

The Science of Prayer

Its ABC's

By Glenn and Ethel Coon

Name: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX

How to Conduct a Home ABC Prayer Group

You have launched on the study of a wonderful "new kind of prayer. It is actually not new in the sense of never having been known before, but it has largely fallen out of use. The beloved John, author of the epistles which bear his name, has stated that thus the old becomes the new: "Brethren I write no new commandment. ... Again, a new commandment I write unto you. ..." 1 John 2:7, 8.

Some of the students of these lessons confine their study to the privacy of their own homes. Others, however, wish additional help by meeting in what we call ABC Prayer Groups in some neighborhood home. Here about five or six meet for an hour once a week for discussion and prayer. We are receiving the most thrilling letters from across our land, as well as other countries, telling of the rewards of such home ABC Prayer Groups.

The format of home ABC Prayer Groups may vary as led by the Holy Spirit. We place in the following paragraphs one way to conduct such an ABC Prayer Group, with emphasis on the first such meeting, which contains a few items which are not necessary to repeat in succeeding discussions.

ORDER OF MEETING

1 Opening Song

A chorus such as "Whisper a Prayer in the Morning" or "Lord, Lay some Soul upon my Heart."

2. Prayer

All open their Bibles (each brings a Bible) to Matthew 18:20. They kneel, place their hand on the open Bible and, if all have a lesson, read the prayer which follows. If there are not enough lessons so all can share, the leader may offer the prayer phrase by phrase, and the others can repeat in unison the ABC Prayer. It goes something like this:

"Dear Father in heaven, we present to Thee this promise of Thy presence with us. We ask Thee to fulfill Thy promise to be with us today. We believe Thou art keeping this promise, and we claim Thy presence, and thank Thee that Thy presence is with us through Thy Holy Spirit, in Jesus' name. Amen."

3. "I Know Something Good" Certificate (1st meeting only)

All follow as the leader explains the Certificate which stands for no criticism of anyone else. No one feels superior to any other person whether of another race, nationality, religion, or any segment of society. When tempted to criticize anyone, even someone in our own home, we catch ourselves and say,

Science of Prayer

"Pardon me, I know something good." Then we try to mention something good about that person even though it may seem small.

4. "Terms We Use in These Lessons" (1st meeting only).

It will be observed that whatever term we use we are referring to the same kind of prayer. Many prefer to call it simply an ABC Prayer. Others love the term "The Prayer of Reception." We use both terms interchangeably.

5. Discussion of the Lesson

All will have read the lesson beforehand if possible. Thus as you meet in a group all will be able to contribute thoughts to the rest of the group. Relating the blessings we receive helps to fix them in our minds better than merely listening to others' experiences. Therefore, all members of every ABC Prayer Group are encouraged to take part in the discussion. There is no sermon. There are no long talks. No one is expected to talk more than a moment or two at any time. Thus all are blessed by participating. The leader of the group merely serves as a moderator. He sees that the program moves along smoothly. Various ones, as they take turns, point out what they have found helpful in the lesson. They discuss those particular points. Others present additional thoughts. The discussion period lasts from 20-30 minutes.

6. Quiz Questions

The quiz questions may be filled out together, then checked with the correct answers following the quiz.

7. Share Time

Either before or after the lesson discussion there is a period of 15-20 minutes for sharing prayer experiences. These experiences should be based on answered ABC prayers. The suggested pattern of sharing is that the person relating the experience of answered prayer will first state in a sentence or two, the problem, then the Bible promise claimed, then the answer that was received. In these ABC prayer groups no answers to prayer are shared except those where Bible promises were claimed. For the first meeting or two members of the group may not have yet learned how to claim a Bible promise. Then prayer groups could read some experiences from the various books we have authored, or play a cassette tape in which we have related ABC prayer answers.

8. Choosing a central Prayer Figure

At this point the group selects one individual for whom they will all pray. He is usually fairly well known to most in the group. We call this person John Doe (or Jane Doe). Often this person is, or has been, a professing Christian, but may now be in deep spiritual need. The group will keep this name confidential, as they do everything that is said in the prayer group. All lips are sealed to criticism or gossip, both within and out of the group. This individual takes precedence in the prayers of the group over and above all other requests for prayer. This is why we call this person the Central Prayer Figure. The group learns how to claim Bible promises for John Doe. They also learn how to speak to him, how to write to him, how to associate in any manner with him. John Doe's name remains the Central Prayer Figure until he finds Christ. Then all rejoice together.

