



Cover photo: Students from Avondale College in Auckland who pray outside their school every Wednesday morning. Anna Wachter (daughter of Navigators staff) and a friend started this in February 2017.

PRAYER THAT TRANSFORMS

Many people live, work and play comfortably without God. Prayer and God are portrayed as necessary for those who get to the end of their own resources. Better to rely on yourself and those around you. Is this true? Is God and prayer something of a last resort?

I am impressed with how much prayer played a part in the life of the apostle Paul. For someone so knowledgeable and accomplished he seemed to rely on prayer and God more than the average person. Why is this? His prayers reveal concern for inner life changes; becoming more loving, deepening faith, Spirit inspired knowledge of God, inner strength, peace and joy, enlightened hearts. We might urge people to make inner changes, however only God can work these out in and through us. We pray because there are so many, many things that only God knows and can do.

This edition of Navigate is full of practical ideas on prayer. The contents are written by practitioners, people who are seeking to walk with God in the midst of busy jobs, juggling family commitments and facing suffering. Prayer is not for the faint hearted, it is for those seeking to know God more deeply and who want to bring Gods kingdom into the lives of those around them.

Simon

Simon Cayzer
National Director



I go for a walk every day, rain or shine, first thing in the morning, and I pray then. The dog doesn't mind if I pray out loud and walking seems to stop my mind from wandering off God so much. - **Sue McNaughton**



Sue McNaughton. In my life as a non-evangelist, non-apostle, non-teacher, people-avoider, prayer is what keeps me connected to the white fields needing labourers. In prayer I find the reason to care about people; no-one is ever beyond the reach of the gospel and if God does not answer my prayer today, tomorrow or in my lifetime that's because he has a better schedule than I do.

Tony Parsons. *“And pray in the Spirit on all occasion with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints” (Ephesians 6.18).* This is my 'to go' verse on prayer as a life-style! The energy here 'incites' me to pray and to 'keep on' supporting fellow workers for the Kingdom. I find praying with a bunch of mates focuses me to stay on task and to meaningfully enter their world. Remarkably encouraging.



Juliet Cayzer. Prayer can be difficult to practise consistently when life is busy. One thing that helps me is having a few people to pray regularly with. Even though it's only for a short time each day, or once each month, the structure helps to stop the rest of life from taking over. And little by little, when you pray regularly, it adds up. An additional, unexpected consequence of regular prayer has been experiencing prayer transform my own heart. God and His Kingdom are in sharper focus and there's less resistance to look to him in challenging situations rather than seeing them from my perspective.

Ben Burnell. I have had a couple of times in dedicated prayer where I search deep within to bring before God any and all struggles or weaknesses I can think of. I think it's often too easy to gloss over these things, which I may consider 'small', whereas in reality I'm most likely choosing not to acknowledge them out of pride/shame etc. He already knows all of these things and there is a real power and freedom that comes when I have been completely open and transparent with God.



Sarah Campbell. Growing up my mom was always hosting prayer meetings at our house. She was part of a group called moms in prayer. I remember her teaching me at a young age the importance of praying scripture. This is still one of my favourite tools today. I love making prayer cards and putting a few verses to pray for a specific person or group of people. They aren't fancy and I'm always adding to them. Not only am I praying in a more focused way, but hopefully I'm memorizing scripture as well.

Franziska Plimmer. Prayer gives me a personal relationship with God. I talk to him before a meet up with a student and often during. I also like to write down prayers answered so that I can go back to them and draw comfort from all the times he has so obviously provided for me.



Liz McClure writes:

Before work: 'Father, create opportunity to invite D to read the Bible with John on Thursday'.

At work: 'Random' corridor meeting with D. Invite given. He's very keen.

Thursday: Text friends - pray. John & D meet. D responds to the Good News.

At work: D finds me. Smiling - 'a weight's lifted. I never understood this before', quotes 1 John 5, about 'having life'. He's off to memorise more.

Later. Text friends 'amazing news'. And say ...Thank You Father.

Paul Mulholland. The trials of life seem to loom much larger at two, three or four a.m. Recently, instead of thinking or praying directly about the current problem, I am able to get a different perspective by working through the alphabet and naming and thanking God for his many attributes, or meditating and praying over memory verses one word at a time e.g. Psalm 23. This allows me to refocus on God rather than the problem and even often puts me back to sleep!



Asking God questions and then listening to his response. Here's one of my favourites: “What is it that I don't understand about you Lord, that if I did, I wouldn't have reacted in that way?” - **Merodie Rose**



I am motivated to pray often because he is already ahead of me and at work in people I am concerned for. This gives me confidence to ask him boldly to do what is really needed for someone, letting him guide me specifically on what to ask. It also gives me faith to believe he will answer.

- **Stefi Plimmer-Blattner**



Why is praying so hard? I asked some close friends what they found challenging about prayer. The responses revealed three main themes; difficulty **connecting** to God, **consistency**, and **focusing** on what we're praying for.

Taking the time for prayer in our already busy schedules can be a big ask. Then when we do pray it often feels like we're talking into some gaping void, we lose focus and start thinking about something else. It is understandable we find prayer challenging. When I encounter the difficulties listed above it becomes increasingly challenging to take the time to pray and seek God. Eventually praying becomes a token gesture.

