to the marginal reference, "*And Jesus answering said unto them, 'Have the faith of God'*". Of course, that is a tremendous factor, for it can be quickly realised that if we have **His** faith all our problems are over. Well, Jesus told how that operated in verse 23. He said that with such faith, if anyone orders a mountain to remove into the sea, it will go. Note the condition, namely, that there should be **no doubt in the heart**. That is where divine faith differs from natural faith.

You see, when God made the world, he commanded the land and the mountains to appear, believed it, and up they came out of the sea. Every mountain has since then rested on His word of faith, and if the great mountains can rest on His Word, can't we? The One who commanded these mountains to come up above the sea knows very well that the reverse is the only way to get them back down again. But His original word stands, and if anyone would reverse that, and make a mountain sink below sea level he would have to have God's word for it. If not, he will have to show himself stronger than God. Hmmm.

I once heard a preacher tell of a woman who had to climb a hill beside her home daily, and it was very wearisome. Then she read that 23rd verse, and, of course, skipped the conditions. That night she prayed that the hill would be removed. Had she got rid of her doubts though? The preacher said that the next morning she pulled aside the curtains and the mountain was still there, to which she retorted, "I thought so". Who can get rid of these doubts before God shows His mind on things? But the preacher made a mistake then, I thought, by saying, "Of course, what she should have prayed, was that God would give her strength to climb that hill". Maybe she should have, but that is no exposition of verse 23, which he meant it to be.

### **Need to know God's mind**

The key is to get **God's** faith. How do you think that is possible without knowing the mind of God? And is it all that difficult to know His mind? Paul instructed the Ephesians, "*Don't be fools then, but try to find out what the Lord wants you to do*" (Eph 5:17). This is where our flesh objects, for the one thing it loathes is to have to wait on, and seek God until He reveals His will on things. Waiting **on** God is hard enough, but waiting **for** God can be worse.

### **Declaration of God's mind**

Mark 11:23 also shows us that our praying needs to bring us to the place where we can believe what we declare. It does not say, "he shall have what he prays", but, "*he shall have whatsoever he says*". Who can say, "It is done", without the the witness of the Spirit? But we must avoid complications, for we may get the impression that we have to wait around for some word, or inner voice, etc.. No, there are many matters

where the will of God is made abundantly clear from the scriptures, so that we know what to pray for without doubt. That we shall know our requests are granted when the doubts are gone, and we spontaneously praise God because we know He has granted our request. The witness is there.

Mark 11:24 sums up this way. *"Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them"*. Whenever the Bible says, "therefore", it is best to see what it is there for. It is based of course on verses 22 and 23. It means that while we are praying, before we get to the "Amen", we should receive that witness in our hearts that God has granted our request. And then it will be done. If the request is a difficult one, and no answer is received when first praying, leave it, and seek God again in prayer, and perhaps again. But once that "yes" has been received, do not pray about that thing again, otherwise it will only foster unbelief.

### **Dealing with delayed answers**

If there is a delay in the answer, do not be tempted to pray again if you have the "Amen", but just remind God, with thanksgiving. He has asked us to be His remembrancers. This does not mean He forgets, but often enough we seem to forget, not even recognising the answer when it comes. Then we don't glorify Him.

When I was newly saved, I joined a very active and evangelical church in the city where I lived. But for the first three years, I relied on what came from the pulpit to sustain my spiritual needs. Of course it was insufficient, as two meals per week generally are, and so my spiritual life was withering. But then three of us got together into a weekly bible and prayer group. We used to meet after business at 5 o'clock on Thursday evening, and continue until nearly 7 o'clock. As we began to handle the Word for ourselves, we found we had to call upon the Lord for illumination, and He answered. But during those days we became conscious of the low spiritual level of our city of a million people. And this caused us to pray earnestly that God would raise up someone who would impact the whole of the city with the gospel. This burden was upon us for some considerable time. The years passed, and no answer appeared to be given, our group broke up as one by one we became married and moved to different parts of the city. A few years later, however, it was our privilege to start the "Youth for Christ" vision in the city. And about the time when it was impacting the whole of the city, my brother reminded me of the prayers that we had prayed those many years before. I was amazed, especially to realise whom He had raised up to do the job. I had forgotten, but not God. Now I have learned to remind God with thanksgiving, and this keeps me alert for the answer.

