

Learning to Pray

By Pastor Jim Hoffman

I don't know about you, but I am always encouraged when someone says to me, "Jim, I am praying for you." In a day and age where we hear so much about prayer, where it is commonplace for us to say, "I will be praying for you," I often wonder if we truly know what we are committing ourselves to and if we know what it takes to pray.

Oral Roberts credits his mother for giving him the best advice about prayer. When he was 17 years old, he was seriously ill and an invalid. His mother said to him, "Oral, you must give your life to God. Only God can help you now. And you must pray." Oral responded with, "I don't know how to pray." His mother gave him wise counsel as she said, "Oral, you don't have to know how to pray. Just talk to God out of your heart. Tell him what you feel inside. That's what it takes to pray."

Believe it or not, prayer is truly that simple. It is a time for us to simply share what is on our hearts if we would simply take the time. John Bunyan once wrote that "in prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart." Talking with God is like talking to anyone else that you are in relationship with; it takes your time and your attention. It takes your willingness to share what is truly in the depths of your heart and soul. It takes your willingness to listen for God's response. The beauty of it is that even though you may not have adequate words to say either aloud or silently, God knows your heart and what is on your heart. You have to avail yourself of the opportunity to be open to God so that he can know your thoughts and needs, and so that you can know the mind and will of God. It is a two-way conversation with the Creator of all things. And it is a right given to each of us as God's children!