9. Prayer Requests

Other prayer requests are presented from time to time to the group. They are prayed for generally, and in emergency, specifically. Each member of the group may write down these requests and remember them each morning at home as impressed by the Holy Spirit. At home these individuals may be prayed

Science of Prayer

for as a whole. Some members mention them name by name, but it is advised not to make the prayer list a burden.

10. Praying for John Doe (Jane Doe)

Before the group kneel together, the one in charge drills them on how to offer an ABC Prayer. He opens the Bible to 1 John 5:16. The other members follow with open Bibles. He emphasizes the need of Asking in prayer; of Believing what the promise offers; and of Claiming the answer we have received. The fully developed answer will be realized in time. Then they kneel with all Bibles open to 1 John 5:16 (or some similar Scripture), and if all have access to a lesson, they may actually read the prayer one at a time, around the circle. If not, then the leader offers an ABC Prayer and each follows as best he can remember. This is as a drill:

"Dear Lord, I hold my Bible open to this promise. It promises John Doe (or the name you have selected as your Central Prayer Figure) life. I ask that You will give John Doe life. I believe you are giving him life because You cannot lie; and I thank you that I have received life for John Doe as I, through Christ, conform to the conditions of answered prayer. In Jesus' name.

11. Personal Message to You.

Each ABC Prayer group meeting will plan to spend a little time reading the Personal Message to You part of the lesson. It explains very briefly how to conform to seven secrets of winning John Doe to the Lord. The same seven secrets work for happy marriages too, and for all of life's communications. So even if two Christians have been at odds with one another, or if a husband and wife find their affections being weaned from each other, these seven secrets, if applied, can produce results for them-results that are almost fantastically fabulous! Each will have a lesson in hand and will follow the reading of this letter and make comments. (For those who wish to go into more detail in the seven secrets-often called seven laws-we refer you to our books, Please Pray and The Art of Bible Counseling.)

12. Closing the Meeting

A closing chorus: perhaps the same one used in the beginning, or merely a closing prayer, or both.

QUICK QUOTES

Be ye therefore merciful,
as your Father also is
merciful. -Luke 6:36.

We do pray for mercy;
'And that same prayer doth teach,
us all to render The deeds of mercy.
- Shakespeare

How to Conduct a Church ABC Prayer Meeting

Several churches have conducted what we call ABC Prayer Meetings. The results have been excellent. The format is generally similar to that of the home prayer discussion groups. However, there are a few changes. A sample format follows:

1. Opening Song
2. Invocation
3. Welcome

Science of Prayer

The short welcome will mention the "Terms Used in These Lessons."

In the welcome, the leader will also mention that this is a different kind of prayer, and that therefore drills will be conducted to help fix its principles in the mind.

4. Lesson Discussion

This study group is somewhat different from the home prayer group, since there may possibly be scores or even hundreds present. Three teams with two on each team are used to discuss various phases of the lesson. These teams are assigned points of the lesson to be discussed. The assignment is given one week in advance, usually after each meeting.

After each team discusses the points assigned them (in about three or four minutes), that portion of the lesson is thrown open to the floor for questions or comments. Thus if each team takes four minutes, and if the floor discusses each the same length of time, it is a total of 24 minutes. After each team has discussed its particular part, and the floor has responded, one other individual sums up the whole lesson in three minutes. Thus the entire lesson discussion should be completed in less than 30 minutes.

Suggested Outline with Time Limits

- (1) Discussion by Team 1 3-4 min.
- (2) Questions &/or comments from the floor 3-4 min.
- (3) Discussion by Team 2 3-4 min.
- (4) Questions &/or comments from the floor 3-4 min.
- (5) Discussion by Team 3 3-4 min.
- (6) Questions &/or comments from the floor 3-4 min.
- (7) Summary of lesson by another individual 3 min.

TOTAL TIME 21-27 min.

5. Share Time

This period in the ABC Prayer meetings at the church are similar to home share time. But normally each person sharing an experience of answered prayer will confine it to less than one minute. Long experiences of answered prayer bore many people. ABC Prayer meetings should not include long experiences. Before the share time begins it is well for the one in charge (usually the pastor) to review the three parts of the personal testimony to be given: 1-the problem; 2-the promise claimed; and 3-the answer received.

