



***LIFE IN THE  
CHURCH!***

*Booklet 6*

*of*

*"Effective Christian Living" Series.*

***By***

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*THE BIG QUESTION!*

*#6*

*"LIFE IN THE CHURCH!"*

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1.

"HOW DOES PRAYER HELP ME  
IN MY SPIRITUAL GROWTH!"

Prayer is one of the effective means of grace to the Christian. Paul wrote, *"Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."* *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* (Philippians 4:6-7, RSV)

TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!

Prayer is a means of growth. Prayer is both an attitude and an act. Prayer is a sudden and urgent utterance of the soul, and it is an agonizing and lengthy state of the soul. It is important for the Christian to pray every day.

### **TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!**

*'Father, I desire to maintain a loving relationship with you through prayer. Involving myself in regular prayer and study of your Word, I believe I will receive guidance in times of decision, reproof in times of mistakes, comfort in times of sorrow, strength in times of weakness, and courage in times of fear! Thank you so much!'*

### **TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!**

*It might be wonderful if Christian growth would come easily and naturally and spontaneously, but you probably know that dynamic growth in the Christian Life involves the resolution and determination of Your Will—discipline! Discipline is necessary for any kind of achievement (athletics, etc.), and certainly this is true concerning spiritual growth and health.*

*"Take time to be Holy, speak often with thy Lord." Make your daily 'Quiet Time' a high priority! Meditate upon God's Laws, day and night. Start your day by talking earnestly with God, and let God speak to you through the Bible!*

2.

*"WHAT IF I HAVE NO TANGIBLE RESULTS FROM MY LABORS OF LOVE?"*

*In our success-oriented society, if certain tangible results are not achieved within a prescribed time, then one is pronounced as a failure.*

*From God's perspective, tangible results are not to be despised. However, if a Christian labors diligently and prays fervently, and yet there are no tangible results forthcoming, he is not to abandon His God-given task. He is to remain faithful to His Lord, without tangible results!*

*How easy it is to become discouraged and eventually to 'throw in the towel' if we do not see results from our spiritual labors! On the other hand, how easy it is to grow smug, complacent, or self-sufficient if we see many tangible results from our spiritual labors!*

*The Spirit-filled man is faithful, regardless of man's applause or man's scorn. He is faithful regardless of his temptation to despair when seeming to fail, and regardless of his temptations to pride, when*

*seeming to succeed.*

### *TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!*

*Paul the apostle had a high sense of divine call in his life. Faithfulness to that call was all-important to Paul. He focused his attention on God, not on man's praise or on man's persecution.*

*Both in happy times and in hard times, Paul was faithful to his divine commission to preach the Gospel regardless of life is changing circumstances. Faithful when he appeared to be successful and when he did not appear to be successful.*

*Said Paul, "I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ." (Philippians 3:8, RSV)*

*Many missionaries have labored hard and long with little numerical or 'worldly' success, but they were faithful to God's call. They are on God's honor roll, for their faithfulness constituted their success.*

*Love never fails, even if the one you love rejects you. To love, in spite of rejection, is to be truly successful.*

**TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!**

*"Father, help me not to grow weary in my labors of love, not to lose heart when my little world of achievement around me begins to crumble. Help me to keep running the race of life and fighting the fight of faith, even when my efforts seem fruitless of results. Keep my eyes on the 'finished line' and let me see the prize of God that awaits the faithful of all ages. In Jesus' name. Amen."*

**TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!**

*Remembering to 'keep on keeping on' for Jesus when circumstances tell you to 'throw in the towel'*

3.

*"SHOULD I CONFRONT FELLOW  
CHRISTIANS WHO DISAGREE WITH  
MY DOCTRINES?"*

*You, as a follower of Christ, are called to be a 'UNITER', not a 'divider' in the Body of Christ (the Church)!*

*While you maintain your essential (basic) doctrines regarding God, Man, Sin, Jesus Christ, and Salvation, you are also called to be Tolerant and Charitable with your fellow believers who have a different 'persuasion' regarding secondary doctrines (that are not essential for salvation) - doctrines like baptism, the Lord's Supper, the observance of the Lord's Day, views regarding the 'Last Times', Eternal Security, Speaking in 'Tongues', and so much more!*

*Maintain your own 'Convictions' regarding your interpretation of 'secondary doctrines' and be glad to discuss your beliefs with those believers who differ from you. However, always be careful never to overly dogmatic or insensitive to the feelings of 'your fellow believers'.*

*It is never your goal to 'win a theological war'; no, your goal is to engage in a loving, open-minded dialogue with others - recognizing that no one possesses a perfect understanding of all the hidden mysteries of God, some of which God has revealed in His matchless Word!*

