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**THE ROLE OF PRAYER IN MISSION FORMATION:
FROM AFRICA TO AUSTRALIA**

written by

Kathryn R. Pocklington

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

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has been read and approved by the following members of the

Faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary.

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**THE ROLE OF PRAYER IN MISSION FORMATION:
FROM AFRICA TO AUSTRALIA**

By

Kathryn R. Pocklington

A Dissertation Presented to the
Faculty of the School of Intercultural Studies

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Abstract

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Pioneers of Australia is a vibrant and dynamic mission organisation, entrusted with the privilege of sending mature disciples to share the good news of Jesus Christ among the nations. The purpose of this dissertation is to enable Pioneers of Australia applicants and appointees to proactively grow in the specific area of prayer, ensuring that prayer lies at the very core of their ongoing formation for global mission.

This research investigates two major sources of prayer. Firstly, prayer as seen in the life of Jesus and the early church in Acts – voices from Scripture. And secondly, prayer as found in the lives of Pioneers-Africa, another sending entity within Pioneers – voices from Africa. The findings are then applied to the context of Pioneers of Australia.

The research utilizes is a combination of literature survey of Scripture (voices from Scripture) and ethnographic methodology (voices from Africa). The latter includes the mutually enhancing methods of Narrative Interview and Participant Observation. After identifying the points of intersect between the material, I then establish Biblically-based principles of prayer for application to Pioneers of Australia. I have limited this to five initial principles, which are then creatively expanded through a booklet entitled *Shaped by Prayer*, found in Appendix E. All of this is to facilitate a greater understanding of and commitment to the role of prayer as a core aspect of the life and ministry of our cross-cultural global mission workers, leading to greater Kingdom impact.

Mentor: R. Daniel Shaw, PhD

238 words

Dedication

Thank you, God of all, for bringing the words of Psalm 32:8 alive -

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;

I will counsel you and watch over you.¹

To Mum and Dad,

For your endless encouragement, feedback and food!

You are my safe place.

¹ Unless otherwise specified, all Scripture citations are from the Holy Bible, New International Version (2013).

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I am deeply grateful for those who have assisted me in this research in a multitude of ways. Thank you to Pioneers-Africa for sharing your stories with me and enriching our global Pioneers family through your shared wisdom and experience regarding prayer. Special thanks to Uncle Chris and Uncle Fred for your cultural guidance.

Thank you to my Pioneers of Australia family, for putting up with me as I disappear each Friday to study, or send you the occasional idea for feedback. I am grateful for how you have lived out our core value of an Ethos of Grace during this time.

I continue to thank the Lord for those who have mentored and guided me over the years. Thank you to Dr David Price, who has been a quiet champion along the journey. Thank you to Dr Thomas Kimber, for this final year of face-to-face mentoring. You are a gentleman in the true sense of the word. And thank you to our 'Back to the Future' Professor - Dr Daniel Shaw - for your passion, insight, cheerleading and commitment to our cohort. I am grateful for you.

To the Pacific Rim cohort - *Wan Solwara* - thank you. Thank you for being my brothers during these four years of study. Thank you for giving me a different glimpse into who God is and what the Revelation 7:9 gathering will look like. Thank you for sharing your cultural insights and for the gift of learning together. What a meaningful experience this has been!

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List of Abbreviations

Apps	Applicants and Appointees
E-I	Ethnographic Interview
G-T	Grounded Theory
N-I	Narrative Interview
NT	New Testament
P-O	Participant Observation
PoA	Pioneers of Australia
SMC	Sustainable Mobilization Conference
SU	Scripture Union

Introduction

We were nearing the end of an interview. This experienced and innovative Pioneers-Africa leader had been forthright, surprising even in some of his responses. With minutes left I asked him, “If there is one thing that Africa can give to the world in the area of prayer, what do you think it is?” He paused and smiled in a self-deprecating way. Tilting his head slightly G-16¹ thoughtfully replied, “Passion. Sincerity. Seriousness. Reverence. Dependence. When an African prays, he is serious about it. It’s not a formality. It’s business... That’s what we can give. I’m not sure why. Maybe we are so passionate and serious about it because we lack. But we can teach the world lack.” This highlights the profound and pervasive posture of dependence on God found within many members of the Pioneers-Africa community; dependence as they serve in difficult places for many years; dependence for provision of needs; dependence on the One who can intervene in their own lives and those they are serving. For this community of Pioneers-Africa, prayer has shaped their experience of and focus on mission.

This research examines the topic of prayer within the context of mission. With a high respect for the authority of Scripture, I listen intently to a selection of Scriptural voices. Given the missional nature of these sources, I chose prayer in the life of Jesus and the early church in Acts. Through field research, I listened to a variety of voices from Pioneers-Africa, asking the overarching question of how prayer has shaped their lives and ministries. Finally, I have sought to encourage and strengthen the role of prayer in the

¹ Within the coding of those interviewed within Pioneers-Africa, G refers to Ghana (interview location) and 0-20 reference the order of the interviews.

lives of those preparing for long-term, cross-cultural life and service with the Australian community of Pioneers, known as Pioneers of Australia (PoA).

There is much that the global community of Pioneers, including PoA, can learn from our African brothers and sisters. Most PoA Applicants and Appointees (Apps)² who are preparing for cross-cultural mission service have followed Christ for many years and are mature disciples. Many have been spiritual leaders within their own church environment. They reflect the character of Christ and desire to make Him known among the nations. Listening to and learning from the voices of Scripture and Pioneers-Africa, then, reflects a proactive desire to strengthen and encourage those who are already surrendered disciples, wanting to grow in prayer.

When asked in an on-line survey³ how they would like their prayer life to change or grow, various responses were given from a group of PoA Apps. “Increased intimacy and honesty,” said one. “More consistency,” said another. An App candidly desired more depth and less distraction. Another admitted that “life is too busy,” which acts as a barrier to praying more with her spouse. She was not alone. Others commented that they “want to experience more of life in the Kingdom immersed in the Spirit of Jesus,” or “grow closer to God... hear His voice more clearly.” Many PoA Apps desire to grow in prayer. In this research, I will present valuable material for PoA Apps to draw from as through prayer, they continue to be formed into the likeness of Christ in the context of mission.

Motivating Background

Throughout Scripture we can see the importance of prayer. This is further established in the gospels, as Jesus not only models the importance of prayer, but expands

² Applicants are those who have applied for service with Pioneers, but are still completing this process. Appointees are those who have completed the application process and have been accepted by – appointed to join – PoA. I will refer to the combined group of Applicants and Appointees as Apps.

³ This survey was sent out in 2016 after obtaining ethical permission. As indicated in the survey introduction, by completing the survey, PoA Apps were indicating their consent of my use of the data.

it to a new level. The Lukan prayer motif and Jesus' dependence on the Father brought out in the gospel of John particularly emphasize this deeper dimension of prayer. Acts 10 and 13:3 point to the foundational place of prayer for mission. Although not included in this study, Romans 8:34 reminds us that even now Jesus is sitting at the right hand of the Father, interceding on our behalf. The Spirit, too, intercedes for us (Romans 8:26-7). If this is how Jesus and the Spirit are spending their time, is it not a mark of the importance of prayer and how central to our life and ministry it should be?

In 2005 one of the Regional Leaders within Pioneers was asked by the then International Director what could be done to make sure that the Pioneers' core value of a Passion for God would stay front and centre. Out of that conversation, a movement was born within Pioneers. It is called *Soli Deo*, 'God Alone' or 'Only God'. The Ghanaian *Gye Nyame* symbol, 'except for God', and symbolizing the supremacy of God, has become incorporated into the Pioneers *Soli Deo* language and culture. All of this seeks to invite the global Pioneers family into a deeper, more intimate walk with the Lord, guarding our collective Passion for God so that all things would be recognized as from and through and to God Alone, as Romans 11:36 reminds us.

In 2006, I joined the *Soli Deo* working group, and have been a part of it ever since. My involvement has taken several forms, but the most consistent has been working with two colleagues to send out a monthly reflection for all those within Pioneers for our world-wide day of prayer and fasting, which is held monthly.

It was initially through my role on the International Leadership Team of Pioneers that was held in Ghana in early 2007, that I caught a glimpse of the deep reservoir of prayer in the lives of many from Pioneers-Africa. Subsequently, it was through the *Soli Deo* working group, a global collection of people with a love for prayer and a longing to see others grow in their walk with the Lord, that I came to learn more of and from our African brothers and sisters. Exposure to their lives, lives which are marked by prayer,

has had a profound effect on me, and I believe there is much to learn from them that can be applied to Australians heading out into long-term cross-cultural mission.

After serving in India for almost eight years, during which time the Lord taught my Indian prayer partner and me many lessons in our years of prayer together, I have returned to Melbourne to work in the PoA National Office. My main responsibility is to facilitate further preparation for our PoA Apps, numbering between fifty - sixty people in any given year, for long-term cross-cultural service. This emphasis on prayer will ideally be woven into all aspects of continued formation for mission, guarding against prayer as an addendum, but rather ensuring that it remains at the core of their lives and ministries.

Purpose

Against the backdrop of the role of prayer as identified in the life of Jesus and the early church in Acts, I will research the role of prayer within the Pioneers-Africa sending entity, based in Ghana.

End Goal

The end goal is to develop Biblically-based foundational principles of prayer for the next wave of long-term cross-cultural workers sent through PoA, which will facilitate their understanding of and commitment to the role of prayer as a core aspect of their life and ministry, leading to greater Kingdom impact.

Central Research Issue

The central research issue of this study is the role of prayer as identified in the life of Jesus and the early church in Acts, as it intersects with the role of prayer within Pioneers-Africa, to establish principles of prayer applicable to PoA.

Research Questions

1. What is the role of prayer in the life of Jesus and the early church in Acts?⁴
2. What is the role of prayer within Pioneers-Africa?⁵
3. Which of these principles of prayer, found at the point of intersect between the role of the prayer in the life of Jesus and the early church in Acts and Pioneers-Africa, are transferrable and would help nurture an understanding and practice of prayer in those preparing for long-term service with PoA?

Methodology

In Part I of this research, I investigate prayer in the life of Jesus and the early church in Acts. My conclusions from listening to the voice of relevant Biblical texts are confirmed by the expert view of scholarly commentators, which I discovered by way of a literature review of related writings. As stated in the above purpose, this material provided a backdrop for the ensuing research with Pioneers-Africa. It also offered a substantive thematic framework for the Interview Guide developed as part of my ethnographic methodology. Guided by my Scriptural findings, I interviewed twenty-one members from the mission sending organisation Pioneers-Africa regarding the role of prayer within their own lives and ministries. The research method utilized was Ethnographic Interview (E-I), more specifically Narrative Interview (N-I). This was then supplemented with Participant Observation (P-O) for verification and validity. Through careful, iterative analysis, the methodological research produced descriptive data regarding the role of prayer within Pioneers-Africa and the impact it has had on their collective life and ministry. This will be further explained in Part II, while the implications for application to PoA will be further explored in Parts III and IV.

⁴ The patterns that arose from this research can be divided into the following categories: background, practice, content, teachings and impact of prayer. This is further explored in Part I.

⁵ The findings include the following categories: influence, practice, content and impact of prayer. This is further explored in Part II.

Definitions

The central words or phrases found in this dissertation are defined as follows:

Prayer – Although a rich variety of definitions on prayer exists, there are three elements I would like to include in the definition of prayer for this given research. Firstly, it involves relational conversation with God (Cullman 1994), an “expression of a relationship with a God whom we are learning to trust because he is faithful and good” (Marshall 2001, 123). John 11:41b-42 tenderly illustrates this, while Peter’s conversation with the Lord in Acts 10 is an interactive example. Secondly, this communication is two-way. It is not limited to “speech addressed to God that contains praise or petitions (Farris 2001, 91),” or the asking and interceding that is often witnessed in the gospels, but also involves listening to and waiting (Lincoln 2001) upon God. Luke’s material particularly emphasizes this point. Additionally, Acts 16:7, 9 and 18:9-10 provide evidence of Paul hearing from God. Thirdly, it involves a willingness to be changed and shaped, coupled with a posture of obedience, as “Obedience is faith in action. It is the outflow, the very test of love” (Bounds 1997, 154). While one author writes, “True prayer is habitually putting oneself under God’s influence... Prayer is a fight for the power to see and the courage to do the will of God” (Fosdick 1954, 60, 171), another notes that “Real prayer is absolute self-surrender to, and absolute correspondence with, the mind, the will, the character, of God” (Thomson 1959, 43). Out of that place of relational, two-way communication with God, we hear, are changed, bent to His will, and persuaded towards involvement in His ongoing activity in the world (Brown 2000, 612). Jesus’ experience in Gethsemane brings this to life, as well as Paul’s response to the Spirit in Acts 16:6-10.

Mission Formation – For this dissertation, when I write of mission formation, I am pointing to the transformational process of being formed into the likeness of Christ, for the purpose of proclaiming and engaging in the mission of Christ in the world (Catholic Mission 2013), particularly regarding cross-cultural global mission. The

Biblical data and Pioneers-Africa material relating to the role of prayer discovered through this research leads to formation for cross-cultural global mission. This will be explained more robustly in Part IV.

Pioneers – is a worldwide mission organisation which, as it indicates in its mission statement, “mobilizes teams to glorify God amongst unreached peoples by initiating church planting movements in partnership with local churches” (Richardson 2011, 2).

Pioneers of Australia and Pioneers-Africa – these are two of seven Mobilisation Bases within the global community of Pioneers. They serve the church by sending cross-cultural mission workers into areas of the world with the least opportunity of hearing the good news of Jesus Christ, respectively from (primarily) Australia and West Africa. They are historically two of the earliest nations to join Pioneers at a global level in the 1990s.

Cross-cultural workers – This refers to mission workers who cross from one culture into another to share the good news of Jesus Christ through word and deed.

Significance

This is a critical area of research for two reasons. Firstly, considering the above definitions, prayer is central to the ongoing mission formation process and is an area of growth for PoA Apps. With Scripture as the authoritative measuring line, it is essential to concentrate on the Word of God, meditating upon it, learning from it and obeying it. To glean from the role of prayer as found in the life of Jesus and the early church in Acts so as to grow in their life of prayer, adds dimension and maturity to their lives in Christ.

Secondly, as I consider the role of prayer through the lens of the workplace of culture (Walls 1996), it is necessary to listen to the wise voices of those who have gone before us. For Pioneers to be truly global, it is both essential and a privilege to learn from each other in mutual dependence. We, at PoA, need our brothers and sisters from

Pioneers-Africa to teach us more about prayer, how it can shape our lives and ministries, and what this could look like as we apply it to long-term cross-cultural ministry. The ultimate hope is that when Apps, and subsequent in-country cross-cultural mission workers, establish a strong, dependent prayer life, it will allow for a more effective and fruitful long-term service for God's glory among the nations.

Assumptions

I bring with me several assumptions regarding this research. Firstly, I am assuming that prayer should be a core element of a follower of Jesus Christ, and is therefore worth pursuing. Secondly, I personally bring with me a childhood spent in the Philippines and adult years spent in India, equating to almost half my life spent outside of Australia. This brings with it a natural affinity for other cultures and an innate longing to learn from them, with the deep-rooted assumption that they do many things much better than I or others from my culture do, although somewhat differently. Finally, I assume that my view of God is not the only or best view of Him, that theology does not equate to Australian or European theology, and that we need each other to see Christ more fully.

Delimitations

The delimitations are found in three areas. Firstly, in this research, I will evaluate prayer as found in the life of Jesus and the early church in Acts. This scriptural overview was not intended to be exhaustive, but aims to lay a focused, Biblical foundation germane to the PoA context. Secondly, the ethnographic methodological research is limited to an interview sample from the Pioneers-Africa Mobilisation Base found in Ghana. Thirdly, the intended application is primarily for the PoA context. PoA Apps are largely, though not exclusively, preparing for engagement within a global, cross-cultural context.

Dissertation Overview

If prayer is at the core of those going into long-term cross-cultural ministry, the hope is that they will have a more fruitful service, with greater Kingdom impact among the nations for the glory of God. To learn from Scripture and from our brothers and sisters in areas of the world such as Africa is an important part of this process as we seek to live out unity and a prayerful posture in a global context.

In Part I, after noting various terms for prayer, I listen to selected voices from Scripture, surveying the role of prayer in the life of Jesus and the early church in Acts. This includes the background, practice, content and impact of prayer in the life of Jesus and the early church in Acts, as well as additional data regarding teaching on prayer found in the gospels but absent from Acts. Here I rely on the scholarly work of experts, reflecting Robert Schreiter's first form of theological thought when constructing local theologies: commentary (Schreiter 1985). Admittedly, Part I includes voices from Scripture which largely have a North American or European accent, as much of the scholarly writing on this topic originates from there. Part II balances this deficiency.

In Part II, I listen to voices from Pioneers-Africa, displaying the rich reservoir of prayer from this community. After establishing the research methods of N-I and P-O, and the mixed method of analysis utilized, I will lay out the findings which fall into the categories of influence, practice, content and impact of prayer.

In Part III, I harmonize the two previous voices, analysing the point of intersect between the Biblical and Pioneers-Africa data to identify some transferrable principles applicable for the PoA context. It does this under the familiar headings of background influence, practice, content, teaching and impact. I then introduce PoA, setting the organisational context within a broader climate in which the application will occur.

Finally, in Part IV, I identify ways forward, integrating the research material, laying out clear and pragmatic recommendations for application and future research.

Part I

Voices from Scripture

As a mission practitioner, there are a realm of viewpoints from which I can learn: history, the social sciences, anthropology and so on. But important voices though these may be, only the Word of God is inspired (Escobar 2003). Within PoA, we have a deep respect for Scripture, and seek to place our collective lives under its authority. For these reasons, Scripture and related literature will be my starting point in developing an understanding of prayer. By examining the role of prayer in the life of Jesus and the early church in Acts, listening to their voices so to speak, I will set the theological foundation for the ensuing research.

Part I has two chapters. In Chapter 1, after discussing the terminology of prayer, I study the role of prayer in the life of Jesus in all four gospels. After completing an extensive survey of relevant literature, I divided the findings into the categories of background to prayer, practice and content of prayer, teaching on prayer, with a final analysis on the impact of prayer. In the shorter Chapter 2, I limit the study to the role of prayer in the life of the early church as found in the single book of the Acts. These findings, filtered with the Chapter 1 data, follow the same category divisions, with one exception. Direct teaching on prayer is not found in Acts, so is not included as a heading.

I have selected passages which bring to light the pivotal motifs regarding the role of prayer in the life of Jesus and the early church in Acts. While not intending to be all-inclusive, this study emphasises key elements found in the prayer life of Jesus and the early church to eventually establish principles of prayer applicable to PoA.

Chapter 1

Prayer in the Life of Jesus

Exiting the culture of heaven and entering the culture of Roman-ruled Jewish Israel, Jesus is God's clearest revelation of Himself to humankind. And yet Jesus, God Himself, still prayed. Although His position as one of the Trinity is unique, His life of prayer is still a model for us, and there is much that we can learn as He interacted with the Father (John 12:49) and was led by the Spirit (Mark 1:12; Matthew 4:1; Luke 4:1).

Prayer Terminology

To gain a more profound comprehension of prayer in the Biblical text, I will detail the varied and nuanced meanings of prayer in Table 1. I have taken the Greek terms and meanings found in Table 1 from a combination of sources (Strong 1980, Liddell and Scott 1948, Arndt and Gingrich 1979, Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich 1964), with additional notations referenced as necessary. The number within each column indicates how many times that word (or a derivative thereof) appears within a given book. Only a few occurrences of indirect prayer have not been mentioned in Table 1. Although the basis for the chart was my own Greek word study, P. T. O'Brien gives a break-down of the synoptics and Acts (O'Brien 1973).¹ It is Oscar G. Harris' table,

¹ I am aware of the three commentaries by P.T. O'Brien which were withdrawn by W. B. Eerdmans from August 2016. However, I have chosen to cite his much earlier work, as no hint of improper scholarship has been linked to any other work. This book adds distinct value to the conversation around prayer in Luke-Acts.

however, that is the most exhaustive and helpful, including a number of terms not found here (Harris 1966).²

Table 1: Greek Terms used in Relation to Prayer

Word and Meaning	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Acts
proseúcomai: To pray to God, supplicate, worship, pray earnestly for, offer prayers, vows or worship, or to offer petition (Han 2000)	15	10	19	0	16
proseuchv: Prayer (worship), by implication an oratory (chapel), a place of prayer, sanctuary, chapel or synagogue, or as Michael Brown adds, offering wishes/desires to God (Brown 2000)	2	2	3	0	9
devomai: To beg (for a favour), petition, beseech, pray, make a request, entreaty	1	0	8	0	7
devhsiz: A petition, prayer, entreaty, request, supplication, or as Brown adds, imploring of grace (Brown 2000)	0	0	3	0	0
êrwtauvw: To interrogate, request, ask (about), beseech, entreat, pray, invite an answer (in certain usages)	0	0	0	6	0
eûlogêw: bless, praise	5	5	13	1	2
eûcaristéw: To give thanks, thank	2	2	4	3	2
aiteuvw: ask, beg, call for, demand, crave, desire, require, request, beseech with supplication	14	9	11	11	10
parakaleuvw: To call near, invite, invoke, beseech, call for or upon, entreat, exhort, appeal to, urge, implore	1	0	0	0	0
mevwuw: To stay, be present, live, dwell, lodge, remain, continue, abide, endure, persist	3	2	7	40	12

The verb/noun combination most used for prayer within the synoptics and Acts is proseúcomai/proseuchv. Occurring seventy-six times within the synoptics and Acts, these terms are noticeably absent in John, and particularly emphasized in Luke's writing. The terms signify a mix of worship and supplication.

² I. Howard Marshall's numbers at times differ from those found in this chart. See (Marshall 2001, 113).

Other terms are used for prayer, though more broadly (O'Brien 1973). The verb/noun combination used second most is *devomai/devhsiz* (Plymale 1991), which seems to indicate an earnestness without the flavour of worship, found again to be emphasized within Lucan writing, absent from Mark and John, and used once in Matthew.

John Roth notes that the use of *devomai* was highly emotive, with pleading overtones, as seen in Jesus' prayer for Peter in Luke 22:32 (Roth 2006), while *devhsiz* was used for concrete situations (Plymale 1991, Harris 1966). *ἔρωτα* is a favourite of John's, being the only literal term for prayer that he uses in his gospel.

εὐλογέω and *εὐχαριστέω* are additional words frequently used. Though not directly translated as pray, the context in which they are used indicates communion with and communication toward God. Roth emphasizes that *εὐλογέω* is an action directed God-ward (Roth 2006), while I. H. Marshall adds that it was used for both thanking God for food and petitioning Him to bless people (Marshall 2001). God was the receiver of praise and the origin of blessing. This term can also be applied outside of the prayer context (Harris 1966).

Several other words are worth noting. *αἰτέω* is used interchangeably with pray and is the word most consistently used by all four gospel writers. It is found fifty-five times. *παράκαλεω*, though uncommon in use, is found in Matthew's passion scene, indicating communication between the Son and the Father.

Lastly, *μενω* is also included. It does not represent prayer in the same way that the other Greek terms do. However, it is an important word to include as it captures the relational nature of prayer found within John's gospel. In John, the "intimate and unending fellowship of Jesus with the Father is everywhere assumed, but only once in a while does it surface in the form of actual prayer" (Trites 1978, 171). I will investigate this further at a later stage, as there is the implication of being heard in prayer that comes

with abiding (Cullman 1994). But as is clearly evident from the sheer volume of use, it is an important term to John.

Of the 289 references to prayer in the New Testament, seventy-nine are found in Luke-Acts, thirty-two in Matthew, and eighteen in both Mark and John (Harris 1966).³ It is not difficult to deduce, then, that prayer played a significant role in the life of Jesus and the early church, though we will see that this significance varies from gospel to gospel.

Before laying out what emerged from my research of how Jesus practiced prayer, the content and impact of His prayers, as well as how He taught others to pray, I will first set the cultural context of prayer which influenced Jesus in His formative years on earth.

Background

Throughout the gospels, hints of Jewish influence on prayer arise, although care should be taken when reconstructing such practices, as Jewish orthodoxy was not set during Jesus' life time (Bradshaw 1981).

Joachim Jeremias writes of the fixed daily prayers and the liturgical traditions which Jesus and the disciples inherited. At dawn and dusk⁴ a creed, the *Shema*, was recited and set into the *Tephilla*, which became known as the eighteen Benedictions,⁵ a "prayerlike hymn of benedictions" (Jeremias 1984, 185). At 3 P.M. the *Tephilla* was again recited as evening sacrifices were offered at the Temple (Jeremias 1984). Acts 3:1; 10:3 and 10:30 refer to this time frame. *Didache* 8.3 also confirms the threefold Jewish pattern of prayer, although the author is encouraging his readers regarding the Lord's Prayer (Radice and Louth 1987). The *Tephilla* was comprised of three benedictions

³ See particularly pages 12-15.

⁴ Dawn could mean anywhere between dawn and sunrise, and dusk refers to any time after sunset. For more, see (Bradshaw 1981, 1).

⁵ It later became nineteen benedictions, was generally recited in the synagogue by one man on behalf of the others, who then responded with *amen* (Bradshaw 1981).

praising God, twelve petitions of the congregation, concluding with three more benedictions of thanks to God (Bahr 1965). Thanksgiving was given before and after meals, on the Sabbath and at Passover, throughout the day and when synagogue services began, which included a mix of open prayer and liturgy (Jeremias 1984). The *Qaddish*, ‘holy’, was an ancient Aramaic prayer, which ended the synagogue services, and, Jeremias claims, “with which Jesus was no doubt familiar from childhood” (Jeremias 1964, 21). Finally, it was the common custom to stand for prayer, as seen in Mark 11:25; Luke 18:11; and the warning in Matthew 6:5 (Dunn 1992).

Looking more closely at the prayer life of Jesus, it is probable that Jesus grew up saying the *Shema* and the *Tephilla* (Dunn 1992). Matt. 22:37; Mark 12:29-30 and Luke 10:27 make reference to the *Shema*, whereas the *Tephilla* and *Qaddish* could well have influenced the shaping of the Lord’s Prayer, as it reflects the three-part delineation of the *Tephilla* (Bahr 1965). Several phrases found in the *Qaddish* are echoed in the Lord’s Prayer (Jeremias 1964).⁶ Scripture highlights Jesus’ understanding of the Temple as a House of Prayer (Matt. 21:13/Mark 11:17), and, from an early age, He visited it, seeing it as His Father’s house (Luke 2:49). It was also His habit to attend the synagogue on the Sabbath, as Luke 4:16 displays (Dunn 1992).

As I observe it, this is the fabric of prayer sewn into the lives of Jesus and the disciples from their own Jewish heritage (Jeremias 1967, Margaret Magdalen 1987) and reinforced through Jesus’ example. Jesus, however, would expand these patterns, for “although his praying covered the usual time of prayer, morning and evening, His need of prayer... went far beyond the formal saying of prayers... Jesus was a man of prayer

⁶ The following phrases are reflected in the Lord’s Prayer from what Jeremias sees to be the oldest form of the *Qaddish*: “Exalted and hallowed be his great name... May he rule his kingdom” (Jeremias 1964, 21). He writes of Jesus couching prayer in familiar terms, where He took the Lord’s Prayer “from liturgical sphere of the sacral” but used new content (Jeremias 1984, 189). Marshall also affirms that the Jewish *Qaddish* is the “nearest parallel” to the Lord’s Prayer (Marshall 1978, 457). Additionally, see Millar Burrows for more on the Jewish influence on the Lord’s Prayer (Burrows 1955).

whose natural response particularly to situations of crisis and decision was to seek God alone in prayer” (Dunn 1992, 618).

I will investigate Jesus’ practice of prayer, explore the content of several key prayers, look at His teaching on prayer, before presenting the consequent impact of these elements. I will then repeat the process for the early church found in Acts.

Practice

Within the gospels, the prayer life of Jesus is portrayed a multitude of times. Not all instances reveal the content of Jesus’ prayer, but they do give a deeper understanding of the importance Jesus placed upon prayer. Although both the pattern and teaching of Jesus’ prayer is found in all four of the gospels, I agree that Luke and John need particular consideration (Turner 1990); Luke, because of the key role prayer plays within his gospel, and John, because of the unique Father-Son relationship displayed.

Matthew rarely mentions Jesus’ practice of prayer. Allison Trites notes that Matthew’s focus is on piety and faith and that mention of prayer ties into these greater themes. She adds that Mark, who includes more evidence than Matthew of Jesus’ prayer practice, is a gospel of action, and although prayer is recorded, the author does not stress the prayer life of Jesus (Trites 1978). James Dunn notes that Mark’s few recordings of Jesus at prayer seemed to come at a time when Jesus was undergoing vocational crisis of one kind or another, explaining the extended time spent in prayer. This, he states, should not be seen as the normal pattern of prayer for Jesus (Dunn 1992).⁷ However, although this may be an emphasis found in the gospel of Mark, when placed alongside the other gospels, there is clear evidence of differing motivations which drove Jesus to prayer.

⁷ Walter Wessel notes that in addition to Mark 1:35, Mark 6:46 and 14:32-41 were times when Jesus’ prayers were in response to times of crisis (Wessel 1981). Although this is clearly the case for Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-41), I would suggest that the two earlier references were pressure situations rather than crises.

In the following sections, I will explore the relationship between several of Jesus' prayer practices and the ensuing outcome, substantiating the previous comments.

Withdrawing to Pray

An initial glimpse of Jesus' prayer life comes in Mark 1:35 (Koenig 1992), when He slipped away in the early hours of the morning to find a place where He could pray alone. This practice is referred to again in the Matthew 14:23/Mark 6:46 account, although only Matthew points out that He was alone. Luke 5:16 indicates that it was a habit of Jesus to withdraw, while Luke 6:12 portrays Jesus spending the entire night in prayer. Luke 6:13 has Jesus calling His disciples to Himself, again indicating that He was alone. In most of these passages, a mountain reference is included, "the place of prayer, the scene of secret revelations, of communication with the unseen world" (Conzelmann 1982, 29). Although neither private nor morning prayer was uncommon for pious Jews, Jesus breaks away from ritualistic prayer (Jeremias 1984) by retreating from His place of residence to a quiet, solitary place for hours on end, adding a new dimension to prayer (Harris 1966) and revealing a deeper level of dependence on the Father. This rhythm of withdrawal to be with the Father brought restoration from His work with the crowds (Coggan 1967). It is self-evident that communion between the Father and the Son "is plainly a feature of the prayer of Jesus" (Trites 1978, 173).

It is interesting to note that before Mark 1:35, the crowds were pressing in on Jesus. He both healed many physically and from demon possession. Though He was God, He was also human, and it is simple to imagine just how weary He was. After Jesus withdrew and was found by the disciples, He gave instructions that they move on to another village. "The impression we get here is that Jesus had found both renewed

strength and clarity of vocation” amid competing claims upon His person and time, and that through prayer Jesus concluded that it was time to move on (Koenig 1992, 15).

Likewise, prior to Luke 5:16, Jesus was healing the sick. There was a different priority behind His need to withdraw this time. Here, His fame had spread and the crowds were seeking Him out. His coming away points to His need to be restored, reconsidering His priorities; removed from the demands of the crowd and the distraction and temptations of celebrity (Morris 1983) towards the will of the Father. This time also prepared Him for the coming clash with the religious leaders (Thomson 1959).

Prayer and Miracles

Several passages link the communion of the Father and Son to the outworking of miracles. In Mark 7:34, the gospel writer depicts Jesus looking to heaven, sighing deeply and giving a command for the deaf man’s blocked ears to be opened and speech to be restored. What silent communication occurred at this point? John 11:41b-42 again includes the Father as the One who hears (“Then Jesus looked up and said, ‘Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me’”), before Jesus turns to give Lazarus life. By lifting His eyes, a Jewish gesture (Kanagaraj 2011), He was showing that the Father was involved as a shared source of this miracle (Marsh 1985). Donald Coggan identifies grief as the catalyst for the communion between Father and Son on this occasion. Jesus needed to retreat into the Father’s presence before defeating death and bringing Lazarus back to life (Coggan 1967).

