

This is our method of prayer: acknowledging our oneness with God, claiming the ability that this gives, and expecting to have the things needed and conducive to spiritual progress. Myrtle Fillmore, Healing Letters, page 100



Principles and Practices of Affirmative Prayer

Unity Church of San Antonio
Spring Study 2010

Principles and Practices of Affirmative Prayer

*Prayer is the most highly accelerated mind action known. It steps up mental action until man's consciousness synchronizes with the Christ Mind. It is the language of spirituality; when developed it makes man master in the realm of creative ideas. Charles Fillmore, **The Revealing Word**, p. 152.*

Welcome to UCSA Spring Study 2010

Congratulations for signing on to Unity Church of San Antonio's study of ***Principles and Practices of Affirmative Prayer***. During the six weeks ahead, expect nothing short of spiritual transformation! If you have set aside the methods and styles of prayer you learned in former years, but have not developed a prayer life consistent with Unity's affirmative approach, you have much to look forward to. Perhaps you already have a working approach to prayer; wouldn't it be wonderful to deepen your daily prayer experience and become comfortable praying aloud at the beginning or ending of a group gathering. All this and more are the promises of our time of study.

In Unity, we spend a lot of time talking about God and learning about God. In prayer, we cultivate an *experience of God*. We are not so much seeking to *reach* God as to *express* God as life, love, intelligence, power and substance. Our prayers do not change God; they change our *awareness* of God. Our changed awareness of God changes our experience of life. Charles Fillmore taught: ***We now know that fervent words expressed in prayer and song and eloquent proclamations of spiritual Truth release the millions of electrons in our brain cells and through them blend like chords of mental music with the Mind universal (Atom-Smashing Power of Mind, p. 84).***

Here we go, on a journey from begging God for things we think we need or to change our circumstances, or other people; to affirming the Truth underlying all circumstances. We'll go from language that treats God as a super-human to language that realizes the here-and-now divine field of good in which we exist. We'll go from falling asleep to resting in the silence; from addressing God as a distant being to being aware of God's indwelling presence; from worrying about our loved ones to seeing their divine wholeness.

Here we go, in prayer,

Rev. Linda Martella-Whitsett

*Prayer ... is to change our minds and hearts so that God's omnipresent good may fill our minds and hearts and manifest in our lives. Myrtle Fillmore, **Healing Letters**, p. 18.*

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Study Circle Agreements

We gather together to honor the sacred journey of each spiritual being; to uphold everyone's highest intentions; to appreciate the courage of every person who shares with us; and to encourage each one's most authentic, most inspired actions. In spiritual friendship, then:

- We agree to be present for one another, maintaining compassionate attention when others are sharing.
- We agree to uphold one another's highest intentions during our gathering and between gatherings in our personal times of prayer.
- We agree to create a secure environment for everyone, where we consider anything said in our circle confidential.
- We agree to be one hundred percent personally responsible for our own experience in the circle. We do not ask others to advise us and we do not offer advice to others, trusting the indwelling Christ wisdom to direct each of us to our own authentic actions.
- We agree to give room for anyone to take whatever amount of time is necessary for sharing, and when we are the speaker, we agree to do what is authentically necessary without dominating the floor.
- We agree to listen with our hearts, discovering the personal relevance of others' sharing, deriving meaning for our own journey of transformation.
- We agree to appreciate one another's courage and to support one another by viewing them as they truly are, whole in Spirit.
- _____
- _____

Principles and Practices of Affirmative Prayer

Session One What is Affirmative Prayer

Affirmative Prayer is not begging a distant God to change ourselves, other people, or our circumstances. Affirmative Prayer is aligning with the One Power and Presence (God), realizing the divine nature is our divine identity, and declaring the highest Truth revealed in this moment.

*Many good people think that God is a person located in a place in the skies called heaven. They pray to Him for what they want and are satisfied. This is the prayer of the primitive, personal man, and it meets his needs; but this is not direct communion of the Father and the Son, the communion with reference to which Jesus said, "I and the Father are one." Cora & Charles Fillmore, **Teach Us to Pray**, p.13.*

*We don't have to pray or beg for God to give us anything. All we need do is to meditate quietly and affirm the presence and power of the great Giver of all, and then accept the gifts. Charles Fillmore, **Prosperity**, p. 74.*

*Pray, but let your prayer be affirmative, for that is the prayer of faith. A begging prayer filled with ifs is a prayer of doubt. Charles Fillmore, **Prosperity**, p. 85.*

*Do not supplicate and beg God to give you what you need, but realize, affirm, and absolutely know that your supreme mind is functioning right now in God-Mind itself and that your thought substance and the spiritual substance of the Most High are blended into one perfect whole that is now being made manifest in the very thing you are asking for. Cora & Charles Fillmore, **Teach Us To Pray**, p. 159.*

*We do not have to beseech God any more than we have to beseech the sun to shine. The sun shines because it is a law of its being to shine, and it cannot help it. H. Emilie Cady, **Lessons in Truth**, p. 34*

Principles and Practices of Affirmative Prayer

Explore

- ? When you address God, regardless of the name and nature you ascribe to God at the time (Gracious Father, Sweet Spirit, Dear God, Infinite Love, etc.), what are you supposing about God? About yourself?
- ? To what degree does praying in a traditional fashion support or detract from your growing awareness of your divine identity?
- ? If you stop saying, in effect, “Dear God, help me to weather this storm,” or “Dear God, I ask you to heal my cousin,” how are you to be assured that your prayer intention is fulfilled?

