

ANAHEIM YP PURSUIT

BUYING THE OIL

Session One—Ministry Reading

A Time with the Lord

Verses for Pray-Reading:

Dan. 6:10 ...[Daniel] went to his house and three times daily he knelt on his knees and prayed and gave thanks before his God, because he had always done so previously.

Jer. 15:16a Your words were found and I ate them, And Your word became to me the gladness and joy of my heart.

Ministry Reading:

In his book on prayer, Andrew Murray tells of a question raised by the chairman at a ministers' conference: "Everyone here who prays thirty minutes every day, hold up your hand." Of that whole congregation, only one hand was held up! The chairman then asked all who prayed fifteen minutes daily to hold up their hand. Half the hands went up. When he asked who prayed five minutes daily, the remainder of the hands were raised. Is not this the situation among us today? We all must personally ask ourselves this question: "How much time do I spend daily with the Lord?" The most prevailing need among Christians today is to spend a certain amount of time every day reading and praying in the presence of the Lord.

In the physical realm we need to spend time daily to obtain physical nourishment by eating physical food. How much more time we need to spend to obtain spiritual nourishment by eating the spiritual food. According to the present situation nearly all Christians know how to study, memorize, meditate, and search the Scriptures for knowledge, but very few know how to come to the Word of God to enjoy the Lord and to receive spiritual nourishment.

As people who have God living within them, we need to set aside some time each day to come to the Word of God to enjoy Him, to feed upon Him, and to receive spiritual nourishment. From the experiences and testimonies of others, it is clear that we need to spend at least thirty minutes with the Lord each day to contact Him and be strengthened by Him. During this time we need to read and to pray, and this cannot be done adequately in ten minutes. A longer time is necessary in order to read and pray properly. Even half an hour for reading and praying is too short, but surely we can spend half an hour with the Lord every day to pray-read His Word, and the best time for this is in the morning.

During this thirty minutes we must forget about knowledge, a message, a movement, or a work, etc. All this must be forgotten and our whole attention given to spending proper and adequate time in the Lord's presence. As sons of God this is the first and primary daily experience into which all Christians must be brought. For at least thirty minutes each

day, we must learn not to exercise our mind too much, but simply to exercise our spirit in pray-reading. It is impossible for any Christian who spends less than thirty minutes daily in the presence of the Lord to be adequately spiritual and healthy. This is a fixed principle. Can anyone be healthy who does not eat daily?

If we will do this for a period of time, the Lord will work a great change in us. Our experience of Christ will be deepened, and eventually our influence toward others will be prevailing. The whole situation among us will be radically changed, not by teaching, studying, and exhorting, but by contacting the Lord.

We must pay the price to spend this time with the Lord for the sake of our spiritual growth. In the mornings we must not love to lie sleepily in our beds so long. Watchman Nee once told us that if we love our bed, we can never love the Lord. There is a real struggle with us all between choosing the Lord or choosing our bed.

If by the Lord's mercy and grace we desire and agree to spend more time daily in the presence of the Lord, what shall we do? By what means can we touch the Word of God for nourishment and enjoyment? We must learn to do only one thing—we must mingle our reading with our praying. We must contact the Lord by mingling our reading of the Bible with prayer, and by mingling our prayer with reading. This is why a new word, pray-read, has been used. We must pray-read the Word.

First, begin by spontaneously offering a short prayer to the Lord. Then open your Bible and start to read. While you are reading, spontaneously respond to the Lord with what you read. Do not read too many verses, such as a long paragraph or a long section, before praying. While you are reading, respond to the Lord by praying.

Do not try to pray long sentence prayers, and do not pray for many things, asking the Lord to do something for you. Simply learn to pray with the words you read. The valuable prayer, the prayer which contacts the Lord, is to utter or express what is responding within you as you read the Word. (*A Time with the Lord*, pp. 1-5)