Lucan Emphasis on Prayer

There are seven distinct passages found within Luke that exhibit the author's interest, (or preoccupation (Fitzmyer 1989)) in Jesus' prayer life. I will inspect five of these, and Luke's redaction to them as he establishes Jesus as a man of prayer (Barton 1995).

Luke 3:21 – All four gospels reference Jesus' baptism (Matt, 3:16, Mark 1:10), although John only refers to it rather than recording the event (John 1:32-34). It is only Luke's account that ties prayer into this commissioning of Jesus' ministry. Luke alone notes that it was while Jesus was praying that the heavens opened, the dove descended and a voice from heaven was heard. Although the other gospels record the heavens and dove (Matt. and Mark also note the voice), they do not mention Jesus praying. Luke points out that it was after His baptism, while praying, that Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit and set aside as the Beloved (Morris 1983). Here, Luke is placing his own mark on the story of the baptism. The Spirit comes in answer to prayer (Conzelmann 1982).

Luke 6:12 – The choosing of the twelve is portrayed differently in the various gospels. It is only Luke who tells of Jesus retreating to pray, spending the whole night in preparatory prayer (Marshall 1978), and the next morning calling and designating the twelve. Luke implies that this decision of choosing the twelve, the ones on whom Jesus would build His church, was important enough to come before the Father for extended time. "Thus the choice of the Twelve is made only after seeking God's guidance" (Marshall 1978, 238).

Luke 9:18-20 – Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ or Messiah is recorded in the synoptic gospels, but it is only Luke who sets it in the context of prayer. For Luke, it was when Jesus emerged from prayer that He asked the question, providing Peter with the opportunity to proclaim Him as the Messiah, even when Herod and the crowds could not (Turner 1990).

Luke 9:28-9 – Each synoptic gospel follows Peter’s confession with the Transfiguration. But again, only Luke comments on Jesus’ purpose of going up the mountain – to pray. He also reflects that it was while Jesus was at prayer that His appearance changed (Morris 1983) and “divine majesty shone” (Geldenhuis 1952, 281), implying that the “transfiguration occurs as a divine response to Jesus’ communion with God in prayer” (Barton 1995, 88), out of which the full event ensues.⁸ Here, as at His baptism, a revelation from heaven is given as the answer to prayer (Conzelmann 1982), a prayer which followed Jesus’ initial teaching to His disciples in Luke 9:22 regarding the Messiah’s ministry. This prayer’s three-fold purpose saw Jesus sharing communion with the Father, the Father pouring out His encouragement as He deemed fit, and the disciples receiving a revelation (Crump 1992). “The Lucan transfiguration [therefore] empowers Jesus to confront his fate through prayer” (Lee 2004b, 147).

Luke 11:1 – Matthew and Luke both incorporate the Lord’s Prayer into their gospels; yet Luke depicts Jesus at prayer. Inferring that it was Jesus’ personal model of prayer⁹ that prompted the disciples request to be taught to pray, it is reasonable to conclude that His prayer life was authentic and tangible enough that the disciples could not help but ask about it (Trites 1978). Jesus’ followers came to see that “the secret of His power derived from time spent in prayer with his heavenly Father” (Stubblefield 1990, 303). It was a common experience for disciples to ask their teacher for a model of prayer which would set them apart from the disciples of other teachers (Jeremias 1964). Luke alludes to this in 11:1b. However, there was,

Luke suggests, a radiant vitality to the prayer life of Jesus which made a profound impression upon his friends and associates. Above and beyond any formal teaching, the disciples were confronted with a glowing example

⁸ S. John Roth sees this as “pure speculation” (Roth 2006, 492).

⁹ That is, the anointing at His baptism, retreat to solitary places, and prayer before choosing the twelve, out of which He was transfigured.

of genuine communion with God which made an indelible impression upon them. (Trites 1978, 176-177)

Desiring this same genuine communion, the disciples requested entrance into this greater intimacy with the Father and outworking power.

Prayer as Communion

As exhibited in the gospel of John, I appreciate the high value placed on prayer expressed through the communion of the Father and Son. John emphasizes the unique relationship between Father and Son as seen in John 1:18; 12:49 and 14:16 (Koenig 1992). God is referred to as Father 113 times (Janzen 2006), while it is used as a name seventy-five times (Lohmeyer 1965),¹⁰ pointing to a deep mutual indwelling. “Jesus’ prayers in the fourth Gospel are thus revelatory rather than intercessory, expressing the abiding of Father and Son, the love and unity that binds them” (Lee 2004a, 296).

The Greek term *μενω*¹¹ can be creatively articulated as staying put, putting down roots (allusions to John 15 and the vine) or unpacking and setting up home (allusions to John 14:23). John 15:4-5 reveals that intimacy which emanates from remaining is at the heart of this union (Carson 1980b), with the implication of being heard in prayer that comes with abiding (Cullman 1994). Jesus’ hearers were both commanded and invited to remain in Him, manifesting the model they had witnessed of Jesus abiding in the Father, and being directed by Him. “The picture of the Father as vinedresser speaks of him as the director of the Son’s mission and implies harmony between the Father and Son in executing this mission” (Peterson 2013, 23). In turn, Colin Kruse explains that Jesus’ disciples probably understood this concept “in terms of loyalty and fellowship, which would continue as they obeyed his word” (Kruse 2017, 368).

¹⁰ S. Vernon McCasland numbers it at sixty-eight times (McCasland 1953, 84).

¹¹ See Table 1.

With this condition of abiding comes a promise (John 15:7, 16), the product of which is fruit that brings glory to God. This abiding – staying put and not moving away from Him – relationship, indicates love, obedient trust and intimacy with the Father. It also allows them to “speak directly to this God as Father and make claims on him in prayer” (Lincoln 2001, 175). Because of this underlying trust and union, such requests are likely granted (Turner 1990). Without this two-way abiding (John 15:4), there is no fruit, and a branch is just a piece of wood (Marsh 1985). But the remaining relationship did not end there.

While physically present, Jesus remained in fellowship with... [the disciples] by committing himself to being with them and for them. When he returned to the Father, he did not leave them alone (14:15-18), but came to them in the person of the Holy Spirit; then his remaining in them took on a deeper meaning. (Kruse 2017, 368)

Content

Having seen the pattern of prayer in the life of Jesus, I now explore the content of several central prayers. The content is limited, but gives insight into the heart of Christ, His submission to the Father and commitment to the disciples.

Garden of Gethsemane or the Mount of Olives

The Passion narrative enters a new dimension as Jesus moves into prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane or the Mount of Olives, as Luke refers to it. Although John mentions Jesus going to the olive grove, he gives no detail about the events leading up to Judas’ arrival. Matthew and Mark both tell of Jesus taking Peter, James and John up to the garden, then leaving them as He struggles in prayer three times. The request for the cup to be taken is portrayed, as is Jesus’ willingness to submit His will to the Father. Despite his focus on prayer, Luke only mentions Jesus praying once. But he does add an

answer to His prayer in the form of an angel, who gave Him strength as He continued in prayer so intensely that his sweat resembled blood droplets.¹² In the end, Jesus rises in readiness for His death, “leaving us to assume that he has understood God’s answer to be that he must drink the cup and face the hour that is at hand” (Brown 1985). The synoptics show Jesus urging Peter (Matt. and Mark) or the disciples (Luke) to pray, so as not fall into temptation. I will investigate the meaning of temptation within the Lord’s Prayer.

Many people resist the idea that Jesus wrestled with the Father in prayer in Gethsemane. Was He really considering not submitting to the Father’s will? Was He genuinely trying to avoid the cross, with the conditional ‘if’ indicating the Father’s preparedness to grant Jesus’ request (Blaising 1979)? “The Agony in the Garden represents a great crisis in the implementation of the divine will” (Brown 1961, 192). As Don Carson adds,

Jesus’ deep commitment to His Father’s will cannot be doubted. But in this crisis... Jesus is tempted to seek an alternative to sin-bearing suffering as the route...to fulfill his Father’s redemptive purposes... He prays in agony; and though He is supernaturally strengthened...he learns only that the Cross is unavoidable if he is to obey His Father’s will. (Carson 1981, 544)¹³

This prayer, particularly the Lucan version, gives a glimpse of the natural human inclination to avoid the brutal death soon to take Jesus’ life (Morris 1983). It was not a battle quickly nor easily settled (Koenig 1992). Jesus’ prayer, however, was not a request for avoidance, but the deep desire to prevail in the midst of the seemingly impossible (Morris 1983), coupled with a willingness to bear the Father’s rejection of His petition (Cullman 1994). Luke’s point is “that prayer is the means whereby temptation to avoid

¹² Bruce Metzger notes that some early texts have not included Luke 22:43-44, listing proof that they were not contained in the original manuscripts. Metzger adds, though, that there is evidence of the antiquity of this account, and that the Committee have elected to retain the words as a gloss within the text (Metzger 1994).

¹³ Some see Carson’s interpretation as “cutting a divide in the Trinity which is difficult to accept” (conversation with David Price, 8 August 2014).

the will of God may be overcome,” (Plymale 1991, 60) fortifying Jesus for the imminent crisis (Ruprecht 1992); the struggle not vanishing, but passing (Blaising 1979).

Prayers from the Cross

Turning from Gethsemane to the cross, Jesus made seven statements from the cross (Peterson 1997b). Although some include all words within the realm of prayer, I will not include Luke 23:43 (His comment to one of the criminals beside Him), John 19:26-27 (His handing over of His mother into John’s care) or John 19:28 (His claim of thirst). I do not consider them prayers as they are not directed God-ward.

Matthew and Mark have Jesus speaking only once. Quoting from the Psalm 22, they share the same grief-filled question of abandonment.

God forsaken by God. God questioning God. God himself experiences the effects of human sinfulness. And there is no reply, no voice saying *You are my beloved son* ([Mark]1:11 ESV). No dove descending. No explanation. At his baptism the heavens were *torn open* (1:10), but now heaven is shut up to Jesus. Jesus experiences the full extent of godforsakenness... Father and Son united in perfect love throughout all eternity are torn apart on the cross. (Chester 2003, 237)

Although Jesus only uttered the first phrase of this Psalm, as a Jewish boy, He would have memorized the full chapter, a chapter that turns mid-way from anguish to praise (Peterson 1997b). This struggle between abandonment and hope finds that, “Suffering and silence and godforsakenness are not the last word” (Chester 2003, 244).

Luke has Jesus uttering two prayers from the cross. Although some early manuscripts do not include Luke 23:34 (“Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.’”),¹⁴ I will deal with it briefly, particularly as it echoes a

¹⁴ The textual debate continues regarding whether this passage is authentic or was a later addition. Leon Morris admits that though many of the most trusted manuscripts do not include Luke 23:34, that other respectable ones do include it. For more, see Morris’ comments on this verse (Morris 1983, Eubank 2010, Trites 1978, Metzger 1994).

portion of the Lord's Prayer and sets the scene for Stephen's later prayer. Here the "recklessness and lavishness of Jesus' forgiveness" (Peterson 1997b, 55:16) can be seen. His speech and action met in this prayer for forgiveness, the very basis of Christian belief. For forgiveness "undermines the structures of the kingdom of evil and establishes a new community... the coming kingdom of God" (French 2002, 25).

In Luke 23:46 Jesus again quotes from Scripture, this time from Psalm 31:5 ("Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.'"). In the same way that He gave over His will to the Father at Gethsemane, so too He gave over His spirit into the care of the Father, a display of abandoned trust (Harris 1966).

Finally, John records one prayer in 19:30. This perfect tense ("It is finished") shows that although the action is completed, that is, Jesus' earthly life and work are finished, the effect continues (Peterson 1997b) in the present state (Wenham 1988), that is, His death is once and for all. Jesus, at His time of deepest desperation, trusts the Father and surrenders to Him, but also recognizes that their joint work is complete.

Prayer in John's Gospel

Although only four terms are interchangeably used for prayer within John's gospel,¹⁵ the entire gospel is flavoured by the unique relationship between the Father and the Son (Lincoln 2001). Andrew Lincoln affirms others when he writes that Jesus spoke what He heard from the Father.¹⁶ Jesus' purpose was to do the will of the Father, and so he listened to the Father towards this end (Lincoln 2001).

Although John 17 will be my primary focus, the prayer in John 12 sits well within the theme "Father, glorify your name!" One author refers to this phrase as the "central,

¹⁵ See Table 1 for further details.

¹⁶ Here Lincoln lists a ream of references: John 5:19-20, 30; 8:26, 28, 38; 10:18; 12:49-50; 14:10; 15:15 (Lincoln 2001).

pivotal prayer in Jesus' life," stressing the theme of glory (Peterson 1997c, 18:30). The prayer is set in the context of ministry. A group of Greeks came to see Jesus. Upon hearing this, Jesus responds that His hour has come, and begins to teach the surrounding crowd. At one point His teaching turns to prayer (12:27-28), with an immediate answer given. Perhaps the Father's response was more for the purpose of building the hearers' faith (Lee 2004a) than assisting Jesus. No doubt, in the same way as when the Father spoke at Jesus' baptism, His voice strengthened the Son's position among the crowd considering Jesus' forthcoming weakness and death. Gethsemane is foreshadowed here, with a request to not necessarily save from, but help through the coming time of trouble (Coggan 1967). Again, Jesus is affirming that He does nothing on His own, but only within His relationship of interdependence with the Father (Swartley 2006).

The three-fold nature of Jesus' prayer in John 17 is structured to work outwards from Jesus (John 17:1-5), to the disciples (John 17:6-19), then to all believers (John 17:20-26), ultimately seen as the church. Said to replace the Gethsemane prayer and to be John's Lord's Prayer (Lincoln 2001), Jesus begins by praying for Himself, which is then followed by a prayer for the eleven disciples, followed in turn by a prayer for the wider church. It grants a rare insight into Jesus' heart of prayer, where "Jesus' love for his followers is expressed in his prayer to God for them" (Kanagaraj 2011, 147). With little of the content of Jesus' prayers revealed through the various gospels (Carson 1980b), this is the longest prayer by far of the three found in the gospel of John (D'Angelo 1999). It is through this prayer "that the intimate interworking of Father and Son is most clearly expressed" (Gruenler 1989, 179).

Jesus' prayer for Himself is not that alone. His greater purpose, inferred by the Johannine use of "that" in John 17:1 ("Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.") displays His longing for the Father to be glorified, enjoying eternal worship from those who believe. John highlights this by using the term Father six

times in vs.1-25 (Lincoln 2001). The context is the coming dark hour of the cross, for it “is at the cross that Jesus supremely reveals his glory and makes known his Father” (Carson 1980b, 178).

It is entirely right and fitting therefore that the prayer about the glorification of the Father in and through the events that are about to happen should begin with an act of intimate communion between the Son and the Father. For that bond underlies and alone renders intelligible the otherwise impenetrable darkness of the deed. (Marsh 1985, 555)

Jesus continues in prayer for the eleven (John 17:6-19), which is particularly emphasized in John 17:9 (“I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me.”) By using ἐρωτάω, John’s favourite term for prayer only used of Jesus’ prayers to the Father, he emphasizes a request given from Son to Father (Thomson 1959). He is asking for specific actions to be taken; for the protection of those who are His as they remain in the world. Their protection is twofold: from disunity (John 17:11) and from the evil one (John 17:15) (Carson 1980b). Jesus asks that they be sanctified. “To be sanctified is to be made ready for a specific task, and the prayer seeks the endowment of the disciples for their apostolic mission” (Marsh 1985, 562). As sent ones, they represent Christ to the world.

Jesus ends with a request for unity among the wider church. The Greek form does not indicate a progressive process to become one, but rather a continuous state of being one, mirroring unity (Carson 1980a). “Perfect unity will take place when Jesus imparts the glory he shares with the Father to believers (17.22–23). With the inclusion of believers into the SFR [Son-Father Relationship], the theme of unity in the Son–Father characterization reaches its peak in the narrative” (Akala 2014, 111). In some mysterious way, such unity reflects the glory of God in the same way that the Son, submitting to the Father, enabled by the Spirit portrayed unity. So important is unity that this lengthy prayer was the last recorded discourse Jesus shared with his disciples before His death.

Carson identifies it as an enlarging unity, with a ripple effect as the church enlarges its witness. It is a unity, but a unity with a purpose, for the “expanding unity generates a multiplying witness: that is how the church grows” (Carson 1980b, 196). It is a unity not only to be reflected, but to be participated in (Lincoln 2001), a unity that is for the sake of world witness (Aycock 1988). This reflected unity points to the ongoing work of formation into the likeness of Christ. But it is other-centred formation; a formation for the sake of the world. As unity is participated in, formation leads to transformation.

Manifested unity points others to Jesus. Jey Kanagaraj expounds on this idea.

When the believing community expands, one may expect disunity due to different gifts and views of its members, and therefore Jesus prays first that they all may be one. This will be possible only by showing love for one another and by the indwelling power of the Father and the Son within them (17:21)...The perfect unity within God’s community is the centripetal force to bring the “outsiders” unto faith in Jesus (10:16). The same oneness is described in 17:22 as caused by God’s glory, which Jesus possessed and gave to the believers (cf. 17:6). Now God’s community is progressing towards completeness, which will make the world to comprehend that God loves his community with the same love that he has for Jesus (17:23). (Kanagaraj 2011, 169)

Each section of John 17, then, points towards mission, for when the Father is glorified, mission has been fulfilled. When the disciples are protected and kept in the gospel so that they can take the good news to others, mission takes place. And when the church is unified and others see and believe, mission occurs. Mission, therefore, is to be at the heart of the praying disciple (Chester 2003).

Teaching

Jesus’ teaching on prayer is mostly found in the gospel of Matthew and Luke, with few passages in Mark and none in John. These include Luke’s three parables, exhortations, warnings, prayer subjects and the Lord’s Prayer. Although it is well established that Luke intentionally stressed prayer within his writings, there is yet a range

of teaching on prayer that is found in Matthew but not Luke. I will highlight a number of core teachings from the gospels.

Desperate Widow

In Luke 18, Jesus tells two parables, the first of which I will consider. Jesus is travelling with his disciples from Galilee, where he announced the coming of the kingdom, towards Jerusalem. On the way, Jesus teaches His disciples the Lord's Prayer, which they thought would quickly come to pass. But Jesus was aware of the difficult and indefinite days ahead (Penny 2007).

Luke 18:1-8 tells the story of a desperate widow, a symbol of vulnerability in the ancient world (Morris 1983), shamelessly, repeatedly coming before a judge. Although shamelessness in the NT has mostly negative connotations (Snodgrass 1997), this seems to point towards a positive shamelessness, with an abandoned desperation portrayed. In this parable of contrast, God can be approached without restraint and is understood as willing to respond (Snodgrass 1997). Howard Marshall adds a deeper dimension when he writes, "As it stands, the purpose of the parable is said to be that of encouraging the disciples to prayer until the *parousia* and not give up hope" (Marshall 1978, 669). Combined with other teaching on prayer, Jesus urges His followers to persist in prayer and not grow weary of heart (Hicks 1991, Arndt and Gingrich 1979) as they continue to live within the kingdom of God, preparing for the return of the King (Han 2000).¹⁷

¹⁷ Although most commentators regard persistence as central point of this parable, not all commentators are in agreement, differing mostly in regard to emphasis and terms used (Mitchell 1984). Curtis C. Mitchell best summarizes it when he states that "[C.G.] Montefiore holds that instead of teaching importunity, its primary lesson is vengeance. [William] Arndt is of the opinion that its purpose is to help the followers of Christ not to grow weary because of the delay regarding Christ's second advent. [Alexander] Bruce concludes that the parable was given as an incentive to pray in spite of delayed answer" (Mitchell 1984, 162). See (Montefiore 1909, Arndt 1956) for more. Luise Schottroff adds that Luke 18:1-8 "speaks...of resistance to structures of injustice" (Schottroff 2006, 194).

Warnings about Prayer

Scattered throughout the gospels are warnings about prayer. In Mark 9:29 the disciples come to Jesus, bewildered at why they could not drive out certain evil spirits. Jesus reminds them of the need to pray. Walter Wessel remarks that evidently the disciples had grown complacent, relying on their own experience and what they may have seen to be inherent power. They may have forgotten to continue depending on God for such power, their ministry failure mirroring their lack of prayer (Wessel 1981). It was a stark reminder that any authority they held was delegated by Jesus (Foster 1992).

There is a variety of warnings regarding how not to pray. Disciples are not to pray in a showy manner with long prayers (Mark 12:40/Luke 20:47), but secretly tucked away before God (Matt. 6:5-6), for the “person who prays more in public than in private reveals that he is less interested in God’s approval than in human praise” (Carson 1981, 165). They are to avoid meaningless babble or repetitive incantations, which the pagan gods of the time were seen to appreciate (Carson 1981), but to pray simply and authentically as an act of true worship.

The Lord’s Prayer

Perhaps the most paradigmatic of Jesus’ prayers is the Lord’s Prayer, or the Disciples’ Prayer. Some see it as a prayer formula, others as a model for prayer, while others instead see the Lord’s Prayer as an invitation to enter into Jesus’ very prayer life (Wright 2001). As a way to shift priorities (Wright 1997), I am in full agreement with Margaret Magdalen who clarifies that there is a considerable difference between simply saying this prayer and actually praying (Margaret Magdalen 1987) this powerful prayer.

Through the work of scholars such as Jeremias, I gained a refined insight into the background of the Lord’s Prayer. Towards the end of the first century, when Matthew

and Luke were being written, the Lord's Prayer was in existence and being used by the early church. Two related forms existed at that time, the form found in Matthew and the *Didache*, which includes the doxology¹⁸, and the simpler, probably original form found in Luke (Jeremias 1964). Jeremias understands the different wording to have grown out of their context and the form used by the community of believers at that time (Jeremias 1964). Matthew was writing to Jews who had learned to pray as children and for whom it may have become routine, whereas Luke was writing for Gentiles, many of whom were just learning to pray and needed extra courage (Jeremias 1964). One scholar agrees that the Lord's Prayer was commonly used and introduced by Luke (Leaney 1956) for his own purposes, while another scholar refutes this, seeing the logical rationale to be that Jesus taught the Lord's Prayer a number of times during His ministry, with Matthew capturing one of these instances and Luke another version (Carson 1981). Jesus, couching His prayer in the liturgical language of the *Qaddish* (Jeremias 1964), simply, yet profoundly distills His kingdom message. The variation between Matthew and Luke does not diminish the importance of these words.

I will follow the outline of Luke's shorter structure, which, as previously noted, emerged out of Jesus' own time of prayer. The division of the various petitions of this prayer does not reflect the interconnectedness of the prayer as whole; however, it will facilitate consideration of each segment.

Father

Introduced earlier in this research, it is Jeremias' writing which has had the greatest ripple effect regarding the Lord's Prayer. He did considerable work on the Aramaic term *Abba*, translated into Greek as *pathvr*.¹⁹ He claimed that, given the scarcity

¹⁸ The doxology was not fixed in form in the days of the early church (Coggan 1967).

¹⁹ This was probably used by those not familiar with Aramaic (Mawhinney 1988).

of God being addressed as Father in the Old Testament and post-canonical Jewish literature, including the complete absence of its use within the prayer literature of Judaism, it was a curious Aramaic term for Jesus to use, therefore revolutionary in nature (Jeremias 1984). “All this confronts us with a fact of fundamental importance. *We do not have a single example* of God being addressed as *Abba* in Judaism, but Jesus *always* addressed God in this way in his prayer”, the only diversion from this being Psalm 22 quoted from the cross (Jeremias 1984, 66).

Jeremias built on this by asserting that *Abba* was a term used by a child implying security, confidence, reverence and obedience; a term of inappropriate familiarity and disrespect when addressing God (Jeremias 1967). In English, we would say Jesus addressed the Father as Daddy. By using it, Jesus pointed to the unique nature of His relationship with the Father. Almost immediately Jeremias withdrew this claim that *Abba* was only a child’s term (Crump 1992), but the idea was contagious and could not be stopped.²⁰ Although some scholars think Jeremias shaped the evidence around his theory (Mawhinney 1988) and view his findings as problematic (D’Angelo 1992a), Dunn opines that Jeremias’ evidence is compelling, his earlier findings were sound, and “we may still deduce that the reason why Jesus used the word so regularly in prayer was that he experienced his relationship with God through prayer as such a relation of intimacy and reverence” (Dunn 1992, 618-619). Though *Abba* may not be a cosy term, as seen by Jeremias, there is still a sense of familiarity, mixed with dignity and awe, summarized in a term such as dear Father or Papa (Peterson 1997a). The invitation for His disciples to enter into this same intimacy and reverence was profound, with their use of *Abba* “by virtue of the standing relationship” of the Son to the Father (Turner 1990, 65).

²⁰ It was advocates such as Gerhard Kittel who saw this theory grow in impact (Kittel, Bromiley, and Friedrich 1964, D’Angelo 1999). For more on the discussion regarding the use of *Abba* and Jeremias’ correction, see (Crump 1992, 97-99, D’Angelo 1992a, b, VanGemeren 1988). Crump notes that Jesus’ unique relationship with the Father was not because of a revolutionary use of vocabulary, but was located in His very person. For more on Father as a title, see *The Prayers of Jesus* (Jeremias 1967).

N.T. Wright looks at the Lord's Prayer within the context of the Exodus, with Jesus' work with the Father a shaping of the new Exodus (Wright 1997). "The exodus from Egypt pointed forward to a greater redemption – the redemption from sin and death, and the victory over Satan," with the call to the Father a call for the promised liberation fulfilled in Jesus (Chester 2003, 40). Although there is much which can be discussed considering this interpretation,²¹ I found Wright's idea of apprenticeship especially intriguing. Wright speaks of Jesus' relationship with the Father being one of an apprentice to his master, where he is learning from the Father. When there is a problem, or when the darkness of Gethsemane arose, He came to the Father, asking for advice, asking the way forward. This is a powerful concept, indeed, as it highlights the level to which Jesus relinquished Himself, submitting to the Father's will. The Lord's Prayer and the use of Father, then, is the risky request of the disciples, that they, too, would be considered apprentice sons (Wright 1997).

Hallowed be Your Name

In this call for God's holy character and nature to be revealed is a faint echo of the John 12:28 phrase, "Father, glorify your name" or "Holy Father" used in John 17:11. For only God's name, the basis of which is His character, can see God's kingdom established, only His holiness can found His kingship and rule (Lohmeyer 1965). In summary,

What we pray for is that the name, self-declaration, and knowledge of God may win the field as the only truth of all the reality distinct from himself. The sanctifying of God's name, undertaken and accomplished by God himself as we ask of him in the first petition, is the glorifying of his name. (Barth 1981, 160).

²¹ For more on this topic, see chapter seven of *Into God's Presence* (Wright 2001) and chapter two of *The Message of Prayer* (Chester 2003).

Your Kingdom Come

I have come to see this petition as one of the most dangerous passages of Scripture. This is a subversive prayer for the two spheres of God's dominion to come together, for evil to be done away with and Yahweh to reign supreme (Wright 1997).

This is our message: if you continue to defy God, then you will experience his coming rule as judgment and destruction; but if you submit to him now you will experience his coming rule as life, freedom and blessing. That is the good news of the kingdom of God. Our missionary task is to announce the coming of the King and command all people everywhere to repent. To pray for the coming of God's kingdom will direct our attention and our prayers to mission. (Chester 2003, 167)

It is acknowledging God's rule, as manifested through the Holy Spirit (Dunn 1992), as the disciples take up this mission to see God's kingdom come. Only in God's economy does the fulfilment of this prayer require the death of the ruler. It is the outworking of mission that brings this petition to life (Lohmeyer 1965).

Drawing these petitions together, it is within the intimate relationship of Father and child that God's name and character are hallowed when His will as ruler is done, leading to the coming of His Kingdom.

Give Us... Our Daily Bread

Debate has raged over the meaning of the rare Greek term for bread used in this petition.²² Is it a plea for today's need, a dependent request for the basics (Coggan 1967), helping us guard against greed, a prayer for bread not cake, necessities not luxuries (Stubblefield 1990)? Or does it point to the eschatological banquet when God's kingdom has come with completeness? Perhaps it refers to both (Turner 1990), "where

²² For more see (Shearman 1934).

participation in the Messianic Banquet is a current reality,” (Plymale 1991, 54) although ultimately realized when Christ, the Bread of Life, returns.²³

Forgive Us Our Sins, as We Forgive...

This is the crux of the good news of Jesus Christ. It is the nature of God to extend forgiveness, to graciously wave His hand at the debts piled high, although only because costly payment was made in Christ. His followers, too, who are to reflect family likeness, are also to extend such forgiveness (Lohmeyer 1965). “If you didn’t live forgiveness, you were denying the very basis of your own new existence,” (Wright 1997, 54), and, others would add, raise an obstacle between us and God (Stubblefield 1990). Forgiveness “is central to the mission of God and the mission of God’s people. In the cancellation of debt that cannot possibly be paid back, God provides the indebted with a new start, a new start characterized by the transformation of the radically forgiven into those who also radically forgive” (French 2002, 25). Randy Nelson points out that this is the only petition with a condition and accompanying explanation (Nelson 2012), although there are many who do not see forgiving others as a prerequisite for receiving forgiveness. Instead, they should affirm that “Jesus believed that God freely offers his forgiveness but then expects that we will respond by showing forgiveness to others” (Harner 1987, 178).

Lead Us not into Temptation

There are several interpretations regarding temptation, mainly the temporal and the eschatological. The temporal points to the temptation to lie or steal, speak badly of others or have unclean thoughts or be filled with pride (Goetz 1986, O’Neill 1993). It is the cry for strength to resist the enemy, whose very aim it is to lead God’s people astray

²³ Jeffrey Gibson does not believe that this prayer as a whole is eschatological in nature in that “its aim is not to pray down into the ‘now’ things that properly belong to an anticipated ‘end time’ (Gibson 2015, 162).

(Cullman 1994).²⁴ It is the temptation for God's people to exalt their own names rather than God's, to do their own will rather than God's, to establish their own kingdom rather than God's (Garland 1992), a very real temptation. Others see this temptation as implying the final, eschatological trial (Jeremias 1984, Cullman 1994). It is not a prayer to miss out on the hardship, to be preserved from it (Lohmeyer 1965), but rather to stand firm and stay faithful, a cry that God would "Grant us one thing, preserve us from going wrong!" (Jeremias 1984, 202)

This cry for salvation from trial can also lead to the interpretation of temptation as testing. This interpretation helps to reconcile other passages (James 1:13) which tells us that God does not tempt us (Chester 2003). The prayer to not put His people to a test becomes more frequent and fervent as the eschatological age builds.

A final interpretation is one represented by Jeffrey Gibson, who defines this temptation as the temptation to test God. "Do not allow us to do what the wilderness generation...who grew dissatisfied with your ways and doubted your will...did...and put you to the test" (Gibson 2015, 163). In summary, to

follow Jesus and say the Disciples' Prayer is to pledge oneself to demonstrating and proclaiming a certain way of 'being' in the world, a way that mirrors and magnifies the very character of the God of Israel as Jesus made him known. (Gibson 2015, 164)

Impact of Prayer

On examining Jesus' prayer life, I will highlight the impact that withdrawal from the crowds and quiet communion with the Father brought. This retreat time resulted in renewed strength, restoration from His work with the crowds and a refocusing of perspective where He could prepare for what was to come. With the pressure of the

²⁴ For more on this discussion, see Oscar Cullman. His inclusion of Ernest Jenni's interpretation of the causative meaning is particularly interesting (Cullman 1994, 60-62).

crowds to take on the mantle of Messiah as understood through their often-undiscerning eyes, Jesus could hold any temptation towards popularity at bay and hold fast to His role as the Servant King, the One destined to die.

Clear Perspective

This restoration and regaining of perspective came as Jesus met in intimate communion with the Father, as the Father revealed Himself to the Son. Such revelation gave discernment for ministry initiatives. As He came before the Father, He was shown the next steps that He was to take, whether this be which of His followers to designate as apostles (Luke 6:12-13), how to deal with religious leaders (Luke 5:16-24), or whether to leave a village or stay (Mark 1:35-38). Jesus' life and ministry gives us enough insight that "we see a direct relationship between Jesus' times of prayer and initiatives in active ministry. We can say that for Jesus, prayer and action belong inseparably together" (Nessan 2000, 172).