Praying from a Consciousness of God

A common practice at the start of prayer is invocation, assumed to be appealing to God for God to be with us. In affirmative prayer, the word “invocation” which also means “to evoke,” is calling to mind, or bringing into awareness, the Divine. Affirmative prayer is the practice of realizing the consciousness of the divine, which changes the words we speak in prayer. As we become convinced of our divine identity, we take on that identity in prayer and our words therefore flow from Divine Mind.

Prayers aren't sent out at all! Where would we send our prayers? We should direct them to our minds and hearts and affairs. We commune with God-Mind within our own consciousness. Myrtle Fillmore, **Healing Letters**, p. 17.

The moment we have emptied ourselves of self and made room for the Spirit, the Spirit is there...When the Spirit of God dwells in us, then do we become the children of God. When does the Spirit of God dwell in us? It has been dwelling in us from everlasting to everlasting, but from the moment of our acknowledgement of It, of our emptiness, and our realization of It, It consciously functions as our life. Joel Goldsmith, **The Altitude of Prayer**, p. 20-21.

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*As we seek through prayer to know God, our awareness of God as us increases and expands. And as prayer fills us more and more, we become more and more aware of the experience of being part of God. This means that as we pray, we are drawn inexorably into the creative flow of the universe, so that we begin perceiving things not with human eyes or human ears or human minds but from the absolute core of us--the divinity within us. As we approach this point in our prayer life, the emphasis of our prayers begins to make a subtle shift. Rather than praying to God to help us or for God to be with us, we begin praying from that sacred presence which is our very essence. So we can say, then, that when we pray, we are lifting our personal identity to a higher awareness—the awareness that it is God that is praying! When we pray, it is the mind of God seeking to fulfill itself as us. Richard and Mary-Alice Jafolla, *The Quest for Prayer*, p. 13*

Explore

- ? If you no longer address God to begin a time of prayer, how might you establish yourself in the consciousness of God at the start of prayer?
- ? Charles Fillmore began many prayer times with these words of invocation: *I am now in the presence of pure Being, immersed in the Holy Spirit of life, love, and wisdom.* Spend a few moments trying on an invocation of your own creation.

Affirming the Truth

Prayer is more than supplication. It is an affirmation of Truth that eternally exists, but which has not yet come into consciousness. It comes into consciousness not by supplication but by affirmation. Charles Fillmore, *The Revealing Word*, p. 152.

Principles and Practices of Affirmative Prayer

Not to Make Things So

The purpose of an affirmation is not to make things so. Many people think that when we make an affirmative prayer, we are saying something that is not so in the expectation that our saying it – and especially our saying it over and over will make it so. This is not the case.

Let us consider an affirmation that I often use.

God is in charge. This is His world. I am His child. These are His people. Now is His time.

My saying, “God is in charge” and “This is His world,” does not make it so. God is in charge and this is His world. This is the Truth. It is true whether I say it or not. It is true whether I know it or not. My saying it, my knowing it, does not change the truth of it. All that it changes is my awareness of the truth.

The world does not change because I say it is God’s world, but I change. My attitude toward the world changes— and probably everything in my world changes...

*My affirmation will not make something true that is not true. All that prayer ever really changes is my awareness—but this is all it has to change. When I become aware that this is God’s world, what a world I find myself in then! A world of life, a world of love, a world of growth and achievement, a world where the human child of God can grow to become the divine man! James Dillet Freeman, *Prayer: The Master Key* p. 217-218.*

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Explore

- ? Bring to mind a prayer intention you are holding for yourself or someone else. Experiment with written or spoken words of prayer first in a traditional manner, and then in the manner of Unity's affirmative prayer.
- ? Practice with the group writing and reciting affirmations of the highest truth you know about the situation for which you are praying.

Enrichment

During the week ahead, write or speak statements each day acknowledging you are established in the consciousness of God. For example, Charles Fillmore's words of invocation; or recognizing a divine quality that you want to embody such as "I am divine light radiating to all I greet today." "I am the love of God expressing in my workplace." Even if it feels unreal, trust the great truth.



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Session Two Reforming Our Language

The Prayer for Protection by James Dillet Freeman

Called the "Poet Laureate to the Moon" or "a modern day Ralph Waldo Emerson," James Dillet Freeman was one of the most popular Unity writers of recent times. His poetry has been read by hundreds of millions of people all over the globe. His 1941 Prayer for Protection was taken aboard Apollo 11 in July 1969 by Lunar Module pilot Edwin E. Aldrin, Jr. Aldrin had the poem with him when he made his historic moonwalk!

Born in Wilmington, Delaware, in 1912, James Dillet Freeman was of Cherokee, Choctaw, English and Irish descent. He identified himself with his Native American culture, finding the beliefs of Native Americans to be very similar to metaphysical Christian denominations such as Unity. Freeman moved to Kansas City with his family when he was ten years old. He attended Kansas City public schools and the University of Missouri, where he was graduated with honors in 1932. He began writing verse and by the time he finished college, his poems had been published in national publications.

While still in college, Freeman was given summer work in 1929 at Unity School by invitation of Unity's co-founder, Myrtle Fillmore. He joined the Unity staff on a permanent basis in 1933, serving in the School's prayer ministry as a letter writer. Freeman went on to serve as director of Unity's ministerial training program for twenty years. Freeman retired in 1984 from his position as a member of the board of trustees and first vice president of Unity School, which he served for more than fifty years, thirteen of which he served as director of Silent Unity, the worldwide prayer ministry of Unity School that responds to more than three million persons annually.