6. A Drill in ABC Praying

Just before the large group subdivides into small groups of five or six to a group, the one in charge drills the whole group in what ABC praying is like. He emphasizes that "A" stands for "Ask," Matthew 7:7. "B" stands for "Believe," Mark 11:24. "C" stands for "Claim," or "Receive," [Page 116] Matthew 21:22. He explains that the "C" is actually thanking God that we have received the gift promised as we fulfill the conditions. John 11:41.

7. Division into Small Groups

The large group subdivides into small groups of five or six and each of these small groups chooses a group leader (unless group leaders have been selected beforehand).

8. Choosing a Central Prayer Figure

Science of Prayer

Each group leader then leads his group in making a decision as to whom they will choose as their Central Prayer Figure. The Central Prayer Figure is a person who has become discouraged in the Christian life, who is going through a deep Gethsemane experience, or who has grown careless in the love of the Lord. This Figure is to be prayed for confidentially. When the meetings ends, lips are sealed so the Central Prayer Figure will not be embarrassed thinking someone is trying to high-pressure him into serving the Lord.

9. Prayer

Each small group opens the Bible to 1 John 5:16 and reads the promise. Then each one around the circle prays a prayer something like this: "Dear Lord, we ask You to fulfill the wonderful promise I hold in my hand. It says You will save John Doe. So I ask. And because You cannot lie, I believe that as I learn how to win John Doe, You are fulfilling Your promise. And I thank You that I have received as I learn the secrets of communicating with John Doe. I thank You that You have heard my prayer in Jesus' precious name. Amen."

If anyone in the circle is too timid to pray, he will touch the one next to him, who will then continue the prayer as they go around the circle.

10. Personal Message to You

At the sound of the bell, order is called by the one in charge of the ABC prayer meeting. The leader may then refer to the Personal Message to You. These messages cover the seven secrets of communicating with John Doe. Various ones may wish to make a comment. Then the quiz questions are referred to by the leader, and answers given according to the corrected answers at the close of each quiz.

11. Closing the Meeting

It is proper for the one in charge to suggest that each one will receive far greater returns from the study of the lesson if each one studies the next lesson in advance of the following week's ABC Prayer Meeting. Thus each can come ready to contribute some thought to the discussion of the lesson.

THE MIRROR

Lord, make my soul
To mirror Thee,
Thyself alone
To shine in me,
That man may see
Thy love, Thy grace,
Nor note the Glass
That shows Thy face.
-Blanche Mary Kelly

Terms Used In These Lessons

All the following expressions and terms refer to the same kind of prayer-the Prayer of Reception. When we refer to "the science of prayer" we think of the word "science" as "to know." Therefore, when we come to the place in prayer when we can truthfully say, "we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him" (1 John 5:15), we are praying scientifically.

To pray scientifically is to offer what the Scriptures call "the prayer of faith." James 5:15. This means that our scientific prayer is not cluttered up with negatives, doubts, or caviling, while we profess to believe.

Science of Prayer

To offer a scientific prayer of faith means, therefore, that we go beyond the trembling asking. We boldly declare that we believe. Then we reach right up and take hold of the promised gift. (See Matthew 21:22; 1 Timothy 6:12). The three-step procedure of asking (Matthew 7:7), of believing (Mark 11:24), and of actually thanking God that He has heard us (John 11:41), we call "ABC praying," or, "The ABC's of Prayer."

The "Prayer of Reception" comes from two Bible words "prayer" and "receive." So when we learn the conditions for asking, believing, and receiving, and follow them, we offer an "ABC prayer," or a "Prayer of Reception."

The ABC procedure of offering a Prayer of Reception is a drill recommended in these lessons. Often we offer personally an ABC prayer in three steps. Then we follow on and repeat it in one sentence as Christ did at the grave of Lazarus. He placed the ABC steps all in one.

When we were children a stranger was a guest at our table. We discovered that he asked, believed, and claimed. But he did it all in one sentence. Winsomely, he asked for the bread by saying, "I would thank you for the bread." He had incorporated the ABC's all in one sentence, even as Jesus did in His prayer at the grave of Lazarus.

We strongly recommend that the student of these lessons begin drilling himself in the three steps of the ABC's of Prayer, until it actually becomes a Prayer of Reception. Thus, when the lessons are mastered, we no longer need to use any exact or arbitrary words such as ask, believe, and claim. We may then use many expressive words like "I know you have answered, dear Lord"; "I have the assurance that I have received"; or, "I have every confidence that the gift You have promised is sure and that it is mine."

By many different expressions of faith we may express our unbounded confidence that "we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." 1 John 5:15.

We may do this because the principle of the Asking, Believing, and Claiming has become a part of us.