Spiritual Empowerment

On several occasions, Jesus was given answers of special empowerment and acknowledgement. At His baptism, through the coming of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was confirmed as the Beloved of the Father and commissioned into His ministry. At His transfiguration, the Father interacted with the Son in an observable way, giving His answer of approval (Geldenhuis 1952). John 12 has the Father publicly answering, and in Gethsemane, an angel is sent to strengthen Jesus to continue. Such empowerment and acknowledgement had a two-fold impact: Firstly, Jesus was empowered through the work of God the Holy Spirit for the task that lay ahead, and He was encouraged by the seal of

acknowledgement given by the Father. Secondly, Jesus was recognized before the crowd and disciples, giving Him authority in the eyes of others, for their sake not His.

Needed Strength

Through prayer, Jesus was assured of the strength that He needed to continue. This is particularly in times of pressure and crisis, both in the conflict with the religious leaders (Luke 5:16-24) and on the way to the cross (Gethsemane). The ultimate impact of prayer was the enablement to continue forward to His death on the cross.

Imparting to the Disciples

Jesus knew that His disciples would need to live and serve in a similar relationship of total dependence on God for restoration, revelation, empowerment and strength as they continued His work after His death. His teaching on prayer, therefore, was with the aim of impacting the future of the church. “Luke is convinced that the ability of the Apostles and others to carry out their role within the salvific plan depends on their prayer life” (Plymale 1991, 113), a prayer life which emerged from abiding in intimate and steadfast relationship with the Father.

Contagious Influence

Jesus’ life of prayer had a powerful, contagious influence. The disciples became aware of their own insufficient prayer life and grew hungry to know Jesus’ secret of prayer (Geldenhuys 1952). Particularly through the Lord’s Prayer, the disciples were handed the distilled version of Jesus’ mission. Through it, we “find what Jesus prayed for and participated in and, by extension, what Jesus’ followers are to pray for and participate

in” (French 2002, 20). Even the first petition is missional in nature. Those who offer this petition will desire that the Father’s name be honoured, with their own lives the point of origin (Wilson 1998), testifying to God’s revered name through compelling life witness (Trites 1979). But it is the petition for the coming of God’s kingdom that is particularly missional, the impact of which we observe in the life and mission of the early church.

Prayer as a Weapon

An aspect of this pursuit for God’s kingdom to come was prayer as a weapon against the work of the enemy as he attempts to lead God’s people astray, both temporally and eschatologically. Through the paradigms seen in Gethsemane and the Lord’s Prayer, the disciples were introduced to a key strategy to battle against the enemy. This was firstly through Jesus’ own prayer, for “Peter and the disciples would survive the temptations precisely because Jesus had prayed for them” (Tostengard 1980, 285). But it is also through His exhortation to pray against temptation. At the end of the Gethsemane scene, in the same way that “Jesus goes to that darkest place near death with only one weapon: prayer,” so too the “weapon he offers them is not a sword, but prayer” (Tostengard 1980, 286). The disciples learnt from Jesus that temptation and difficulty were conquered through “persistent, intense, submissive prayer” (Green 1986, 39).

Glory as Mission

The theme of glory is also missional in nature. As seen in Jesus’ prayer for His disciples (John 17), “the place of Christ’s manifestation of glory is transferred to the community, and the disciples of all time are entrusted with a sending mission (17:18);” a mission to help the world know and believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Sent One (17:21, 23) (Appold 1978, 373). For this to occur, unity was to be both relational and observable,

for the “unity of God’s people has missionary consequences. It is through unity that the world will know that Jesus was sent by the Father” (Chester 2003, 184-185).

Summary

In this section, after initially outlining various terms for prayer and giving insight into Jesus’ background on prayer, I included core passages that highlight Jesus’ practice of prayer, His content and teaching on prayer, and the ensuing impact of His prayer life. Jesus’ practice of prayer involved withdrawing to pray, prayer which brought about miraculous intervention, and prayer that deepened communion with the Father. The Lucan prayer motif particularly emphasizes prayer in the life of Jesus. The content of Jesus’ prayers found in the gospels is limited, but His prayer time in Gethsemane and His prayers on the cross were included because of the profound and powerful example they give of wrestling in prayer and turning to the Father in prayer during trying times. The way in which John’s gospel outlines Jesus communing with the Father is essential to include as it lays the relational foundation for the prayer apprenticeship that the original disciples took on and current disciples are invited into. I limited Jesus’ teaching on prayer to the desperate widow, selected warnings about prayer and the Lord’s prayer.

I chose each of these passages as they highlight the impact of Jesus’ prayer life, namely the clear perspective, spiritual empowerment and needed strength given to Jesus. I then laid out how He imparted the deeper dimension of His own prayer life to the disciples with contagious influence, how He used prayer as a weapon, and the way in which glory came to the Father, bearing witness as mission to the work of the Son, as a consequent result of God responding to prayer.

I will now turn to the role of prayer found in the early church in Acts, exploring the Biblical evidence under identical headings, with the one exception of teaching, as no direct teaching on prayer is found in Acts.

Chapter 2

Prayer in the Early Church in the Acts of the Apostles

Early in the Acts of the Apostles, the church is marked as a people of prayer. Throughout the book as a whole, prayer is mentioned twenty-five times¹ in a way that reflects the practice and impact of prayer within and upon the early church (Trites 1978). It is even through prayer that the church was born and through which it grew, as seen in Acts 2:42-47 (Trites 1978). As in Chapter 1, I categorize the findings of my research into background, practice, content and impact. However, there is no direct teaching on prayer found in the single book of Acts, in contrast to the four gospels.

Background

Prayer rituals were practised by the early church community. Some of these, seen from the practice of Jesus and the disciples, originated from their Jewish heritage, as it “is hardly conceivable that the earliest community would have observed the hours of prayer had Jesus rejected them” (Jeremias 1984, 188). Others became embedded in the culture of their new church community. Several examples identify prayer as a primary apostolic concern of the early church (Turner 1990), even in their simple practices, presenting “the picture of the church and its members regularly engaged in prayer, whether it be in the Temple at the regular hours, or in houses and on roof-tops at other times” (O’Brien 1973, 123).²

¹ Others cite thirty instances (Green 2001, Bartholomew and Holt 2005).

² These also included the early church devoting themselves to prayer (Acts 1:14; 2:42), regularly involved in Jewish prayer practices through Temple visits (Acts 2:46; 3:1; 22:17) or to a synagogue alternative (Acts 16:13, 16) due to not achieving the necessary quorum of ten male household heads (Longenecker 1981), daily prayers (Acts 10:3, 30) and giving thanks (Acts 27:35).

Practice

Although prayer was ritualistic and liturgical for the early church, having witnessed Jesus redefine the practice of prayer, expand prayer to new levels of intimacy with the Father and express the heart of prayer through content and teaching, a solid foundation was set for the prayer life of the early community. Acts 1:14 highlights the commitment of the early church engaging in prayer. By receiving the Holy Spirit, they were empowered to enter intimate communion with the Father with greater understanding and effectiveness. Joel Green builds on this by dividing prayer within Acts into four helpful categories (Green 2001). I will consider each of these.

Table 2: Four Categories of Prayer for the Early Church in Acts

Selecting Leadership (last 3-laying on of hands)	1:24-6 choosing Matthias	6:4,6 choosing seven	13:3 Paul, Barnabas	14:23 appointed elders
In the face of persecution/hardship	4:24-31 believers' prayer	7:59-60 Stephen's death	12:5, 12 Peter in prison	16:25 Paul and Silas in prison
During moments of missional innovation	9:10-12 Ananias' vision	10:3-4, 9-16, 30-31; 11:5 Cornelius and Peter's visions	22:17-21 Paul's trance	28:8 healing in Malta
For salvation ³	7:60; 9:40; 20:36; 21:5 kneeling	13:2-3; 14:23 fasting	8:15 receive Holy Spirit	

Selecting Leaders

In the selecting of leaders in Acts, a varied reflection of Jesus' choosing of the twelve disciples can be discerned. The revelation of the right person to a role or ministry occurred through petitionary prayer, while others were commissioned into a task through prayer (O'Brien 1973). In the choosing of Matthias, nominated because he bore witness to the resurrection, which was seen as the "centre of gravity for Luke's theology"

³ I digress from Green's heading and use the alternative heading 'God's Intervention.'

(Plymale 1991, 75), the casting of lots was not a magical formula, or pure chance (Cullman 1994). Instead it was an invitation, wrapped in prayer, for the Lord to examine the heart of these two men (Coggan 1967) and choose the appropriate one (Acts 1:24, 26). The latter three passages in this category indicate that the laying on of hands was a symbolic gesture of the spiritual commission that took place, authorizing them to undertake their ministry (Stott 1991). Additionally, it is “noteworthy that now the Twelve have added prayer to preaching...in specifying the essence of the apostles’ ministry,” (Stott 1991, 121) helping them identify the need for the seven.

Persecution and Hardship

Persecution and hardship were familiar to the early church. Rather than turning from it, however, the church depicted in Acts comes before God time and again, seeking boldness and release. It is evident that the early church learned victory over trial through Jesus’ own prayer life (Crump 2006). Although Acts 4:24-31 and Stephen’s prayer in Acts 7 fit under this topic, I will include them under the Content of Prayer heading.

Acts 12:5 speaks of the church praying earnestly for Peter. One variant reads “much prayer in earnestness,” (Metzger 1994, 346) adding weight to the petition being offered on Peter’s behalf. The comic and human ending of this scene, is, of course, that though the church was deep in prayer for Peter, when their prayer was answered, they were shocked and disbelieving, with Rhoda leaving Peter to wait in the street. They refused to recognize the very answer they had been praying for (Wall 1991).

In Acts 16:25, a lesson of steadfast faith is taught. Paul and Silas, set in stocks, were singing and praying. How easily it is to forget that their backs were in strips after receiving a severe flogging, and they were likely in intense pain. They did not, however,

sink into despondency, but rather turned their hearts and voices to God (Longenecker 1981), bearing witness to Christ as the other prisoners listened (Acts 16:25b).

Mission Initiative

In the moments of mission initiative, I again see a reflection of instances when Jesus spent time in intimate communion with the Father, out of which came clarity of action.⁴ Green includes Ananias' role in bringing sight to Paul. Acts 9:11b indicates that it was while Paul was praying that Ananias received a word from the Lord. In Acts 10 and the story of Cornelius and Peter, these men were praying when the revelation came, ultimately seeing the gospel penetrate the Gentile world as never before. It would be reasonable to conclude that had Cornelius not been prayerful, he would not have had an initiatory role in the Gentile mission. Finally, through Paul's recounting of his story in Acts 22, it is reiterated that he was at prayer (Acts 22:17) when he fell into a trance and received a word from the Lord. In these instances, God intervened through a vision, given while praying, communicating the radical role He had for each of these men. It reinforces the idea that prayer is one of the primary ways in which God reveals His plans, allowing people to hear and obey by participating in His kingdom work (Green 2001).

God's Intervention

Prayer for God's intervention displays a desperation and dependence of God's people upon the only One who can step in, bringing forgiveness, healing, provision, protection and revelation. The kneeling posture (Acts 7:60; 9:40; 20:36; 21:5) reveals a sense of humility (Green 2001), whereas fasting (Acts 13:2-3; 14:23) creates a

⁴ See the section in Chapter 1 titled Lucan Emphasis on Prayer.

vulnerability before God. It strips us of a basic need, which sets the scene for asking God to work in mysterious ways outside of the control of those submitting to Him.

Content

The content of prayer found in the early church in Acts is limited. However, there are two important prayers which highlight the missional nature of the Acts community; the prayer of boldness and the prayer of witness.

Prayer for Boldness

Acts 4:24-31 is perhaps one of the most powerful prayers found in Scripture, and the longest prayer of the church found in the NT (Koenig 1992). Although there was much at stake for those praying, it is important to note that the prayer is not for safety or protection, but for boldness and further enabling, that the gospel may be known and God glorified. Peter, a central figure in this scene, “was no longer the Peter who denied Jesus three times...[but] had become a witness of the risen Jesus” (Kwon 2012, 68). It is evident that the early church cared more about God’s Kingdom purposes coming to pass than their own well-being.

Starting with praise and recognition of who God is, this prayer acknowledges God as the Creator God who is over all things. The prayer moves into a quick reminder of things past, where it is made clear that God is the God of both revelation and history (Stott 1991). The actions of the Roman rulers did not surprise God, nor were they outside His control. But rather, He “decided” them “beforehand” (Acts 4:28). Finally, a passionate request for boldness and healing power is given, linking back to the previous scene (chapter three) of the story (Kwon 2012). Knowing who God is, the believers could request with fervour and trust. “God’s response is immediate, direct and unmistakable”

(Plymale 1991, 86), as seen in Acts 4:31. The prayers of the early church believers were answered through the coming Holy Spirit, who enabled them to fulfil their request to speak boldly in a way that God's "redemptive aim was not thwarted" (Green 2001, 192). The point is "made that such prayer plays an integral part in the advancement of God's ... saving purpose" (Peterson 1998, 394).

Prayer of Witness

The story of the first martyr (particularly Acts 6:8-15 and 7:54-60) brings both challenge and encouragement. Stephen, marked by God's grace and the power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit, portrayed the boldness often seen in the early church and requested in Acts 4:29. His zealous speech before the Sanhedrin led to his death. Spirit-filled, he peered into heaven, catching an unparalleled glimpse of God's glory and Jesus' place. As Paul stood watching, Stephen echoed two of Jesus' prayers from the cross, that of forgiving His enemies (Luke 23:34 – "Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.'") and of entrusting his spirit to God (Luke 23:46 – "Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.'"). In the same way that Jesus' final words from the cross were those of deep trust, so too were Stephen's cries (Brown 1986). Such a comparison is striking indeed (Peterson 1998), as Stephen incorporates the death prayers of Jesus into his own death scene, modelling the Christian approach as a new way of forgiveness without vengeance (Matthews 2009).

Impact of Prayer

The impact of prayer within the life of the early church as found in Acts is evident in several ways. Observing Jesus, the Apostles had realized that prayer was an essential element in His ministry, and sought to emulate His example. However, with the coming

of the Holy Spirit, the disciples' prayer life was enabled and empowered to a deeper degree as the intimacy between the Father and the Son was brought to life through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This is particularly evident through the leadership: Peter, the disciples given to the Word and prayer, and later, the Apostle Paul, all of whom dedicated themselves to prayer (Grenz 1988), making it a priority. "In short, Luke portrays prayer as an important practice of the disciples...it requires a total dependence upon God" (Han 2000, 689). This is expressed through the emphasis on community for early church, their decision-making process and missional focus, as explored below.

Community

Prayer impacted the sense of community within the early church as they regularly met together (Acts 1:14), sharing life (Acts 2:42-47), coming before God in dependent expectation (Acts 1:24), and witnessing Him at work in answer to prayer (Acts 2:43). Phrases such as "devoted themselves...to prayer" (Acts 1:14) point to a commitment to orientate their lives towards God in prayer. It cost them: time as they regularly met together, finances as they shared their food and goods, and sold property (Acts 2:42-47). But they gained a people to whom they belonged. John Stott helpfully brings the communal nature of prayer to life as found in Acts 4:23-24. He writes,

What was the apostles' reaction to the Council's ban and threats? *On the release*, Luke tells us, they went straight *to their own people*, their relatives and friends in Christ, *reported* everything the Council had said to them (23), and then immediately turned together *in prayer to God* (24a). Here is the Christian *koinonia* in action. (Stott 1991, 99)

Together they could stand firm as they bore witness to the world. Together they would grow. Together they learnt to wait.⁵ Together they grew in authentic maturity, correcting misguided or "counterfeit response[s] to the presence and activity of God's

⁵ Jesus' command in Acts 1:4 to wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled in Acts 2:1-4.

Spirit” (Longenecker 1981, 360), as displayed by Simon the Sorcerer’s (Acts 8:19). Together, they were acutely aware that answer to prayer came through the Spirit’s enabling.

Decision-Making and Courage

The impact continues to be evident in how decisions were made, such as those chosen for leadership, and how people were commissioned to continue the mission of the church. It is displayed through the choosing of Matthias (Acts 1:24-26), the seven (Acts 6:4, 6), the commissioning of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:3) and the appointment of elders (Acts 14:23).

Gethsemane was a “struggle for clear vision to see and strength to do the will of God” (Fosdick 1954, 161). In the same way that through prayer Jesus was given strength to press on to His awaiting death, the early church was given the ability to accept death. This is portrayed through Stephen (Acts 7:54-60), the ability to celebrate hardship (Paul and Silas in Acts 16:25), the power to be freed from prison (Peter’s release in Acts 12:5-12), and for bold speech in arduous situations (Acts 4:29-31).

Missional Focus

Although the empowerment and acknowledgement which Jesus received through prayer was unique, prayer had a profound impact on world mission, with God’s response to prayer being the point of origin for mission (Daniélou 1996). Through prayer, often taking the form of a vision, angelic or other supernatural happenings (Blue 1998), Paul was strategically brought under God’s reign, bringing the gospel message to lands never before reached. He was both told where to go (Acts 16:9-10; 22:17-21) and where not to go (Acts 16:6-7) through God’s revelation. Through prayer, the Gentile world was

unlocked. This included the involvement of a Gentile centurion and a greater acceptance from Peter, an important figure in this mission (Acts 10). Healings (Acts 28:8), open hearts, and receiving the Holy Spirit gave greater power and boldness for proclamation and miracle work. The church was given a missional task and empowered to complete it through interaction with God in prayer. “Prayer, then, is one of the primary means for cooperation in God’s mission in the world” (Lincoln 2001, 177).

Summary

In Chapter 2, I have included central themes which underline the importance of prayer for the early church in Acts. Influenced by both their Jewish heritage and their relationship with Jesus, the early church practiced prayer when selecting leaders, during times of persecution and hardship, when initiating mission, and while displaying dependence on God to save them. The content of prayer shows the desire for boldness and that their lives would bear witness no matter what the cost. These themes lead to the resulting impact where prayer was highly valued by the early church as a community of God’s people, providing clarity for making decisions, courage for action and granting focus for mission.

With the authoritative voice of Scripture as a backdrop (Part I), I now turn to answering my second Research Question which looks at role of prayer in the community of Pioneers-Africa.

Part II

Voices from Pioneers-Africa

In recent decades, there has been a slow shift of the “center of gravity of Christianity to the non-Western world” (Bediako 2004, 7). While involving more than Africa, as Bediako continues, Africa has become the one of the heartlands for the Christian faith today.

Such an impact has reached my own organisation, Pioneers, where we see Pioneers-Africa influencing the worldwide organisation. Through long-standing relationship, I have witnessed the way in which Pioneers-Africa are sending out a people who are given to prayer as an integral part of their life and ministry. I believe there is much that PoA can learn from our Pioneers-Africa family.

Part II, therefore, listens to voices from Pioneers-Africa as I further explore my central research issue which studies the role of prayer as identified in portions of Scripture as it intersects with the role of prayer in Pioneers-Africa, to establish principles of prayer applicable to PoA. In the following section, I will present a brief overview of the research context, describe the Narrative Interview Ethnographic and Participant Observation methodologies for collecting data and rationale for selecting these research methods, and explain the data analysis utilized (Chapter 3). In Chapter 4, I will then lay out the rich findings that emerged.

Chapter 3

Research Methods: An Evaluation

Regarding my field research, two mutually enriching approaches best enabled the qualitative research undertaken, providing meaningful answers to my second research question around the role of prayer in Pioneers-Africa. These were Ethnographic Interview (specifically Narrative Interview (N-I)) and Participant Observation (P-O).

Research Methods and Methodology

I used Ethnographic Narrative Interview as my primary method for data collection. As “qualitative methods rely on text and image data” (Creswell 2014, Kindle Location 4184-4185), the N-I method enabled me to collect significant descriptive and explanatory data, and consequently explore the “underlying patterns of meaning” (Gubrium and Holstein 2009, Kindle Location 4384) of prayer within Pioneers-Africa. Statistical information, provided through quantitative means (Bernard 2011), would not have achieved this aim. I utilized P-O as a secondary method to set the research context, while also providing validating data. I will speak more to this later.

John Creswell clarifies research design, explaining that “researchers might study individuals (narrative, phenomenology); explore processes, activities, and events (case study, grounded theory); or learn about broad culture-sharing behavior of individuals or groups (ethnography)” (Creswell 2014, Kindle Location 4273-4274). Although elements

of phenomenology¹ emerged from this study, ethnography best describes the method of exploring the “culture-sharing behaviour” of prayer within Pioneers-Africa.

Narrative Interview: The Use of Story

There are various forms of interview that come under the umbrella of E-I, with N-I the most appropriate and effective for the Pioneers-Africa context. Since “telling stories is essentially a meaning-making process,” (Seidman 2013, Kindle Location 291), by utilizing the rich tradition of storytelling as a core form of communication (Atkinson 1998), I found that time and again N-I served the dual purposes of setting the respondents at ease and giving them a vehicle to share meaningful, descriptive data and first-person narrative. When first beginning the interview, respondents were not sure what to expect, but on hearing the first question, they would often lean back and begin talking, immediately more at ease.² Question 1³ gave the respondents opportunity to describe significant turning point moments in their lives (Denzin 1989), opening up as both teacher and brother/sister in the Lord, allowing another to understand their experience as they reflected upon it through narrative (Seidman 2013).

I found that N-I achieved several other important purposes. Firstly, it set each story into the larger context (Denzin 1989). As the interviews progressed, I noticed a number patterns emerging through like-data. I will identify these further in the chapter on findings.

¹ Phenomenological research is a method intended to gather data relating to “the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants. This description culminates in the essence of the experiences for several individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon” (Creswell 2014, Kindle Location 809-810). While some questions did evoke phenomenological responses, this was not the overarching pattern arising from the data.

² When initially going through the interview guide, Uncle Chris commented that was pleasantly surprised at how the questions invited unpressured responses.

³ Briefly tell me your Christian life story. What has shaped your spiritual journey? (Grey font – this was the original question. As we reviewed the interview guide, Uncle Chris queried the use of the word spiritual. I amended the question for the sake of clarity.) See Appendix A for the Interview Guide.

Secondly, I found Margaret Kovach's insight that stories are "pivotal in gaining insight into a phenomenon" (Kovach 2009, Kindle Location 1670-3) to be true, helping to clarify data. "Let me tell you a story," responded G-11, displaying how a "personal story can be like a trail...leading us somewhere completely new. Or it could so strongly validate something we already know that it could lead us to a new conclusion about something we were tentative about previously" (Atkinson 1998, 73). At times, this naturally occurred. "Now, let me tell you what happened," narrated G-20. However, I found that if I asked a question and it was answered in a purely conceptual way, I would follow up with, "Could you tell me a story about that?" Or "What is an example of that?" For data that I wanted to validate, I would ask a variation of "I've been hearing about this. What has been your experience regarding...?" I found James Spradley's advice on descriptive questions particularly helpful when I was picking up on a specific term or concept that needed to be explored (Spradley 1979). By the eighth interview, I had made a short list of themes that were consistently arising and began to probe for further understanding, with the "aim...to build an accurate and representative picture of key issues in a short space of time" (Schostak 2006, Kindle Location 1717-9). This pointed to reliable data consistency within the interview set, further confirmed by the remaining interviews.

Using a semi-structured approach to N-I, I found it gave the structure to provide a level of consistency, while at the same time giving freedom to follow a lead or delve into an area of interest. Steiner Kvale confirms that most qualitative interviews are semi-structured, involving primed questions within a sequence of themes, while being open to modification (Kvale 2007). This allowed me to build on the emergent themes from Part I while leaving room for additional developing patterns.

Aware that I was not fully in control of this privileged, collaborative effort (Atkinson 1998), I occasionally had to gently guide a respondent back into the general

domain of prayer. At other times, if a respondent was moving into an area of a future question, I would follow the flow of thought and either promote a question or, if they had not fully entered the thought, let them know that we would explore that soon. Noting it on my Interview Guide (see Appendix A), I would utilize one of their phrases when I revisited the question. Rather than limiting conversation, this kept the respondent on a helpful question path.

Ethnographic Questions

I utilized Spradley's descriptive, structural and contrast questions (Spradley 1979). Beginning with a grand tour, broad scope descriptive question about the respondent's Christian life story, I found that this relaxed the respondent, as mentioned earlier. The second question, regarding influences on their prayer life, also fell into this category, although with some structural overlap. Later questions reflected a mini-tour version of this, evoking responses that provided detail, examples and experiences. Of the follow-up questions asked in response to emerging patterns, the mini-tour and structural categories best enabled clarification of these developing themes.

The structural questions embedded into the Interview Guide unveiled interesting responses and helped me form thematic relationships of kind, function, characteristics, practice and reason. An example of this is the way in which question three, which asks how prayer is practiced on a daily/weekly basis, opened the areas of fasting, night hours, early-morning prayer and the length of prayer, several unexpected areas that needed to be explored and verified. Follow-up questions into each of these areas expanded my understanding of the Pioneers-Africa reality of prayer.

I used contrast questions when seeking to explore the difference between one area and another. For example, as the theme of fasting began to arise, I added a question,

asking the difference that fasting makes in the role of prayer. “Why not just pray? Why pray and fast?” This enabled a better understanding of the essence of the question.

Participant Observation: Secondary Method

P-O acted as my secondary method. During my time Accra, I operated as an observer-as-participant. I engaged in parts of the two conferences, but primarily observed, unobtrusively taking notes in the background. For some conference participants, I quickly became an accepted outsider; an outsider because I was not born in Africa, but accepted because of the welcome of their trusted leadership and staff, because I was already known by a small handful of people, and because of my willingness to live simply in the office accommodation, and serve as needed. Additionally, rapport built through shared meals, stories and church visits each Sunday. Although I am an expatriate Caucasian woman, my presence did not bring with it organisational authority or role. Coming as a learner, this accepted outsider status was consolidated as word spread of the non-threatening and enjoyable nature of the interviews.⁴

Spradley’s categorization of human experience: what people do, or their cultural behaviour; what people know, or their cultural knowledge; and things people make or use, or their cultural artefacts (Spradley 1980), was helpful. The cultural behaviour I observed further validated a range of findings which arose from N-I. For example, while conducting P-O, I witnessed the emphasis that Pioneers-Africa places on prayer, heard Biblical teaching on prayer, including teaching on Spiritual Warfare, took part in a day of fasting prayer, watched the practice of what I call corporate prayer, where participants prayed simultaneously, and observed other cultural forms of prayer, where people moved at will, walking around the room, kneeling or passionately gesturing. There were also a

⁴ This was confirmed when conference participants began to approach me, requesting an interview.

range of vocal levels, with several participants shouting freely. Additionally, three church visits gave insight into data regarding the influence of churches on the prayer life of interview respondents. The final question of the interviews was another form of P-O, where the respondent ended our time in prayer. P-O, therefore, provided methodological corroboration, with “multiple research methods [used] to study one problem” (Beitin 2012, 248). This established reliability of the data arising from N-I through another frame of reference, while further validating the overarching methodology.

There were, however, several limitations that I experienced within P-O. One was that there was quite a range of behaviour to observe during the conferences, but in the two non-conference weeks, the office environment was relatively quiet. The second reason that P-O was occasionally difficult was that I did not find out about a regular time of prayer until quite late into the conference. I was aware of the limitation that I could not be in all places at once. Generally, this was not a problem, but I was disappointed when, after the fact, I discovered a lost P-O opportunity of prayer at 4:30 a.m. After several interviews, I began to see that this was a rhythm of prayer practiced by many respondents. They would rise at 4-4:30 a.m. to pray for an hour to an hour and a half before the day began. Only through a passing comment of a male American participant⁵ at the second conference did I find out that many Africans were rising for early prayer at the conference. If I had known, I would have slipped out onto the roof to quietly observe. I regret not having this opportunity, limited by my appropriate stay in the women’s accommodation. This vicarious observation, however, validated the data I was collecting as credible data.

P-O provided much opportunity to delve into cultural knowledge. As previously mentioned, there was teaching and individual prayer, worship and communal prayer

⁵ This American was the only non-African participant sharing a large accommodation room with the other male African participants, hence his inside knowledge of the early rising times. He had been living and working in Kenya for many years and was an accepted outsider of Pioneers-Africa.

practiced. Outside of church visits, I was surprised at the lack of cultural artefacts involved in prayer, although *djembes*, traditional Ghanaian drums were included in worship through song. This worship was threaded with prayer. Some of this lack was the intentional response of Pioneers-Africa not to align too closely with the Ghanaian church culture, which often teaches and practices prosperity theology.

Although data was gained through P-O, I now understand what Michael Angrosino means when he speaks of P-O being a “role adopted to facilitate” data collection, rather than a method for collecting data (Angrosino 2007, 35). In my research experience, it seems that the primary role of P-O was to establish trust through my presence at the two conferences and church visits with a variety of the conference participants and mobilisation staff. A secondary aspect of P-O was to build data validity, confirming that “Presence builds trust. Trust lowers reactivity. Lower reactivity means higher validity of data” (Bernard 2011, Kindle Location 6116-6117).

Ethical Matters

Ethical approval was granted by the Human Subjects Research Committee. Additionally, a consent form was signed by both the leadership of Pioneers-Africa and individuals who were interviewed. This consent form (see Appendix C) clearly stated the purpose of the interview, that it would be recorded and anonymity provided.

As English and French are the common organisational languages of Pioneers-Africa, these were the language options for interview. All those interviewed were fluent in one or the other of these languages, often both. As I am not Francophone, an experienced translator was provided if needed. The Interview Guide itself was not translated into French, allowing the interpreter to translate as contextually appropriate. In the end, however, only one interview involved French translation. This highlights an access situation which arose during the second conference.

At the first conference, I had spoken to someone about conducting an interview, with a positive response, but since the respondent's English was limited and I was planning to use an interpreter. Through a series of events, this person was asked to be interviewed at a certain time. Although Francophone, the respondent chose to do the interview in English, despite the offer of a translator. We did utilize an interpreter for a portion of the interview, although most of the interview was in English. In retrospect, I would have arranged for a translator to assist in the facilitation of the entire interview.

Collecting Data

During April-May 2015, I spent almost a month interviewing and observing members of Pioneers-Africa.⁶ Two conferences were held at the Pioneers-Africa office in Accra, Ghana, and were attended by both Pioneers-Africa office staff and field workers scattered throughout (primarily) West Africa. The interviews took place as follows:

- Week 1 – six people were interviewed during this first three-day conference,⁷ which included seventeen field workers and eleven staff.
- Week 2 - I conducted a further three interviews during a quiet week.
- Week 3 – seven people were interviewed during InTent⁸, lasting five and a half days. Fourteen field workers and twelve staff attended this conference.
- Week 4 – four people were interviewed during my final week in Ghana.

Of the total twenty-one people interviewed, twelve had Ghana as their country of origin. The remaining nine had a range of countries as their country of origin, with all but one

⁶ Although I had completed one pre-test interview before arriving in Ghana, during my weeks there, I interviewed another 21 men and women, recording and eventually transcribing all but one of these. The latter was a short interview with an outsider, which is not included in the Table 3 listing, nor has it been transcribed.

⁷ Sustainable Mobilization Conference (SMC).

⁸ A Pioneers' Leadership Development program.

from West Africa.⁹ Each person interviewed will be referred to as G-0 – G-20.

Finding Respondents¹⁰

To conduct in-depth interviews, I employed purposive sampling, interviewing “individuals who have knowledge about the area of focus and can provide a perspective on it” (Beitin 2012, 244). In this case the purposive (also referred to as purposeful) sampling was quite broad due to the correlating research question: What is the role of prayer within Pioneers-Africa? All members of Pioneers-Africa would be able to speak to the topic of prayer. All members of Pioneers-Africa had the “perceived ability to answer specific questions of substantial... importance to the research” (Johnson and Rowlands 2012, 105). Knowing this, I still sought to represent the composition of Pioneers-Africa within the interview set as best I could. I therefore set the interview criteria as follows:

- They would be a part of the Pioneers-Africa community (field and base)¹¹
- Although there would be a strong representation from Ghana (as the base is located there and most of the base workers are Ghanaian), where possible, they would represent a spread of nations regarding both their country of origin and their country of service¹²
- Where possible, there would be a mix of gender and marital status
- They would be able to conduct the interview in either English or French (English in direct interview and French through an available interpreter¹³)

⁹ As Pioneers-Africa is based in Ghana, a larger percentage of the community has Ghana as their country of origin. However, over the years, this has become more diverse as relationships with churches and partner organisations outside of Ghana has strengthened. The remaining people sent through this mobilisation base are largely from Togo, then from a scattering of West African nations.