*As a poet and author, Freeman inspired millions. He was a modern-day transcendentalist who wrote in the tradition of Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman. The universal appeal of his work prompted translations in thirteen languages; one book of his poems, *What God Is Like*, has been translated into Japanese and published in Japan. His work has been published in *The New Yorker*, *Saturday Review*, *Scientific Monthly*, *Christian Herald*, *Good Housekeeping*, *McCall's*, *The New York Times*, *Reader's Digest*, and numerous Unity publications.*

<http://jamesdilletfreeman.wwwhubs.com>

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Prayer for Protection

James Dillet Freeman

*The light of God surrounds us
The love of God enfolds us
The power of God protects us
The presence of God watches over us
Wherever we are, God is.*

James Dillet Freeman's prayer has provided spiritual confidence and comfort to millions of people through the past century, including American soldiers in Vietnam who carried the prayer in their uniform pockets. The prayer has been whispered by people on the threshold of challenging moments, such as at take-off on an airplane or nearing death.

Recognizing the power of this prayer as written, many Unity students can look beyond the language that might give an impression of God as outside us conferring light, love, power, and presence on us. Others prefer to adapt the language as we have at UCSA, as a testament to our growing knowledge of our divine identity. At the close of every Sunday Service at UCSA, we recite *The Prayer for Protection* as follows:

*We are here to glow as the light of God
We are here to embrace as the love of God
We are here to stand in Truth as the power of God
We are here to radiate as the presence of God
Wherever we are, God is.*

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Explore

- ? Recite the original *Prayer for Protection* softly. Sit for a few moments allowing your feeling nature to experience the prayer. Then share with others your reflections. Do the same with the UCSA version of the prayer.
- ? Reciting which version of the prayer do you feel more confidence, empowerment, reassurance? Explain why.
- ? *The Knots Prayer* is a contemporary prayer circulating over the internet. As a group, rewrite the words of this prayer in the style of Unity's affirmative prayer (refer to Session 1).
- ? As you did with the *Prayer for Protection*, reflect on each version of *The Knots Prayer* and discuss your inner response to the language of each.

Enrichment

Choose a traditional or standardized prayer that has meaning for you. Rewrite the prayer in the style of Unity's affirmative prayer. Reflect on your inner response to both versions of the prayer. Bring both versions with you next session to share with others in your study circle.

Examples: *The Serenity Prayer*, *The Prayer of Faith*, *The Lord's Prayer*, *Prayer of St. Francis*, Now I lay me down to sleep...

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The Knots Prayer

Dear God:
Please untie the knots
that are in my mind,
my heart and my life.
Remove the have nots,
the can nots and the do nots
that I have in my mind.

Erase the will nots,
may nots,
might nots that may find
a home in my heart.

Release me from the could nots,
would nots and
should nots that obstruct my life.

And most of all,
Dear God,
I ask that you remove from my mind,
my heart and my life all of the 'am nots'
that I have allowed to hold me back,
especially the thought
that I am not good enough.

Amen

Author Known To God

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Session 3 Affirmative Daily Prayer

To live by prayer means to reach a state of consciousness where we come into conscious oneness with the Presence, that inner Source, and live without taking thought, without struggle, and without striving. Prayer is undoubtedly the highest way of life there is. Joel Goldsmith, **The Altitude of Prayer**, p. 132

Set aside regular periods every day for prayer. Use words of Truth during your silence periods. As you change your thinking and bring it into line with Truth principles, a transformation will take place in your consciousness. Your mind will become keen, awake, alert, and illumined, and your body temple will be filled with new life. You will be inspired with practical ideas that will enable you to succeed in a larger way. Myrtle Fillmore, **Mother of Unity**, p. 281.

Startling as it may sound, it really doesn't make any difference to God whether or not we pray, but it makes a lot of difference to us. Prayer is not a matter of conquering God's reluctance, but of attuning ourselves to God's eternal willingness. Eric Butterworth, **Unity: A Quest for Truth**, p. 50-51.

Prayer is not a means of arousing God to action but the process of waking up from our drowsiness so we can see ourselves, not in a mirror darkly but face to face. Eric Butterworth, **Celebrate Yourself**, p.136.

Explore

- ? If you are not in the habit of daily prayer, talk about what may be in the way of your doing so (no time, no solitude, too many other responsibilities, unsure of how to proceed, etc.) Cough up all your excuses, write each one on a scrap of paper, laugh about them, then tear up the scraps into miniscule pieces. Take them home, dig a hole in the ground and let the scraps become fertilizer, because that's all they are worth. Take a deep breath.
- ? If you are in the habit of daily prayer, talk about the when, where, and how of your prayer life. What do you believe you might add, subtract, or do differently to strengthen your prayer life?

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Relaxing and Becoming Receptive

Cultivate “a calm state of mind and a relaxed condition of body. It is said, ‘You cannot pour into a vessel already full.’ This is true of the individual whose mind and body are already preoccupied with some tense or strenuous state of mind or feeling.” E.V. Ingraham, **The Silence**, p. 17.

Forget all the duties of the day, free yourself of all material things, and surrender yourself to God. Frances Foulks, **Effectual Prayer**, p. 47.

If the body is tensed and cramped, it is continually calling the mind away from its devotions. To be physically at rest in meditation aids in concentration, in cutting out the interference of the intellect so that the mind of God can function more clearly. Frances Foulks. p. 45.

