

June 2016

From the Desk of Rev. Chuck

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Dear Friends,

One of the most rewarding jobs I ever had was as a prayer room worker at Silent Unity while going through ministerial school. When I was working at Silent Unity I often thought of making up business cards that read: *Have Prayer Will Travel*.

Prayer was central to Jesus's ministry. So much so that he taught the people that being seen praying was not how God answered prayer. Jesus never stood in the middle of town, or on a street corner, or made a public display of any kind when he prayed. In fact the writer of Matthew has Jesus giving the people very implicit instructions on how they need to pray.

"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

While working at Silent Unity for over 3 years I discovered that people prayed for just about everything you could think of. And most, if not all, of their prayers fell into six stages.

Stage 1 - We tend to prayer from worry & fear. *Someone once said that worry is prayer in reverse.* When we find ourselves praying from an attitude of worry and the emotion of fear we end up creating and experiencing the very thing we don't want in our lives. Years ago I had a friend who prayed from this stage. He was always praying for things to get better in his life but his focus was always on what was wrong in his life and not what was right. While having lunch with him one day he said, "God never answers my prayers." I responded that God had answered his prayers and continued to do so, in fact if he really wanted proof that God answered his prayer all he had to do was look at the things he was worrying and praying about and he would see that everything had come to pass.

Stage 2 - Prayer involves our unconscious mind which is the activity of unconscious prayers.

With this stage of prayer all you know is that

this hurts to much and that there has got to be a better way. You tend to do things you don't understand, go places you have never gone to before, read books that once held no meaning for you. Your unconscious prayers may not even use the word God. But God hears all prayers.

Stage 3 - The prayer is conscious prayers. This is when we move from *"there's got to be something better"* to *"I have found a better way, I have found someone or something to help be with this challenge in my life."* It is in this stage that we find that there is power greater than ourselves at work in the universe and in our lives. These prayers are the prayers we say with a conscious awareness of what we want in our lives by going to God or the presence of God as we best understand that presence in our lives.

Stage 4 - Prayer is the petition stage. This is the most common of all prayers uttered by us. In this stage of prayer people pray for God to give them this or that. They want a certain car, a certain job, they even ask God to give them a certain person and then three years later they're back asking God to get rid of that person. As Jesus taught, *"God already knows your need before you even ask"* (Matt 6:8). You don't have to beg.

Stage 5 - Silent Unity has built their world wide ministry of prayer in this stage called **affirmative prayer**. Jesus said that we should give thanks before we receive. Before performing the miracles of raising the dead and feeding the five thousand he took what he had and gave thanks, going to God first before doing anything. When praying affirmative prayers you are praying with an attitude of mind that says, "I have all ready received it, thank you, God."

Stage 6 - Prayers of giving thanks. Prayers of thanksgiving are the highest form of prayer. As Jesus would often say, *"Thank you for hearing me Father."* When you pray from an attitude of thanksgiving, from an attitude of gratitude, two things happen. One, your heart is open and receptive and because it is you find yourself entering a state of being and awareness that all is right with the world. Two, as you give thanks, the Universe starts to act on your activity of faith and creates more of what you are giving thanks for.

And don't forget the master prayer that takes care of all needs. The Lord's Prayer.