### **The importance of heart desire**

Before leaving Mark 11:24, we should note first that the word "desire" is used. You will know that desire is something which is born in the heart. That is where wrong desires come from too. The mind can easily assess what the position is, and from knowledge frame a prayer. Our verse does not encourage this kind of approach. When praying we should take time to discover what our real **desire** is, and correct it to conform with the will of God where necessary, for this is what God is going to take notice of when we pray. It is not the aerial which gives the transistor radio the power to function, but the batteries. However the aerial has a necessary function of course. It is **desire** which furnishes the heart with the power to pray effectively. Do not ignore

this factor, or you can waste much time in prayer, and run the risk of disillusionment and doubt.

### **Listen to the Holy Spirit**

Secondly, we must be listening carefully to the Holy Spirit when we pray, for during intercession, and while pouring out the heart, it is His ideal time to communicate God's "yes", or "no", or "wait". This is known by inner conviction. Beware of mental short-cuts. And beware of optimism, for it is no substitute for faith.

### **Wait for the definiteness of the Holy Spirit's conviction**

Thirdly, when we have the all-clear in our hearts while praying the promise says "it shall be given". It is the definiteness which consolidates faith, and crushes unbelief and doubt. In this connection it is lovely to see the way that the little Jewish slave in Naaman's house told Naaman so forthrightly that if he would stand before that Samaritan prophet, and obey his instructions the way she had to obey Naaman's wife, he **would** be healed (2 Kings 5). That was definite. Little wonder that God sent her as His missionary to that great army general. None of the contemporary religious leaders in Israel shared her faith, and this is why no Israeli lepers were healed. When Jesus mentioned this to the Jews in the Nazareth synagogue centuries later, they made their first attempt to kill Jesus (Luke 4:27-29). Realise though, won't you, that Naaman was no promise grabber. He sought the prophet, obtained the Word of God regarding his problem, and then acted on it. But we should always beware when God gives His "Amen", His "yes", not to be guided from then on by our senses.

### **The importance of forgiveness of others**

In Mark 11:25-26, the Lord added something very important, saying, *"And when you stand praying, forgive whatever you have against anyone, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins. If you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your sins."* That is to be expected when we realise that the second great commandment is to love our neighbour as ourselves. Failure here will short circuit the whole prayer, for *"if we regard iniquity in our heart"* (and that is where resentment and bitterness ferments) *"He will not hear me"* (Ps 66:18).

### **The courageous confidence of true faith**

Now let us turn to 1 John 5:14-15, *"This is why we have courage"* (faith) *"in God's presence. We are sure that He will hear us if we ask Him for anything that is according to His will. He hears us whenever we ask Him. Since we know this is true, we know also that He gives us what we ask from Him."* Actually I prefer the AV rendering of this, which I think is clearer: *"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him"*. The word "confidence" means faith, if you consult the margin to Hebrews 11:1, so I have used it with the translators word "courage" in the passage just cited.

### **How NOT to pray for the sick**

The popular idea of praying according to God's will, it seems to me, is not faith at all, but sheer presumption, and must be very offensive to God. I mean, do you not hear words like this when the sick are being prayed for: "Lord please heal our brother, take

away his pains, and let him be perfectly well, etc., **if it be Thy will.**"? With this approach we say everything which **we** think should be done, then ask God to endorse it. We want God to do **our** will, whereas we pray often enough that His will should be done on earth the way it is done in heaven. In heaven, they presume nothing: there they wait until instructions come from the Throne. Perhaps we append the words "if it be Thy will" onto our request in case the sick are **not** healed, and then we can put the blame on God's contrary will.