¹⁰ I use the term respondents when referring to those I gained data from via their interview responses, and refer to participants as those attending the conference in Ghana, whom I observed through P-O.

¹¹ One man interviewed was not a direct member of Pioneers-Africa. He is viewed as a close working partner of Pioneers-Africa since 2013, and was invited to the SMC, so was interviewed as part of this community.

¹² Twenty-one people were interviewed. Twelve were from Ghana. Nine were from a range of other nations.

¹³ Only the consent form was translated into French. This was done by an English woman who had worked in Senegal for many years, was fluent in French, known and trusted by the Pioneers-Africa community,

See Table 3 and Appendix B for more information regarding the respondents.

Table 3: Attributes of Pioneers-Africa Respondents Interviewed¹⁴

#	Gender	Marital Status ¹⁵	Country of Origin	Country of Service ^{16 17}	Field or Base
1	Male	Married	Ghana	Ghana	Field
2	Male	Married	Ghana	Ghana	Base
3	Male	Single	Ghana	Ghana	Base
4	Male	Married	Ghana	Ghana	Field
5	Male	Married	Ghana	Ghana	Both
6	Female	Married	Ghana	Ghana	Base
7	Female	Married	Ghana	Ghana	Base
8	Male	Married	Ghana	Ghana, World	Both
9	Male	Married	Ghana	Guinea, Ghana	Both
10	Female	Married	Ghana	Mali, Ghana	Both
11	Male	Married	Ghana	Mali, Ghana	Both
12	Male	Married	Ghana	Mauritania, Area	Field
13	Male	Married	Kenya	Kenya	Both
14	Male	Married	Niger Republic	Niger Republic	Field
15	Male	Married	Nigeria	Burkina Faso	Field
16	Male	Married	Nigeria	Togo	Both
17	Male	Married	Sierra Leone	Ghana	Base
18	Male	Married	Sierra Leone	Nigeria	Base
19	Male	Married	Togo	Gabon, Togo	Both
20	Female	Married	Togo	Mauritania	Field
21	Male	Single	Togo	Togo	Base

and had completed a doctoral program, so understood the intent behind the consent form. In the end, only three French consent forms were utilized.

¹⁴ The table information is not listed in chronological order of interview (as is the List of Interviews in Appendix B), but rather in alphabetical order of country of origin, then country of service.

¹⁵ Of the total 21 people interviewed, only two were single and four were women. However, of the 93 Pioneers-Africa members, only 14 are single and 10 are women, so this is a fair representation.

¹⁶ The only nations where field work is taking place but no representative was interviewed were Benin, Cote D'Ivoire, Senegal and China. Also, Togo has many workers, and this was not represented in the same way Ghana was, although the Ghanaian numbers in Table 3 include a mix of field and base. Because my research focused on the general Pioneers-Africa community rather specific national influences, the data was not impacted by this lack.

¹⁷ Of the 21 respondents, only ten people have solely served in their country of origin on a long-term basis.

During my time in Ghana, Uncle Chris Katsepor, one of the long-standing and well-respected leaders of both Pioneers-Africa and Pioneers as an international community, acted as both my sponsor and cultural mentor. On the first day at the office, after gaining signed permission from the Pioneers-Africa leadership¹⁸ to conduct interviews, we reviewed the questions in the Interview Guide and the list of participants attending the SMC. After I had clarified the criteria for those being interviewed, he expounded on each person included on the conference list,¹⁹ giving me two names as a potential starting place. This helped me prioritize with whom to start, as I intentionally left the handful of participants returning for the next conference until later. Equipped with details about each person, this allowed me to intentionally seek out those who would reflect a relatively broad sample of Pioneers-Africa members. As I moved ahead with the interviews, I sought to fulfil this criteria to the best of my ability, balancing it with those who were available.²⁰

Most interviews lasted 60-90 minutes, with the shortest forty-four minutes and the longest almost two and a half hours long. The interviews took place around the Pioneers-Africa office complex, in open privacy; open in that people could walk past and see the interview occurring, but distant enough to not be overheard and for the recording to be clear. This provided a safe and yet relaxed atmosphere for the interviews.

¹⁸ Both Uncle Chris Katsepor, as a senior leader of Pioneers-Africa, and Eugene Yakohene, the Mobilisation Base Director, signed separate consent forms on behalf of the organisation, Pioneers-Africa, indicating permission to interview within this collectivist community. Additionally, individuals signed consent forms as respondents of an interview.

¹⁹ Uncle Chris explained that seven participants had strong enough English for an interview, three of them could act as interpreters, one was not with Pioneers-Africa but a partner organisation, five of them would return for the second conference, and all of them have served for longer than five years on the field.

²⁰ When I noted an imbalance of criteria, I sought to find respondents to fit that criteria, hence why many of my final interviews were women, who were largely lacking until then.

Data Analysis

I will now turn to the analysis process, before summarizing the methodology utilized for this research.

Theme-Constrained Questions

Through the foundational Scriptural research (Part I – the role of prayer in the life of Jesus and the early church in Acts), initial themes emerged: practice, teaching, content and impact of prayer. These themes shaped the general areas of further research regarding the role of prayer within Pioneers-Africa. I therefore sought to explore personal narratives using theme-constrained questions, which would allow me to harmonize the Part I and Part II material. For this reason, I used a deductive, theory-driven approach to construct the Interview Guide. Once the Interview Guide was confirmed, however, the emergent and iterative process of data collection was not influenced by the Part I themes.

Regarding the data that arose out of the interviews, I primarily depended on the inductive approach of grounded theory (G-T); starting with the data, being led by it, and allowing the emic themes to decide the coding. This iterative process was truly one of shaping and reshaping (Charmaz 2006), and I have found that the thematic categories that emerged from N-I data differ somewhat from those that arose from the Biblical analysis in Part I. This is further detailed in Part III – Harmonized Voices.

Additionally, I found that twenty-one interviews were sufficient, for in the final third of the interviews little new data was emerging and I found I had reached a point of saturation regarding the research focus.²¹

²¹ Saturation is “when gathering fresh data no longer sparks new insights or reveals new properties” (Creswell 2014, Kindle Location 4332-4334). Also see (Charmaz 2006, Seidman 2013).

The Iterative Process

During my time in Ghana, I quickly noticed repeated, emerging patterns. By the eighth interview, I had begun to unofficially code interviews or responses to certain questions, and was asking further probing questions to confirm collected data or test assumptions. The iterative cycle continued.

I was limited in the coding and analysis process during the two conference weeks, given that the conference went all day and most evenings I was busy interviewing respondents. There was no conference during my second week in Ghana, which gave me time to begin transcribing the first six interviews. I hesitantly started the coding and analysis process then, as transcribing helped confirm emerging patterns. Admittedly, deep content analysis and official coding did not occur until I returned to Australia. I did find, though, that the unofficial coding process that I used in Ghana was further confirmed as I processed the raw transcript and P-O data and became the main coding headings once formal analysis commenced.

On my return to Australia, I followed Simon Creswell's logical steps for Qualitative Research, which includes organizing and preparing the data through the transcription of the interviews. I found that listening to each interview for a second time as I transcribed the interviews was helpful in affirming the themes that I had begun to construct, enabling greater intimacy with the data, which led to unearthing details I had previously missed.

Creswell further encourages researchers to read over all the data, identify patterns for coding, form descriptions, initially and at an advanced level, and finally interpret the findings (Creswell 2014). I utilized the computer assisted qualitative data analysis software QSR NVivo program to assist in this process. Finding NVivo to be a useful means of managing data, I listened to each interview for a third time as I electronically coded the data, allocating data within each interview into the relevant theme or sub-theme

categories. Because the data was often wrapped in story, I distributed the data by units of thoughts rather than by word or sentence, as this authentically facilitated the narrative approach. This easily enabled the collection of like-data, while also enabling me to create new codes or themes, known as nodes in NVivo, as I progressed, advancing analysis development.

Before I began to write, I printed out each classification and physically highlighted emerging research content. This fourth reading of the data helped to further refine and validate the data that I will report in Chapter 4 – Findings.²²

Coding Tree

Through the iterative analysis process, I created a coding tree to explain the thematic headings in which the data was grouped. The four macro level theme titles for my coding tree are influence on prayer, practice of prayer, content of prayer and impact of prayer. Each of these had a variety of mid-level theme titles to bring deeper dimension and greater distinction to the analysis process, while still others were broken down into micro level theme titles. The coding tree also notes each respondent who contributed data to a given theme. (See Appendix D for the coding tree layout.)

Although practice, content and impact were themes that emerged from the Part I Scriptural literature survey on the role of prayer in the life of Jesus and the early church in Acts, I found that influence²³ quickly surfaced as a main heading in the African data. It came in response to one question,²⁴ but it also appeared in variety of other question responses. In my literature survey of Scripture, teaching was the fourth theme heading.

²² This analysis process has been visually detailed and is available upon request.

²³ That is, what has affected or shaped the prayer life of those being interviewed.

²⁴ Question 2 - When you think about your prayer life, what would you say are the most influential parts of what has shaped your prayer life as it is today?

However, I found that in the interviews, teaching belonged as a sub-theme under influence. Some responses sit in several different coding categories, though the majority have been placed in one classification alone.

Reliability and Validity

Irving Seidman asserts that interviews can help build validity, or trustworthiness, as “by interviewing a number of participants, we can connect their experiences and check the comments of one participant against those of others” (Seidman 2013, Kindle Location 696).²⁵ As previously mentioned, this occurred early into the interviews. I had noticed certain patterns emerging: modelling, night hours, prayer with fasting, the length of time spent in prayer, the communal nature of prayer and spiritual warfare, to name a few. When I heard one of these terms or themes in response to a question, I would follow it up. “Tell me more about that,” I would ask, and time and again, a respondent would settle back and unfold another story. This was further validated through P-O.

I found it comforting that that there were a handful of outliers. This came in response to being asked for an interview. One gentleman directly answered, “No.” This was strangely affirming, as it confirmed that while an automatic response in the affirmative might be interpreted as cultural pressure, it did not have to be automatically assumed. I also received a refusal in the form of extended evasion.

There were several outliers regarding question responses. G-16, responding to a question on prayer and fasting, replied,

I don't like fasting. I will always struggle with... There have been times when I have really argued with myself and people close to me, like my wife. And say, look, why should I fast? In the first place, why can't I just pray? I

²⁵ As noted in footnote 14, although the interview selection pool was somewhat limited to those present at SMC, InTent and the office in Accra, consistent data arose from the respondents, reaching saturation within the 21 interviews. This confirmed data reliability and validity.

mean, fasting is just like twisting God's hand behind Him or something and trying to get Him to do things. So, I dodge fasting as much as I can.

I valued his honesty, as his unusual response validated the consistency found elsewhere.

G-14, in response to a cultural understanding of why certain night hours were a valuable time for prayer, commented,

Some people have made a fetish of it...that you must get up by 12 hours and pray 'til 3...these are the times when the witches are most active. You can't pastor without coming across these things. And I am aware that we have several stories that buttress this. But, I don't tie myself to that. I...specify Friday evenings...as a church...we have all-night prayer every Friday.

There was both enough consistency to find patterns, while enough distinction to know that a fixed response was not being given.

Summary

After deciding on Pioneers-Africa as my research context, I interviewed a purposive interview sample who could meaningfully speak into the question: What is the role of prayer in Pioneers-Africa? This was further substantiated by interview criteria, the results of which I have identified in Table 3. The information confirming the criteria originated from trusted Pioneers-Africa cultural guides.²⁶

Once the conference participants were identified, I moved ahead with asking permission to interview. When given, we arranged a time for a 60-90 minute recorded interview. Occasionally the interview was shorter or longer than this. Following the Interview Guide, I utilized N-I, spending time hearing stories in response to the questions around the role of prayer in the respondent's life. This resulted in meaningful, descriptive data. Anecdotes became verifiable data when consistent responses were given resulting in patterns, which finally reached a point of saturation towards the final third of the

²⁶ As previously noted, Uncle Chris and Uncle Fred, who are both national Ghanaians and respected leaders within Pioneers-Africa and the global family of Pioneers, acted as my cultural guides, providing cultural discernment and interpretation when necessary.

interviews. Staying on-site during the conferences allowed me to practice P-O, which built relational trust, leading to greater validity of shared data. It also enabled additional verification of the interview data through observation.

This was further confirmed through the analysis process, which unofficially began while in Ghana when I used spare time to begin transcribing the completed interviews. Already the iterative process of G-T began to uncover data as themes were reiterated by respondent after respondent. This was validated once I was back in Australia and finished transcribing all the interviews. NVivo enabled an easy distribution of the information into various categories, under headings that I initially identified during the transcriptions. Paradoxically, a handful of outliers strengthened the data by displaying that the information given was not fixed or forced. Listening to the interviews for a third time as I electronically distributed the data into various coded categories confirmed both the validity of the data and the emergent patterns. I will now turn to these findings.

Chapter 4

Findings

This chapter will lay out the findings that arose from the N-I data regarding the role of prayer in Pioneers-Africa, which was validated through P-O. Through subsequent analysis of data, I divided the interview data into the thematic headings of influence, practice, content and impact. Ongoing implications will be discussed in Part III.

Influence

I have identified a number of factors that emerged from the N-I data as consistent influences in shaping the prayer life of Pioneers-Africa respondents. This range of dynamics can be seen in Table 4. The figures on the right indicate the number of respondents out of the 21 interviews completed who provided data relevant to that sub-heading. I will examine each of these in turn.

Table 4: Influence on Prayer Life

Influence	Number of Respondents
Pioneers-Africa	21
Teaching	20
Modelling	17
Cultural	16
Events	13
High School and College Years	12
Church	8

Pioneers-Africa

The influence of Pioneers-Africa continues to be pervasive, falling into six primary areas: influential figures, Tuesday prayer day, Spiritual Emphasis Week, half nights of prayer, encouragement from the base and economic need.

From the start, the story of Pioneers-Africa was one of “prayer and dependence on the Holy Spirit.” G-0 narrated to me that the “wheels upon which mission drives is prayer.”¹ As a movement birthed out of prayer, one respondent told of how it was during prayer that the initial idea of going to Mali came to Dr Solomon Aryeetey, and the subsequent idea of establishing Pioneers-Africa was given. This priority on prayer has been maintained by a leadership committed to prayer.²

Secondly, Tuesdays have always been the day of prayer and fasting for Pioneers-Africa. Originating with Dr Solomon and his prayer partner mentor, who would meet on a Tuesday for a day of prayer and fasting, it continued when Dr Solomon and his family served on the field. During that time, they began to see a pattern of response to the Lord, particularly on a Tuesday.³ So, in agreement with what they observed, they continued Tuesdays as the day for Pioneers-Africa.

Tuesday mornings are given to prayer and fasting. Generally starting at 10 a.m., the various team gather until 1-2 p.m., when they break their fast.⁴ G-12 reiterated, “So from day one, it has become like a culture.” G-20 provided another view. “We are not legalistic about it,” but “we’ve seen God answer a lot of prayers through the Tuesday [meetings].”

¹ G-0 also included sacrifice, the Word of God and faith as additional “wheels of mission.”

² G-14 gave evidence that when “they pray, it effects the environment. In our discussions, in our strategy.”

³ “They would say, I would come on Tuesday. Why on Tuesday? Meanwhile, our fast and prayer days were Tuesdays.” (Respondent reference is not specified so not to reveal the identity in other references.)

⁴ During this time, the Pioneers-Africa staff and teams open the Word, share prayer requests that have come in, pray for the mission workers, crises and enemies of mission, and for fields that they would like to see opened. They bring various needs before the Lord, both mobilisation and financial, pray for Pioneers as an international community, and against the non-gospel teaching seen in the church.

Thirdly, once every quarter, a Spiritual Emphasis Week is called. The team takes three-four hours a day for a week for prayer and fasting, studying a theme, which in 2015 was In His Presence. G-18 clarified that, “they will write to all the team members to remind that we will have the Spiritual Emphasis Week. It’s on our calendar ... We will collect prayer topics throughout the week... we will meet here...do a little Bible Study, then pray.” G-5 identified the motivation for these weeks. “At times, you can overwork yourself to the point that you may forget that you need to get closer to the owner of the work... But it takes prayer to fulfil God’s agenda.”

Fourthly, these Spiritual Emphasis Weeks would often culminate with a half night of prayer, where families and partners are invited to join for prayer from 8-11 p.m. or 9 p.m.-midnight. These would occur at other times, as well. G-8 mentioned that “last year we had a lot of... Friday half night... we start around 8 p.m. and we close at 11 p.m. We come and pray for Pioneers-Africa, the missionaries... if there are certain needs, we also pray about it and ask God to help us.” Some teams on the field hold such evenings monthly, though G-7 mentioned that this varies with travel.

Fifthly, those at the Pioneers-Africa Mobilisation Base office in Accra nurture an atmosphere of prayer themselves and encourage it in those on the field. Many people use social media applications to gather and distribute prayer points and this encourages people to pray for each other. G-7 stated that “the grounds are so hard, in terms of wanting to break through... It’s not easy on the field. So, it takes a lot of prayer.” G-14 affirmed that “those on the field pray more, because... it’s hand-to-hand combat. So, they will certainly pray more, fast more.” But it is normal for the group to gather in prayer, or for one person to pull another aside and ask for needed prayer in one area of another. The office staff also demands a level of accountability. They will ask, “Have you been praying? ... So, in our monthly reports, we need to mention, talk about our prayer lives,” G-15 explained. G-7 displayed a tenacity regarding prayer. “Places that were resistant are

opening up, because we will not stop. We will pray until we see that something happens... We like to persist in prayer like in Luke chapter 18.” Disciplined commitment such as this has built a deep resilience.

Lastly, economic need has often been a driving force for prayer within this community of faithful believers. G-9 commented that “there are times when the month is coming to an end, we don’t have... funds to give our staff out there. And it’s heart-breaking. But now, God is providing... So those are some of the ways that prayer has affected my ministry.” “Us Africans, we don’t know where the support is coming... If we survive, then, we think it is His doing,” ended G-11.⁵

Time and again it was affirmed that “the engine that runs this organisation is prayer,” (G-18) for us, “as an organisation, prayer is the hope that we are all hooked to” (G-19). Story after story poured forth to affirm this belief, because “we get results,” as G-8 witnessed. “We believe that without prayer we cannot make it, especially in our context.⁶ We cannot make it. [Prayer] sustains us and keeps us focused on this work... We just have to daily depend on the Lord for our daily bread.”⁷

Teaching: Biblical

Although teaching was one of the four main thematic headings that emerged out of the Part I Scriptural material, I only included one question that directly related to teaching. However, time and again, in response to interview question two and five

⁵ This is in sharp contrast to prosperity doctrine, which supports the belief that good health and wealth are the right of a believer. The term survival and the comment regarding daily bread in the following paragraph points to a dependent request for the basics (Coggan 1967) under the Chapter 1 section on the Lord’s Prayer.

⁶ During InTent, the second conference during which I conducted interviews, one session combatted the idea of prosperity theology, which is rampant in Ghana and surrounding nations. The emphasis was on the continued need for dependence, while not being misdirected towards greed.

⁷ Daily bread extended to simple needs like covering medical costs (not medical insurance), their children’s education, as well as living, ministry and low-level travel expenses. From time to time it included the desire to gather enough money for marriage.

regarding the elements that had shaped their prayer life, most of the respondents referred to the impact of Scripture on their lives.

G-1 began, “the Scriptures...the life of our Lord...of the disciples. What did they pray about?” G-5 added, “The Scriptures...helped me realize that, without prayer, ministry work would be like social work.” G-0 noted in more detail, “John 5... taught me to be unhurried... Jesus always waited on His Father... So that whole John chapter five has also shaped my prayer life.”

G-13 spoke at length about “aligning our will and partnering with God.” G-2 affirmed this from a different angle, specifying that “place of Gethsemane is like a place of death to self... How do I get that discernment? I use God’s Word to know.”

G-14 gave a range of examples. “I am amazed that Elijah was a man of like passion, like me. And he prayed earnestly... I find Paul’s letters so engaging. Always I prayed for you, I prayed for you daily... How did he manage it with that busy schedule?”

G-15 continued to display the force of Scripture’s bearing on Pioneers-Africa. “The Word of God. The life of Christ. Because I used to tell myself, Christ was fully God and fully man. And despite His fullness of God, He really... lived a prayerful life... If Jesus could pray, to leave us a model, then... we...have no choice.” G-17 noted that “long before dawn, Jesus was up...and went to a solitary place. And we saw this several times... preparing Himself in the presence of God.”

Teaching: Extra-Biblical

There were a lesser number of teaching influences that came through books read, audio teaching, impacting web links, or teaching through discipleship, which I will delve into further under the sub-heading of modelling.

By far the most influential was books read, whether they be the Book of Common Prayer, rooted in Scripture, or authors such as Watchman Nee, A.W. Tozer or E.M. Bounds. G-12 made the discerning comment that “those books, they were talking about an Isaac Principle, and my career was in the way. I struggled and finally I decided to give it to the Lord. And I said, Lord, you have yourself a man whose profession belongs to you.” G-14 added, “I was blown to pieces that human beings could pray so much and that they could have such results... those books ... showed me men and women of God who prayed their lives away.”

Modelling

Seventeen of the twenty-one respondents commented on the impact of mentors and life models upon their own prayer life. G-0 commented that it “had a certain shaping effect on me.” He later talked about getting “into a network that took disciple-making very seriously...how they prayed depending on the Holy Spirit to communicate the gospel... I saw it modelled... I was led into it... I saw their lives at close range.” G-12 pointed out that “by watching others do it...I could see their life... There’s something about people of prayer... it’s infectious.” In a variety of forms and disciplines, such mentors taught many respondents how to pray.

G-1 was also impacted by family members. “I saw the life of my grandmother... of my Father.” G-16 echoed this regarding his grandfather. “I remember his prayer life. Long before day-break you would hear him up, praying. And there were times when he would go to the forest... and spend a whole day... he would declare a whole day of fast...So I learned from the background I came from.” G-11’s life was greatly impacted when a family adopted him into their prayer practice, modelling family prayer for him. He further explained, “We have something called Morning Devotions. At dawn...a

particular, serious Christian house can wake you at 4:30, 5:00 and the entire family will come together. They pray. They sing. They will share the Word of God... They would start teaching me a lot of things.”

G-14 remarked on a university senior, “When we went into the prayer room, he fell on his knees and said, God, if you won’t use me, just kill me... I had never heard anybody pray like that before...that really had an impact on me.”

Several respondents mentioned Dr. Solomon Aryeetey by name, G-0 summarizing him as “a man of faith...modelling a continual dependence on the Holy Spirit and trusting the Lord to provide.” Some respondents identified JFK Mensah and his discipling influence in their life of prayer. Others mentioned their spouses as prayerful. One respondent observed,⁸ “I’ve seen him praying all the time. There are times when you are talking to him, and he will alter something and you know that he is praying.”

Further respondents were aware of how they model prayer for others, such as their children (G-13 and G-6). G-9 spoke of leading others, and how it “compelled me to go an extra mile, to always pray ahead of time, pray ahead of the group, praying ahead, fasting ahead, reading more.” By modelling it for others, his own prayer life was expanded.

Another aspect of modelling is the influence of mission workers and organisations. While the compulsory prayer and morning worship (G-17) could have had a negative impact on some, G-5 commented that through the ministry of Serving in Mission, he came to have a “love for the things of God deep in my heart.”

Cultural

The cultural or sub-cultural influences upon the prayer life of the respondents are varied and fascinating, with a mix of (what can be termed) constructive and adverse

⁸ I have purposefully excluded this respondent’s coding reference for confidentiality purposes.

effects. Here, prayer foci arose from a sharp awareness of spiritual realities, expectations, and surroundings fraught with multi-religious pressures. The context, then, has helped shape how this group thinks about and practices prayer. The cultural influences can essentially be divided into influences from the traditional religions, Islam, Roman Catholicism, syncretism and additional cultural forms.

Traditional Religions

A number of respondents have had direct exposure to traditional religions which has impacted their motivation for and form of prayer. Although this section has a strong link with the latter section on Spiritual Warfare, I will include it here, as it speaks to the elements influencing the emphasis of prayer. G-20 deepened my understanding by outlining an event.

My mother sent me to a fetish shrine... and they gave me some incisions. [Put the black powder] on my forehead, even when I was a Christian... So immediately I took the black powder, when I got on campus, I threw it away. But I had forgotten that in the shrine, the man had made the incisions already ... So that sent me off into another era of spiritual battles. And even in the midst of that, I saw the power of God.

G-19, whose parents were fetish priests, added that because of such a past, deliverance was necessary “to do away with all the idols, all the ancestral spirits.” G-20, also shared a story of ancestral involvement.

In our part of the world, somebody finds the piece of...vast land. I was the first who found the place, so it's mine. I am the *oma heni*, the owner of the land. The king of the land. Now, the second person who comes and settles in with me becomes the *asa fwaché*...the war leader...when there is a contention between me and you, his responsibility is to organize us to go to war. My father's lineage...of the *asa fwaché*. Now that is significant because they don't go to war open handed. They have covenanted with all kinds of demons... And then my mother's mother was the direct queen mother...the female chief of the village. So, there is a male king and she is the female mother. You know, and all these children... Even the corpse sat in state, with all...these other human beings. I mean, what kind of

foolishness is that? But it tells you the rituals and the covenants on that side as well... some of us have to clean up all those messes.

Examples such as this provide evidence for the compelling force of traditional religions in forming the present reality of prayer in the lives of many from Pioneers-Africa.

Although this may be more evident in the villages than in the city,⁹ G-7 stated that his “commitment to spiritual warfare has a deep root in the culture.” He explained,

In Africa, we have a lot of spirits with names. We have *Mami Wata*, spirit in the sea. We have witchcraft... We have *Mmoetia dwarves*. And, we believe in them...though their names are not in the Scriptures. Because we meet people who say, I have *Mmoetia* spirit, I have *dwarf* spirit. And you can be with that person here, and then you can't see him again... So...there's a cultural impact, especially in the area of spiritual warfare.

Islam

G-6 talked of the impact of Islam on his prayer life. “There is no way I can sleep beyond 5 a.m. ...I have specific times I appoint for prayer. And I believe that if at 5 a.m. I wake up and I didn't pray, there's something wrong.” Although it may be easy for a cultural outsider to interpret this as legalism, it is important to note that such discipline can also lead to positive outcomes. G-8 responded to the surrounding influence of Islam by redeeming the five set times of prayer. He notes that in his formative years, “we realized that every time the Muslims go pray in the morning... about five times a day... we decided that we needed to pray... So, we also stepped up our prayer.”

Roman Catholicism

More than a third of the respondents had a Roman Catholic influence on their lives, which, in turn, impacted their prayer lives. For G-0, this was a positive experience,

⁹ “...we believe in the river gods... you want to appeal to him to kill, to act against somebody who has offended you. That's how you curse... You have to initiate or you evoke a spirit. So to do that, you have to go with sheep, goats, it's not free. You have to go and perform something. Then the spirit will take that and then... work against the person for you.”

where, through the lives of the Catholic priests, he witnessed a deep level of devotion. For most others, it established a rich discipline, but lacked a sense of intimacy. For G-10, Catholicism developed an understanding of a distant God, not like now, where “it’s like God is sitting like you,” noting my physical proximity in the interview. Others identified their experience with the Catholic church as “not far from... idol worship” (G-19), which leads naturally into the next section on syncretism.

Syncretism

G-19 epitomized this thread found in the data by having to go to church on Sunday, “but you have to come to the fetish. So that is how we mixed things up.”

G-1 mentions the motivation for some church prayer nights. “Sometimes I feel that people have... an unnecessary burden... somebody... is afraid of witches. But look at what Christ has done for you... You don’t need to spend nights...praying about it.”

Another side to this is the influence of the prosperity doctrine upon the church, a form of Christian syncretism. This can be seen through teaching in the church and the use of declaration prayer.¹⁰ G-13 continued, “Here in Africa, we have so much of prayer going on... It can be an all-nighter. It’s all about people asking for things, asking for material things, asking for a better life... That’s not prayer.”

Additional Cultural Forms

There are several other cultural expressions or forms that emerged from the data. One is the audio volume of prayer. G-11 admits, “I screamed a lot...in prayer.” G-7 further explained, “Africans tend to think that prayer is actually in loudness that God will hear you. So, there is a lot of noise in our charismatic churches.” G-18 notes that for

¹⁰ G-7 explained, “I declare that I will prosper. I declare that my family will...”

many people prayer is warfare, with prayer meetings full of fervour and passion. Regarding shouting, “In Jesus’ name. What’s the difference? Sometimes I do it just because it helps me concentrate. But if I’m in my home, I don’t think it’s... necessary. But once again, I won’t stop people from getting that wild, shouting and all.”

G-12 makes a comment on the economic environment. Because funds are limited and the church is generally preaching prosperity doctrine and wanting the finances to come to churches directly rather than to para-church organisations, it is difficult to access funds. “And so that probably... is part of the reason why people see a bit more fervent. You either pray in some instances or you die!” A sense of deep desperation and need often propels people into fervent, passionate prayer.

Several respondents mentioned Nigerian prayer.¹¹ Additionally, a cultural element seen in the Ghanaian context is what G-7 calls genealogies or spiritual patterns.¹²

Events

More than half of the respondents identified an event as influential in shaping their prayer life. G-0 spoke of a death in the family. “I think that day my prayer life changed... experiencing the power of God in the moment of grief, in the moment of brokenness and powerlessness... feeling God carry me, proving wisdom and direction... assured me that we have a living God.” G-5 added that through deep loss, “God has given us peace of mind. It’s through prayer, as we go to Him, God goes beyond our strength.”

G-14 told the story of leaving luggage at a central bus station, praying and fasting, only to miraculously retrieve it many weeks later. “So, that’s the first answer, the first real answer to prayer I remember, which turned me on.” G-15 mentioned the “challenges

¹¹ G-1 enthused, “Being a Christian in Nigeria, talk about the influence of the environment... you’d be amazed at the number of night vigils... Nigerians pray for ev-er-y thing!”

¹² G-7 explained that “in Africa there is a lot of... belief in generational curses... what spirits are doing that will not make us succeed in life and all those things, as against our own character.”

in mission helped me to grow in my prayer life,” specifying dying children and needed finances. G-19 joyfully detailed the story of a health problem, and, on receiving prayer, returning to the doctors. “He said, I don’t believe it... there’s nothing there.” G-19 continues, “So that day, my prayer life changed. I believed more. I could feel God. I could tell that there is someone who cares. And that increased my faith.”

Each situation or event influenced how the various respondents understand God and the way in which they can communicate with Him through prayer.

High School and College Years: Scripture Union

It was interesting to note that almost half of the respondents mentioned the influence of Scripture Union (SU), primarily during their secondary school years where G-0’s “leaders would open the Word... They taught us how to pray... how to pray the Scriptures.” G-12 and G-17 reminisced about the SU songs¹³ and how those simple tunes encouraged prayer. G-16 and G-18 adopted the A-C-T-S¹⁴ format, which they learnt through SU. Several talked about more formal roles with SU and the way in which that matured their prayer life and ministry to others through counselling, deliverance, overseeing all night prayer meetings and encouraging fasting.

SU was not the only campus ministry that impacted the lives of respondents, but it was the most consistent.¹⁵ These ministries nurtured an understanding of Scripture, a passion for prayer and a desire to be involved in mission. G-16 remembered,

When I was on campus, I was doing at least three hours of prayer a day... in between the lectures, if I had time, I would...spend an hour in the garden... when I came home from lectures...I would go in there...I would spend an hour just praying... Sometimes then I had an extra prayer time in the night, maybe at 8pm or 9pm, before I went to bed.

¹³ *Read your Bible, Pray every day...*

¹⁴ Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication.

¹⁵ Also, Intersarsity, Christian student movement, University Christian Fellowship and Campus Crusade.