Explore

- ? **What are some ways that you relax and become receptive as you begin a time of daily prayer?**
- ? **Most spiritual disciplines around the world utilize breathing and/or body movements at the start of prayer times. Why, do you believe, these are often recommended? What difference have they made to you?**

Invoking, Affirming, Concentrating

In prayer attention is the concentration of the mind upon a statement of Truth. Attention is focalizing the “I AM” or inner entity upon a word of prayer, until the inner meaning is realized and the soul is aware of a definite spiritual uplift. As a lens focalizes the sun’s rays at a given point -- and we know how intense that point of light may become -- so concentration focalizes the mind on a single idea until it becomes manifest and objective Cora and Charles Fillmore, **Teach Us To Pray**, p. 31.

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Concentration is the centering of the attention on a particular idea. Concentration forms a mental loadstone in the mind to which thought substance rushes like iron filings to a magnet, bringing the forces, whether mental or physical, to a common purpose.” Charles Fillmore, *The Revealing Word*, p. 39-40.

Concentrated attention of the mind on an idea of any kind is equal to prayer and will make available the spiritual principle that is its source in proportion to the intensity and continuity of the mental effort. Charles Fillmore, *Jesus Christ Heals*, p.48.

Explore

- ? Experiment with “I AM” affirmations that bring you into alignment with the divine nature and your divine identity (review Session 1 if needed). Examples: “I AM one in God.” “I am Divine Love active in the world.”
- ? Practice sitting in concentration with an “I AM” affirmation of your choice.

Meditating

Continuous and contemplative thought; to dwell mentally on anything; realizing the reality of the Absolute; a steady effort of the mind to know God; man’s spiritual approach to God. The purpose of meditation is to expand the consciousness Christward; to bring into realization divine Truth; to be transformed in spirit, soul, and body by the renewing of the mind. Charles Fillmore. *The Revealing Word*, p. 131.

Meditation is simply turning our attention inward—watching—waiting. Charles Roth, *More Power to You*, p. 113.

If one is new to meditation or out of practice, when he first starts to watch his thoughts, it is like watching a monkey in a cage. Charles Roth, p. 113.

A daily half hour of meditation will open up the mind to a consciousness of the Inner One and will reveal many things that are hidden from the natural man. Charles Fillmore, *Christian Healing*, p. 15.

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In daily meditation lies the secret of power. No one can grow in either spiritual knowledge or power without it. H. Emilie Cady, **Lessons in Truth**, p. 11.

No person, unless he has practiced it, can know how it quiets all physical nervousness, all fear, all oversensitivity, all the little raspings of everyday life -- just this hour of calm, quiet waiting alone with God. Never let it be an hour of bondage, but always one of restfulness. H. Emilie Cady, p. 12.

Watch carefully, and you will find that there are some things, even in the active unselfish doing, which would better be left undone than that you should neglect regular meditation. H. Emilie Cady, p. 11.

Explore

- ? Define and describe the phase of prayer Unity titles "meditation."
- ? In the above two quotations of Dr. Cady, she fervently urges us to daily practice of meditation. Many people stretch a little, read something inspirational such as Unity's *The Daily Word*, and address God in prayer before going about the activity of their day. What benefits might you gain by spending additional time in meditation?

Resting in the silence

The word is powerful, but the silence is more powerful. The silence is the Presence of God. Sue Sikking, **Only Believe**, p. 138.

The one way to enter the realm of the fourth dimension, or of realization, is through scientific prayer, commonly named the silence. Charles Fillmore, **Keep a True Lent**, p. 170.

Silence is...the deep inner conviction and assurance of the fulfillment of an ideal...the dawning of Truth in the consciousness... It is the inner conviction that prayer has been answered, although there is as yet no outer manifestation. Charles Fillmore, **The Revealing Word**, p.164.

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Do not be discouraged if you do not at once get conscious results in this silent sitting. Every moment that you wait, Spirit is working to make you a new creature in Christ - - a creature possessing consciously His very own qualities and powers. There may be a working for days before you see any change; but it will surely come. You will soon get so that you can go into the silence, into conscious communion with your Lord, at a moment's notice, at any time, in any place. H. Emilie Cady, **Lessons in Truth**, p 112.

A person in the silence must consciously cut out all noises, even the rattle of his thoughts and the murmur of his words, no matter how pleasing these sounding brasses and clanging cymbals may be to his intellect, if he would receive the great message the omniscient mind of God has for him. Frances Foulks, **Effectual Prayer**, p. 88.

Prayer is an attitude of listening... God is not in the whirlwind, and by whirlwind we mean any of the physical manifestations of error or discord... God is in the still, small voice. If we want to experience the presence of God, is there any other way of attaining it than by recognizing we must hear the still, small voice? When we hear it, we receive some spiritual awareness. It does not necessarily mean an audible message, but every time that we receive some inner impulsion from the spiritual Presence, the voice has been uttered and some phase of earthly discord melts. Joel Goldsmith, *The Altitude of Prayer*, p. 133

Explore

- ? At first glance, resting in the silence seems so similar to meditating as to be indistinguishable. Talk about the subtle distinctions of each of these stages of prayer.
- ? Many practitioners of Unity prayer describe going so deep in the silence as to become unaware of their surroundings. How might a practitioner of prayer know the difference between falling asleep and going deep?

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Thanksgiving

Instead of a supplication, prayer should be a jubilant thanksgiving. This method of prayer quickens the mind miraculously, and, like a mighty magnet, draws out the spiritual qualities that transform the whole man when they are given expression in mind, body and affairs. Charles Fillmore, **Christian Healing**, p. 76.

