HOW TO SPEND AN HOUR *In Prayer*

BY DICK EASTMAN

How can anyone possibly pray an entire hour?

Here's how to structure an hour in prayer with twelve scripturally based aspects. Conveniently, each hour can be divided into twelve five-minute "points of focus", allowing specific time for each of these vital areas. Of course, some of these aspects may require only a minute, whereas others—such as intercessory prayer for the world—will require far more than a mere five minutes.

1 

Praise Psalm 63:3; Hebrews 12:15: Matthew 6:9b

All prayer should begin with a recognition of God's nature. The Lord's Prayer—our model for all praying—begins with "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." Praise is that aspect of prayer which vocally esteems God for His virtues and accomplishments.

2 

Waiting Psalm 37:7; Isaiah 40:31; Lamentations 3:25

Not only should we begin with an prayer, but time should be given to being "quiet" in God's presence. This is not meditation or just a time for listening; it is simply taking time to let God love you.

3 

Confession Psalm 139: 23-24; Psalm 51:10; I John 1:9

The Psalmist asked God to search his heart for unconfessed sin. He knew sin was one of the greatest roadblocks to answered prayer. Early in prayer we need to make time for confession. This clears the way for powerful praying.

4 

The Word 2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 19:7-8

"The commandment of the Lord (His Word) is pure, enlightening the eyes," wrote young King David. When we bring God's Word into our prayer, We are opening our eyes to new possibili- ties in God. At this point in prayer, read God's Word.

5 

Intercession 1 Timothy 2:1-2; Psalm 2:8; Matthew 9:37-38

Our prayer now centers on intercession for a lost and dying world. This concerns praying for others who have desperate needs.

6 

Petition Matthew 7:7; Matthew 6:11; James 4:2

This aspect of prayer concerns our personal needs. Petition is included in the Lord's Prayer in the expression "Give us this day our daily bread." To petition God is to open our need to God through prayer.

7 

The Word Jeremiah 23:29, 2 Samuel 22:31; Numbers 23:19

Earlier we suggested you read God's Word. Now, pray God's Word. Here we bring actual Scripture into our prayer. We can never pray out of God's will when we pray God's Word.

8 

Thanksgiving Philippians 4:6; Psalm 100:4

When Paul wrote to the Philippines, he instructed them to offer prayer and supplication "with thanksgiving." Thanksgiving differs from praise in that praise recognizes God for who He is, and thanksgiving recognizes God for specific things He has done.

9 

Singing Psalm 100:2; Ephesians 5:19

Melody in its trust sense is a gift of God for the purpose of singing praises unto Him. Many Christians, unfortunately, have never learned the beauty of singing a "new" song undo God during prayer. These songs may come straight from the heart with the Holy Spirit creating t'h e melody. Paul spoke of singing "spiritual songs." To sing unto the Lord is to worship God in melody.

HOW TO SPEND AN HOUR *In Prayer* CONTINUED

10



10. Meditation **Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1-2; Psalm 77:12**

To wait in God's presence is simply to be there to love Him. Meditation differs in that our mind is very active. To meditate is to ponder spiritual themes in reference to God.

11



11. Listening **Ecclesiastes 5:2; 1 Kings 19:11-12**

Whether through His written Word or by an inner "still small voice" of His Holy Spirit, God speaks to praying Christians. But we must take time to listen.

12



12. Praise **Matthew 6:13; Psalm 100:4; Psalm 150**

We begin our prayer by recognizing God's nature, and we end in similar fashion. Jesus taught this when He ended His prayer with the statement, "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

These are just suggestions—everyone has a different prayer life. Developing such a prayer habit will lead you into a ministry that changes you and the world around you as well.