With such a communal emphasis on prayer, he also wryly noted that “people talked about prayer so much that you felt guilty” if you did not take part.¹⁶

It was a fervent, passionate time, with some extremes. G-18 talked about praying through the rain because of the five-hour prayer session that was planned. “We were praying. It was raining and we said, we will not leave... I wouldn’t do that today. If it started raining... I would go and find shelter... But in those days, it was warfare!” Or G-20’s remark, “We fasted the whole semester. Can you imagine? 16 weeks!” However, these college years set the foundations for the prayer life of many respondents.

Church

The teaching and discipleship received from the church played an important and influential role with several respondents. G-1 talked about receiving from the church an understanding that prayer is talking to your Father. For G-2, it was a formal discipleship class, while with G-19, a designed class formed the context to learn about breaking ancestral spirits and experience deliverance, as well as other aspects of discipleship. G-20 received healing through prayer at church. G-3 had an encounter with Christ through church. “I had never gone to church... And then I said yes. I lifted up my two hands and they prayed for me. And I really confessed my sins and I received.” G-4 was baptized in the Spirit through his church, which expanded his prayer life, while G-8 was shaped through extended prayer. “My church... having all night prayer... If I have all night prayer with my friends, I can have one or two hours on my own.”

¹⁶ This points to a subtle peer pressure regarding prayer, but would need further research for confirmation.

Practice

It is apparent how integral the practice of prayer is to this group of respondents, displaying a powerful combination of passion and discipline. G-7 commented on a “spiritual discipline cultivated” consistently, with G-18 affirming that when people “practice...over time then it becomes part of you. Like we get up early to pray... Once we keep at it, it’s serious... it becomes a delight.” G-11 spoke of training himself in prayer.¹⁷ Others spoke of incorporating prayer into every part of their day, whether it be driving or drafting a letter, so that it “can be a lifestyle,” as G-16 noted, rather than a ritual. He again added, “I’ve always wondered, how...people survive without prayer. It’s the password. It resolves every problem.” Others, such as G-20, admitted that with small children extended “prayer becomes difficult,” though still essential.

There were a few unique practices which arose out of my research (see Table 5). These include prayer in the Spirit, retreats, length of prayer, particular hours of prayer, both early morning and night hours, the role of fasting, communal prayer, and the continued growth respondents desire in the years to come.

Table 5: Practice of Prayer

Practice	Number of Respondents
Fasting	21
Continued Growth	20
Length	18
Communal Prayer	18
Hours	3
- Night Hours	15
- Morning Hours	16
Prayer in the Spirit	15
General Comments	10
Retreat	6

¹⁷ “If it is an inner prayer that you need to be building, build it well.”

Fasting

It is interesting to note how pervasive fasting prayer is among those whom I interviewed. For many respondents, the practice of fasting began in their formative years. G-12 began in first grade, fasting from morning until noon, while G-18 began fasting in secondary school. G-2 and G-18 started fasting at conversion. G-8 grew in the practice of fasting, starting in junior school, fasting from 6 a.m. - noon, then 6 a.m. - 6 p.m. fast, before attempting a one-day then three-day fast.

I heard about extended fasts of 21 or 40 days, although these were more unusual. Tuesday day of prayer and fasting, team and retreat fasting were commonly mentioned,¹⁸ as well as fasting within the church family. G-0 mentioned that at times it seemed like work, but was glad for the “discipline of preparation” before ministry. G-1 disclosed, “fasting...has become a part of me...tomorrow, I won’t eat until...6:00 in the evening.”

Narratives poured out of breakthroughs and revelations that came during times of prayer and fasting, such as the gift of tongues, the gift of a current human language, multiple dreams, clarity for ministry, provision and healing. G-14 reminisced that, “It was during that fast that I received my calling to full-time ministry.”

But why fast? Why not just pray without fasting? In reply, G-1 told me that, “There are moments when we... wanted to hear clearly from God... You know, Lord, we want to see your face concerning this... We think that praying is not enough. Let us fast and pray.” G-12 articulated, “We find fasting a good Christian discipline. The church has used it all these centuries, and so we subscribe to it... Jesus says that one day the Bridegroom will be taken out of your midst, and then will they fast in those days.” He points out a further dimension where “fasting makes you so weak, you don’t want to trust in yourself any more...it takes away my defences...my excuses.”¹⁹ For G-20, fasting

¹⁸ “Every month with my” family, “but every three months with the team,” specified G-10.

¹⁹ G-11 added, “Fasting helps us to empty ourselves before God,” while G-15 affirmed, “humbling yourself before God.”

displays that “I’m really serious about this. This is urgent. This needs attention.” While for G-7, “when I add fasting to prayer... my spiritual senses become more sharpened... I become more sensitive to the Lord.” Some days, G-9 will wake up “and feel that the Lord is leading me not to eat... I don’t eat this day... There are days that... a lot of challenges that are to come. The fasting will... prepare me.”

Several respondents clarified that fasting is not a way of manipulating God to twist His cosmic arm. Nor is it a key, guaranteeing results (G-13). “You are not adding fasting as a bribe,” G-18 clarified, but “it has a way of drawing you closer and closer to Him.” In contrast, G-16 was the exception who admitted that he did not like fasting, and that it was a form of manipulating God, as formerly quoted.

A handful commented on the struggle of fasting. “The first day we were trying a three day fast,” recollected G-18, “I nearly died!” Others have had to adapt their fasting habits due to health, having moved away from the extremes of their youth of dry fasts (without water) or extended days of fasting, while still valuing the practice.

Continued Growth

One of the final interview questions asked was, “How would you like your prayer life to change or grow?” The responses fell into several categories.

Firstly, some of the respondents would like their prayer life to grow in length. G-1 said, “I desire that discipline, to stay for two hours, three hours... really communing with God and praying, while G-7 would like to “give two hours in prayer every day.”²⁰

Secondly, a number of respondents desire to develop their “inner prayer life” (G-11). G-0 yearned for more communion with Jesus, and a more consistent ability to pray

²⁰ G-5 would like to “go to another level in my prayer life. Move from my normal two hours... to go up again,” particularly as he seeks further clarity from the Lord. G-4 would like to increase his night hours, whereas G-8 wants to develop his consistency in prayer, being “able to pray without losing focus.”

the Scriptures. G-13 wanted that same communion to gain insight. G-14 reiterated this from a different angle. “I haven’t been satisfied with my listening to God. And now I am on a huge journey to hear God’s voice more clearly and take my dreams, visions and encounters with God more seriously.” G-16 hungers for a more conversational lifestyle of prayer, with G-18 wanting a greater aligning with God’s will.

Thirdly, a group longed for a more specific lessening of self. G-12 admitted, “The less asking I do, the happier I will be.”

Length of Prayer

It became quickly evident that within Pioneers-Africa, extended prayer is common. G-5 painted a cultural picture which reflected the value placed on extended prayer and the impact of remaining in God’s presence. “In ...African culture, when we are cooking in our homes... we use firewood, and the longer you stay in the kitchen... you come back and you smell of smoke.”

Upon reflection, I see that there are two sides to this equation: teaching and modelling, which built the spiritual discipline of long hours of prayer each day (G-0), and secondly, there is a need for extended time because of the content and communion.

Firstly, several respondents spoke of praying for “no less than one hour” prayer a day.²¹ G-7 represented a range of respondents in saying, “one of the reasons why I usually would go an hour, is because Jesus also told them in the Garden of Gethsemane that you could not even wait for me an hour. So, it means that to Jesus even one hour is not even the minimum.” G-14 gave another example. “I see in Jesus someone who is not just hit and run in prayer. There is nothing wrong with short prayers. It’s just that, if the Master Himself took such time, what on earth was He telling God in a 40 day fast? It was

²¹ G-11, G-12, G-14 and G-15.

so long...you want to imitate Him and... it will involve staying long.” G-13 detailed cultivating this habit in college. In “the beginning it looks like an unending time...each day... you set your alarm for 30 minutes and you are there praying...I move it up to 45 minutes... Before I know it, it’s already one hour... You [are] growing in this thing.”

The second element that emerged, was that extended time was needed regarding both content and communion. G-12 shared with humour, “Like I understand it, prayer is a fine-tuning of our will towards God’s will and you know how stubborn some of us are... I guess that’s my reason why I would tarry...because it takes a long time before I would get going in step with the will of God.” G-13’s motivation is “to stay closer. I want to stay in His presence...If the communion is sweet, it’s not just going to be for five minutes.” G-14 gives several reasons for the length of time, including time needed to focus his wandering mind, the number of things he wants to tell God, but he also finds “that the longer I stay in the presence of God, the more clearly I sense what He is saying to me. If I pray five, ten, fifteen minutes, I’m really not sure what God is telling me. But if I stay longer...what I’m receiving becomes more stable.”

Many of the respondents spoke about much longer hours spent in prayer. I will touch on this in the section under night hours. It was during times such as this, that an additional revelation would at times be received. G-8 remembered that “most of those times... we’ll be praying and all of a sudden we will have a Word of Knowledge from the Lord, an inspiration.” G-14 added to this, “I must confess that that invariably happened if I prayed long... after four hours and getting revelations. And some of them were so very true... I got the answer to what I was searching for in a...way that I couldn’t miss it.”

Communal Prayer

Prayer is practiced communally on a number of levels. All or half night church or college prayer meetings were commonly mentioned, as was family and team prayer. G-12 stated, “I take it seriously gathering with other people to pray.” G-13 affirmed modelling prayer by saying, “many fellow students were helped to learn to pray as we gathered together.” G-5 and G-9 deeply valued their prayer partners, while G-9 added, “There are times when I am praying in a group, I feel like...this is the fellowship of the Brethren... There is so much...power...that is... released upon us when we pray in a group.”

Hours of Prayer

All but three of the respondents spoke of particular hours given to prayer, mainly morning and evening hours. These will be detailed below.

Morning Hours

Almost half of the respondents spoke of waking at 4-4:30 a.m., so that they could spend an hour to an hour and a half in prayer and Bible study before the day began, often followed by prayer with a spouse or family. G-17 summarized the general thought that “long before dawn, Jesus was up...He began His day, preparing Himself in the presence of God. So, prayer brings you into God’s presence, so you can take in strength from Him, wisdom from Him, guidance from Him, to prepare you for the day. No matter how ordinary.” With this model, a rhythm has been set. “Waking up early... gives me an opportunity to focus my attention on God without being distracted with activities, other

issues,” said G-13.²² With children to see off to school, 6 o’clock is too late for G-19, so this early morning discipline has been established, demarcating the priority of prayer.

Night Hours

Another area of note is that of night hours of prayer. These include previously mentioned nights or half nights of prayer, often held on a Friday evening, where church or Christian communities gather from approximately 9 p.m. – midnight or into the early hours of the morning. By spending extended time in prayer, they are imitating Jesus who spent all night in prayer. G-1 calls these night vigils. However, there is another fascinating element to these night hours.

It is not uncommon for respondents to pray during the night, most commonly from midnight to 1 a.m., “Like tonight...myself and my colleague we are going to pray from 12 in the night until one,” said G-2, vividly making the point.

There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the night hours are cool and “you are not going to have any interruptions,” as G-12 commented. Secondly, there is a cultural phenomenon behind these hours. “In our culture,” G-5 observed, “deep night, forces work a lot. It’s known... it is a time when the majority of prayer warriors don’t joke in the 12-5 or 12-3 time of prayer, because they are the moment when the forces... operate.” G-18 confirmed this understanding, “If you go to the villages... they do [sacrifices] at midnight...all kinds of incantations and the like.” G-2 is one of these prayer warriors. “I...personally believe that...12:00 in the night to about 3:00 in the morning, those are the most critical time to pray... you go to some village, you see some spiritual power... so you are compelled to fast and pray to destroy them.” G-7 confirmed that “There have

²² By rising at 3:30 a.m., G-14 finds that “in the morning hours I am most fresh. My spirit is most still...I would like to listen to what God would say to me.” G-15 goes to the office or onto the porch for this, while at other times he practices walking prayer.

been a few times when I have gone on the fields... and I see the missionaries engaging in midnight prayer... very serious praying.”

But not all respondents see this as valid. G-14 noted that “some people have made a fetish of it,” but “I wouldn’t have my timetable to be structured by Satan. So, I sleep.” G-18 does not regularly practice this himself, but will join his wife upon occasion. “I won’t say, don’t do that. I’m not anti,” but “if I get a sense that this guy is going to be doing something at midnight, I don’t have to wait to midnight. I can start praying now.” G-8 concludes with, “I don’t really go to that extreme...I only pray for what God has laid on my heart...because prayer is effective whether in the morning or the night.”

Prayer in the Spirit

Two-thirds of the respondents spoke about prayer in the Spirit, that is, where the experience of prayer is altered due to a heightened awareness of the presence of God and the acknowledged involvement of the Holy Spirit. There is a sense of dependence on and cooperation with the Spirit (Foster and Smith 1993), and a vulnerable invitation for God to be the leader of this time of co-exchange. Prayer in the Spirit is often, but not always, linked to praying in tongues.²³ Two related aspects need to be noted.

Firstly, although debate has raged for centuries around the topic of “speaking in the language of the Spirit in tongues,”²⁴ as G-11 defined it, what is interesting is how it has enhanced the respondents’ prayer life. G-14 commented that “without the help of the Spirit, it is difficult to pray for a long time, and it is difficult to pray through certain issues. Because we are human. And we run short of words... but that prayer language

²³ It could be noted that there is a cultural expectation to speak in tongues. However, this aspect was not researched in depth.

²⁴ This explanation is not meant to be contentious, nor to demean those who do not speak in tongues or experience the Holy Spirit in prayer in palpable ways. It is simply a finding which arose from the interview data. I appreciate Charles Kraft’s desire to “want all that God has for us in this area, but in a balanced, reasonable way” (Kraft 1989, 8).

really helps you.” G-11 further explained, “Sometimes praying in my understanding. Sometimes pray in the Spirit... when I speak in tongues, I can go three hours, four hours. But with my understanding, it’s very limited... roughly one hour.” G-13 continued by saying, “It fuels your ability to pray. Because in the beginning you are wondering, what will I say, 30, 50 minutes? I will run out of words. But the Holy Spirit gives it utterance.” G-7 again bore witness to this phenomenon when he said, “we pray a lot in tongues here. If we are praying six hours, probably three hours can be praying in tongues.” So, prayer in the Spirit allowed for the length of prayer to be extended.

But prayer in the Spirit is not only about the quantity of prayer, but the quality of prayer. G-14 spoke of his intention to “find more time in the presence of the Holy Spirit, trying to fellowship with Him and listen. If He is a teacher, then I must be His student... it is a transforming experience to... allow the Holy Spirit this part in helping you to pray. You pray longer, you pray deeper, you pray mysteries in the Spirit.” G-20 affirmed that “at some point I... just sense the tongue bubbling out of me... And there is almost always this deep feeling that, I have just addressed something... I don’t even know what I have addressed.” G-15 also noted, “There are times you just don’t know how to pray...if words cannot express the deepest need of the heart, I just keep praying my spirit... you pray with tongues, you pray in spirit.” This second aspect of prayer in the Spirit, then, indicates a more profound quality of prayer where the one praying can find expression in prayer, while also receiving as an apprentice, better learning the mysterious ways of God.

Retreat

A smaller group witnessed to the practice of prayer retreats. For some of them it was a weekly or routine practice, where they come away for two or three hours to pray and fast. Others spoke of the role of retreats at the beginning of the year, to set the tone

for the year to come. While still others talked about taking a prayer retreat during significant times in their lives, such as moving into ministry, seeking marriage or waiting on the Lord regarding a specific matter. This usually included going away to retreat centres, “demarcated for prayer” (G-8). G-7 expounded on the idea of retreat. “When you fast three days, you become very weak in the body, so you are able to receive a lot... usually I go into those times with a big book, and” I receive “a lot of revelations about other people at that time... it is more of waiting on the Lord... surrendering... asking the Lord for...spiritual strength.” A handful of respondents mentioned a saturated reading of Scripture during this time, and breakthroughs which occurred as a result. Overall, it was spoken about as a respected and customary practice.

Content

When asked what they pray about, respondents’ answers ranged from praying for their needs, which may be material or related to personal growth, to seeking to keep away from self-focused prayer. G-11 told how “one day I was praying, and I said, God, I don’t want to be doing this thing again. I want to grow out of [it].” G-13 continued. “Knowing you have access to God ...the prayer topics are diverse. You pray for... guidance, God to meet needs, open doors, fruitfulness, Christian maturity, discovering God, interceding on behalf of people ...to be saved. So, the list is wide.”²⁵ G-7 echoed a number of respondents who spoke of praise and thanksgiving being an integral part of their prayer life. “If I...pray for one hour...the first 30 minutes is...worship... I always want to reflect on how good [God] is.”

In addition to this content, several patterns emerged, as listed in Table 6.

²⁵ Others mentioned crying in prayer, groaning on behalf of the lost (G-0 and G-12).

Table 6: Content of Prayer

Content	Number of Respondents
Closing Prayer of Interview	21
Struggle	20
General Comments	17
Intercession	17
Dreams-Revelations	14
Spiritual Warfare	13

Closing Prayer of Interview

One way of gaining more data on the content of my respondents' prayer, was to ask them to close our interview in prayer. I found it to be a deeply moving ending to our time together. With little exception, the respondents included thanksgiving, both to the Lord for His goodness and for the opportunity to share their stories with me, and expressed dependence on Him. They petitioned for Spirit-led guidance and wisdom for and blessing on my work, that it would have Kingdom impact, as well as asking the Lord to reveal Himself more profoundly, taking us to a deeper level of prayer. Some respondents echoed the intercessor's heart previously written about, where they appealed for more harvest workers, for His Kingdom purposes to be achieved, while others prayed more broadly for the running conferences and greater work of Pioneers.²⁶

Struggle

Respondents admitted to the reality of struggling in prayer. G-0 spoke of this occurring in "the broken moment... conflict situations, interpersonal relationships. When I feel slighted or disrespected." He went on to detail a time when, rising at his usual time of 4 a.m., he wrestled with the Lord about a meeting he did not want to attend. During

²⁶ This does not include G-10's closing prayer, as it was in French.

prayer, the Lord gave him a verse with immediate application to the given situation. “I was shocked,” he noted. “So, I started meditating on those two words... And it was a fruitful meeting because I went with a different attitude.”

G-1 and G-11 commented on the struggle born out of family pressure to not go into ministry and their struggle before the Lord to obey His call. “I went through persecution, because my brother wanted me to pursue secular education to be... better off,” clarified G-11. Others mentioned the struggle to faithfully serve, year after year. G-2 reflected, “The flesh...is pulling you. You are suffering... the weather is harsh. Finances are not... sufficient...and [family] are living big and good... I pray God give me the strength not to struggle with that thought.” But, he added, “I don’t belong to myself.”

Many of the respondents talked about the struggle to align themselves with God’s will, and yet the deep desire that His will be done. G-12 transparently detailed, “I think I struggle with the will of God... Something is happening and I am not quite there. God, why? ... I wrestle and I struggle. I don’t want to accept it.” G-14 told of a struggle with God when his leadership was usurped by another. Through the situation, he learnt a lesson, “so I never wrestled with Him again about leadership... He is your Father. He will not give you wrong counsel. And when He says something, you have to obey, but it’s painful.” G-17 talked of “fighting God all the time... It could be a personal thing in my life... certain sin... or a challenge that I’m facing.” “But,” laughed G-18, “He always wins!...Jacob struggled all night with the Lord. God is not saying don’t struggle...it is not wrong to...struggle with the Lord in prayer, to...go deep with Him and say Lord please.”

G-20 put it plainly, “I’ve told God, look, my heart wants to stop. My faculties don’t want to do this... that is one of the struggles that I have with God...because I’m always in this direction and God is in that direction!”

Intercession

Although personal need is clearly evident in the African context, attested to by multiple people, almost all respondents spoke of the importance of intercession within the content of their prayer lives. “I have a responsibility wherever I am to draw attention to the lost, to the perishing,” revealed G-0. Challenged by the Apostle Paul’s model, he asked, “How much weeping do we do for the lost?” Harvest field, unreached people groups, world evangelism, ministry and nations were all common terms, with specifics given in many cases. G-8 further shared that “I realized that God has given me a gift of intercession...I...walk and I hear, pray for this person. Or I have a dream and it said, pray for this person. I see certain things. And when I call, this person says, this is what happened to me and God has delivered me. So, I realized that God [gave] me this gift.”

G-14 summed up the general understanding of the role of intercession by stating,

Jesus ever lives to interceded for us... If His ministry is intercession now, then there must be something in intercession that we don’t understand. Because the Holy Spirit intercedes for us here, in the will of God. And Jesus intercedes for us before the Father... Reflecting on that means that two-thirds of the Godhead believes that intercession must constantly go on with the Father. I don’t think we do enough of it. I don’t think we do enough of it.

Dreams-Revelations

The above quote from G-8 leads nicely into a fascinating pattern that emerged from the interviews: the role of dreams, visions and revelations.

A number of respondents told stories of the way in which their dreams at night brought distinct messages from the Lord. G-7 commented that “I sleep and then the Lord will be speaking to me.” G-9 spoke at length of his dreams. “I had a dream and a young pastor... came to me...asking me to go to their church and help... when I woke up in the

morning, he was the first to knock on my door. And what I dreamed was exactly what I saw... I knew the Lord was communicating to me and I went and I never regretted it.” He added, “There are...prophetic dreams, long before they happen, I have dreams about them... It always causes me to pray.” G-8 confirmed that after he received Holy Spirit baptism, “I realized that I started having a lot of dreams... sometimes I wake up in the night and pray. Sometimes I wake up in the morning and I have to pray about it and continue praying about it... until I see a solution.” He gave several examples as evidence, as did G-20. “And then, I had a dream... I woke up that day and...I am resolved.” G-19 expressed it in terms of guidance. “In the dream, God would reveal the situation to me. So, the following day when I would wake up, the prayer request that I put before God, the answer would come to me in the dream! And God would tell me, I should do this, I should do that.”

G-7 also spoke of revelations that came during times of fasting. G-14 elaborated that “sometimes when I fast I have about 60 dreams. God explaining things to me, warning me, talking about the future.” As previously mentioned, he has found that the longer he prays, the more revelations he receives. One form of revelation, a Word of Knowledge (G-6) or insight given by God, is where “God has seemed to reveal something to you” (G-5). These are during waking hours, with G-16 narrating how God gave him a Word of Knowledge to help reconcile a marriage.

G-2 gave an example of a special revelation given to his wife during prayer including detail about their future ministry. “I believe that God gave her the vision to...direct... [our] pray[er],” he affirmed. For the founder of Pioneers-Africa, it was during prayer that he received a clarion call to raise up more Africans for global mission.

Spiritual Warfare

Over half the respondents specifically mentioned an element of spiritual warfare, with several participants quoting Ephesians 6:12. “Part of praying,” stated G-13, “is to engage the powers of darkness by asking God to do that which He only is able to do... to evoke the authority that God has given us as His children to confront... to command them in the name of Jesus.” This links back to the cultural influences I noted earlier: the impact of fetish priests, visits to the shrines, curses, worship of ancestral spirits and activity in the night hours, and the need of many to be delivered from the ongoing effect of such a background. For G-18, this was a part of his prayer ministry as a student. “You can’t be a minister in Africa if you don’t understand spiritual warfare,” he said.

God has redeemed G-20’s past. “I used to experience demons... but I think that I have the gift of discerning of spirits... There was this day a few months ago...I just felt that the door was opening... I saw some ripples at the door. And then I saw this man, physically ... I knew he was a demon, because he emerged out of that ruffle. And then, we had an encounter... And I prayed, I rebuked it.”

When G-14 was first learning about spiritual warfare, however, he “was very surprised to see evil spirits coming out of people.” He is no longer surprised, but equipped for this reality. G-14 has also discerned “a difference in the various localities when I pray.” When working in one region, “I pray four hours... I see the impact.” In another area, “with two hours prayer, I achieved the same thing.” In a third place of ministry it took even more prayer. “I don’t know how to describe...that, but it’s what I would call Spiritual Warfare.” G-16 talked about a “heavier atmosphere” in the nation in which he served.

Impact

The final emergent pattern that arose out of the data collected was what I call the impact of prayer, difficult to measure though this is. However, time and again, various respondents bore witness to four distinct areas where prayer made an impact (see Table 7). G-9 clearly expressed the high value of prayer and its impact. “The best thing that happened to me, after knowing Christ, was to discover the power of prayer.”

Table 7: Impact of Prayer

Impact	Number of Respondents
Fruit-Breakthroughs	21
Intimacy-Communion	20
Decisions and Leading	14
Longevity	13
General Comments	7

Fruit-Breakthroughs

Several intriguing stories emerged when asked about the breakthroughs or fruit that occurred through prayer. “The more I pray before ministry, the greater the impact,” disclosed G-14, with G-7 even turning down ministry opportunities if he does not have the time for prayer and study of the Word, because it is “prayer that makes the difference. It’s not just speaking the Word, but... when you pray it is God...taking over.”

For some respondents, it was God’s supernatural intervention, where God provided “the unthinkable” (G-0) in creative, almost comic ways (G-11). G-20 called it God “doing a *concertio*” or concert. For others, it was God’s healing hand which displayed the power of God in a miraculous way. G-5 recalled a Muslim man, dying from a fatal snake bite. Healed through prayer, he and later his wife decided to follow Jesus. A good number of respondents mentioned “oppressive people set free” (G-17) or

deliverance cases (G-18). “I...pray for people who are...oppressed by spirits...and they get delivered,” ended G-9.

For a handful, it was God’s grace in inner transformation. G-11 talked of family reconciliation, while G-3 described tribal reconciliation. Several spoke of the miracle of family coming to Christ. “I told God, how can I go and tell others about you when my own father” does not believe (G-17)? He was to become one of G-17’s greatest prayer partners. Additionally, G-19’s father “become a Christian and threw the idols away.”

A few breakthroughs that occurred through prayer related to unreached areas and peoples. G-14 hesitated to comment on this. “The fruit is so small,” he explained regarding the handful of men he had disciplined while on the field. “But He is the Lord of the harvest, so I can’t complain.” Sometimes a breakthrough led to a greater openness, where “there is something broken. We are no longer enemies” (G-6). While at other times it led to significant fruit. “Another breakthrough is that we have been able to take territories... through prayer...God has broken through...these villages” (G-11). G-4’s team “started with prayer and went to a village... that was very difficult to access with the gospel...deeply involved in idol worship” Others had tried and failed. But through prayer, they were led to this village, and a church exists today.

G-12 narrated when he had “seen God work a notable miracle because we prayed,” telling the story of drought. After being asked to pray by the Muslim leaders, the team embarked on a week of saturated prayer. Finding themselves in the market place, one team member prophesied a deluge of rain. G-12 admitted his fear, feeling put on the spot by this team member. But they continued in prayer. “All of a sudden the sky is getting dark... and it rained and rained, just like the guy who prophesied said.”

G-14 confessed that at times it is difficult to see the fruit. “One day I complained to the Lord. Others are praying, I don’t see anything...He said, the prayer is what I use to

tie the hearts of the people to me.” Others, too, remarked on hidden fruit. But more often than not stories including supernatural workings were retold as an expected part of life.

Intimacy-Communion

A second well-defined area of the impact of prayer was the way in which prayer nurtured a sense of intimacy and communion with God.

G-0 marvelled at the instant access that we have to our Father because of Christ’s finished work on the cross. He explained by painting a cultural picture.²⁷ “I don’t need prior notice. Instant access to my Father... Isn’t that something?” he finished. G-10 and others talked about the Father relationship they had with God.

Several respondents talked about practicing the presence of God in daily life; as things come to mind, while walking, driving, cooking or preparing for the day. G-16 described his lifestyle of prayer and how “I ask God questions and I debate with Him and chat with Him... it is not just rattling off. A lot of times it is listening.” G-9 explained how prayer had become a part of his life. “I would even be talking with people and I would be praying inside... so it moved... to a very personal impromptu something,” with the Lord “dealing with me at a different level... more intimate...more sensitive way.”

Another segment indicated a profound dependence on God, epitomized by G-8. He has “faced many difficult times and that’s when I needed to draw closer to God...I became stronger in prayer because I felt I had no place to go except to God.” G-5 voiced the need to fellowship with God, “because it is possible to be... involved in ministry and miss what God wants you to do.” While G-9 testified that “it was then that I knew that

²⁷ “If you are going to see a chief in Africa, you don’t just walk in. You have to give prior notice... if it’s a paramount chief... you must be a big man/woman to see the paramount. You need an appointment. There are some requirements to bring some drinks... this and that before you...enter into the courts and sit for the chief... And even then you don’t have direct access to the chief.”

there was a place of prayer in my life... I realized that was one...way that Lord builds His relationship with His children. When I found that out, I spent more time doing it.”

G-14 admitted how prayer nurtured this sense of intimacy and communion. “The relational aspect between myself and God developed as the prayer time increased...I discovered that prayer was two-way, not just me coming with a shopping list...and going away. But I saw that if I spent time with Him, He spoke, and I must confess that that invariably happened if I prayed long.”

G-5 spoke of personal pain and how “from the things that I have gone through... God has drawn me closer to Himself. There’s no doubt that prayer plays a part in that.”

G-12 lit up when talking about how he fell in love with the presence of God. “Then He’s telling you what to do and you can get that information only when you sit with Him... You draw near to God and He draws near...He grabs you in a bear-hug!” he continued.

Decisions and Leading

Most respondents remarked on how prayer had provided clear guidance in decision making and ministry leading. G-9 observed,

When we Christians don’t pray, we always go there, making assumptions, thinking it’s the Lord. But if we spend time in the Lord, ask the Lord for things, the Lord will definitely reveal His mind to us. And we will go out there and be sure that whatever we say or do, it is the Lord’s will. That is how we effect the will of the Lord, because of our time with the Lord.

Story after story poured out. G-12 noted the clear call from a comfortable career to an unreached area. It was a “very painful transition. But I’m glad I listened to Him.” Others affirmed that having received well-defined direction enabled them to serve during tough times. G-13 spoke of learning to wait, where “God told me that... what He wants to do with me, it’s not something I can learn in a classroom. I should remain where I am.”

G-16 humorously described how prayer “drives me in decision making. You need somebody to consult, God is always readily available!” G-18 reflected a dependence on prayer in the decision-making process. “I just say, just give me some time. Let me pray about it. And I will pray. And after some prayer, I am certain of this, and the Lord will do it.” G-12 voiced a complex situation in one country of service. “We prayed... And then I felt emboldened by the prayer.” G-20 added, “So we prayed. Immediately the words just came to me,” and a breakthrough came. Another time, “when I was praying... I knew God was saying no.” G-20 did not listen to the Lord that time and the opportunity failed.

Several respondents articulated God’s leadership in seeking a life-partner. G-13 disclosed more of his process. “But as I prayed one morning, God said to me, don’t you see that I’m not involved in this. I’m not the one who is leading you.” Later, he saw God provide a wife in an unexpected way. “I could have said, she’s not from my tribe...I don’t want...that. But praying and asking God and seeing Him answering.”

Longevity

Many of the men and women that I interviewed are working in demanding situations. Some endure harsh weather and environments, sickness and persecution. Many have struggled with low finances over the years. A few have experienced a deep fatigue from years of ministry. But almost two-thirds of the group spoke of how prayer had helped them remain faithful in ministry. G-11 testified “that without prayer I would not achieve what I am seeing today... Staying in one place, to do ministry... It’s no small thing,” he said, regarding his long service. G-2 affirmed this, “I think without prayer I wouldn’t still be on the field.”

G-18 recognized the impact of prayer in “that Pioneers-Africa is still running.” With the month ending and not enough finances to pay members, they turned to prayer

and saw God providing. G-5 spoke of a deep, personal tragedy. “People thought...this guy will fold up... but... God has asked me to be here.” He added, “I have known brothers in the ministry and they just throw in the towel. They just give up...because... their relationship with God...their lives were not shaped by their time with God.” G-7 finished this thought. “I wouldn’t be here by now if I had not been somebody who was dedicated to prayer, because, through prayer... God has taught me to surrender to Him.” Coupled with this impact was the desire to remain faithful and finish well.