There is a something about the mental act of thanksgiving that seems to carry the human mind far beyond the region of doubt into the clear atmosphere of faith and trust, where 'all things are possible'. H. Emilie Cady, **Lessons in Truth**, p. 134.

True prayer ... is just a continual recognition and thanksgiving that all is good, and that all good is ours now as much as it ever can be. H. Emilie Cady, **How I Used Truth**, p. 107

Gratitude is a spiritual enzyme that hastens the fulfillment of your prayer of faith. Charles Roth, **Mind: The Master Power**, p. 6.

Explore

- ? Experiment with words of thanksgiving not directed at a distant and separate God.
- ? How might your thanksgiving be expressed wordlessly?

Enrichment

Commit yourself to a daily prayer practice for seven days in a row. A commitment is a promise you make and keep. That means if you lay your head upon your pillow at night without having kept your prayer appointment, you will get out of bed and fulfill your promise before going to sleep. If you truly desire a life of prayer, make and keep a daily prayer commitment for twenty-one days.

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Session Four

The Silence

What is the Silence?

Inasmuch as the silence is fundamentally for the purpose of bringing man into an understanding relationship with God, it is a form of prayer... we do not mean to imply that it is the only form of prayer. It is, however, one of the most vital phases of prayer, and through a right understanding and application of it man will find the silence a strong factor in bringing himself to a realization of the good for which he has long sought in vain. E.V. Ingraham, **The Silence**, Foreword p.3.

The silence is a kind of stillness, a place of retreat into which we may enter and, having entered, may know the Truth. We go into the silence by observing the instructions, 'Be still, and know' (Ps. 46:10). The only way really to know is to become perfectly still, to get away from the outer and from looking for things, into the inner quiet where we are alone with wisdom. In the silence wisdom is given for every need. Myrtle Fillmore, **How to Let God Help You**, p. 88.

Spirit is the "still small voice" in every man that hears and blesses and uplifts... The art of listening to the inner voice and obeying it is well worth developing. Then it is that the Christ of one's life calls out, 'Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.' When the thinking faculty is obedient and does as it is told, it is always rewarded with a multitude of new ideas (fishes). Charles Fillmore, **The Revealing Word**, p. 205-206.

Explore

- ? The phase of prayer called "the silence" is often neglected. We may read something inspirational, such as Unity's *The Daily Word*, recite a few affirmations, take a few deep breaths, feel better and then go on about our day. The silence requires our time and our practice. It is not an activity to complete but a state of consciousness to cultivate. Talk about your experience of praying "in the silence."
- ? How might you distinguish between being "in the silence" and doing nothing? Falling asleep? Being in deep relaxation? If you lose awareness of the world around you, are you in the silence or not?

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Characteristics of the Silence

The silence is not inertia, not a drifting into something we know not about. It is true, our body is relaxed, but it is alive and ready to act; our intellect is stifled, but it is alert and ready to be used. Frances Foulks, **Effectual Prayer**, p. 86.

When one goes into the silence he enters the secret place of the Most High, the closet of prayer within. He closes the door and in the stillness of that meeting place he prays to God, he communes with God, and he meditates on Truth. Then he listens to what God has to say to him. Charles Fillmore, **The Revealing Word**, p. 179.

In order that the fullest benefits may be derived from the practice of the silence, one must constantly go beyond the point of mere mental stillness and allow the elements of the spiritual realm to come forth into consciousness. For beyond the silence is the answer to every question, the fulfillment of every desire, and the solution to every problem that can arise in the experiences of life. E.V. Ingraham, **The Silence**, p. 53.

The “still small voice” is “the voice of Spirit speaking within the depths of one’s being. The ‘still small voice’ is not an audible voice. It comes from within as spiritual knowing. Charles Fillmore, **The Revealing Word**, p. 185.

If one would grow, one must live whatever message is given in the silence. Unless the message from the Father becomes a living, vital reality in the daily life, seeking the silence becomes a mere pastime, a pretense, and hinders growth instead of hastening it. It is as much our mission to live any message given to us as it was the mission of Jesus Christ to live the life and die the death that He did. There is no message too trivial to be carried out, for if nothing in the outer seems to result from it, there has been built into the consciousness a willingness and readiness to do as directed that will lead to higher things. Frances Foulks, **Effectual Prayer**, p. 111.

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Explore

- ? Some people experience phenomena going into or coming out of the silence, such as seeing colors, hearing voices, or feeling sensations. In fact, some people become captivated by such phenomena, drawing their attention away from the deep stillness of the silence. We can become so eager to hear God's voice that we become restless rather than restful. Talk about how you manage the tension between your desire for an answer or reassuring word, and your desire to be deep in the silence.
- ? Some of the quotations above emphasize listening to God, as if God was a super human speaking into us. What do you believe is meant by these statements?
- ? Agree in your circle about the amount of time you are willing to designate in this session to sit in the silence together – 5, 10, or 15 minutes. Agree on a signal, such as a bell or chime, to begin and end the time in the silence.

Enrichment

Look at your calendar for the coming week, and schedule 20 minutes of prayer time at least once, preferably every day. Follow the steps of prayer found in **Session 3: Affirmative Daily Prayer.**

*We need only practice stillness, with our mind turned Godward, to experience such a calm, such a peace, such a joy that we recognize it is God's presence and wait eagerly for Him to speak. When the ear is opened Godward it shall hear, for the promise is "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Frances Foulks, *Effectual Prayer*, p. 85-86.*

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Session 5 Praying Aloud in a Gathering

This is our method of prayer: acknowledging our oneness with God, claiming the ability that this gives, and expecting to have the things needed and conducive to spiritual progress. Myrtle Fillmore, *Healing Letters*, p. 100.

