

December 27, 2006

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. Philippians 4:6

Dear GEBC Family:

Prayer—it works. I had the privilege of serving with Dr. Ken Taylor at Tyndale House Publishers for many years. He was a man who believed in prayer. Many of the executive team relate similar stories—after a meeting in Dr. Taylor’s office about some business matter, they would begin to leave—only to have Dr. Taylor ask, “Where are you going? If we need to talk about this issue, we need to pray about it.” And then Dr. Taylor would begin praying.

Prayer is vital to a healthy church and mature believers, and the Elders and staff of Glen Ellyn Bible Church want to be known as a church that prays. Prayer brings us closer to God. Prayer helps us understand God’s will. Who alone can change a human heart, turning it from selfishness to selfless? Who alone can save a soul, providing forgiveness and cleansing from all unrighteousness? Who alone can ultimately preserve unity within a marriage, softening the hearts of spouses toward one another? We know that it is God alone. The Psalmist sang that unless the Lord “builds the house” its builders labor in vain (Psalm 127:1).

Amazingly though, God ordained prayer as one of the means through which He works. Samuel Chadwick, a preacher and teacher in England, wrote: “The one concern of the devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayer-less studies, prayer-less works and prayer-less religion. The devil laughs at our toil, mocks at wisdom, but trembles when we pray.”

The Elders long for the people of Glen Ellyn Bible Church to consistently and constantly pray. Dr. Taylor later wrote in his autobiography, “One of the great lessons I have learned through the years is that regular prayer time is not possible without determination and discipline.” Recognizing the need for discipline and determination in order to become a people of prayer, you will find several opportunities listed on the back of this letter that are aimed at helping the people of GEBC **strengthen the practice of prayer in 2007.**

In His service,

Jim Kraus, for the elders

Strengthening the Practice of Prayer in 2007

- **Weekly Prayer Gatherings** – Whether you have a specific prayer request, or simply want to grow in the practice of prayer we gather for four times weekly.
 - **Sunday Morning** – led by pastoral staff and elders.
 - 7:15-7:45 a.m. in the Senior Pastor's office
 - 11:10-12:10 p.m. in the Senior Pastor's office (**NEW in 2007**)
 - **Wednesday Evening** – led by pastoral staff
 - 7:00-8:30 p.m. in the Fireside Room
 - **Saturday Morning** – led by Cathy Sirvatka
 - 9:30-10:30 a.m. in the worship center.
- **Small Group Curriculum** – This annotated bibliography will provide helpful direction for groups wanting to study the subject of prayer together. Contact pastor David Hornok to receive a copy (dhornok@gebible.org).
- **Small Group Training** – Offered January 21st, from 12:30-2:00 (lunch included), this seminar will be taught by pastor Kelly Brady and will offer practical direction in overcoming barriers to prayer in your small group, as well as strategies for praying with and for those in your group. Email pastor David Hornok (dhornok@gebible.org) to register for this seminar.
- **Lenten Season Devotions and Prayer** – We are encouraging everyone to purchase a copy of *Reliving the Passion*, by Walt Wangerin. This forty-day devotional begins on Ash Wednesday, February 21st, and will help prepare our hearts and minds for the celebration of Easter. This devotional will also serve as a guide for our Wednesday Evening Prayer Service during the Lenten season. You will be able to purchase a copy of *Reliving the Passion* for \$12, in Rathbun Hall beginning February 4, 2007.
- **Prayer Retreat** – This half-day retreat, offered on Saturday morning, April 21st from 8:00-12:00, will provide both group and individual prayer time, as well as guided and unguided prayer opportunities. The goal of our time away is to equip those just beginning to pray, as well as encourage devoted intercessors to continue in prayer. Contact senior pastor Kelly Brady (kbrady@gebible.org) to register for this seminar.
- **September Sermon Series** – We'll kickoff the fall and our new ministry year in with a series on prayer titled, *Talking with God*. This series will aim at not only strengthening our understanding of how prayer “works,” but also provide practical strategies for overcoming the barriers to praying without ceasing.