Summary

The goal of good research is to produce “clear, understandable, insightful, trustworthy and even original analysis” (Gibbs 2007, Kindle Location 245-7). Tapping into the deep reservoir of wisdom and experience of prayer through semi-structured narrative interview, I came away with greater insight into the role of prayer within the Pioneers-Africa community. This process of data collection was largely facilitated through the role of Participant Observation (Angrosino 2007), which both established trust through my presence at the two conferences and church visits with a variety of the conference participants and mobilisation staff, while also validating the data that arose through N-I. As I sorted and analysed the data through the iterative process of GT, and facilitated by NVivo, the findings fell into four main headings: Influence on prayer, Practice of prayer, Content of prayer and Impact of prayer. Each main heading contains a variety of appropriate sub-headings, as previously indicated, further consolidating findings on the role of prayer within Pioneers-Africa.²⁸

²⁸ In the section on methodology analysis, I briefly outline the mutual relationship between the Biblical findings and N-I data emerging from Pioneers-Africa. Utilizing initial themes from the Biblical material (around practice, teaching, content and impact of prayer), I sculpted an interview guide (found in Appendix A) that “invited unpressured responses,” in the words of Uncle Chris Katsepor. The questions were theme-constrained, and yet were open-ended enough to allow unexpected and surprising data to emerge. It is difficult to conclude if these same themes from the Pioneers-Africa material would have

As I evaluate future significance and application of this research, several core areas have clarified which need to be considered. The range of patterns which arose out of this research are reflective of behaviours and thinking known to Pioneers-Africa,²⁹ indicating a way of viewing God and His involvement with the world. For example, the profound posture of dependence on God found within many members of the Pioneers-Africa community is expressed in a range of ways, displaying intentional discipline that nurtures prayer in the respondent's life which has emerged out of their life reality. Through the length, breadth, depth and communal nature of prayer, a compelling quality of prayer is evident, adding to the culture of prayer that has been foundational to Pioneers-Africa. A second example is the acute awareness to the spirit world where spiritual matters and interaction with spiritual beings is not compartmentalized, but rather a part of daily life. These and other ways of thinking will be further explored in Part III.

In the next stage of my research project, I will therefore seek to harmonize the selected Biblical voices presented in Part I with voices from Pioneers-Africa found in Part II, with the aim of application to the PoA context. This is to enrich the current culture of prayer by establishing and fostering principles of prayer relevant to the PoA context in Part III.

arisen without any influence from the Biblical findings. However, though theme-constrained, the open-ended questions did not suppress the rich narratives that arose.

²⁹ Charles Kraft writes that "people perceive reality habitually according to culturally defined patterns" (Kraft 1989, 57).

Part III

Harmonized Voices

“In a way all theology can be considered a variation on a sacred text” (Schreiter 1985, 80). Robert Schreiter continues by explaining that there are three forms of theological thought to consider when constructing local theologies: commentary, narrative and anthology.

The selected voices from Scripture found in Part I reflect this first form of theological thought – commentary. It is important to note that Part I mostly contains scholarly writings which originate from a European or American perspective, with relatively little African material emerging. The main reason for this is that there are comparatively few scholarly publications regarding this very specific topic by those outside the European or American world. Although Part I includes voices from Scripture, the interpreters themselves mostly speak with a North American or European accent. Part II brings balance to the above deficiency by listening to voices from Pioneers-Africa, utilizing the second form of theological thought – narrative. “Through a series of transformations, which not only extend the meaning of the original text, but engage the hearer ... to identify with some of the agents in the narrative,” (Schreiter 1985, 82) Biblical narrative and the narrative of the Pioneers-Africa community merge together (Schreiter 1985).

In the next stage of my research project, I will seek to harmonize the Biblical and Pioneers-Africa voices by establishing points of intersect, before introducing an additional voice – that of PoA.

Chapter 5

The Intersect Between Scripture and Pioneers-Africa

It is fascinating to explore the point of intersect between the Biblical data and Pioneers-Africa data, harmonizing their voices to identify translatable principles applicable for the PoA context. A great deal of overlap exists, with Biblical references woven throughout the Pioneers-Africa material. I will divide these into a combination of familiar headings that emerged from my analysis of the data found in Part I and Part II: background influence, practice, content, teaching and impact.

Background Influence

The influence of Jewish prayer rhythms is evident within the life of Jesus and the disciples in the gospels, and the early church in Acts. The practice of daily, repeated prayer through uttering the *Shema*, the *Tephilla*, and thanksgiving prayers at mealtimes, while hearing the *Qaddish* at the end of synagogue services, set Jesus and the disciples within a larger community. As previously mentioned, in all probability, the *Tephilla* and the *Qaddish* became the initial stimulus for the Lord's Prayer. Sabbath visits to the Temple and synagogue gave them a respect for God's house. Glimpses of this same background is also seen in the life of the early church in Acts. Emerging from this context, Jesus' own prayer life stood out as unique. The level of intimacy with and dependence on the Father which Jesus displayed, particularly emphasized in Luke and John, broke open the possibilities of prayer, expanding Jewish prayer to a new dimension. Through the model and teaching of the Son and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the

early church followed this more profound and meaningful pattern of prayer, now based in the crucified and risen Christ.

Cultural Influence

In the same way that culture influenced the prayer life of Jesus and the early church in Acts, it has affected the prayer life of Pioneers-Africa. This is through the broader African cultural influence such as traditional religions, Roman Catholicism, Islam and other cultural forms. But it was also through the impact of the church culture (intimacy with the Father, deliverance ministry, healing and baptism of the Holy Spirit), college culture (foundational teaching and modelling on prayer, often including radical discipleship experiences), and the Pioneers-Africa culture itself.

Not only was Pioneers-Africa born out of prayer, but prayer continues to be a strategic driver for mission. Prioritized through Tuesday morning days of prayer and fasting, quarterly Spiritual Emphasis Weeks, half nights of prayer, encouragement from the Pioneers-Africa staff and economic need, new members of Pioneers-Africa quickly discover the prominence of prayer and are influenced by these rhythms. These are the contemporary, cultural equivalents of the *Shema*, the *Tephilla*, the *Qaddish*, and synagogue visits for Pioneers-Africa. Spiritual leaders such as Dr Aryeetey urge people into prayer, knowing the importance it has played in his own life and passing that onto the next generation of Pioneers-Africa workers.

This is part of the cultural shaping that occurred in the life of Jesus and the disciples, as well as Pioneers-Africa communal life, for “culture... is a set of patterns taught to people... in terms of which people think and behave” (Kraft 1989, 54). Certain cultural influences motivate the Pioneers-Africa community to pray and has been a part of their own formation for mission involvement.

Modelling Influence

The role of modelling should be stressed here. Prayer was so tightly woven into the texture of Jesus' life that the disciples could not help but be impressed by His model, eventually asking for more teaching in this area. In turn, within the early church, prayer and the ministry of the Word became the two main leadership priorities (Acts 6:4), lived out time and again, its powerful impact written across the early church. The influence of close relational discipleship, where some members of Pioneers-Africa observed family members rising early and spending a day in prayer; viewing older students in campus ministry leadership pray with passion and commitment; experiencing prayer as they were inviting into campus groups, and integrating prayer into their own lives. One man was welcomed into morning family prayer, while another man does the inviting. Through modelling prayer and bearing witness to its impact, lives were transformed, disciples matured and prayer became valued not only as a discipline, but as an essential aspect of ministry based in relationship. This is a significant benefit of communal culture.

Additionally, a link can be drawn with N.T. Wright's apprentice model. Initially seen in Jesus' posture of relinquishment, submission and listening obedience to the Father, the use of Father in the Lord's Prayer is a request for the disciples to also be considered as apprentice sons (Wright 1997). This same humble attitude was reflected by G-14 in stating, "If He is a teacher, then I must be His student," or again when articulating, "He is your Father. He will not give you wrong counsel. And when He says something, you have to obey." This stance is rare, yet captivating.

Practice

It is not difficult to see that prayer played an integral role within Jesus' own life, with growing understanding and importance for the disciples. Jesus regularly disappeared, withdrawing up a mountain, desiring to spend time alone with the Father

(Mark 1:35; Matthew 14:23; Luke 5:16 and so on). His consequent actions point to these hours bringing restoration, renewed strength, clarity of vocation amid multiple demands. The Lucan emphasis on prayer highlights the importance prayer in Jesus' life. The author links prayer to Jesus' commissioning into ministry (Luke 3:21), to the choosing of the twelve (Luke 6:12), to Jesus' identification as the Messiah (Luke 9:18-20), to the Transfiguration occurrence (Luke 9:28-29), and to Jesus' teaching on prayer (Luke 11:1). The gospels link prayer and miracles, with God the source (Mark 7:34; John 11:41), while John particularly emphasizes prayer as communion with the Father (John 1:18; 12:49 and 14:16), a relationship of love and unity, established by remaining in Him.

The Acts of the Apostles records the early church taking Jesus' enriched prayer life and embedding it into the culture of the church. Prayer was the method of selecting leaders (Acts 1:24-26; 6:4, 6), of enduring hardship and persecution (Acts 4:24-31; 7:59-60; 16:25), of hearing from God and undertaking mission initiative (Cornelius in Acts 10, for example), while also maintaining a posture of vulnerability and humility before the God who saves (Acts 9:40; 13:2-3).

From the story of prayer found within *Pioneers-Africa*, it is evident that passion and discipline come together in such a way that allows prayer to shape the lives and ministries of this community. This is expressed through prayer in the morning hours, communal prayer, or the mutuality of prayer and fasting, and so on. Continual references were made to Scripture, pointing to the foundation of a practice, much of which is included in Part I, but some of which falls outside of the scope of this research.

Withdrawal for Extended Time in Prayer

One interesting area of intersect is that of time spent in prayer. Throughout Jesus' ministry, I have noted His withdrawal to pray (Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16), where He spent

extended time in prayer (Luke 6:12). The Biblical references are few but consistent, and the Pioneers-Africa community takes this seriously. Additionally, in the Acts of the Apostles, it was during times of withdrawal to pray that Peter and Paul received revelations from the Lord (Acts 10; 22:17-21). Many within the Pioneers-Africa community also value this idea of withdrawing to pray or spending extended time in prayer. Many of them rise early for prayer, with G-17 noting that Jesus rose before dawn. Others reference Luke 6:12 when Jesus spent the night in prayer, after which He chose the twelve. Jesus' 40 day fast and His rebuke of the disciples at Gethsemane, who could not watch for even an hour, motivate the Pioneers-Africa community to spend extended time in prayer, either daily or for short retreats. They read and apply these Bible passages with quick obedience rather than extended commentary. Short prayer was not belittled, but prayer at length was appreciated because of what occurred during that time, as previously noted. Jesus spent time with the Father in prayer, and out of that place greater intimacy, clarity and conviction came. Pioneers-Africa bear witness to this, with their practice of extended prayer pointing to a value on relationship over task. Clarity around task, however, emerges from the source of relationship.

Communion and Alignment

Another area of overlap is that of prayer as communion. Regarding their wish to change or grow in prayer, a number of respondents spoke of wanting deeper communion, clearer insight and greater alignment with the will of the Father. This we clearly see in the life of Jesus. Unfolded most poignantly in John, the intimacy between Father and Son accentuated in John's gospel has become part of the tradition of disciples who follow Jesus, sought after and replicated by the initial disciples, and now disciples within Pioneers-Africa. They, too, desire the insight we witness Jesus gaining through time with

the Father. They, too, long for alignment of will that Jesus sought most notably at Gethsemane. Although the answers that come through prayer are treasured, the holy enjoyment of God itself is prized. Mention of prayer in the Spirit links with this idea, particularly as it enriches the quality of prayer, enabling the one praying to fellowship with and listen to the Spirit of God, praying “mysteries in the Spirit,” as G-14 commented.

Fasting Prayer

For Pioneers-Africa, fasting is often linked to withdrawing to pray (during retreat) or seeking to develop a deeper communion with God. When speaking of fasting, G-12 referred to Luke 5:35, where fasting would occur once the Bridegroom was taken away. Echoing the practice of the early church in Acts, where they fasted before setting aside Paul and Barnabas, it is not uncommon for Pioneers-Africa to fast as a group, seeking communal discernment, desiring to hear from Him. It is a regular and expected pattern practiced, both individually and communally, a sign of ongoing dependence upon and vulnerability before God, where their defences are stripped away.

Communal Prayer

Communal prayer began with the Trinity: The Son leaning into the Father in prayer (Johannine emphasis), empowered by the Spirit (Luke 3:21). Jesus nurtured this idea of communal prayer through the plural tense utilized in the Lord’s Prayer, and later, His John 17 teaching on unity. Prayer was one reason for the early church to gather (Acts 2:42; 12:5), furthering their sense of community in Jesus. As a communal society, this was a natural outworking of the Body of Christ. So, too, as a communal or collective culture, Pioneers-Africa instinctively values group prayer as they gather for half or all-

night prayer, or take seriously the need to come together with others. G-9 reiterated how “praying in a group... is the fellowship of the Brethren,” with distinct power released when communal prayer occurs.

Prayer Leading to Mission Initiative

Another area of overlap highlights the relationship between prayer and mission initiative found in Acts. Ananias (Acts 9:10-12), Cornelius and Peter (Acts 10) each received a word or vision from God while at prayer, while Paul fell into a trance during a time of prayer (Acts 22:17-21). Time and again God communicated His Kingdom intention through the vehicle of trance or vision. It is an easy side-step to see that He could do the same through dreams, visions and revelations as witnessed within the Pioneers-Africa community.

During the interview process, two-thirds of the respondents mentioned dreams, visions or revelations, where an evident message was given from God. Some of these are quickly realized. Others, as with G-8, “have to pray about it and continue praying about it... until I see a solution.” Although not all of these examples were linked to mission initiatives as seen in Acts, they were outworked in a way that saw God’s Kingdom come, in both small and large ways. It also displays the way in which life is not segmented, but rather God is invited to penetrate all areas of life and ministry, including their dream-life.

Content

With Jewish prayer as a backdrop, the content of Jesus’ prayer outlined in this dissertation falls into the prayer at Gethsemane, His prayers on the cross, and His Johannine prayers (John 12 and John 17). The two prayers highlighted in Acts were the prayer of the early church in Acts 4, which petitions for boldness over protection, with an

immediate answer given, and the prayer of witness spoken by Stephen in Acts 7, where a new attitude to forgiveness without revenge was modelled.

Prayer witnessed and recorded within Pioneers-Africa echoes much of what is seen in the gospels and Acts. Thanksgiving, exclaimed as part of the Jewish prayer, the *Tephilla*, as well as during meal time, took multiple expressions with our African brothers and sisters. An early insight to this was through Uncle Chris' prayer of thanks when he picked me up at the airport, and later when we arrived where I was staying.

Additionally, they articulated dependence on God seen in Jesus' submission to the Father. Several Pioneers-Africa respondents were candid about their struggle in prayer, identifying with Jesus' wrestle in Gethsemane as He sought to align His will with the Father's. A number mentioned labouring to relinquish their will, desires of the flesh, family pressures and so on, looking to Jesus as their guide and seeking God's way and glory over their own.

Engaging Forces of Darkness

A key area of intersect related to this topic of struggle is that of spiritual warfare or engaging with powers of darkness. In Gethsemane, Jesus lived out the fact that prayer is a central strategy against the enemy, battling against the temptation to not obey the Father's will because of the weakness of Jesus' own body (Matt. 26:41). Instead, He prevailed. The Lord's Prayer asks for the enemy's kingdom to be pushed back and the Kingdom of God spread throughout the earth. This prayer is itself a serious tactical weapon against the enemy. Considering the influences of traditional religions, and the fact that Pioneers-Africa is pressing into enemy territory by bringing the Kingdom of God to locations on earth not previously reached by the gospel, warfare prayer often takes a priority place with Pioneers-Africa. As with Jesus and the early church, there is

little divide between the spirit world and the physical world. Just as Jesus and consequently the early church engaged with and rebuked demons, so too Pioneers-Africa recognizes the demonic in their surrounding environment and see themselves as equipped to rebuke such dark forces. Using the tactical weapon of the Lord's Prayer, Pioneers-Africa petitions the Father for breakthroughs in their lives and ministries, manifested through healings, deliverance ministry, hostile villages becoming open to the gospel and so on. Their practice reflects the assumption that God still works supernaturally today, and that they, as a community, can impart His authority in encounters with forces of darkness, for the sake of His glory among the nations.

Courage and Boldness

I find the courage of the Acts' community clearly echoed in the Pioneers-Africa community. Acts 4 calls for boldness, asking for the advance of God's Kingdom over their own protection or well-being. I witnessed this characteristic in Pioneers-African respondents time and again. Giving up their own comfort and safety, many of them have settled in small, simple villages with few resources and constant challenges. And they willingly do this so that the good news may be known in places where it has never been heard before. After the prayer in Acts 4, an immediate answer is given, with the Spirit of God coming to grant their request – boldness to share the good news of Jesus. Such powerful responses to prayer are expected and somewhat common among the Pioneers-Africa community, as they too seek boldness and courage to make Jesus known, often at their own expense.

Furthermore, an oft-heard pray for more harvest workers sees Pioneers-Africa taking the model of Jesus as intercessor (Romans 8:34) and seeking to replicate it.

Teaching

Although this section does not fall quite as neatly as the other section headings, it is an important one to include. Jesus' teaching on prayer is found in the gospels, but there is no explicit teaching on prayer found in Acts. For Pioneers-Africa, teaching comes under the heading of influence. I will briefly comment on the Biblical teaching, which is both directly referred to and is indirectly lived out.

Direct Teaching

Direct teaching of Jesus' was referenced by Pioneers-Africa respondents many times. Two examples are the petitions within the Lord's prayer such as being aligned to God's will, or asking for daily bread, as well Jesus' struggle in Gethsemane as He died to His own desires. Additionally, further teaching was given on Jesus' own model as a prayerful man, where He arose early. Study of John 5 taught one man to wait on the Father in unhurried prayer. Others mentioned Scriptural passages or characters such as Elijah or Paul who lie outside the scope of this study.

Such teaching has shaped the prayer lives of many within Pioneers-Africa. They have sought to listen to and obey this teaching, entrenching it into the framework of their lives through a discipline that nurtures their relationship with and reliance upon God.

Indirect Impact of Teaching

Alongside this is the indirect impact of teaching and models of prayer found in Scripture, particularly within the life of Jesus and the early church in Acts. Jesus told a parable about a desperate widow. She was vulnerable, desperate, and yet she kept hoping, kept persisting. She did not grow weary, but endured despite multiple set-backs. The application urges the reader to prepare for Jesus' ultimate return. It is this life-witness

that I see within the community of Pioneers-Africa. As mentioned under the heading of longevity, many men and women within Pioneers-Africa have persisted with resilience despite a ream of challenges: harsh weather and environments, sickness and persecution, financial lack and fatigue. And yet the tenacity of the desperate, persistent widow is observed; hope and faith displayed.

Within a ministry context, it is easy to rely on experience, education, human wisdom, and so on, all of which are good gifts from God Himself. However, the warning of Mark 9:29 to pray and not be complacent is a stark reminder to guard against reliance on any of these without prayer and ongoing dependence on God. Although this text was not referred to, it is evident that Pioneers-Africa implicitly heeds this warning. After undergoing continual challenge on many fronts for several decades now, they may humorously welcome the opportunity to become complacent, yet a profound posture of dependence exists within the culture of Pioneers-Africa. Although lack may be a motivating factor, as noted in the opening quote of this paper, this none-the-less guards Pioneers-Africa against self-contentment and reliance on method or self over God.

A final teaching of Jesus' cautions against long, showy prayer (Mark 12:40/Luke 20:47) rather than simple, authentic prayer. This is an interesting passage to contrast with the Pioneers-Africa practice of prayer, and one that I comment on as a cultural outsider. During my time in Ghana I observed a small number of conference participants engaging in loud (G-11 admits, "I screamed a lot...in prayer"), energetic, lengthy prayer. However, these were not religious leaders seeking attention or misplaced honour, but rather a cultural expression of passionate prayer often seen within Ghanaian charismatic churches. Coinciding with this activity were others who were quietly praying.

Impact

There is definite overlap with the impact of prayer seen in the life of Jesus and the early church, and that of Pioneers-Africa. Through intimate relationship with the Father, Jesus gained a clear perspective, spiritual empowering and needed strength for His life and death. Through prayer, He remained true to the will of the Father until the very end. Imparting His life model to the disciples, He contagiously influenced them to long for deeper relationship with the Father, showing them that glory would come to the Father through unity with the Son. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, the early church embedded prayer into their communal culture, seeking the same clear perspective, empowerment and strength seen in Jesus' life when making decisions and moving ahead with mission initiatives. God was at work in the early church through prayer.

Similarly, intimacy with God is the source for Pioneers-Africa. They communally and individually voice joy in His presence, dependence upon Him, while displaying an attitude to receive from Him. This is also an expressed area of wanted growth.

With this communing relationship as the basis, there is no doubt that God has led individuals, families and teams within Pioneers-Africa as they have made personal decisions (marriage partners) and ministry decisions (starting Pioneers-Africa, giving up a career, entering a certain village and so on). This is through a variety of avenues: communal prayer, times of fasting, dreams and visions, or during extended times of prayer. It has provided direction and strength as they battle the enemy and serve with longevity, despite the challenging circumstances they face.

In stories of fruit and breakthrough seen in Jesus' and the disciples lives and the life of the early church (Mark 7:34-35; John 11:41-43; and Acts 4:30), through prayer, time and again God has similarly broken into personal or ministerial situations within the Pioneers-Africa community and brought answers that were beyond human involvement.

This has often involved spiritual warfare, as previously noted, where prayer is a powerful weapon against the enemy, grounded in the work of Christ on the cross.

An indirect impact of Jesus' prayer life was the impression it made on the disciples. The disciples learnt that prayer would impact the future of the church, that its growth would depend on prayer. So too, as Pioneers-Africa members make disciples, they are modelling for and investing in others, reminiscent of G-12's comment that "by watching people of prayer," he was infected. Such examples help develop other people who value and are given to prayer, so that they will be people "shaped by their time with God," as G-7 alludes to. The form of their lives and ministries depends on prayer.

Each of these points of intersect contains a missional focus. Intimate communion is not for self-gratification, but filling for the sake of outward service. The leading is often a directing towards mission; a life partner in mission, the embryonic dream of starting an African mission organisation, clarity for mission strategy regarding method or location, healing or deliverance that reveals the power of Jesus. The strength given is for the sake of mission – seeing the Father glorified through the Son, seeing the gospel proclaimed and lived out with boldness, the church expanded and disciples made. Battles are fought so that God's Kingdom will come to small towns and villages throughout West and North Africa as it is in heaven.

Points of Divergence

As noted, there are many points of overlap with the Biblical and Pioneers-Africa material. However, several significant points of divergence also arose. Many of these relate to cultural influences and forms, reflecting "the emergence of a distinctively African experience of Jesus Christ" (Bediako 2004, 4).

Within the life of Jesus, prayer was modelled as a weapon against the enemy within His own Gethsemane experience and taught as part of the Lord's Prayer.¹ It is a core element of Jesus' life of prayer. So too with Pioneers-Africa. However, the expression and focus that spiritual warfare takes within Pioneers-Africa is culturally shaped. With spiritual warfare often combatting manifestations unique to West Africa and linked to fetish practices, Pioneers-Africa applies spiritual warfare in intriguing ways as African traditional religions set the "cultural background of the Christian faith of most African Christians" (Bediako 2004, 37). Unlike many Australians, there is no sense of reservation when participating in spiritual warfare as it meets the unique questions and needs of that culture, displaying the power of Christ.

Although Luke 6:12 tells of Jesus spending the entire night in prayer, it is interesting to note that spending time in prayer during the night hours has become a cultural phenomenon within a segment of the wider African, Ghanaian and Pioneers-African culture. Luke links Jesus' time of prayer to His choosing of the twelve disciples. A handful of members within Pioneers-Africa link this to combating spiritual forces that are active during these hours. Half or full nights of prayer are motivated by communal worship, need or seeking breakthrough, but differ in both expression and purpose to what we witness in Jesus' own time of prayer through the night. It could be argued that there is overlap with Jesus' prayer time in Gethsemane, which Matthew 26:34 and Luke 22:66 imply took place in the evening, but this is stretching the argument. The theme of night hours diverges more than it intersects due to the cultural influence on Pioneers-Africa members who engage in combative prayer during the night hours.

There were a few instances where some difference exists when comparing prayer in the gospels to Pioneers-Africa, but less difference when comparing prayer in Acts to

¹ Other encounters that Jesus had with demons are not included in the scope of this study as they do not link directly with prayer.

Pioneers-Africa. One of these was the role of dreams and revelations, not witnessed in the life of Jesus, but witnessed in the early church. Within Acts, however, dreams and revelations were directly linked to mission innovation. Within Pioneers-Africa, dreams and revelations have broadened out to bring knowledge in personal and mission matters.

Somewhat related to this is the matter of longevity within many members of Pioneers-Africa that seems to be born out of prayer. This is not observed in the gospels, given the short timespan it was chronicling. Acts indirectly links prayer and shortness of life in the case of Stephen and arguably Paul. This point of divergence with Pioneers-Africa may be less related to prayer than proximity to harmful enemies.

Another area of variance was a subtle pattern of pressure. This was primarily articulated by one outlier. He mentioned how, during his college years, prayer was such a central topic that guilt by peer pressure motivated him to pray. Likewise, he does not enjoy fasting, seeing it as manipulative. But other nuances of pressure also appeared in the findings. One respondent exclaimed at the sixteen weeks of fasting undertaking during college years. Would this fast have occurred if not for the pressure felt? Another indicated joining his spouse for night hours of prayer but not initiating this practice himself. The same man spoke of resigned acceptance when prayer was shouted. It would be easy to conclude that the cultural pressure that accompanies a communal culture, pushes members of the community towards certain practices, expressions and forms of prayer. This may be true, but not necessarily negative. In Gethsemane, Jesus Himself pressured the disciples into praying, voicing his disappointment when they fell asleep. Praying communally, and being pressured into prayer is not automatically a negative matter. Care needs to be taken, however, when, with the pressure, shallow or immature prayer is a result.

Finally, one interesting area that may be interpreted as a point of divergence from an Australian point of view, but not from an African perspective, is the literal nature with

which Pioneers-Africa applies Scripture. An example of this is the hour or so of prayer practiced by many within Pioneers-Africa from 4-4:30 a.m. many mornings a week. Taking Mark 1:35, that speaks of Jesus rising early and spending time in prayer, or the passage where Jesus asks, “Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray...” (Matt. 26:40-41; Mark 14:37-38), they integrate it with literal and quick application. This is a prime example of where the “truth of biblical revelation, therefore, is not just truth to be ‘believed in’ as mere intellectual or mental assent; it is truth to be ‘participated in’” (Bediako 2004, 38). While many Australians would still be commentating on if this is indeed the “truth of biblical revelation” and analysing if this should indeed be applied so quickly, many within Pioneers-Africa have already moved into “participation” and are learning through experience. They process God’s Word in a pragmatic and organic way. God’s intention and promises for prayer are to not only be trusted, but shared in.

Summary

This chapter brought together the voices from Scripture and Pioneers-Africa. Examining the background influence – cultural and modelling; practice – withdrawal for extended time of prayer, communion and alignment, fasting prayer, communal prayer, and prayer leading to mission initiative; content – engaging forces of darkness, and courage and boldness; teaching – direct and indirect; as well as the impact of prayer. This was followed by highlighting a few areas of divergence within the findings.

In the following chapter, I will introduce Pioneers of Australia to better understand the context within which these findings will be applied.

Chapter 6

Adding a New Voice: Introducing PoA

The aim of this research is to proactively cultivate prayer within the lives of mature disciples going into cross-cultural global mission with Pioneers of Australia (PoA). To be able to apply the previous findings to PoA, it is important to introduce the greater context within which PoA is located, which is the focus of this chapter.

Introducing Pioneers of Australia

By God's grace, PoA is a healthy, dynamic mission organisation. It is the second largest sending entity within the global family of Pioneers, with approximately 220 cross-cultural workers currently on the field, and with approximately fifty-five Apps in the process of preparing to enter cross-cultural ministry with Pioneers. It is this latter group with which I am primarily though not exclusively engaged.

The office structure is team based. There are five teams which are ultimately led by the National Director of PoA. The mobilisation team is responsible for journeying with people from first contact to just before or when they depart for overseas life and service. At that point, the Member Development team takes over responsibility for the care of members once they are on the field. The Training and Development team overarches and works with both the Mobilisation team - helping people prepare to go out, and the Member Development team - continuing to work with people once they are on the field, although this is to a lesser degree. The support teams include the Finance team and the Administration team.

My specific role with PoA is to lead the small Training and Development team. This primarily means facilitating the learning and growth around mission formation of our Apps. This includes a range of topics, falling into the three broad categories: cultural (developing cultural intelligence), relational (team dynamics and so on) and spiritual matters (spiritual vitality, spiritual warfare, spiritual disciplines). As mentioned above, it also includes life-long learning for those on the field as the need arises, although to a limited degree. I am therefore in relationship of varying depth with all our Apps and many of our field members. There is one other man on my team who is our language consultant and security advisor.

The Leadership Team formerly consisted of each of the team leaders and the National Director of PoA. This evolved in 2016 and now includes the National Director, the Mobilisation and Member Development team leaders, another consulting leader who assists with leadership development, and the Training and Development team leader.

My sphere of influence throughout PoA, therefore, is quite broad. My leadership is most often through influence as opposed to direct authority. This is reflective of PoA's *modus operandi*, which I will comment on below.

Proactive Reframing¹

It is true that formation for global mission is a process. There have been a range of factors maturing, shaping and developing the PoA Apps as individuals, couples and families. Through reading their application papers, interacting with them on several levels, and anecdotal exchange, I have observed that many PoA Apps are people with solid Biblical understanding, people with ministry experience and a passion for the lost, and people who are relatively culturally aware, given the multi-culturalism of Australia.

¹ This idea of reframing was taken from *Reframing Organizations*, which helpfully expands on the structural, human resource, political, symbolic and spiritual frames through which people view an organisation (Bolman and Deal 2013).

They desire to grow in Christ, reflecting Him in word and deed. A number have expressed their value for prayer, while others have spoken of their longing to grow in prayer as they continue to mature as disciples who are making disciples within the context of global mission.

Within PoA, our communal desire is that our life of prayer would continue to deepen, that prayer would be our default position, where we turn to the Lord first rather than last, out of intimate dependence or awareness of weakness and lack. This leads to the question of what degree our lives and ministries are shaped by prayer, and how we can intentionally seek to grow in this area. It is the area of prayer as a pathway to mission formation where I envisage deeper growth and maturity, and is, of course, the focus of this research.

I appreciate Robert Clinton's differentiation between reactive and proactive change. He states, "If we label changes which are reactive to disturbances as *reactive* change then we will call changes which are introduced not to solve problems but to fulfil vision as *proactive* change" (Clinton 1992, Preface-2). I consider nurturing prayer which leads to mission formation within the lives of PoA Apps to be proactive rather than reactive change, with the opportunity to "reframe experience to discover new issues and possibilities" (Bolman and Deal 2013, Kindle Location 455-56). This area of growth, therefore, is not a reaction to a toxic problem, but rather an intentional focus to enable the further maturity and development of Apps surrendered to Christ.

Mission Formation Climate

In the 1940s Kurt Lewin, a social scientist, developed a theory that identified the various elements or forces that influenced a circumstance or social setting. These forces either enabled or obstructed the objective within a given context. In regards to the broader context within which mission formation sits, Lewin's work (Lewin 1951) is

helpful when considering motivating or inhibiting influences. The motivating influences include those elements or people welcoming proactive reframing with a sense of eagerness or anticipation, assisting transformation to occur.² The inhibiting influences include elements which are hesitant towards change for a range of reasons, hampering the acceptance and/or implementation of suggestions made. I will examine these from both a broad-scope level³ and an internal organisational level.

Motivating Influences for Mission Formation

There are four main motivating influences at play within the broader mission formation context: God is at work in the lives of His people, including these Apps; the world atmosphere is in constant flux; the Apps themselves are on a journey of mission formation; and PoA seeks to enable this formation and sending in a way that honours both the Apps, their sending churches and God Himself. I will assess the first two points from a broad-scope level and the latter two from an internal organisational level.