How insulting to the Good Physician! Did you ever meet a doctor among men who willed that his patients should not recover? Such would be put from the medical profession. But wait, doctors may well know to delay dealing with certain sicknesses until the condition of the patient is right. And we need to rely on their superior knowledge and wisdom for that, and we do. Is not God greater than men? And is His knowledge not perfect?

Surely the right way is to seek God in prayer for His will to be revealed with regard to special requests, so that praying can be effective. Otherwise we only organise our own failure. It is so easy when someone comes to be ministered to for healing, who already **knows** that now it is God's will to heal them. These never experience a failure. In such cases, I do not even pray for them, for the praying is done. All that remains to be done then is to minister to them, in Jesus' name, and heal them.

### **Prayer for the salvation of men**

Many ask however, what they are to do about praying for the salvation of someone. I believe that what is required is that such intercede with God on behalf of their unsaved friend or relative until God gives them the witness that they will be saved. At that point prayer should cease, and from then on, remind God with thanksgiving.

### **Why God wants us to pray**

The reasons why people get burdens to pray, is because God wants to work, and the believer thus burdened needs to pray until he is able to move that burden back to God, then God can go on working. If more prayer power is needed, God will replace that burden on the intercessor, so that their intercession will enable him to work further.

A friend of mine had a vision once that will help us understand how this works in heaven. In the vision, a man could be seen a good distance away carrying a very heavy burden which bent him over. As the man drew nearer, she could see that the word "Africa" was written across the back-breaking load, and then she discerned with some alarm that the burden-bearer was the Lord. In the vision, she asked the Lord how she could lighten His load. "Pray for Africa", was the immediate and urgent response. She noticed that as she plied her prayers to the African need, the load began to become lighter.

### **Cure for anxiety: prayer, supplication with thanksgiving**

Now I would like to take you to two wonderful verses in Philippians chapter 4, verses 6-7. *"Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking Him with a thankful heart. And God's peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in Christ Jesus."* The AV is more explicit and shows this process: prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving.

Though worrying comes so naturally to us, it is not a virtue but a sin, because God has commanded us not to worry (Phil 4:6; Matt 6:25-34). That is easier said than done, until we put to work God's prescribed remedy for peace, and peace of such a kind that you should never have to be admitted to mental hospital for worry.

Prayer, supplication, with thanksgiving. What are these three things? **Prayer** is to talk out the whole anxiety with God in detail. It might be argued that He knows all about it before we begin. True, but we need to spell out our anxiety before Him in words so that we can get a focus of what the need really is. Once this is obtained, the next thing is to get down to **supplication**, or pleading for God's intervention. This pleading should be pressed home by asking, seeking and hard knocking, so that we know that God has taken over our worry. At that point, let the supplication go and turn to **thanksgiving**. Result: God takes over the problem, and you receive His peace. It is the only lasting prescription for mental health in this department. But let the prescription be made up, and then taken in proper doses.

There are many other scriptures to which we could turn, but those we have looked at sum up the main principles.

## **FASTING**

We shall now turn to the subject of fasting, and its place with prayer. There is no virtue in fasting on its own, except for health reasons. Fasting must be linked with prayer to have any effect in heaven.

But what is that effect? Little is said on the subject, except a negative give-away in Isaiah 58, which tells the hypocrites not to fast in the way they were doing, so as to make their voices heard on high (Is 58:4). This means, in translatable terms, that fasting turns up the volume of our prayer in heaven, with the object, I presume, of giving our prayer priority rating. It is like turning ordinary prayer into an SOS.

### **God's chosen fast - Isaiah 58**

Isaiah chapter 58 has more to say about fasting than any other passage in the entire Bible. So we will examine it in as much detail as this paper will allow. We shall do so in a verse by verse examination.

In verse 3, we find the hypocrites enquiring as to why God is not responding to their prayer and fasting. He shows them that their motives are astray, because they are doing it to increase their dividends. The New English Bible translates "*exact all your labours*" as "*make all your men work harder*".

