PRAYER CLOSET MINISTRIES

Praying Consistently

Breaking the "hit-and-miss" prayer life and building a prayer habit that lasts

A PRAYER GUIDE BY DR. KEVIN MEADOR

"Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving." — Colossians 4:2

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

A Praying Man: Remembering Kevin Meador

Ministers of the gospel often talk about the importance of prayer. Kevin Meador lived it. He was converted at the age of twelve and surrendered to preach at nineteen. He served churches across Mississippi and, in 1996, stepped into full-time evangelism, preaching revivals, conferences, and crusades. He studied at Mississippi College, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and Reformed Theological Seminary.

Through all of it, one burden stayed with him: to lead people into a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ, and to encourage believers in their prayer lives. In 1998 he founded The Prayer Closet Ministries, taking its name from Jesus' words in Matthew 6:6, and began writing a newsletter to put practical, Scripture-based teaching on prayer into the hands of ordinary believers. Over the next twenty-four years he wrote 174 issues, along with prayer guides and workshops on intercession, fasting, spiritual warfare, and healing.

Kevin knew everything depends on God, and so he was a praying man. He went home to be with the Lord in December of 2022. The teaching he left behind is still doing what he wrote it to do: helping believers pray.

> **THE VISION, IN HIS WORDS**
> "The vision of 'The Prayer Closet' is to lead believers from a saving knowledge of God to intimate fellowship with God through prayer."

This guide is drawn from one of Kevin's newsletters, *The Hit & Miss Prayer Life* (August 2001). It speaks to a struggle nearly every believer knows. We chose it because it is both honest and practical, and because it sounds exactly like him: Scripture first, then simple steps you can start today.

How to use this guide: read Parts 1 to 3 in one sitting, then use the worksheets at the back. Pray through it, don't just read it.

INTRODUCTION

The Hit-and-Miss Prayer Life

Do you struggle to be consistent in your prayer life? The “hit and miss” prayer life is a constant threat to every believer. It simply means inconsistency in prayer. Your prayer life is strong and steady for a while. Then you go through a stretch when you hardly pray, and when you do, you struggle to get the words out. You get caught in the cycle of being hot and cold.

For some believers this is a day-to-day struggle. One day you pray with power and insight. The next day you struggle, or you don’t pray at all. You never know what your prayer life will be like from one day to the next.

The guilt and frustration make it worse. After all these years of being a Christian, why can’t I pray better than this? The question stings most when we hear the glowing testimonies of others. Kevin admitted that he had often cringed at them himself, and wondered why his own struggle was so hard.

> **THERE IS HOPE**
> Your heavenly Father stands ready to help you. He wants you to seek Him daily. He has saved you for the purpose of fellowship, and He longs for you to pray with power and insight. You can break the cycle.

To do that, this guide walks through three things:

1. **Three foundational truths** that motivate you to seek God every day.
2. **The biblical basis for strong prayer habits**, from the Psalms, Daniel, and Jesus Himself.
3. **Ten practical steps** for building and sustaining a daily commitment to pray.

Then the back pages give you a commitment page, a weekly prayer plan, a Scripture-prayer page, and a log for requests and answers.

PART 1

Three Foundational Truths

Consistency starts with what you believe about prayer. Keep these three truths in mind. They are found in one verse:

> *"For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father."* — Ephesians 2:18

1. The Father saved you for the purpose of prayer.

God saves sinners so that they can communicate with Him. The text says the believer has *access* into the presence of God. Every time you pray, you are entering His presence, and His heart and ears are open to you. He longs for you to praise Him, confess your sins, give thanks, make requests, intercede for others, and listen to His voice.

How this helps your consistency: it reminds you to whom you are praying: the eternal God who created all things, the God of the Bible, who has an open door for you at any time and in any place. How could you neglect such a God and such an opportunity?

2. Jesus Christ died so that you could pray.

The text says it is "through Him" that we have access. Sin was a barrier between God and man. Jesus died on the Cross to deal with that sin. When a sinner turns to Christ, that person is forgiven and clothed in His righteousness, and can enter God's presence with boldness.

> *"Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh."* — Hebrews 10:19–20

How this helps your consistency: the privilege of prayer was costly. It cost Jesus His life. It is easy to forget the price that was paid. Yes, it is hard to find time to pray, and it is a struggle to be faithful. But what did Jesus endure to give you this opportunity? Love and sacrifice like that can motivate us to make sacrifices of our own in order to seek the Father.

3. The Holy Spirit empowers you to pray.

The text says we have access "by one Spirit." The Spirit is the One who grants power and insight to pray. He is the Author of prayer in the believer.

> *"Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!'"* — Galatians 4:6

How this helps your consistency: it teaches you to depend on the Holy Spirit in order to pray. True prayer cannot be done in the power of the flesh. You can go through the motions, but a faithful and fruitful prayer life is accomplished in you as you rely on Him. So seek the filling of the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18), deal with the sin that would grieve and quench Him, and stay sensitive to His leadership.

> **REMIND YOURSELF EACH DAY**
> **The Father** has given me access to His presence. He longs to hear my voice and for me to listen to His.
> **The Son** purchased that access. He sacrificed His life so that I could live a life of prayer.
> **The Holy Spirit** empowers me to use it. He lives inside me and grants the power and insight to pray.

PART 2

The Biblical Basis for Strong Prayer Habits

Consistency in prayer flows out of strong prayer habits. By "habit," Kevin did not mean a rut or a routine. Nothing is more boring than going through the motions, and God does not bless ritualistic, superficial praying. He meant an act repeated so often that it becomes spontaneous and natural. You don't have to talk yourself into it each time. Prayer has become essential and vital to your life.

The Bible gives three pictures of this.