Broad-Scope Level

God's influence is both at the external, broad-scope level, and, as the Spirit of God who lives within each of His children, at the internal, detailed level. I place Him here at the broad-scope level because of the reach of His influence.

² Malcolm Gladwell refers to this group as the visionaries, including both the innovators and early adopters. He cites the diffusion study of hybrid seed corn conducted in the 1930s. His chapter endnote mentions Everett Rogers' book, *Diffusion of Innovations*, which explores this concept in greater detail (Gladwell 2002).

³ Clinton briefly describes this as "the elements in the regional or national situation which may affect the local change being implemented" in *Bridging Strategies* (Clinton 1992, 1-7).

God - The Initiator

Genesis 2:7 tells of how God formed a single man out of dust, a forming that Genesis 1:26 and James 3:9 highlights was in the likeness of God, an innate stamp of our identity as humankind. Job 10:8 continues, “Your hands shaped me and made me,” while the Psalmist wrote in 139:13 of this intimate work of being knitted together in his mother’s womb. Jumping ahead to the New Testament as seen in light of Christ’s work on the cross, Romans 8:29 speaks of a process of being conformed to the very likeness of God’s Son, emphasized again by Paul in 2 Corinthians 3:18. Here Paul uses a term translated as transformed, “which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:18b). He is both our “source and reason” for living, through whom our “existence, form [and] meaning” comes (Barth 1981, 56).

Although it may be simplistic to note, God is already at work, instigating formation for mission. This point of initiation is an important one to resolve, as it is intrinsically linked to a posture before God. “Formation as ‘being formed’ will reveal that God is the initiator of our growth... and we are to be pliable clay in God’s hand” (Mulholland and Barton 2016, Kindle Location 163-167). Robert Mulholland adds that the “difference between forming ourselves and being formed is the vital issue of control,”⁴ where we yield ourselves to God (Mulholland and Barton 2016, Kindle Location 295-296), in the posture of active recipients.

Prayer accentuates this, as we allow ourselves to be influenced by God, shaped by the teacher and bent to His will. In response to God’s work of initiation, we pray.

⁴ Mulholland expounds, “I don’t mind...formation at all as long as I can be in control of it. As long as I can set the limits on its pace and its direction, I have no problem. What I do have a problem with is getting my control structures out of the way of my spiritual formation and letting God take control” (Mulholland and Barton 2016, Kindle Location 304-306).

By continuing this iterative process of being moulded into His image for the sake of others (Mulholland and Barton 2016), as we share the gospel in a myriad of ways, the person of Jesus is recognized in both speech and action.

Global Setting

The world scene continues to be one of uncertainty and flux. It is “a time of increasing opposition, global instability, access difficulties, and challenging world ideologies” (Peters 2015). Terrorism has become the norm, still disturbing but rarely surprising people. Within this setting, Australia is gradually becoming more risk averse. And yet, at the same time, the International Director of Pioneers states that “we need to be men and women of courage, standing in the truth of Christ as Victor, equipped and ready to move into the firing line if God calls us there” (Peters 2015). Australians continue to be called to serve among some of these difficult, potentially dangerous places in the world.⁵ And yet such an environment is not blocking people from going into global mission. Counter-culturally, it is driving them to establish a more robust theology of perseverance, risk and suffering that is wrapped in prayer. Such a setting propels PoA Apps towards dependence, where, through prayer, they become increasingly reliant on God to lead them amid such uncertainty.

Internal Organisational Level

PoA Apps, too, are an active part of the mission formation process, further encouraged and resourced by PoA in a life-giving and enabling manner.

⁵ As of June 2017, PoA has sent or is preparing to send people to sixteen of the forty-five countries most impacted by terrorism listed in the Global Terrorism Index (Institute for Economics and Peace 2016).

PoA Apps

As I have journeyed with over a hundred PoA Apps since July 2011, it has been encouraging to see that there is a hunger to develop a deeper intimacy with the Lord. The night of prayer that we regularly hold on the final evening of our week-long annual Orientation program is often seen as a highlight by many participants, while others are awakened to the challenge to nurture their spiritual health. Though the noise and shuffle of life often crowds prayer to the margins, and a handful of lives hint of complacency, many PoA Apps desire to expand their relationship with God in response to the Holy Spirit's work within them. Let me offer some examples over the years of this desire that I have seen within the lives of several PoA Apps.⁶

1. In April 2012 one App wrote to me through Facebook Messenger after a webinar was held in which she took part. She says,

I particularly appreciated some of the things you said about prayer and the way you prayed. Is this something you have gained from experience or have you had reading or teaching specific to pray...? Would love to hear, read or learn more as God lays much about prayer on my heart!

2. In May 2016, a family heading to South East Asia asked me to speak to their church community on the importance of prayer in mission. Here is the request in their voice:

I thought it might be more encouraging having that come from someone who has lived on the mission field and has stories, or real-life experience to share about how important prayer is... So, if you are comfortable to talk for 10-15 mins on the importance of prayer and having a network of prayers, what that might look like.

3. In early June 2016, I was speaking with one of our Apps soon to move overseas. Knowing that she was a woman of prayer, I asked her how she had grown in prayer over the years. As part of our conversation she said, "If something is a priority, we

⁶ Permission to use this material has been granted via email interaction by each of these four people.

make time for it. We don't believe it's true until we act on it. I know what it costs to pray... all that can't be done in that time. But if I want prayer to shape our family, I need to steal that time away."

4. In an email which I received in July 2016, one App wrote, "I... just wanted to ask if you knew of any good resources and parts in the Bible that talk about fasting? I've never really done it and heard lots about others doing it but want to know more about it before using it as part of my prayer life." We continued in conversation, scheduling a call to further talk through this matter of prayer and fasting.

Pioneers of Australia

PoA displays a high organisational value on prayer. This is at both a communal office level, as well as on a smaller scale. As with many other Christian organisations, prayer often sandwiches meetings. We seek God's heart on various matters, drawing Him into the conversation, although we tend to ask more than listen. Some of the staff meet to pray regularly as prayer partners. Others stop for impromptu prayer, or as a staff team, we may gather and pause in prayer if a critical situation arises. A night of prayer is always included in our Orientation Week, the most important week of our PoA year, as previously mentioned. There are also two other practices that extend more broadly.

Just before I came to work at the PoA National Office in July 2011, a practice was adopted that stands to this day. Within the global Pioneers community, a worldwide day of prayer and fasting is held on the first Friday of each month. It is an invitation to continue nurturing the organisational core value of a Passion for God. A prayer guide is sent out, with the themes varying from month to month. Some Pioneers' members use this opportunity within their team context, others do so individually, while still others choose not to take part in this day, or only sporadically. Through the initiative of our

National Director, PoA now takes this day of prayer and fasting and practices it on the Tuesday following the worldwide Friday. This day was chosen because our staff meetings are held on Tuesday mornings, normally for one hour. On this day of prayer and fasting we extend our staff meeting to two hours, usually following the prayer guide that is provided within Pioneers. In addition, we do not provide morning tea, instead choosing to fast in this simple manner. This has become a valued time, with different staff members leading the morning each month.

In addition, each month a prayer focus bulletin is sent out to approximately 850 recipients who follow the month's prayer guide, praying for PoA people. One of our respected stateswomen has compiled this for over twenty years. A parallel booklet, highlighting all PoA members, has recently been updated, with the PoA National Director calling readers to set aside fifteen minutes per day to pray for the unreached.

Considering this clear organisational value of prayer and these practices, any proactive maturing of prayer is built on a robust foundation of prayer.

Inhibiting Influences for Mission Formation

In opposition to the motivating influences, there are three main dynamics which often inhibit PoA Apps from experiencing a more pervasive and profound prayer life as seen in the life of Jesus, the early church in Acts, and within the lives of many Pioneers-Africa respondents. The most powerful of these forces is the Australian culture. The Australian church, in turn, has been influenced by the larger Australian culture, and tends to act as an inhibiting rather than a motivating influence regarding the role of prayer in mission formation. Finally, I will discuss various inhibitors within PoA itself.

As in the previous section, I will examine these from a broad-scope level, before stepping in to view it from an internal organisational level.

Broad-Scope Level

There are several cultural influences that can be identified within the Australian cultural context which are factors stalling the development of prayer within PoA Apps.

Australian Cultural Environment

Australia is becoming an increasingly secular nation, hostile towards those who identify themselves as Christians. In the 2016 census, the ‘no religion’ category was promoted from last to first option, with a subtle change to Government policy to occur if ‘no religion’ rather than Christianity becomes the religious marker for Australia (Schippe 2016).⁷ The Australian church sits within this broader climate of marginalization of Christians, with only seven percent of the population extremely involved in the practice of their faith and communal worship (McCrimdell et al. 2017).⁸

Research has shown Australia to be a nation of highly individualistic, independent people.⁹ Although cultural relativity should be considered, it is not unusual for Australians to view matters of faith as private and individual, contained within their inner life. Although communal discernment through prayer may be valued, again, it is then taken and weighed by the individual as he or she maintains independence.¹⁰

Such independence can extend to our relationship with God. Charles Kraft helpfully lays out several characteristics of a Western worldview, reflective of many

⁷ For the full article entitled “Faith in the Spotlight as Australians Tipped to Lose Their Religion,” see news.com.au June 6th, 2016.

⁸ This seven percent is part of those who identify themselves as Christians, not specifically evangelical Christians, which would in turn be a much smaller percentage.

⁹ The Hofstede country comparison tool states that “Australia, with a score of 90 on this dimension, is a highly Individualist culture. This translates into a loosely-knit society in which the expectation is that people look after themselves and their immediate families” (Hofstede 2016). Australia comes second only to the United States’ score of 91 regarding the cultural dimension of Individualism (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 2010, Kindle Location 1690).

¹⁰ In the words of a PoA App, “My own self and my strong independent personality gets in the way of practising prayer as I should.”

Australians. It includes naturalism, materialism, humanism, and understanding reality through reason (Kraft 1989). These assumptions “are so taken for granted that [we are] rarely even aware of them” (Hiebert 1982, 36), resulting in the flaw of the excluded middle, as Paul Hiebert explains the theory that has been established about the seen and unseen worlds. He explains,

As a scientist I had been trained to deal with the empirical world in naturalistic terms. As a theologian, I was taught to answer ultimate questions in theistic terms. For me the middle zone did not really exist. Unlike Indian villagers, I had given little thought to spirits of this world, to local ancestors and ghosts, or to the souls of animals. For me these belonged to the realm of fairies, trolls and other mythical beings. Consequently I had no answers to the questions they raised. (Hiebert 1982, 43)

When a holistic theology is lacking, God’s people can inadvertently attempt to contain Him, which leads to self-reliance. Building on this foundation, Kraft adds regarding humanism, “Since we believe our achievements have come through unaided human effort, we focus on human accomplishments and abilities... Though human accomplishment is indeed impressive, many seem to believe that there are no limits to it; and, of course, no outside spiritual assistance is needed” (Kraft 1989, 30). Although these abilities are a gift from God, with such a strong cultural influence, self-reliance has become the default position for many Australians.

As a time-orientated culture, it is not uncommon for Australians to “fill their time to its maximum potential. Their lives take on a frantic pace...” (Lingenfelter and Mayers 2003, 40). In a culture where busyness is valued and elevates a person’s identity (Collins 2014), where productivity and efficiency show worth, where noise and distractions are constantly besieging us via technology and media, it is counter-cultural to stop, step away from the distractions, and listen to the Lord. Cultivating spiritual reflection and attuning

ourselves to God’s voice above others is difficult and takes discipline. Without intentionally fostering this posture, it is challenging to grow in this area.¹¹

Prayer can be difficult. When virtues such as perseverance are not encouraged within both the Australian culture and the Christian culture of the West, people will not necessarily seek growth in this area. Many Millennials have the understanding that if they are not immediately successful at any given practice, it is not worth investing in. Tim Elmore clarifies this.

Corey’s problem, of course—and the problem of many in his generation—is that he has never learned how to wait. He expects instant gratification, he is quick to give up when answers are slow in coming, and his lack of self-discipline is already causing him problems in his personal relationships and his job. The truth is, the cult of instant gratification is costly to young people because it fails to teach them qualities such as persistence and self-discipline, which may well be more important to their success than intelligence or talent. (Elmore 2010, Kindle Location 2141-45)

Australian Church Context

Another area of influence is a PoA App’s church and the teaching or modelling of prayer that they have received which has impacted their own spiritual formation. It is not uncommon to hear church members grumble about how poorly prayer meetings are attended. They are all too often comprised of elderly people sitting in a circle, praying through a list. Rarely are they vibrant and attractive to the younger generation.

But prayer within churches is, of course, not limited to prayer meetings. Scriptural teaching on prayer is an important aspect of growing in prayer. It has been encouraging to hear of a handful of PoA sending churches that have taught on prayer during 2016. One

¹¹ This point was further affirmed by PoA Apps who completed an on-line survey, answering the question, What gets in the way of practicing prayer in the way you would like to practice it? One person responded with “busyness... feeling hurried,” while another admitted that “the business of life can and does get in the way.”

of these was taught within the various small groups, focusing on the book of Acts. The second held a Monday evening series on prayer, attended by those who were interested, and included prayer topics from both Old and New Testaments. Another regularly teaches on prophetic prayer at a school related to their church. Let me add three comments about such teaching to justify placing this topic under inhibiting influences.

Firstly, such teaching seems to be uncommon. After a recent workshop I led on prayer, a young woman came up to me, exclaiming that this topic was not taught at her church. Others have echoed this same sentiment.¹² The aforementioned churches are a tiny handful from the several hundred churches that PoA serves as mission partner.

Secondly, even though teaching on prayer may occur in some churches, again, because of the individualist nature of Australian culture, hearers are then often left to take the teaching and apply it themselves, without encouragement or communal commitment to growth.

Thirdly, such teaching and experience of prayer can reflect limited teaching, for “unlike most of the peoples of the world, we divide the world into what we call ‘natural’ and what we call ‘supernatural’ ... [with] our focus... squarely on the natural world” (Kraft 1989, 27). For some this means cessation of supernatural gifts, or lack of exposure to God working in beyond-human ways.¹³ Or perhaps the belief exists, but lacks experience in a way that integrates the teaching in life-changing ways. This in turn impacts the growth of church members, and in turn PoA Apps. One PoA member, who was on Home Assignment after his family’s first term on the field, shared about his

¹² Question 5 of the on-line survey was: Have you received teaching on prayer from your church? (If able, please provide information regarding when and the basic content.) Four people indicated teaching through sermon, two referred to teaching within a small group received decades ago, while four mentioned short courses on church related prayer ministry. None of those responding mentioned church-related teaching on prayer when answering Question 3: What has shaped your prayer life over the years?

¹³ Charles Kraft in chapter three of *Christianity with Power*, gives a balanced reminder that the Western worldview is mostly naturalistic, material, humanistic, rationalistic, and individual/independent. This Enlightenment influence has caused us to dichotomize the spirit world (Kraft 1989).

growth in prayer. He mentioned that before going overseas, the teaching he had received on prayer did not include the role of the Holy Spirit or the involvement of miracles. This had changed once he was in-country and God met him in a profound way. His exposure to an Asian culture paralleled his growing awareness of the spirit world. Another App remarked that teaching on prayer has never included teaching on fasting.¹⁴

These can inhibit growth in prayer, acting as restraining influences at the broad-scope, external level.

Internal Organisational Level

Another potentially inhibiting factor is the possible time constraints within the PoA application process. There is no standard processing time for our PoA Apps, as we value innovation and flexibility as one of our core values. With approximately fifty-five Apps to journey with, most of whom live outside of the city where the National Office is based, time with people is limited, particularly face-to-face interaction. This differs from App to App. For some of our Apps there is a three-year process between application and their exit. Others have a quick processing time-line, exiting the country soon after they have applied and been consequently appointed. My personal time with this latter handful of Apps is restricted due to the speedy nature of their process. Although my influence is not be limited to face-to-face interaction, it is important to note that such personal interface builds trust and rapport in a way that on-line or other forms of exchange cannot. This highlights the importance of working with the Mobilisation team, a gifted and committed group, who are usually the first point of contact for PoA Apps.

The positive side of having time constraints is the sense of urgency that it creates.¹⁵ Because time with many Apps is limited, it is a compelling force to maximize

¹⁴ This is not always the case. Two survey respondents wrote about taking part in “prophetic and intercessory prayer,” and another mature woman had practiced fasting.

¹⁵ This is the first of John Kotter’s eight stages of change (Kotter 2012).

the time I and others do have with each individual or family unit, to further facilitate their mission formation. However, because growth in prayer and mission formation takes time, this shortened season can be a challenge. Our time with them is only one link in God's chain for them.

A subtle, but none-the-less potential additional inhibiting influence may be the question of how to measure growth in someone's spiritual life, particularly their life of prayer. As Ruth Barton notes, "It is important for us to embrace spiritual transformation as a process that is full of mystery" (Barton 2012, Kindle Location 196-7), which is therefore difficult to assess, weigh, or evaluate. In many ways, the outcomes of this research are about encouraging growth, whether from nothing to something, or maturity to greater maturity. Because within the PoA context we do not mandate training or development opportunities, but rather recommend such prospects, it can be difficult to firstly raise this as a growth area, inviting Apps to deepen their prayer lives, and secondly, quantify growth within someone's life of prayer. These are challenges worth wrestling through.

Impartial Influences

At this juncture, it is helpful to note the decentralised nature of Pioneers on an international level, and how PoA compares to such a state. I have placed this under impartial influences, as it can both aid and impede growth.

In their book, Ori Brafman and Rod Beckstrom contrast centralised and decentralised organisations, drawing out the analogy of spiders and starfish: with the latter able to replicate themselves if they are divided, and are difficult to destroy. For the authors, starfish represent decentralised structures which encourage creativity and innovation. Decentralised structures also tend to be more adaptable in both operation and

culture. Furthermore, Brafman and Beckstrom write of taking a hybrid approach, which brings out the best in both sets of organisations, maximizing both structure and flexibility (Brafman and Beckstrom 2006).

This theory is applicable as the global family of Pioneers is a highly decentralized organisation. It does not take a hierarchical approach, instead holding servant-postured leadership as one of its core values. The International Director of Pioneers is well respected, but has been awarded only limited powers through the Pioneers' International Ministry Agreement. The power he holds is more through relationship than status. For example, team decisions occur at a team level. He cannot mandate a team change.

In contrast, Pioneers of Australia's ecosystem is more centralized in nature, with a distinct structure and certain hierarchy. However, it fits into Brafman and Beckstrom's hybrid theory as the central office structure and environment, and central authority of the National Director act as an anchor for the more fluid elements of the organisations. The Mobilisation team is a good example of decentralisation, with various members of the team spread around Australia, but accountable to their team leader and the mobilisation co-ordinator.

This starfish approach in turn impacts the preparation process, where, centralised policy is held at a distance and only accepted if it serves a greater purpose. Each App is viewed uniquely, and although a standard applies, the standard is flexible and open to discussion. This hybrid approach is central to the outworking of mission formation.

Transformational Leadership ¹⁶

Within the Pioneers context, decentralisation and transformational leadership are often coupled together. I believe that the application of transformational leadership will add distinct value to the process of formation for global mission. Northouse writes,

transformational leadership is the process whereby a person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower. This type of leader is attentive to the needs and motives of followers and tries to help followers reach their fullest potential. (Northouse 2013, Kindle Location 5452)

Within my role at PoA, I desire to see PoA Apps undergo profound transformation, reaching greater potential as people of God given to prayer and the Word. As the PoA staff serves PoA Apps, a certain trust is assumed and consequently built on, allowing for the relational connection spoken of above to be created and developed, and profound influence to occur. By being sensitive to the various Apps, knowing their stories and their needs for mission formation, I and others will be able to generate holy discontent and a yearning for something more, in turn raising their motivation to see their lives and ministries marked and shaped by prayer, for “a movement has momentum when a commanding truth becomes its driving force” (McKenna 2012, 85).

Summary

In Part III I have sought to harmonize the voices from Scripture and the voices from Pioneers-Africa, doing so under the following points of intersect: background influence, practice, content, teaching and impact. Several points of divergence were also noted. This chapter, then, explained the context within which PoA mission formation is

¹⁶ Peter Northouse defines transformational leadership as, “a process that changes and transforms people. It is concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals. It includes assessing followers’ motives, satisfying their needs, and treating them as full human beings. Transformational leadership involves an exceptional form of influence that moves followers to accomplish more than what is usually expected of them. It is a process that often incorporates charismatic and visionary leadership” (Northouse 2013, Kindle Location 5430).

located. This involved introducing not only Pioneers of Australia, but the broader mission formation climate, including motivating and inhibiting influences. Two impartial influences noted were the decentralized nature of Pioneers and the topic of transformational leadership. Both have potential to stall or enable the development of the role of prayer in mission formation.

Part IV will now look forward to the application of this research.

Part IV

Voices for the Future

My purpose for this research project has been to listen to two main sources regarding the role of prayer: voices from selected Scriptures (Jesus and the early church in Acts) and voices from Pioneers-Africa. Utilizing Robert Schreiter's three forms of theological thought in relation to local theologies: commentary, narrative and anthology, I have reflected the use of commentary in Part I's voices from Scripture. I have then, in turn, reflected the use of narrative in Part II's voices from Pioneers-Africa. After harmonizing these two voices and identifying points of intersect in Part III, my end goal has been to develop Biblically-based foundational principles of prayer. In some ways, I have applied Schreiter's anthology to this final Part IV, assembling lessons on prayer rather than the more usual song or story. I aim to bring the selection and collection of these principles to life in a practical manner to cultivate mission formation for the next wave of long-term cross-cultural workers sent through PoA, facilitating their understanding of, commitment to, and experience of prayer as a core aspect of their life and ministry, leading to greater Kingdom impact.

The challenge of how this will take place to facilitate the process of proactive reframing (Clinton 1992) with PoA Apps regarding the role of prayer in formation for global mission will be evaluated in Chapter 7. I will then conclude this dissertation in Chapter 8.

Chapter 7

Shaped by Prayer

In this chapter, I will highlight the practical nature of this research project. A first step towards this end is to identify principles of prayer which are translatable to the PoA context, before bringing these to life through practical means.

Translatable Principles for PoA

This dissertation has been working towards the end goal of establishing Biblically-based foundational principles of prayer for the next wave of long-term cross-cultural workers sent through PoA. Part I (Chapters 1 and 2) listened to Scriptural voices on prayer. Part II (Chapters 3 and 4) listened to Pioneers-Africa voices on prayer. Chapter 5 brought these voices together, harmonizing them by establishing points of intersect.

Due to the constraints of this dissertation, rather than choosing all points of intersect (found in Chapter 5) as principles of prayer, I will focus on five priority principles for future application for PoA Apps. I have then creatively expanded each of these principles of prayer into a practical booklet entitled *Shaped by Prayer* (Appendix E). This is to enable pro-active growth around potential blind spots for PoA Apps.

Every culture and context has its own clarity and blind spots (Walls 1996) regarding a range of matters. Chapter 6 examined these inhibiting influences for mission formation as it relates to PoA. Inasmuch as this dissertation is relevant for application of research in the PoA context, the following principles, therefore, have been distilled primarily but not solely from the ‘Practice’ sections of Chapters 1, 2, 4 and 5 in order to

highlight points of intersect between Part I – Voices from Scripture, and Part II – Voices from Pioneers-Africa, as laid out in Chapter 5.

Practice: Developing Intimate Communion with God

Firstly, a foundational lesson for PoA Apps is that of developing deeper, more intimate communion with God. This may seem obvious, and yet to prioritize our orientation towards God alone takes intention. Here, the material from Chapter 1 under the heading of Practice: Prayer as Communion intersects with the material from Chapter 4, under the heading of Impact: Intimacy-Communion, regarding Pioneers-Africa. It was further developed in Chapter 5 under the heading of Practice: Communion and Alignment.

As presented in Chapter 1, Jesus expanded an understanding of prayer through His relationship with the Father. This was particularly emphasized in Father and Son relationship expressed in John’s gospel, and Jesus’ posture of remaining in the Father. The depth of communion and level of dependence which He modelled sets the tone for the intimate, apprentice relationship that all disciples are invited into. The way in which prayer was so intrinsically embedded in the life of Jesus and the early church in Acts was displayed by how quickly they turned to prayer, automatically defaulting to prayer rather than attempting a range of other methods before turning to prayer. This, too, is seen in the life of Pioneers-Africa. They pray because of a desire for greater communion, clearer insight and greater alignment with the will of the Father. They pray because of the simple enjoyment of fellowship with the Father and attentiveness to the Holy Spirit, where they discover “mysteries in the Spirit” (G-14). And they pray because of their need. They identify dependence and lack as one of their gifts to the rest of Pioneers. This is in

marked contrast to the ingrained self-sufficiency of many Australians, and therefore many PoA Apps.

Practice: Extended Time with the Father

Secondly, this level of intimate relationship with the Father and dependence on the Spirit, then, can be nurtured through the two-sided coin of passion and discipline, seen in the life of Jesus, the early church in Acts, and Pioneers-Africa. One side reflects Pioneers' primary core value of a Passion for God, conveyed in myriad ways. Since formation for mission is never finished (Burrows 2007), when it is intentionally nurtured through discipline, disciples are strengthened. "The dominant current paradigm for mission is that of an efficient machine. Spiritual formation is neglected because it does not easily fit the assembly-line paradigm" (Plueddemann 2000, 902). With this as a potential blind spot, nurturing the two-sided coin of passion and discipline is essential for Australians as they move into cross-cultural global mission.

One expression of this is the time spent in prayer. Here, the model of Jesus, as outlined in Chapter 1 under the heading of Practice: Withdrawing to Pray intersects with the material from Chapter 4, under the heading of Practice: Length of Prayer and Hours of Prayer, regarding Pioneers-Africa. It was further developed in Chapter 5 under the heading of Practice: Withdrawal for Extended Time in Prayer.

Jesus regularly slipped away to spend time with the Father in prayer. In Acts, it was during times of withdrawal to pray that several people received revelations from God. Pioneers-Africa notes these examples in Scripture and quickly apply it to their lives as many of them regularly pray for "no less than an hour" (G-11, G-12, G-14 and G-15) each day. They have learnt that during extended time with God, greater revelation and clarity is granted for, as G-14 states, "what I'm receiving becomes more stable." During

this time “a fine-tuning of our will towards God’s will” (G-12) takes place, and “the communion is sweet” (G-13). By intentional time away in prayer, particularly through extended times of prayer, relationship can deepen and a range of powerful outcomes can arise. Additionally, this choice of time expresses a value for relationship with God over task for God. For many PoA Apps, the pendulum of task over relationship has swung to the extreme, and balance needs to be found.

Practice: Seeking Communal Discernment

Thirdly, the principle of seeking communal discernment is an important one for PoA Apps to cultivate. This principle is taken from the material found in Chapter 2 under the headings of Impact of Prayer: Community and Decision-Making, the Pioneers-Africa material found in Chapter 4 under Practice: Communal Prayer, which was further developed in Chapter 5 under the heading of Practice: Communal Prayer.

Communal prayer not only reflects the united Trinitarian relationship, leads to communal discernment and displays of courage, but it builds the church. This is particularly displayed in the life of the early church in Acts, as they come together to prioritize prayer and hear together from Him. Pioneers-Africa, in turn, intuitively practices this within a communal culture, instinctively valuing shared fellowship and taking “it seriously [to] gather with other people to pray” (G-12). “It is a reminder too that the will of God will rarely be wholly clear to an individual alone and that God usually works through a community of like-motivated, mutually interdependent and mutually supportive people” (Dunn 1992, 624). Communal prayer further nurtures a sense of interdependence and mutual submission, of patient waiting as unity is reached, mitigating against the inhibiting influence of individualism, as found in Chapter 6.

Practice: Moving into Guided Action

Fourthly, another Biblically-based principle for PoA is that of guided action. This where God's people or person hears from God before moving into action to fulfil the mission initiatives entrusted to them. As seen in Scripture, when this is practiced, the impact is significant, with the Kingdom advancing and breakthroughs occurring.

This principle is based on the Impact of Prayer material in Chapter 1, as Jesus received a clear guidance and perspective, spiritual empowerment and needed strength from listening to the Father before moving into the purposes set aside for Him. Likewise, in Chapter 2, under the heading of Impact of Prayer: Missional Focus, the early church practiced hearing from the Lord, being guided by Him, before moving into action as seen as displayed in separate events involving Ananias, Cornelius, Peter and Paul. Included in Chapter 4 under Content: Dreams-Revelations and Impact: Decisions and Leading, Pioneers-Africa continue to tie together attentive listening to God with obedient action. This was consolidated in Chapter 5, under Practice: Prayer Leading to Mission Initiative.

This is an important matter in a context and culture where people are well educated and full of knowledge, often racing ahead of God and then seeking His blessing. "In the midst of their busyness and frequently without intending it, missionaries and mission leaders themselves tend to forget that 'mission is God's mission', and not just a great human enterprise" (Escobar 2003, 27). This is not to say that they are not to use the good minds given them, but often they use them at the cost of listening to the God who knows all things. To patiently wait on God, actively listening to Him and staying there long enough to hear from Him is a discipline. Additionally, by aligning their wills to His will, they can further take part in what God is doing in the world.

Content: Engaging Forces of Darkness

Fifthly and lastly, the area of developing deep spiritual awareness to better engage forces of darkness is key. Jesus and the disciples did not compartmentalize their lives, but rather their broad understanding of the spirit world invaded all of life, seeing God's Kingdom come through supernatural means. This was brought out in Chapter 1, Content: Garden of Gethsemane or the Mount of Olives and Teaching: The Lord's Prayer. It was further emphasized in Chapter 2, Practice: God's Intervention, where the early church cried out to God to step into their lives in a way that was beyond themselves.

So too with Pioneers-Africa, with G-18 affirming that "You can't be a minister in Africa if you don't understand spiritual warfare." This is echoed in Chapter 4, with the Pioneers-Africa Content: Spiritual Warfare. "The conditions of Africa... are taking Christian theology into new areas of life, where Western theology has no answers" (Walls 1996, 146). The integration of theology is a powerful witness, manifesting the practical truth of the good news of Jesus Christ. Such an understanding has influenced how truth is proclaimed, when and how mission is moved forward, how individuals and communities engage with powers of darkness to see God's Kingdom come. Such spiritual power, coming from God as source, cultivated by prayer, Biblical meditation, fasting and other disciplines are strategic for global mission, particularly mission initiatives across religious frontiers (Escobar 2003). This principle was finally highlighted in the intersecting Chapter 5 material, Content: Engaging Forces of Darkness.

The Role of Prayer in Mission Formation

Crystalizing these initial five principles of prayer taken from the rich, combined data of Part I and Part II allows me to flesh out the question, "How can prayer shape our lives and ministries?" Prayer can shape our lives through deeper intimacy with the Father, through purposefully combining a Passion for God with discipline and spending an

extended stretch of time with the Father, as one example. We are shaped for global mission through Guided Action and so on. Prayer is a powerful pathway for mission formation. The proactive reframing of PoA culture to deliberately nurture formation for mission, with prayer at the core, displays PoA's high value on not only prayer, but being continually formed into the likeness of Christ for the sake of the nations. As Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal note, this reframing opens the door to fresh ideas and possibilities. This may mean that Apps explore innovative and unfamiliar avenues of prayer. As PoA raises up a people of faith and courage for global mission, there is a strategic opportunity to utilize transformational leadership, identifying points of need or blind spots and mentoring Apps towards mission formation so that their present lives are shaped by prayer in preparation for their future ministries to be consequently formed by prayer.

Before I develop the relationship between prayer and mission formation further, however, let me provide a deeper explanation of this term.

Mission Formation: A Deeper Explanation

The term formation has its roots in the Roman Catholic church, where, as early as the mid-1800s, the French term *former* (to form, train) was used in regards to novices, primarily regarding internal attitudes (Mayes 2009). Over the decades it was applied to those training for the Catholic priesthood, becoming the primary model in the 1980s. Language regarding formation for ministry was eventually adopted by the Anglican church in the late 1980s (Mayes 2009).