You can have an unrecognised selfish motive when fasting and praying. This happened to a friend of mine in Switzerland. He is a farmer, and some years ago his herd of swine contracted swine fever. The law demands that such pigs be slaughtered, but he set everything aside, and fasted and prayed for seven days, at the end of which God healed his entire herd. When he told me, I felt I should challenge him on God's behalf in this way. "Are not men, and their eternal destiny, more important than pigs? When are you going to fast and pray for the salvation of your friends and neighbours?" It had not occurred to him.

God was gracious certainly, but Isaiah says that this is not the kind of fasting that God has chosen. Is 58:4-5 bear this out, where God warns against fasting and praying for

selfish interests, and does not even agree to our punishing our bodies with fasting for such ends.

### **Motives and methods for right fasting**

Isaiah 58:6-7 carry the details of the right motives for fasting, and also the right methods. And these are not always to do with food, but embrace doing without our privacy, spare time, sleep etc.. Listen again, *"Is not this the fast which I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke. Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house. When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh."*

It will not take much to realise, that if we are to carry out such a command, it is going to destroy our selfish way of living for ever. Our time will be governed by the will of God, our homes will become temples in which to minister to those in need. Our cars will become tools of service in the kingdom of God, while our money will become an assistant to enable us to carry out God's kindness to the needy. In fact, we shall find ourselves going without all sorts of things which are generally accepted as being the right of every citizen in our present society.

Bear in mind though, that this is an Old Testament injunction. It was given to Israel, God's earthly people, and therefore the physical applications were the strongest for them. But the Church are God's spiritual people, and we have to take greater heed to the spiritual side of this command. Not that the physical should be ignored, and against such an attitude James, the Lord's half-brother, has given us ample enough warning. It is not sufficient, said James, to pronounce a blessing on the physically hungry without giving him food (James 2:14-17). The Israeli only need give him food. The Christian however must give him food **and** the blessing of the Lord. So our responsibility is greater than that of the Jew. Let us examine the command in detail therefore, from a spiritual viewpoint, for the physical viewpoint is clear enough.

*"loose the bands of wickedness"*. People get bound, both by habit and by demon forces. We are to loose them. This takes time, patience, prevailing prayer, and care.

*"undo the heavy burdens"*. Some of these are tied to people with such spiritual knots that it takes much time and love before we can unravel those knots, and then spiritual strength to lift the burdens from those bound down. In Hebrew, "the heavy burdens" means "the bundles of the yoke". The burdens caused through an unequal yoke in business or marriage are very heavy, but it is part of our ministry to undo these. The yoke is destroyed because of the anointing. You will find that in Isaiah 10:27.

*"let the oppressed go free"*. It is difficult after reading that verse not to remember what the scriptures say about Jesus, that *"He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him."* (Acts 10:38). His power lay in that last statement, God was with Him. How is this attained? Doctor Luke shows us the secret again and again in his gospel, showing how Jesus would retreat into the wilderness for prayer, would spend the night in prayer, again and again Each time there were renewed evidences of healing and deliverance. So much of Jesus' fasting had to do with giving up time and comfort. And this is the fast His Father chose. Because He did not fast like John Baptist with regard to food, many onlookers called him a glutton (Matt 11:19).

*"That you break every yoke"*. Have you ever had to wrestle with those things which tie people to alcoholism, adultery, unnatural fears, compulsions, lying and such-like? If you have, then you will know why the Lord said "break these yokes", for there is nothing else to do. But to break them requires spiritual strength only gained through prayer, fasting and prayer.

*"Deal your bread to the hungry"*. Those who are continually giving out the Living bread know what this means in waiting on God. And I do not mean time spent in scanning commentaries for sermons, but time spent waiting on God for bread from heaven. Personal desires which consume time have then to take second or third place.

*"Bring the poor that are cast out to thy house"*. For the Jew, he only had to open his home, but the Christian will find he has not only to open his home to receive people like this, sometimes for weeks and months, but also has to open his heart to such, and help them until they are brought into the fellowship of God's people into the house that Jesus is building.