Most people in a gathering are relieved to find a minister or prayer chaplain present to offer prayers at the start and end of our time together. Rarely will anyone else volunteer for this seemingly daunting challenge of giving words to our spiritual experience together. In a spiritual community developing a culture of spiritual leadership, it is important that each of us increase our capacity to vocalize affirmative prayer. Imagine a community where you could turn to anyone nearby, asking for prayer support and being able to trust that the words will flow from a rising consciousness of divine identity! That is what we are creating together!

In this session, we will discover that when it is your turn to pray aloud in a gathering, you will have access to a simple four-step formula to assist you in spoken affirmative prayer. Think four A's: Atmosphere, Acknowledge, Affirm, Appreciate.

The Four A's of Spoken Prayer Atmosphere Acknowledgement Affirmation Appreciation

Breathe – get in the **atmosphere** of the divine

The process begins when the facilitator calls for stillness, and everyone is invited to make contact with his or her own inner divinity. Richard & Mary-Alice Jafolla, *The Quest for Prayer*, p. 88

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*In all our prayers, talks, and songs with God as the subject, we should first have a period of silence, a selah, in which the divine presence is invoked as the creative power. Then we can proclaim with Jesus, "I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works." Cora and Charles Fillmore, **Teach Us To Pray**, p. 136.*

*When we pray we look up from within, not because God is off in the sky, but because this spiritual center in the top of the head becomes active and our attention is naturally drawn to it. Charles Fillmore, **Christian Healing**, p. 76.*

Explore

- ? Think of the most effective ways you have been called into prayer by a group prayer leader. What was helpful about the words spoken and the instruction given?
- ? As a group, brainstorm language you could use when called upon to lead group prayer that gets you and the group into the atmosphere of the divine.

Acknowledge One Presence and Power

*The important thing to remember is that neither the group nor any individual in the group is praying to God. Rather...they are praying from the Presence of God within...The difference between praying to God and praying from an awareness of the presence within can be likened to a fireman's trying to put out a fire by asking the hydrant for water rather than hooking up to the hydrant. Richard and Mary-Alice Jafolla, **The Quest for Prayer**, p. 89.*

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You are not an isolated person separate and apart from every other person in the meeting. Each one is in you, and you are in each one, and all are in God. Those who come to this room to be a part of your consciousness of truth are all embodied in God, all one. There are not two, three, five, or six, as there seem to be. There is only one, all one in God-consciousness, all partaking of the divine name and nature. Joel Goldsmith, **The Altitude of Prayer**, p. 96-97

...it is well to impress upon the sensitive mind that it is unified with Divine Mind through Christ, through the same mind that was in Christ Jesus. Cora and Charles Fillmore, **Teach Us to Pray**, p. 139

Explore

- ? **What does it mean to you to pray “from the Presence of God within”?**
- ? **Refer back to Session One about invocation. Write a list of possible statements you could make that acknowledge the Oneness, the Allness, of God.**

Affirm divine consciousness/powers/**attributes**, Truth

When asking the Father for that which belongs to the Son under the divine law, man should assume the power and dignity of the Prince of Peace. He should not crawl and cringe before an imaginary king on a throne but rather feel that he is the image of an invisible being that has created him to represent His mightiness as well as His loving-kindness. We should affirm with conviction those mighty words uttered by Jesus: “All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.” Cora and Charles Fillmore, **Teach Us To Pray**, p. 28.

We now know that fervent words expressed in prayer and song and eloquent proclamations of spiritual Truth release the millions of electrons in our brain cells and through them blend like chords of mental music with the Mind universal. Charles Fillmore, **Atom-Smashing Power of Mind**, p. 84.

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The word of prayer has in it a living seed that is bound to impregnate the soil of the mind and cause it to bring forth fruit after its kind. Cora and Charles Fillmore, **Teach Us To Pray**, p. 19.

Explore

- ? What might you want to affirm at the start of your study circle session? At the close?
- ? What might you want to affirm after people in your circle express their prayer intentions?
- ? What might you want to affirm when a group is gathered in prayer for a specific prayer intention, such as to pray about the after-effects of the earthquake in Haiti?

Express thanks – appreciate

The purpose of praise is to awaken in ourselves a higher realization of the omnipresence and power of God. Charles Fillmore, **The Revealing Word**, p. 152.

Turn the power of praise upon whatever you wish to increase. Give thanks that it is now fulfilling your ideal. The faithful law, faithfully observed, will reward you. You can praise yourself from weakness to strength, from ignorance to intelligence, from poverty to affluence, from sickness to health. Charles Fillmore, **Christian Healing**, p. 80.

Praise and thanksgiving impart the quickening spiritual power that produces growth and increase in all things. Charles Fillmore, **Prosperity**, p. 105.

Explore

- ? How might you speak words of appreciation without addressing God as if God is separate and distant from you?
- ? Put together the four A's and take turns in the circle offering a group prayer.

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Enrichment

During the week ahead, anticipate one time you will be in a group. Whether or not you would likely be asked to lead a prayer, construct a spoken prayer in the format of the four A's. The more often you practice praying aloud in a gathering, the less anxious you will feel and the more your words will flow from your divine identity. What a blessing you are to others in your presence!