The psalmist: prayer like breathing

> *"Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice."* — Psalm 55:17

> *"My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning I will direct it to You, and I will look up."* — Psalm 5:3

He prayed throughout the day because it had become a significant habit of his life.

Daniel: prayer that cannot be stopped

When the king signed a decree outlawing prayer, Daniel went home, opened his windows toward Jerusalem, and knelt "three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days" (Daniel 6:10). He was not being rebellious. He prayed because it was his

custom; it had become a natural and vital part of his life. He could no more neglect prayer than he could stop breathing.

Jesus: the best example

> *"Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed."* — Mark 1:35

All through the gospels, Jesus pulled aside to pray. Prayer was vital to His life and ministry, and often it was His way of resting. Like the psalmist and Daniel, He had made prayer a habit that flowed out of His life.

> **TAKE IT TO HEART**
> Consistency in prayer is the fruit of strong prayer habits. You can build those habits. It will take commitment and work, and the next section shows you how.

PART 3

Ten Steps to Sustain Your Commitment to Pray

Making the commitment to pray is not hard. Living it out amid the pressures of daily life is the real challenge. These suggestions will help you follow through.

1

Set a time for prayer.

This is critical. You can talk with God any time, but when you keep varying your time, you hinder the habit-forming process. Strive to meet God at the same time each day. Andrew Murray put it plainly: "He who has no set time for prayer does not pray." Make an appointment with God.

2

Set a time goal.

Don't just say, "I plan on spending some time with God today." Decide how much. Jesus asked His disciples why they could not watch with Him for one hour (Matthew 26:40). Seek to give God an hour. If that seems unrealistic, start with fifteen minutes a day and build from there. This is not a legalistic trap, and there will be times you go longer, so stay sensitive to the Spirit. But a goal keeps your prayer time from being the first thing you sacrifice.

3

Make a daily affirmation.

Before you can build the habit of prayer, you must remember its importance. Try this, and say it aloud each morning: "My most important appointment today is with my heavenly Father."

4

Be determined.

Sustaining the commitment is the real challenge. Decide in your heart that you will make the time. You may have to rearrange your schedule, your spouse may have to make some sacrifices, and you may have to give up some good things for the greater thing: communion with God.

5

Ask God to enable you.

"Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving" (Colossians 4:2). That is God's will for you, so plead that verse back to Him and ask Him to help you be consistent. Pray it with confidence: "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us" (1 John 5:14).

6 Enlist others to pray for you.

If you are struggling here, ask another believer, or several, to pray for God's help in this area of your walk with Him.

7 Use the days of the week as an outline.

Give each day a topic. For example: Monday, healing; Tuesday, the lost; Wednesday, your church; Thursday, the nation and current issues; Friday, family; Saturday, leaders; Sunday, personal needs. Stay open to the Spirit and pray about other things as He leads, but give each day a focus. The great enemy of consistency is a lack of direction. Without it, you wander and falter. God is a God of order, not chaos. (A weekly plan page is in the back.)

8 Pray through the Scriptures systematically.

Kevin found this extremely helpful: "I preach and teach through the Scriptures on a systematic basis. Why shouldn't I pray through the Scriptures regularly?" Choose a book, perhaps a shorter New Testament book like Philippians or 1 John, and read a passage each day. Then ask five questions: *What can I adore God for? What sins do I need to confess? What can I give thanks for? What do I need to request of God? What does this text teach me to pray for others?* Your answers don't need to be long. He wrote that he was amazed again and again at how the text he prayed spoke to his own needs, and met the needs of others exactly when they needed it. (A page for this is in the back.)

9 Keep a list of requests and answers.

Record what you are seeking God for, and the answers He gives. It gives your praying a continual focus, and it will build your faith as you look back. (A log is in the back.)

10 Ask the Holy Spirit to create a spirit of prayer in you.

The Holy Spirit is the Author of prayer in our lives (Galatians 4:6), the One who teaches and empowers the believer to pray. Plead with Him to create a fresh longing to seek the Father and to release a yearning for prayer into your life.

WORKSHEET 1

My Prayer Commitment

Write this out. A decision made on paper is much harder to let slide.

My set time for prayer each day:

My place:

My time goal (minutes):

My daily affirmation:

What I may have to rearrange or give up to keep this appointment:

The person (or people) who will pray for me and hold me accountable:

The book of the Bible I will pray through first:

A PRAYER YOU CAN PRAY

Father, You have commanded me to continue earnestly in prayer, and I know it is Your will that I seek You daily. Please enable me. Holy Spirit, create in me a longing to pray. Jesus, thank You for the price You paid to give me this access. Help me to be faithful, for Your glory. Amen.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

WORKSHEET 2

My Weekly Prayer Plan

The suggested topics come from Kevin's example. Change them to fit your life. Write the specific names and needs you will pray for each day.

Day	Focus	Names and needs
Monday	Healing	
Tuesday	The lost	
Wednesday	Church	
Thursday	Nation and current issues	
Friday	Family	
Saturday	Leaders	
Sunday	Personal needs	

Stay sensitive to the Spirit. Pray about pressing needs any day. The plan gives you direction; it is not a cage.

WORKSHEET 3

Praying Through a Passage

Copy this page for each day. Read a short passage, then answer the five questions briefly.

Date: _____ Passage: _____

What can I adore God for in this passage?

What sins do I need to confess because of this text?

What can I give thanks for from this text?

What do I need to request of God from this text?

What does this text teach me to pray for others?

WORKSHEET 4

Requests and Answers

Record what you are asking and how God answers. Look back often.

Date	Request	Answered	How God answered

Keep going.

Prayer is God's gift to the believer, and we must learn how to use it.

Find more prayer guides, newsletters, and sermons from Dr. Kevin Meador at

prayerclosetministries.org

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