

The Power of Prayer  
Pastor David Seabaugh  
Immanuel, Elmhurst

Her comment rocked me to my foundations. Money was tight and the church leadership was considering a loan to cover some long-desired projects. We were running numbers, making plans, hemming and hawing when, out of frustration, she spoke. “Have we asked God about any of this?” The room fell silent. We all knew the answer, but no one dared to say it. After some awkward exchanges, she offered to pray. Her prayer would change the course of my life.

The words of her prayer weren’t poetic or planned. It was the way she spoke. There was a comfort and a reverence to her words, as if she was talking with an old friend who had saved her life time and time again. She thanked God for all she had. Nothing was taken for granted. She asked for provision with boldness, requesting what seemed impossible. She did so with a sense of expectation, as if she had already seen Him do the impossible and was simply asking for it again.

The final part of her prayer will never leave me. She completely surrendered the results to God. If He provided, she would take that as a “yes” and get busy down that path. If God didn’t provide, she would drop right back on her knees, eager to see the new direction He was taking her. She had peace, something I was desperately longing for.

Her faithful prayer that day led me on a journey of discovery about God and myself. I heard Jesus’ words echoed in her prayer, “Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek and you will find (Matthew 7:7)”. I began to trust my instincts less and inquire of God more. I sought guidance from the scriptures and found that God’s words of wisdom far surpassed my feeble tactics. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding (Proverbs 3:5)”

My entire approach to life shifted as I surrendered to God. Prayer started to precede my planning. Trust in God’s direction replaced my well-reasoned strategic musings. Time and time again I observed God putting the right person in the right place at the right time. It happened so often I began to expect it. We would pray hard for something to happen only to find that God would accomplish His plan a different way. We would suffer a loss only to find a providential new opportunity around the bend. Following Jesus became an adventure, with all the dramatic twists and turns one could possibly expect.

The wisdom of God looks terribly foolish to humanity (1 Corinthians 1:25). Struggling with a hard decision or a sticky situation? Pray! Better yet, get a whole group of friends together to pray. Pray and then wait (Psalm 27). When God answers, organize and mobilize! Having financial problems at home or at church? Make sure you are giving away money! There are endless stories of people tithing 10% to their church only to see God provide for them in incredible ways (Malachi 3:10).

It works. It takes a lot of faith to surrender the results to God when things are difficult. It’s uncomfortable removing yourself from the leadership position in your own life. Maybe you’ll be like my friend, rocking people to their foundations when you say,

“Have we asked God about any of this?” Maybe your humble, bold prayer will change the course of someone’s life, like my friend’s prayer did for me so long ago.