

The Practice of Petitionary Prayer

from *Disciplines of a Godly Man* by R. Kent Hughes

The Prayer List

Essential to our effective petitionary prayer is a prayer list. I say this first because of my own repeated experiences. For example, I may be praying for my mother, and as I pray for her I see our old family home at 747 Edmaru Avenue. In front is parked my gray-primed 1941 Ford. It has racing slicks on the back, a hopped-up '48 Merc engine, and on the side, custom pin-striping which reads "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." Suddenly I am seventeen, wearing my blue suede leather jacket, sitting behind my gold steering wheel, and heading down Beach Boulevard to Huntington Beach. I can smell the ocean and cocoa butter. So much for my "prayers for Mother"!

This is why I need a prayer list. To be sure, even using a list, my mind still wanders. But when it does, I always have my list to bring me back. And when I am especially prone to distraction I can place my index finger on her name and pray with my eyes open—moving from name to name in this way.

Every Christian man [woman] should have a prayer list which lists, among other things, the names of family and, if married, spouse and children. Moreover, the list ought to be detailed, featuring personal items under the names of those closest to him. I have found that small "Post-its" placed under headings help keep my list updated.

My daily prayer list carries the following headings, each with several details under it:

- Family
- Staff, secretaries, & custodians
- The ill
- The grieving
- Important events
- Present problems
- Ministries
- Weekly worship
- New believers
- Missions list

In addition to my daily list, I have four other lists which I try to go through once a week.

List 1

- Ongoing ill
- Personal request from others
- Evangelism
- Spiritual warfare

List 2

- World
- USA
- Personal life
- Needed personal qualities

List 3

- Christian leaders
- Pastors
- Upcoming ministries & vision

List 4

- Government leaders (federal, state, and local).

Without a prayer list, my promises to “pray for you” would be totally empty.

Quite frankly, I could not get on at all without a prayer list, not only because it tames my wandering mind, but also because it insures that I will not neglect things that are important to me, including the many requests for personal prayer which I receive. Without a prayer list, my promises to “pray for you” would be totally empty. In addition, a prayer list is perfect for keeping track of answers to prayer.

If you do not have a prayer list, start small. Simply list the relationships and matters most important to you on a 3 x 5 card, add a few specifics under the names, and put it in your wallet for daily reference. I guarantee that if you use a prayer list, it will greatly enhance your prayer life.