*"When you see the naked, cover him"*. Many, like the man who fell among thieves on the Jerusalem to Jericho road, are stripped of their covering (Luke 10:30). Some have lost their purity and self-respect. Others have been stripped of respect for God or man, through violent treatment at the hands of the devil or men. Others have been rendered naked through their sins being discovered: unmarried mothers fill the ranks of such, and many seek the covering of just being lost in big cities. How naked these become. It is ever the ministry of the Holy Spirit, through His servants, to cover these naked. Love covers a multitude of sins too.

*"Hide not thyself from thine own flesh"*. This affects relationships in marriage, the family, the church and the nation. We hide instinctively from the person who gets into need, for helping them is always costly. In fact, the whole of such a ministry is very costly, as you probably now recognise. This is the fast that God has chosen.

### **Some practical Issues concerning fasting from food**

Is there no place for fasting with regard to food? Oh yes. Some prayers do not break through without the aid of fasting, but the point is that fasting must not be viewed as the object, but as the aid to give power to the ministry of helping those in need. Endless numbers of books have been written about fasting (e.g. *God's Chosen Fast*, by Arthur Wallis, Victory Press, 1968), so I need not say much here, except one or two essential or useful things.

If the fast is for one day or two and you are an habitual tea or coffee drinker, you would be advised to take a cup of tea or coffee at meal times so that the withdrawal symptoms caused through abstinence do not render your praying unnecessarily difficult through a splitting headache. A cup of tea every four hours will take care of that, and keep your head clear.

If you are going to fast for a prolonged period, stop tea and coffee a fortnight before, and for better health reasons observe the following. Four days before starting, cut out all meat and fried food. Three days before eat mostly vegetables, boiled or raw. Two days before, eat only living food, raw vegetables, dried or fresh fruit, nuts and milk products. One day before, eat fresh fruit and tomatoes ad lib. On the day, just stop eating.



There are also other ways of fasting. On one occasion Daniel tells us he went off all fancy food, and disciplined his spirit by only eating basic essentials. He said, *"I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth till three whole weeks were fulfilled"* (Dan 10:3).

### **Blessings from God's chosen fast**

But fasting must never be an end in itself, but a means to the end that God's will be fulfilled in lives or nations. The result of fasting, according to the way God has chosen it, that is not doing without food, but ministering to others, will mean the following (Is 58:8):

*"Thy light shall break forth as the morning"*. Your whole being will begin to light up, mainly because you are beginning to love your neighbour as yourself. Ministering to others will throw light onto your own problems, and give you the answer for these problems.

*"Thine health shall spring forth speedily"*. Any person who becomes outward looking experiences an inner release. Living for yourself breeds introversion, which in turn breeds sickness and complaining. I have a friend who sought God for many years, by every possible means, for the healing of her eyes. She called the elders, sought special preachers, etc. and endless, but at last one day she stopped it all and said to God, "I am so tired of it all Lord, that from today I shall not seek you any more about my healing, but I do want to pray for a number of my friends who need healing". And there followed a great time of intercession, and praise. She was dumbfounded, when walking away from the place of prayer, to discover that she was completely healed. That was truly speedily.

*"Thy righteousness shall go before thee"*. Who can find much fault with those who give their lives to help others? Do you know the faults of Francis of Assisi?

*"The glory of the Lord shall be your rearward"*. If righteousness will be your vanguard, his glory will be your guard's van. The glory of the Lord will follow you, for His signs will follow, and these good works of the Father, when seen by men, will cause them to glorify God behind you. And this was so true in Jesus' ministry.

*"Then thou shall call, and the Lord shall answer"*. Truly, as answers to prayer are gained, they open the way for greater answers to come. I have noticed that it takes time, dedication, faith and patience to conquer certain sicknesses. But once conquered, the way opens for many deliverances in that area. But God did not promise an Aladdin's lamp, remember.