### *TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!*

*"Christians are to love one another". (1 John 4:7) There should be no place among Christians for the sectarian spirit - that spirit which results in dividing true Christians because of secondary issues of doctrinal distinctive.*

*Criticism, divisions, carnal jealousy, and competition—these are the results when Christian groups elevate secondary issues rather than unite together because of their common love for Christ!*

*Whenever Christians manifest any spirit other than love, they are hindering the cause of Christ and frustrating the purpose of God which is "...to unite all things in him (Christ), things in heaven and things on earth." (Ephesians 1:10, RSV)*

### *TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!*

*"O thou unifying God, help me to main-*

*tain 'the unity of the faith in the bond of peace.' Broaden the circle of my inclusion of those fellow Christians who agree with me in the essentials of the faith but who disagree with me in the secondary doctrines of the faith. Deliver me from the sectarian spirit that results in destroying fellowship among Christian people. In Jesus' charitable Name. Amen."*

### *TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!*

*With your admirable place in God's church and with your strongly held orthodox doctrines, may I encourage you to be tolerant with your fellow believers whose minds have led them to interpret some Scriptures different from you. I am not referring to essential doctrines regarding Christ, which all true believers must agree upon—for personal Salvation.*

*I am talking about the many 'Secondary' doctrines that equally Sincere and equally Intelligent and equally Mature Christians interpret differently! Remain open-minded, humble, and teachable! Learn Something From Almost ANYONE!*

4.

*WHAT IS MY PROPER RESPONSE TO  
FELLOW CHURCHMEN?"*

*Paul (the New Testament Apostle) believed that the secret to being a strong Christian or to being a strong Church was love.*

*Love heals all breaches between brothers.*

*Love humbly submits to others, and learns from the advice of others.*

*Love makes a person pliable, understanding, and easy to get along with.*

*Love restrains one from pronouncing judgments on others, and changes the critical look into the compassionate look.*

*Love builds up the character of others, and gives the church a unified front in order to meet the frown of the world.*

*Love is the fragrance of the Church which attracts the spiritually destitute and gives hope to the despairing wayfarer.*

*TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!*

*To the divided Church at Corinth Paul writes, "Now I do beg you, my brothers, by*

*all that our Lord Jesus Christ means to you, to speak with one voice, and not allow yourselves to be split up into parties. All together, you should be achieving a unity in thought and judgment. For I know, from what some of Chloe's people have told me, that you are each making different claims". (1 Corinthians 1:10-11)*

*Because of Christ's example, Paul urges Christians who feel strain between themselves because of differences of opinion, to make up their differences. Paul says that 'they should be knit together'.*

*Just as fractured bones need to be knitted, together to restore the body to maximum usefulness, so fractured relationships between members of Christ's Church must be healed in order that Christ's body, the Church, can function in a healthy and efficient way.*

#### *TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!*

*"Father, help me never to be guilty of rending the fellowship of your church, for you hate all who 'sow discord among the brethren'. (Proverbs 6:19)*

*Make me an instrument of peace and love—to reconcile relationships, which*

*have been destroyed, and to strengthen the spiritual fellowship, which has been threatened. Help me to "maintain the unity of the faith in the bond of peace". In the empowering name of Jesus. Amen."*

***TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!***

*Always remember, throughout your life's journey, and especially when you are involved in your many human relationships within your Church, that to be a peacemaker is to do the work of God Himself (for there is no greater Peacemaker than God does!).*

5.

*"AS A CHRISTIAN, HOW SHOULD I  
VIEW THE CHURCH?"*

*It should be said of Christians: "Christians always help each other"! Paul often talked about his fellow workers. "In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now." (Philippians 1:4-5)*

*In Romans, Chapter 16, Paul refers to over 30 different fellow workers and speaks of them with great affection, love, and appreciation. (Phoebe, Prisca and Aquila; Epaenetus, Mary, Andronicus and Junias, Ampliatus, Urbanus, Stachys, Apelles, Aristobulus; Herodion Narcissus, Tryphaena and Tryphosa, Persis, and his mother and mine. Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, Olympas, Timothy, Lucius, Jason, Sosipater, I Tertius, Gaius Erastus, and Quartus). No one can do the job by himself. We need one another!*

**TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!**

*What is one of the Marks of a great Church? Christian workers who work together with a Spirit of Cooperation and Interdependence, each working for all and all working for each in the Spirit of Christ.*

*The Church is like a team and the pastor is simply a 'playing coach'. None is seeking glory for himself and all are seeking glory for the team Manager - Jesus Christ! Christ both owns and manages the team and all of us are fellow team players!*

*The Church is not a spectator sport. The Church is a team of workers, all working hard together to win the game of life. No competition against each other, but all working for each other and for the Lord!*