Principles and Practices of Affirmative Prayer

Session Six

Affirmative Prayer for Others

Before praying with or for another, it is important that we first pray for ourselves.

*In praying for others, we really need to pray first for ourselves, to pray for light and peace and understanding. Then we shall be able to let go of anxiety, worry, and fear concerning our dear ones and pray for them with understanding and complete trust. No matter how things may look to us, our prayer reaches past the appearance and affirms our faith in God who is present in the one for whom we pray. Martha Smock, *Meet It With Faith*, p. 90.*

*I thought about the many times I have prayed for others. I saw that I have never prayed for another and received a good report about the results of my prayers when I did not myself feel lifted up and moved. I was changed. I was touched. The power of God had flashed in me. James Dillet Freeman, *Prayer: The Master Key*, p. 125.*

Explore

- ? What are the purposes and benefits of praying for others by praying first for ourselves?
- ? Talk about a time you have felt concern enough for a loved one that you prayed for them. Was your prayer a prayer of faith or a prayer of desperation? Would you pray differently today? What would be different?

In praying for others, we recognize the Divinity within them and within all life, no matter what the appearances are. We must know and affirm that each person is created in the image and likeness of God.

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Your greatest prayer for another is the realization that God is within him, a loving presence, a power for good, a moving force that heals and guides and blesses. Feel your oneness with those for whom you pray. Martha Smock, **Listen Beloved...**, p. 61.

*There is one prayer that always has power to help others. There is one prayer we can always make for another, whether he asks for prayer or not. This is the prayer of love. To make the prayer of love is to see the one for whom we are praying perfect in spite of flaws; for this is how love always beholds the beloved. When we do this, we call forth the highest and best in everyone for whom we pray. James Dillet Freeman, **Prayer: The Master Key**, p. 130.*

The words **I behold the Christ in you** are good to remember and hold in our prayers for others, for the most effective prayer we can make on anyone's behalf is to behold the Christ in her, the perfect Spirit, the perfect power, the perfect mind, the perfect life, the perfect guide, the perfect peace. Martha Smock, **Meet It With Faith**, p. 91.

There is power in prayer; there is much that we can give to others through our prayers. The greatest gift we can ever give to anyone, the most helpful thing we can ever do for another, is to trust the power of God in that person, to have faith that with this power all things are possible, all disease is curable, all conditions are capable of transformation. Martha Smock, p. 92.

Explore

- ? In prayer for others, we are not declaring a desired outcome; instead, we are expressing words of confidence in the Good of God, in the perfect Divine Life of another – calling that Good and that Life into expression. Talk about the difference between saying “I see this illness healed” and “Divine Life is flowing in and through this person, and all is well.”
- ? In one of the quotations above, Martha Smock suggests we affirm “I behold the Christ in you” when praying for another. What does this mean to you? How might this help in prayer?

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To pray for the highest good for someone requires that we truly “let go and let God,” trusting what is best for the person is being revealed.

Whenever you pray for others, have faith that there is a Spirit in them, a Spirit that is God, a Spirit that will not fail. The way in which God guides others may be different from the way in which you think they should go. But if you are praying in faith, if you are trusting the power of God, you are able to let go of what you personally think should be the outcome, the answer. You are willing to let God's will be done, for you know that God's will is good, perfect, and true.

As much as we long for the best for our dear ones, our desire cannot compare with the infinite possibilities for good that are in them, that God is ready and willing to unfold through them. When we pray, we help encourage and quicken the Spirit that is in them; we help call forth the God Self. We are never disappointed in our prayers for others when we do not limit them to what we think is right and best, to what we think we should pray for, but enlarge them to encompass the limitless good of God.

Let not your heart be troubled by the problems and needs of your dear ones. Even when it seems that there is nothing you can do, that you must stand by and see a dear one suffer, do not forget that God is with your dear one, that God's love is greater than any human love.

Have faith in the Spirit of God in your dear one, have faith in God to guide, to bless, to heal, and to help. You are not to stand by with a troubled heart, but with a heart of faith, a heart that is filled with love, a heart that rejoices in the power of God at work,

Martha Smock, Meet It With Faith

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When you pray for another, your word of Truth quickens, awakens, and stirs to action the Spirit within that individual, so you do not need to lose any of your vital force when you realize that the word does the work. In this realization your patients do not draw upon your energy. Myrtle Fillmore, **Healing Letters**, page 128.

You can be of no greater help to anyone than the measure of truth established in your consciousness...Your consciousness is as infinite as God because God constitutes your consciousness, and God is infinite. All who are embraced in your consciousness are embraced in the law of God, if you know it and consciously remember it. Joel Goldsmith, **The Altitude of Prayer**, p. 70, 72.

Explore

- ? **When you really, really want another person's health restored, relationship healed, poverty relieved, etc., how do you get out of the way so that you are not in the way with your anxiousness?**
- ? **Some metaphysics teachers claim you must ask a person's permission before praying for them, as if your prayer for them could interfere with their will. However, prayer for another is never about asserting an outcome but about affirming a divine truth that uplifts life. What is yours to do in prayer for another? What is not yours?**
- ? **When you are particularly close to someone for whom you are praying, it is often helpful to ask someone else to pray with you for your loved one. Share a particular prayer intention you have for another person. Take turns in the group praying aloud for your loved ones (refer to *Session Five: Praying Aloud in a Gathering* to use the Four A's).**

Enrichment

During the week ahead, call **Silent Unity**, Unity's worldwide prayer ministry available by telephone twenty-four hours a day, every day -- 800-669-7729. Express a prayer intention for yourself or someone else, and then listen to the words of prayer spoken by a Unity prayer worker.