*"Thou shalt cry, and He shall say, 'Here I am'"*. That "Here I am" is to be understood in the sense that God will reveal Himself as the Jehovah, The "I am" who is equal to any need. Remember Martha? *"I know that he will rise in the resurrection"*, she said. That was a long way off. But Jesus brought the miracle into the present day, by declaring, *"I am the resurrection"*. What a revelation. No wonder she cried, *"You are the Christ, the Son of God!"*

Then follow some important conditions and promises. The conditions (Is 58:9b):

*"If you take away the yoke"*: this means, if you stop perverting justice, wrong things must be put right, and justice given to those that deserve it.

*"Stop putting forth the finger"*: the New English Bible says, *"Stop pointing the accusing finger and laying false charges"*. How basic this is to deliverance. When we stop blaming others, and see our own guilt, we are well on the way to deliverance.

*"And speaking vanity"*. Empty talk must cease, especially misinterpretations about faith, and whether God's will to heal today still persists. We must begin to speak the truth as it **is** in Christ. Empty misinterpretations, based often upon what we hear of false experience, hinder God from helping us.

*"If you draw out your soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul"* Your soul - that is where feelings operate, compassion in particular. All these riches we claim to have in Christ have to be shared. In fact, if we fail to share them, we lose them. But when we share them, we retain and expand them. It is peculiarly difficult when the spiritually hungry are so starved that it takes time to feed them small bits often until their appetite returns, and capacity develops.

But look at the promises, if you feel the effort required is too much (Is 58:10b):

*"Thy light shall rise in obscurity"*: publicity will cost you nothing, for your gift will make room for you, and you will be much sought after by needy folks.

*"Thy darkness shall be as the noonday"*. You will not only have a ministry, but revelation will increase from God, making your moments of so-called darkness look like other people's midday sun.

*"The Lord shall guide you continually"*. Instead of you searching around for guidance, you will find God organising your programme for you.

*"The LORD will satisfy your soul in drought"*. He will make constant provision for you, so that the well of inspiration never dries up.

*"He will make fat your bones"*. Notice that it is bones he will make fat. This means that He will provide you with strength of limb and powers of endurance that will even amaze you, let alone others.

*"Thou shalt be like a watered garden"*. There will be a constant freshness about your life and ministry, as well as an abundance of fruit. It will be the very life of Christ manifesting itself through you. Any pastor who goes around visiting and ministering to his flock during the week knows that there is a new freshness about his preaching on Sunday. The same applies to those who are not preachers, yet who determine to be effective servants of Jesus.

*"Thou shalt be like a spring of water, whose waters fail not"*. There will be a continuous supply of the Spirit to meet the needs of those God sends to you.

Then comes the crowning blessing, it seems to me, *"They that shall be of thee shall rebuild the old waste places, thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations. Thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in"* (Is 58:12). Isn't that mighty. In other words, we will not only be used to help and bless and deliver others, but the work done in them by God through us will make them deliverers also. This is why John said in his third epistle, *"Nothing makes me happier than to know that my children live in the truth"* (3 John 1:4). To see what Christ had put into him coming through into those to whom he had ministered overwhelmed the apostle with great joy. Yes, the greatest joy he ever experienced.

## **CONCLUSION - Knowing God**

Have you understood from this paper that learning to pray is something which takes years, for it is a beginning of what will open out into eternity, namely "Knowing God".

This paper presents Denis G Clark's teaching on Prayer and fasting in the most condensed and literary form he ever produced. It is a transcript of a pair of a lecture prepared as a tape recorded lecture for the "Cassette Bible College" (Foundation lectures F2). The body of the text is unaltered, only the headings paragraphing, punctuation etc. have been provided by the editor.

This series of notes provide a basic treatment of the topic, to stimulate personal bible study. Every effort has been made to be accurate, but the reader should test everything (Acts 17:11; 1 Thess 5:21). Errors, or queries which are unresolved after consulting the LORD, should be referred to the editor: [R H Johnston](#)

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