*None of us, by ourselves, can win all the souls to Christ. We must all be doing witnessing and soul winning. None of us can finance all the needs of the Church. All of us must be giving our tithes and offerings to the Lord. Someone said, "Many hands make the work easy"!*

## TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!

*"Father, help me to work cooperatively with all of my fellow 'team members' in your Church. Let me do nothing out of envy or rivalry, but out of good will. Help me never to look only to my own interests, but also to the interests of others, never doing anything out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. "If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions, 2 make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; doing Nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; 4 not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others." (Philippians 2:1-4) In Jesus' loving name. Amen!"*

## TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!

*The Church is not a 'business' nor is it a 'religious club', the Church is the Body of Christ, and you are an important (but humble) part of Christ's Body! Discover your unique talents (spiritual gifts), and ask God*

*how you should use your abilities, not to glorify yourself, but to bless everyone around you (in and outside your local church). Serve confidently, but always humbly.*

*Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but soberly according to the degree of grace, that God has granted to you.*

*The Bible says that you are to 'consider others better than yourself.' "... doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself..." (Philippians 2:3) Keep yourself in 'The Shadows of the Cross' - exalting Christ, loving others, humbling yourself.*

6.

*"IF I AM PART OF A CHURCH, WILL I LOSE MY INDIVIDUALITY?"*

*"What Does Peace Really Mean?" Does it mean that all individual differences between humanity are abolished?*

*If persons are reconciled to one another, does this mean that all personal identity is lost and that all individual distinctive are sacrificed? Ephesians 2:15 says, "His purpose was to create in Himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace".*

*Unity, not unison, is the meaning of peace. For instance, a symphony is great because there is unity (harmony) amidst differences in musical instruments.*

*Another example: The Body is one, not because the body parts are the same, but because the body parts, though very different, work together to bring a harmonious functioning to the entire body. (1 Corinthians 12:12-31)*

*TIME FOR A LITTLE INSIGHT!*

'Unity amidst diversity' is the meaning of peace. The Church is composed of many Christians, all of whom are different, but all of whom are to cooperate together for the over-all harmonious functioning of the entire Church. What does peace mean? It means unity in the Body of Christ.

*"I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all. But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, when he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now this, He ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some,*

*evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:1-13)*

*Difference between persons in the Church is what makes unity possible! If all persons were the same, there could at best only be unison! But unity amidst diversity is the meaning of peace. Never turning differences into barriers into communication!*

*To be one in Christ is to appreciate one another's national, racial, cultural, religious, temperamental, age differences and to allow those differences to be used by God to benefit the entire body of Christ.*

### *TIME FOR PERSONALIZED PRAYER!*

*"Heavenly Father, you are the author of life with all of its rich variety. Help me to accept my uniqueness, and enable me to use my unique personality and gifts to contribute to the growth and edification of*

*your Church and of your wonderful world.  
In Jesus' uniting name. Amen."*

*TIME FOR A WARM AFFIRMATION!*

*It is obvious that the Creator Loves great variety in His Master Work in Nature! Numerous species among all the great groups of animals! God chose to create various races, temperaments, and personalities, when He created human beings!*

*Even identical twins are somewhat different! When you become a Christian, God awakens you to your wonderful uniqueness—in your God-redeemed Self, with special abilities and newly discovered potential! You don't become 'centered' on yourself with conversion, but instead you become aware of the latent gifts that God has given you, and you desire greatly to live a life pleasing to God and useful to others! Your unselfish Self is awakened!*

*Booklet Titles Of  
“Effective Christian Living” Series.*

<i>No.</i>	<i>Titles</i>
1.	<i>THE POWER OF PRAYER!</i>
2.	<i>THE CROSS OF JESUS!</i>
3.	<i>THE CHRIST OF EASTER!</i>
4.	<i>PREPARING FOR DEATH!</i>
5.	<i>CHRISTIAN WITNESS TO OTHERS!</i>
6.	<i>LIFE IN THE CHURCH!</i>
7.	<i>GOD FOR ALL HOLIDAYS!</i>
8.	<i>THE SPIRIT FILLED LIFE!</i>
9.	<i>PERSONAL SIGNIFICANCE!</i>
10.	<i>OUR ETERNAL HOME – HEAVEN!</i>
11.	<i>CULTIVATING CHRIST LIKE CHARACTER!</i>
12.	<i>CONFRONTING LIFE’S COMPLEXITIES!</i>
13.	<i>LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE!</i>
14.	<i>CONQUERING THE ENEMIES WITHIN!</i>
15.	<i>GOD’S PLAN OF SALVATION!</i>
16.	<i>THE CHRIST OF CHRISTMAS!</i>
17.	<i>COPING WITH LIFE’S HARDSHIPS!</i>