In addition, seek out a UCSA Prayer Chaplain after Sunday Services, or call the church office – 210-824-7351 – and a prayer chaplain will call you back.

Principles and Practices of Affirmative Prayer

Further reading about Affirmative Prayer

Jafolla, Richard and Mary-Alice, *The Quest for Prayer*. Unity Books (Unity Village MO) 1999.

Hasbrouck, Hypatia, *Handbook of Positive Prayer*. Unity Books (Unity Village MO) 1984.

Foulks, Frances W., *Effectual Prayer*. Unity Books (Unity Village MO) 1945.

Freeman, James Dillet, *Prayer: The Master Key*. Unity Books (Unity Village MO) 1968.

Fillmore, Charles and Cora, *Teach Us to Pray*. Unity Books (Unity Village MO) 1941.

Association of Unity Churches, International, *Creating a Life of Prayer: A Small Group Ministry Exploration* (Lee's Summit MO) 2003.

Goldsmith, Joel S., *The Altitude of Prayer*. Harper & Row (NY NY) 1975.

Principles and Practices of Affirmative Prayer

Get Ready My Soul

Daniel Nahmod

Get ready my soul I'm diving in
Get ready my soul I'm diving in
To the deepest kind of love
To the sweetest kind of life
Get ready, get ready my soul

Everything I've ever done
Everything I've ever seen
Everything I've lost or won
Everything I've ever dreamed
Has brought me here to the present moment
Here to a new beginning
Here and I'm seeing life so clearly now

Get ready my soul I'm diving in
Get ready my soul I'm diving in
To the deepest kind of love
To the sweetest kind of life
Get ready, get ready my soul

Cause here I go deeper deeper
Deeper than I've ever been before
Here I go closer closer
Closer to my sacred Source

Get ready my soul I'm diving in
Get ready my soul I'm diving in
To the deepest kind of love
To the sweetest kind of life
Get ready, get ready my soul

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When I Pray

Daniel Nahmod

When I pray I feel my heart go deeper
My heart go deeper into my God
When I pray I feel my heart go deeper
My heart go deeper into my God

Right here, right now, right where I am I pray
Right here, right now, right where I am I pray

When I pray I feel my soul go deeper
My soul go deeper into my God
When I pray I feel my soul go deeper
My soul go deeper into my God

Right here, right now, right where I am I pray
Right here, right now, right where I am I pray

When I pray I feel my love go deeper
My love go deeper into my God
When I pray I feel my love go deeper
My love go deeper into my God

Right here, right now, right where I am I pray
Right here, right now, right where I am I pray

Right here, right now, right where I am I pray
Right here, right now, right where I am I pray

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Our Thoughts Are Prayers

Lucille Nelson

Our thoughts are prayers
And we are always praying
Our thoughts are prayers
Listen to what you're saying
Seek a higher consciousness
A state of peacefulness
And know that God is always there
And every thought becomes a prayer

Our thoughts are prayers
And we are always praying
Our thoughts are prayers
Take charge of what you're saying
Seek a higher consciousness
A state of peacefulness
And know that God is always there
And every thought becomes a prayer

Go Within

Bethani

Settle back, close your eyes, free your mind, just be
Watch your breath come and go as it takes you out to sea

God is here loving you, hear the ocean's roar
Go within, let the peace bring you home once more

Let your thoughts drift away, you don't need them here
You are in a quiet place where trust replaces fear

Feel the beating of your heart, feel the air upon your skin
Listen to the silence; God is calling, go within

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In the Silence

Bethani

In the silence there is a sacred place
A secret meeting place, love is there
And in the silence where every color blends
And every rainbow ends good is there
In the light now you find that you know peace of mind

In the silence your path is paved in gold
And all your dreams unfold
Love is there
Peace is there
Truth is there
God is there

In the Stillness of This Moment

Karen Drucker

In the stillness of this moment there is peace
There is peace
In the stillness of this moment there is peace
There is peace
And I rest and trust and breathe and know
That in the stillness of this moment there is peace

In the stillness of this moment there is love...

In the stillness of this moment I feel love...

In the stillness of this moment I am peace...

Principles and Practices of Affirmative Prayer

The Master Mind Prayer

1. Recognition

I gratefully acknowledge the loving, creative Power for Good in the Universe, which is active within me, and all others. I now claim my Oneness with that Power which is the Source and Master Mind of my life.

2. Faith

Faith is my faculty of spiritually seeing and knowing that all things are possible. It is not I, but the Spirit within me that does the work.

3. Surrender

I let go and let God be God in me. I open my mind and heart to all that is revealed within.

4. Release

I am honest with myself as never before, and I willingly admit, forgive and release all mistaken judgments, erroneous beliefs and negative emotions that I have directed toward myself or others. [Pause]

5. Intention

Knowing God is my Source and all things are possible, I declare my prayer intention is...

GROUP RESPONSE:

“ _____, All that you desire is fulfilled by faith.”

6. Receiving

I lovingly and gratefully receive the gifts of God my Source. The Universe responds to my every need and desire. I celebrate the good news of my prayer intention fulfilled.

7. Covenant

I affirm this covenant with my Source, the Master Mind, and I go forth into my life with a spirit of enthusiasm, excitement and expectancy. I am at peace.