One tool I have recently discovered has been to pray through the Psalms, using them as a springboard for my own prayers. This has revitalised my prayer life. I use two different approaches:

1. I read a Psalm in its entirety, summarise it in my own words and then use the key ideas from the Psalm as the basis for my prayer.
2. I read a Psalm and then re-read it, stopping after each verse that has caught my attention. I then use those verses as the basis for my prayer, praying for anything that comes to mind.

This has helped me immensely with connecting to God. I have developed a greater appreciation for who God is. My prayers have also begun to change from only asking God for things, to appreciating and thanking God for who he is. Using the Psalms has refocused my prayers on God as a great, majestic, powerful, loving, generous God. This has helped me to **connect with God** on a personal level.

By connecting with God I am enjoying my prayer times more. I want to pray more! This leads to my second point: We are busy, but there's no substitute for taking the time to pray and to seek God. I am finding the more I pray, the more I learn and appreciate about God, which leads to wanting to pray more. It is a positive feedback loop. As a result I am becoming more **consistent** in my prayer time.

Psalm 19:7

The law of the Lord is perfect,
refreshing the soul.
The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.

Thirdly, I have found using scripture to structure my prayers helps me **focus my prayers**. For example, reading, "The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing" (Psalm 23:1) reminds me to thank God for providing for me in all situations and to pray for those who are in need. Reading the next verse triggers the same process and so it continues until the end of the Psalm. In this way my prayers are bound within the content of the Psalm and I can see the progression in the Psalm as I work through it. This has helped me to remain focused in my prayer.

Allowing Psalms to prompt my own prayers has made my prayer life come alive. It has felt like God is talking to me as we converse through my thoughts, my prayers and my tangents. Sometimes I have run out of time before I have finished reading through a Psalm. When this happens I look up the psalm on my phone and continue to pray the remaining verses throughout the day.

Hebrews 4:12 comes to mind as I reflect on the impact praying through the Psalms has had on my prayer life. God's Word really does come alive! He speaks through verses that grab our attention and he speaks through the thoughts that spring to mind when we read a verse. God's word is active, revealing and discerning our innermost thoughts and feelings. God is shaping us as he stimulates our thoughts and emotions.

I started this when my reading plan took me to the Psalms. Now I do it in addition to my regular Bible reading. It took about three months before I began to notice the difference in my prayer life. If you are looking for something new to try I would highly recommend praying through a Psalm each day. Psalm 27 is a personal favourite of mine to try this with.

- **Prakash Primulapathi**

The beauty I've seen in prayer is how it's changed me. I know the Lord hears and cares, but seeing so many little prayers throughout the day answered reminds me of the amazing love of our Father and helps me trust in the bigger issues. - **Sarah Campbell**





Peter Burch first went to Indonesia as a Navigator International Trainee in 1976. Now four decades later, with his wife Sulis, the excitement and heart to share the Good News about Jesus has not diminished. I visited Peter and Sulis in February this year, seeing them both at work first hand. On one occasion Peter introduced me by saying, "This is my friend Simon and he is going to tell you how he came to know God." On another occasion Peter and I were invited to join an

Islamic class. A respectful dialogue between Peter and the teacher Hassan unfolded, with many people listening. By building bridges Peter was able to talk about knowing God and how Isa (Jesus' name in the Koran) brings us to God.

In April a team of students and Navigator staff will visit Bandung for a short term cross cultural experience. Bandung is a city Peter and Sulis have served in and where there are Navigator ministries. This trip will be a rich opportunity of opening eyes to new cultures, developing a heart for the nations and walking with God in a different setting. Please pray for the team who will be in Indonesia when you receive this.

- **Simon Cayzer**



Talk to God, like you would your father, friend or brother. Turn to him throughout your day with the smallest of things, for he cares about it all. - **Franziska Plimmer**

NAVIGATORS FAITH DIRECTIONS CONFERENCE ASIA-PACIFIC

In January I joined 85 Navigators in Kuala Lumpur from across Asia-Pacific. We came together to celebrate God's work among us, seek direction from God for the next 10 years and to grow in unity. These purposes were worked out primarily through small discussion groups.



The three main Faith Directions to come out of our time together were:

1. Advance the Gospel through more lifelong labourers in all parts of society
2. Advance the Gospel through pioneering into new contexts
3. Advance the Gospel through developing more pioneers, labourers, local leaders and mobile alongsiders



Personally, I was deeply encouraged through the interactions I was able to have with so many people across the region. It was humbling and challenging to hear stories of how God is at work in such varied cultural and religious contexts as we all continue to build his kingdom.

- **Amy Wachter**

WELCOME BRENDA

Introducing **brenda wang**, our National communication, events and funding executive administrator for the next 6 months. She will work part-time with the Navigators alongside her current role as administrator of a study abroad program in Kaikoura called Creation Care Study Program. From Canada, **brenda** worked for 10 years as campus staff with the Canadian Navigators and brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to her role. You can contact her at brenda.wang@navigator.org.nz. **brenda** prefers to have her name all in lower case.



Praying through promises such as Isaiah 40:28-31 and 43:1-2 lifts me during demanding times. I even sing these promises in prayer as I walk or bike from place to place. - **Tim Simpson**