Mission formation, or formation for global mission, is a close cousin to ministry formation or spiritual formation. The term is used widely by the Catholic Mission, with definitions that are compatible with evangelical mission organisations such as PoA, although the expressions of this may differ. The Catholic Mission states that "Mission ... Formation is a transformational process. It refers to the forming or shaping of the

whole person, not just the cognitive but the spiritual, to take up and carry on the mission of Jesus Christ in the world” (Catholic Mission 2013). Additionally, the Catholic Social Services Victoria add,

When we talk of preparing people to share more effectively in the mission of Jesus, we speak of “formation”. Formation is much more than training and education because it is about the internalisation of values, attitudes and ways of seeing, and the maturation of faith. It is something that we do in cooperation with God. Formation seeks to develop in us sensitivity to where God is leading our lives and our mission. (Catholic Social Services Victoria 2017)

In my experience, both as a cross-cultural worker and in preparing others for engagement in cross-cultural mission life and service, mission formation falls into three main categories: spiritual formation, cross-cultural or intercultural formation and relational formation, as previously alluded to in Part III. This “lifetime task [includes] prayer, reflection, discussion, study, reading, debate, and dialogue [to] align us with God’s Spirit,” as global mission workers interact with their future and current “missionary reality” (Burrows 2007, 19, 20, 17). It is formation into the missional Christ, as there is a direct relationship between formation and missional engagement (Daniélou 1996), and is for the sake of others (Mulholland and Barton 2016).

Prayer is central to this process of formation for mission, as it “is the innermost form of the fight for character” (Fosdick 1954, 154), an “indispensable part of having one’s whole life continually reorientated around God’s plan, and of receiving and acquiring the understanding, character formation and sanctified performance apart from which no meaningful knowledge of God or his ways is possible” (Bartholomew and Holt 2005, 362-363).

As stated in the definitions, then, mission formation points to this transformational process of being formed into the likeness of Christ, for the purpose of proclaiming and engaging in the mission of Christ in the world, particularly regarding

cross-cultural global mission. The translatable principles relating to prayer will be set within the flexible scaffolding of formation for global mission.

Shaped by Prayer: A Booklet

The question remains: What could the relationship of prayer and mission formation look like? As PoA raises up a people of prayer to go into global mission, how can we mature their prayer lives, proactively seeing “recruitment and formation [as]...two sides of one coin” (Burrows 2007)?

In response, I have crafted a simple booklet called *Shaped by Prayer*, found in Appendix E. This booklet contains a variety of chapters that reflect the translatable principles for PoA, touched on above. It has set in place a flexible scaffolding to encourage prayer as a pathway to mission formation. After the initial page of explanatory introduction, this framework includes the following for each chapter or section:

- Introductory Paragraph
- Voices from Scripture
- Questions for Reflection
- Voices from Africa
- Questions for Reflection
- Tips for Integration
- Developing Praxis (including Action Steps)

I will briefly explain the reasoning behind the inclusion of these elements.

Voices from Scripture: Modelling Biblical Reflection

As previously noted, within PoA, Biblical teaching is a priority. The rich teaching on prayer found in Part I provides fertile soil from which the seed of growth can sprout. Maximizing this material to inspire, encourage and challenge PoA Apps is an important starting point. But it is not all there is, hence the section on Questions for Reflection.

Pausing to reflect on Scripture is central to the formation process, adding intrinsic value. Within his servant as leader paradigm, Robert Greenleaf writes about withdrawal to reorient oneself, and listening in a discriminating manner (Greenleaf et al. 2003). Reflection could be interpreted as a waste of time, but put into the context of pausing, stilling and re-orientating ourselves before God, chewing matters over with Him and listening to Him, it is a holy spending of time, setting true perspective as we recalibrate before God. In the section of his book titled Teacher as Servant, Greenleaf's character, Mr. Billings, encourages his students to ask the question: What do we learn from this? (Greenleaf et al. 2003). Reflection on the process of deepening our prayer lives will likewise add value as we continually ask God to teach us to pray, and learn from the iterative cycle of reflective action. Ideally this leads to greater integration of the received Biblical content, and greater impact of integrative praxis.

Walter Wright further affirms this need for meditative reflection, as it is through our awareness of vulnerability that we spend time with our Father, dependent on Him, continuing to retain a learner's stance.

I find that it is often during times of prayer that my mind sees the reality of my day from a different perspective. I keep paper and pencil with my Bible and allow myself to stop and write down ideas that come during prayer and reading. I am convinced that the meditative mind works differently from the reasoning mind. I see and think differently during ... prayer and meditation. (Wright 2000, 187)

Voices from Africa: Modelling Cultural Reflection

Before my research began, I intuitively recognized the wise and vibrant life of prayer practiced by Pioneers-Africa. I now hold the data confirming previous anecdotal evidence. The mineshaft is deep. Much gold has been mined, gold which needs to be shared. By imparting our stories, we learn from each other, we become more closely knit

together as family, and we realize that our understanding of God and the world is not the only one. The posture of attentive listening to and learning from our global brothers and sisters is an important one to hold as PoA Apps move into global mission.

Again, reflection is needed. This reflective habit is essential to nurture regarding cultural issues as PoA Apps are prayerfully formed for global mission. “The art of forming mission [workers] for intercultural ministries... is not the art of forming men and women for routine pastoral ministries, but helping men and woman who are led by the Holy Spirit to join a concrete group of disciples and become competent in intercultural settings” (Burrows 2007, 15). Effective cross-cultural mission demands both Biblical and cultural reflection so that the gospel can be shared in culturally relevant, innovative and life-giving ways. So, this section in the *Shaped by Prayer* booklet facilitates a dual process – that of hearing stories on prayer from cultures other than their own, and that of provoking deep reflection on cultural expressions or experiences which may surprise, unnerve, encourage or challenge them.

Integration and Praxis

These sections will help guard against purely conceptual learning, but rather move a PoA Apps into praxis where they integrate their learning.

It is often “assumed that the integration of faith and learning is automatic. It is not” (McKenna 2012, 32). Teaching without action remains inert good intent, while action without reflection can lead to an unhelpful or unhealthy cycle of activity. This reflective action, which involves the process of living and careful examination (Quinn 2004), enhances the integration of ideation and praxis. Such application needs to be fostered within PoA so that prayer does not remain a future important idea to be developed when time allows, but rather a priority to be explored as part of mission

formation. Practice becomes habit, which in turn becomes a rhythm of life. David Bennett reminds us that response reflects integration.

Jesus' primary focus in teaching the disciples was not to help them master skills often associated with leadership – setting goals, formulating strategy, organizing personnel and resources, exercising authority and discipline... Instead, Jesus showed his disciples how to follow, how to obey, how to respond to the authority and call of God. (Bennett 1993, 192)

Although speaking about living wholeheartedly, Brené Brown points out that “unless we're willing to have an honest conversation about what gets in the way of putting these into practice in our daily lives, we will never change. Never, ever” (Brown 2010, Kindle Location 245-6). An element of practicing prayer is honestly ascertaining the barriers to change - lack of time, independence from God and others, limited spiritual awareness – and bypassing those barriers to bring change. Another element is that of experimentation. William Burrows writes of the need to creatively reflect on mission matters. At times, such creative reflection includes an openness to trial new conduits, methods, formats or practices (Burrows 2007). A range of these are included in the Appendix E *Shaped by Prayer* booklet.

Summary

Throughout Chapter 7 I have been considering how to cultivate prayer as a core element of mission formation. Initially, I laid out five translatable principles taken from the intersect between the voices of Scripture and the voices of Pioneers-Africa. These provide depth and focus for the role of prayer in mission formation. Before outlining the *Shaped by Prayer* booklet (see Appendix E), I supplied a further explanation of mission formation, which, in many ways, is the aim. Prayer is the pathway or vehicle towards that end. Finally, the framework for the booklet was given, with an additional explanation for the various elements of Scripture, culture, reflection, integration and praxis.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

I began this research with the purpose of listening to the authoritative voices from Scripture and the cultural voices of Pioneers-Africa with the question, “What is the role of prayer in mission formation,” that is “How can prayer shape our lives and ministries?”

Research in Retrospect

The central research issue of this study has been the role of prayer as identified in the life of Jesus and the early church in Acts (Chapters 1 and 2), as it intersects with the role of prayer within Pioneers-Africa (Chapter 4), to establish principles of prayer applicable to Pioneers of Australia (PoA) (Chapter 7). I have investigated these issues by utilizing an extensive literature survey of appropriate Scriptures to answer my first research question: What is the role of prayer in the life of Jesus and the early church in Acts? I then used two mutually enhancing methodologies, primarily led by Ethnographic Narrative Interview, and supplemented and verified through the secondary method of Participant Observation to answer my second research question: What is the role of prayer in Pioneers-Africa? These Scriptural and cultural findings were then brought together and the point of intersect examined in answer to my third research question: Which of these principles of prayer, found at the point of intersect between the role of the prayer in the life of Jesus and the early church in Acts and Pioneers-Africa, are transferrable and would help nurture an understanding and practice of prayer in those preparing for long-term service with PoA?

In Part I, although not an exhaustive Scriptural work, my findings established that prayer is central to the life of Jesus and core to the early church in Acts, rather than an addendum or peripheral. It involved two-way communication, where not only were words spoken, as we see through the content found in chapters one and two, but there was a revelatory nature to prayer in both the life of Jesus (emphasized through Luke's focus on prayer and the Father-Son relationship of John's gospel) and the early church as they listened with expectancy that God would respond and reveal His ways to them (in their decision-making process, in mission initiatives and strategy, when they were enduring persecution or needing help). Through prayer, Jesus maintained a clear perspective for His life and ministry priorities, intentionally withdrawing to spend time with the Father, orientating His life in a listening stance (as John emphasizes) and modelling intimate dependence on and communion with Him (as seen by John's prolific use of Father and *mevnw*). Through the role of the Holy Spirit and His wrestle before the Father in Gethsemane, Jesus was granted the spiritual empowerment and needed strength to continue on, modelling that temptation and difficulty were conquered through "persistent, intense, submissive prayer" (Green 1986, 39). For Jesus, though, prayer was not only a place of intimate communion, but it was also a weapon with which to defeat the enemy. Through Gethsemane and His prayers from the cross, we see that "Jesus goes to that darkest place near death with only one weapon: prayer," (Tostengard 1980, 286).

Jesus not only taught His disciples about this new level of prayer, deeper than the Jewish understanding and practice of prayer, but demonstrated it for them in a contagious way. Taking this understanding of prayer into the early church, the Scriptural literature survey confirmed that through prayer, the early church made decisions, displayed a vulnerable dependence on God, stood firm, and had the privilege of being a part of mission initiatives. All of this reinforces that prayer is a central means through which

God unveils His ideas, plans and strategies, and invites His people to participate in His work in the world (Green 2001).

Significant themes which emerged from the Scriptural findings (Chapters 1 and 2) can be distilled, then, into the following ways. Firstly, intimacy leading to empowerment, where through a relationship of total dependence on the Father, revelation, empowerment and strength were given. Secondly, prayer as a weapon to combat the enemy, where prayer, as Jesus' strategy of choice for Himself (Gethsemane) and His disciples (Lord's Prayer), was a key to intervene when the enemy was seeking to lead God's people astray or ruin Kingdom work. Thirdly, clear perspective or clarity for decision making, entitled guided action, where the given action emerges from a listening posture and guidance in prayer. And lastly, the role of communal prayer (in Acts), where God's people are lead as a community in discerning the right choice or decision, and unity for mission witness.

As I explored the role of prayer in Pioneers-Africa in Chapters 3 and 4, my findings were validated through consistent patterns arising and being confirmed within the set of twenty-one Narrative Interviews and Grounded Theory analysis. The N-I data findings were better enabled by the facilitative role of Participant Observation, which built trust and lowered reactivity (Bernard 2011), while additionally ratifying the N-I findings through methodological corroboration.

This research has shown that prayer is central to the community of Pioneers-Africa, which itself was birthed out of prayer, where their collective passion for God is nurtured through various spiritual disciplines and where their lives and ministries are shaped by their time with God. As G-9 testified, "it was then that I knew that there was a place of prayer in my life... I realized that was one... way that Lord builds His relationship with His children. When I found that out, I spent more time doing it." Through the teaching and modelling they have received, members from Pioneers-Africa have quickly applied Biblical teaching and stepped into the practice of prayer.

Such discipline is expressed through fasting, the intentional desire to grow and stretch themselves in prayer, praying for extended hours, communal prayer, specific hours of prayer (in the early hours of the morning, or, during specific night hours to combat fetish practices), prayer that is intensified through the involvement of the Holy Spirit, and prayer retreats, which often combined these practices. Pioneers-Africa pray with a sense of expectancy, anticipating that God will respond to their prayers. This points to their deep dependency on God and awareness of their own lack. “Maybe we are so passionate and serious about it because we lack. But we can teach the world lack,” as G-16 reminds us. Additionally, the data also supported a rich quality of prayer, distinct fruit and breakthroughs achieved through prayer, which, for many, led to a longevity in ministry as their lives were, in fact, shaped by their “time with God” (G-7). The data also demonstrated that Pioneers-Africa has a discerning awareness of the spirit world and a desire to engage with forces of darkness, echoing the understanding of prayer as a weapon, as seen in the life of Jesus.

To further establish the end goal, in Chapter 5, I brought the Scriptural and Pioneers-Africa voices together, finding points of intersect and divergence. From this material and to achieve my end goal of developing Biblically-based foundational principles of prayer, I identified five principles of prayer in Chapter 7, as a starting place for PoA Apps:

1. Developing intimate communion with God
2. Extended time with the Father
3. Seeking communal discernment
4. Moving into guided action
5. Engaging forces of darkness

I then took each of these five principles and creatively expanded them into a booklet entitled *Shaped by Prayer*. This pragmatic outcome of my research comprises the whole of Appendix E. Chapters 6 and 7 further highlights the context of PoA Apps, providing the scaffolding of mission formation so as to reframe pro-active change. This basis for engagement in prayer includes both motivating and inhibiting factors.

Tying together these various sections of the research, therefore, further supports the outcome of the research as prayer displayed in the life of Jesus and the early church is consistently echoed in the prayer life of Pioneers-Africa, although reflecting “a distinctively African experience of Jesus Christ” (Bediako 2004, 4). This material has provided reliable, meaningful and proven pathways of prayer through which PoA Apps can cultivate a deeper understanding, longing and practice of prayer as a core element of formation for global mission. This was achieved, and yet it is just the beginning.

Unfinished Work

In many ways, this research is just scratching the surface of the topic of prayer in mission. There are many and varied avenues that need to be explored through further, on-going research. The following are recommendations for future research projects.

It would be helpful for further research to be conducted on detailed and various pathways of prayer for mission formation. Exploring questions around practices that meet diverse and assorted cultures, personalities, ministry experience, theologies and so on, could better nurture prayer within the lives of global mission workers. Additionally, this could include a means of measuring the effectiveness of practical tools for prayer.

As William Burrows comments, there is a mutuality between recruitment and formation (Burrows 2007). For PoA, this sits within a missions setting. Research on the relationship between mobilisation (recruitment) and formation, and the consequent outcomes, would well serve the missions world. This contrasts the more event orientated

preparation or training. Formation speaks of a process. Seeing this process set within a recruitment relationship would be a fascinating study.

A deeper examination of one of the findings which arose from the research on the role of prayer within *Pioneers-Africa*—the relationship between prayer and resilience—would also add value to the mission world. Some studies have been conducted on spiritual health and resilience, which have spilled over into the area of prayer. But few, if any, studies have focused solely on the relationship between prayer and resilience. This is different from longevity, as resilience includes not just an ability to last, but the capacity to last with joy and effectiveness, bouncing back from challenging situations, while (for the mission worker) retaining faith in the God who sent them.

A further area of needed research regards the role of culture in shaping our understanding of prayer. This dissertation has only touched on that topic, and from an indirect angle. Questions such as, “What does a group think about God’s intention for prayer in light of their cultural experience and/or expectations?” or “How do they process Scriptures regarding prayer within their context?” Both are interesting and would be important topics.

It would be helpful for research on the blockages to a more balanced awareness of the spirit world within countries such as Australia to be conducted and/or updated. With the work of those such as Charles Kraft, Paul Hiebert, R. Daniel Shaw and Charles Van Engen in the background, a contemporary study of Biblical theology in context, barriers to prayer practices and so on, would be enlightening to many who assume their way is the best or only way of seeing the world, understanding God’s Word, and practicing prayer.

Significance for PoA and Beyond

There are two main implications of this research dissertation. Firstly, for PoA Apps, there are implications for individual and communal behaviour, potentially

expressed in the prayer pathways found in *Shaped by Prayer* in Appendix E. Most believers would cognitively agree that prayer is a central pathway to deeper, more intentional mission formation. However, they may not be prepared for the discipline and cost involved, which in turn nurtures a passion for God. This quick obedience and willingness to be shaped is modelled well by Pioneers-Africa. Ideally, transformation among the nations can be traced back to personal and communal formation that finds its source in prayerful relationship with the God of all things.

A second effect relates to the Pioneers global family. Although it is essential to start with Scripture, it is also necessary for the international family of Pioneers to more consistently listen to the voices of our less heard global brothers and sisters. This allows us to “become more informed and conversant with the growing theology from the Majority World church... and help us to recognize some of our own, less obvious... blind spots” (Tennent 2007, 17, 18). This is one attempt to do so, hearing how Pioneers-Africa thinks about and practices prayer within the context of culture, the workplace of theology (Walls 1996).

Holy Imaginings

Richard Foster writes,

In our day heaven and earth are on tiptoe waiting for the emerging of the Spirit-led, Spirit-intoxicated, Spirit-empowered people. All of creation watches expectantly for the springing up of a disciplined, freely gathered, martyr people who know in this life the life and power of the Kingdom of God. It happened before, it can happen again. (Foster 1988, 175)

Within Pioneers, our foremost core value is a Passion for God. The longing of my heart is that, as an organisation, we would protect and nurture this Passion for God above all else, seeing God glorified among the nations; that we would be a people of the Word

and prayer, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, as Acts 6 encourages; and that through our prayerful, listening lives, we would have Kingdom impact.

My hope and prayer is that PoA would be sending out a “disciplined, freely gathered” people, as Foster remarks, willing to give it all for Christ, led and empowered by God, the Spirit, for the sake of Jesus’ holy fame among the nations.

Central to this is a vibrant prayer life, where our Apps not only value prayer, but sew it into the very fabric of their lives, where passion and discipline meet to nurture a posture of prayer, and where God’s voice is the most important voice in the room. It is out of this atmosphere that a people of faith and courage will emerge, entering cross-cultural life and service with deep dependence and awareness of their lack.

May PoA Apps and members have this impact on others, being formed agents of transformation who model a dependence on God, where prayer is their default position and from which all else flows. Pioneers long to see unreached people groups become reached, the lost to become found, and those trapped in darkness to encounter the Light of the World. There is no guarantee with such a goal. Many past saints with prayer-soaked lives did not see obvious, measurable Kingdom fruit in their lifetime. And yet, as God’s people and through Biblical precedence, we stand in faith that, through prayer, we can impact salvation history. For, it seems to be true that time and “again the kingdom comes, and in some mysterious fashion our praying helps to bring it about” (Koenig 1992, 53). If more PoA Apps are sent with this understanding and posture, then there is greater hope of Kingdom impact within their own lives and ministry occurring.

So, how can prayer shape our lives and ministries? When our lives are, in fact, shaped by our “time with God”, as G-7 reminds us. When we admit the centrality and cost of prayer, prioritizing it as we continually orientate our lives towards God the Father, Christ the Saviour, and the Spirit of transformation. For “if I want prayer to shape our

family [and here you can add your choice of words – marriage, team life, ministry...], I need to steal that time away.”

Both examples are powerful reminders of the mutuality between passion and discipline, where, through prayer, God continues His work of forming us into His likeness for the sake of the nations who are yet to hear the good news of Jesus Christ. Prayer is a critical pathway to mission formation, not as an end in itself, but for the sake of God’s glory and Jesus’ holy fame. As G-5 reminds us, “when we are cooking in our homes... we use firewood, and the longer you stay in the kitchen... you come back and you smell of smoke.” May PoA Apps and members alike, linger in the kitchen of God’s presence, so that when we emerge, we smell of the smoke of God’s character and nature, His message and actions—a smoky fragrance rising to Him and captivating to others.

Appendix A

Interview Guide

Date:	Place:
Respondent:	Replacement Code: G
Gender:	Marriage Status:
Country of Origin:	Country of Service:
Ministry Focus:	Years of Service:

After a few minutes of introduction and gaining of background information...

1. Briefly tell me your Christian/spiritual¹ life story. What has shaped your spiritual journey?
2. When you think about your prayer life, what would you say are the most influential parts of what has shaped your prayer life as it is today?
3. How do you practice prayer in your daily/weekly life? What does your prayer life look like – personally, within your family, as a team? Does this differ from day to day? Do you have certain patterns that you follow?
4. When you pray, what do you pray about?
5. What has shaped your understanding of prayer?
6. Have you ever listened to/read teaching on prayer? When was that? Who was it by/from? (Tell me about that.)
7. When you think about your life and ministry, what difference has prayer made?
8. Have you seen any fruit and/or breakthroughs because of prayer?
9. When you struggle in prayer, what do you struggle with?
10. What place does prayer have within Pioneers-Africa? Is it encouraged? How?
11. How would you like your prayer life to change or grow?
12. Is there anything else that you would like to talk about regarding prayer?
13. As we finish, could I ask you to close us in prayer?

¹ Grey text was not asked, but was there as a prompt, in case it was needed.

Appendix B

List of Interviews

A total of twenty-one people were interviewed, with all interviews then being transcribed.

#	Date	Length	Country of Origin	Country of Service
1	Mar-10	1:35:32	Ghana	Ghana, World
2	Apr-23	50:48	Sierra Leone	Nigeria
3	Apr-24	21:01	Nigeria	Burkina Faso
	“	29:56	same person as above, 2 recordings	same person as above
4	Apr-25	53:19	Kenya	Kenya
5	“	51:23	Togo	Togo
6	“	1:02:41	Ghana	Ghana
7	Apr-26	1:18:44	Niger Republic	Niger Republic
8	Apr-30	1:12:16	Ghana	Ghana
9	“	1:25:29	Ghana	Ghana
10	May-02	1:27:48	Sierra Leone	Ghana
11	May-03	44:11	Togo	Mauritania
12	May-04	1:31:24	Ghana	Ghana
13	May-05	1:23:45	Ghana	Ghana, World
14	“	1:44:03	Nigeria	Togo
15	May-06	1:39:21	Ghana	Mauritania, AL
16	“	1:10:22	Togo	Gabon, Togo
17	May-08	48:53	Ghana	Guinea, Ghana
18	May-12	33:00	Ghana	Mali, Ghana
	“	1:10:54	same person as above, 2 recordings	same person as above
19	“	57:44	Ghana	Ghana
20	“	1:03:43	Ghana	Ghana
21	May-14	2:24:41	Ghana	Ghana

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

On the following page, I have included an informed consent form used by most of the interview respondents. A French translation of this same form, and a slight variation, signed by Pioneers-Africa leadership, is available on request.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM – Those Interviewed

As Uncle Chris introduced me, my name is Kate Pocklington. I serve as part of the team at the Pioneers of Australia Mobilization Base. I have also worked with Uncle JFK as part of the Soli Deo working group for many years. I am doing research on the role of prayer as part of further study at Fuller Seminary.

I'm inviting you to be a part of this research, as I believe that Pioneers-Africa has something unique to teach the international fellowship of Pioneers regarding the role of prayer. The purpose of this interview is to collect information through stories and answers to questions from members of the Pioneers-Africa Mobilization Base, such as yourself. My hope is that through this the cross-cultural workers sent through Pioneers of Australia will grow in their understanding and commitment to the practice of prayer as a core aspect of their life and ministry, leading to greater Kingdom impact.

If you are willing, I would like to:

- Interview you for about 60-minutes
- Ask about your spiritual life story and the role of prayer in your life and ministry
- Record the interview and take notes (so that I'll remember everything!)

Please know that:

- I'm not expecting any special answers, so just answer naturally
- You can stop at any time
- You can skip any questions
- I'll keep your answers private and your identity safe

Uncle Chris and Brother Eugene are aware of this. I'm working with them:

- To ensure your privacy and protection
- To make sure that your ministry is not harmed at all through this
- That you as part of Pioneers-Africa will benefit when the final research comes out (I look forward to that!)

A follow-up survey may be needed. If you would be willing to take part in this, please tick below.

If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to talk to Uncle Chris, email me at krpock@swissmail.org or email my research supervisor, Dr Dan Shaw, at danshaw@fuller.edu. If you agree to take part in this research, please provide fill in the following:

I have read and/or talked through this form and willingly consent to be part of this research project.

Name (please print): _____

Follow-up Survey: You may contact me for follow-up information or clarification. Yes No

If yes, email: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix D

Coding Tree for Pioneers-Africa Data

Macro Level Theme Title	Mid-Level Theme Title	Micro Level Theme Title	Respondents
Influence	Pioneers-Africa		G0, G1, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6, G7, G8, G9, G10, G11, G12, G13, G14, G15, G16, G17, G18, G19, G20
	Teaching	Biblical	G0, G1, G2, G5, G7, G9, G10, G13, G14, G15, G16, G17, G18, G19, G20
		Extra-Biblical	G1, G2, G3, G5, G6, G7, G8, G9, G10, G11, G12, G14, G15, G16, G17, G18, G20
	Modelling		G0, G1, G2, G3, G5, G6, G7, G8, G9, G11, G12, G13, G14, G16, G17, G18, G20
	Cultural		
		Traditional Religions	G1, G4, G7, G11, G18, G19, G20
		Islam	G1, G6, G8, G10
		Roman Catholicism	G0, G1, G4, G9, G10, G18, G19, G20
		Syncretism	G1, G10, G12, G13, G19, G20
		Additional Cultural Forms	G1, G2, G3, G7, G11, G12, G13, G18
	Events		G0, G1, G3, G4, G5, G6, G8, G9, G11, G14, G15, G19, G20
	High School and College Years		G0, G1, G7, G8, G12, G13, G14, G16, G17, G18, G19, G20
	Church		G1, G2, G3, G4, G7, G8, G19, G20
Practice	Fasting		G0, G1, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6, G7, G8, G9, G10, G11, G12, G13, G14, G15, G16, G17, G18, G19, G20
	Continued Growth		G0, G1, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6, G7, G8, G9, G11, G12, G13, G14, G15, G16, G17, G18, G19, G20
	Length		G0, G1, G2, G3, G4, G5, G7, G8, G9, G11, G12, G13, G14, G15, G16, G18, G19, G20
	Communal Prayer		G0, G1, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6, G7, G8, G9, G10, G11, G12, G13, G14, G15, G16, G19
	Hours		G8, G16, G18
		Night Hours	G1, G2, G4, G5, G7, G8, G9, G11, G12, G13, G14, G16, G18, G19, G20
		Morning Hours	G0, G1, G2, G4, G8, G9, G10, G11, G12, G13, G14, G15, G17, G18, G19, G20

	Prayer in the Spirit		G3, G4, G5, G6, G7, G8, G9, G11, G13, G14, G15, G17, G18, G19, G20
	Retreat		G3, G7, G8, G9, G13, G19
Content	Closing Prayer in Interview		G0, G1, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6, G7, G8, G9, G10, G11, G12, G13, G14, G15, G16, G17, G18, G19, G20
	Struggle		G0, G1, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6, G8, G9, G10, G11, G12, G13, G14, G15, G16, G17, G18, G19, G20
	Intercession		G0, G1, G2, G3, G5, G6, G7, G8, G9, G10, G13, G14, G16, G17, G18, G19, G20
	Dreams/ Revelations		G2, G3, G5, G6, G7, G8, G9, G11, G12, G14, G16, G18, G19, G20
	Spiritual Warfare		G0, G1, G2, G5, G6, G7, G13, G14, G15, G16, G18, G19, G20
Impact	Fruit/ Breakthrough		G0, G1, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6, G7, G8, G9, G10, G11, G12, G13, G14, G15, G16, G17, G18, G19, G20
	Intimacy/ Communion		G0, G1, G2, G4, G5, G6, G7, G8, G9, G10, G11, G12, G13, G14, G15, G16, G17, G18, G19, G20
	Decisions and Leading		G0, G3, G4, G5, G8, G11, G12, G13, G14, G16, G17, G18, G19, G20
	Longevity		G2, G4, G5, G7, G8, G9, G10, G11, G14, G17, G18, G19, G20

Appendix E

Shaped by Prayer

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A Word Before...

Over the past few years I have had the privilege of conducting a deep study on prayer, examining how prayer can shape our lives and ministries. As a people who highly value Scripture, it was important to begin with the Word. However, due to the constraints of time and focus, I choose to limit this study to prayer found in the life of Jesus and the early church in Acts.

Additionally, over the years, the Lord has used members of the PI-Africa community to teach me (and others) much about prayer. I wanted to explore the deep reservoir of knowledge, experience and wisdom regarding the role of prayer within PI-Africa. The results were both challenging and encouraging.

In the pages to come, I am presenting an offering – an offering from Scripture and from the stories and experience of PI-Africa; an offering to enable each one of us to proactively mature our individual and collective prayer lives; and an offering that will help us consider how each one of us would like to answer the question, “How would I like to grow in prayer in this next season of life and ministry?”

This booklet is just a beginning. I have chosen five areas that arose from this research on prayer, and each small chapter follows a like pattern including content, reflection and tips for integrative praxis. My prayer for you as you use this tool is that it will drive you deeper into the heart of God, facilitate right or reorientation, and ensure you are heading in God’s direction as you serve among the nations for the sake of Jesus’ holy fame and the glory of the Father.

Holy Enjoyment: Developing Intimate Communion with God

Throughout the gospels, we see that Jesus expanded an understanding of prayer through His relationship with the Father. The depth of communion which He modelled sets the tone for the intimate relationship into which all disciples are invited. The objective of this chapter is to develop the two-sided coin of a Passion for God and discipline, with the latter seeking to strengthen mature disciples for the sake of global mission.

Voices from Scripture

Prayer as communion - It is important to ponder the relationship of prayer as expressed through the communion of the Father and Son. In John's gospel, the unique Father- Son relationship is emphasized (John 1:18; 12:49 and 14:16), referring to God as Father over 100 times, while using it as a name 75 times (Lohmeyer 1965). This speaks of a deep mutual indwelling.

Jesus' prayers in the fourth Gospel are thus revelatory rather than intercessory, expressing the abiding of Father and Son, the love and unity that binds them (Lee 2004a, 296).

Remaining - The Greek term for remain or abide can be creatively expressed as staying put, putting down roots (allusions to John 15 and the vine) or unpacking and setting up home (allusions to John 14:23). John 15:4-5 reveals that intimacy which emanates from remaining is at the heart of this union (Carson 1980b), with the implication of being heard in prayer that comes with abiding (Cullman 1994). Jesus' hearers were both commanded and invited to remain in Him, manifesting the model they had witnessed of Jesus abiding in the Father, and being directed by Him. "The picture of the Father as vinedresser speaks of him as the director of the Son's mission and implies harmony between the Father and Son in executing this mission" (Peterson 2013, 23). With this condition of abiding comes a promise (John 15:7, 16), the product of which is fruit that brings glory to God. This abiding relationship – staying put and not moving away from Him – relationship, points to love, trust and intimacy with the God of all things. It also allows disciples to "speak directly to this God as Father and make claims on him in prayer" (Lincoln 2001, 175). Because of this underlying trust and union, such requests are likely to be granted (Turner 1990).

Without abiding, there is no fruit, and a branch is just a piece of wood (Marsh 1985).

Questions for Reflection

Spend time prayerfully considering the following questions. It may be helpful to journey your responses.

- Be real - how are you presently doing with the Lord? Is it ideal?
- Would you use words like communion, intimacy or remaining to describe your current relationship with Him?
- Is prayer an intimate, loving communion with God, as we see in Jesus?
- If not, what is pulling you away from Him, or acting as a barrier?
 - *If something just flitted across your mind, follow that up.*
 - *Are you too busy working for God to spend enough time with Him?*

- *Have you developed an unhealthy habit that feeds your needs?*
- *Are you turning to other things and people instead of God?*
- Spend time being genuinely honest with yourself and the Lord.

Voices from Pioneers-Africa

Instant access – With prayer nurturing a sense of intimacy and communion with God in his life, one brother from Pioneers-Africa marvelled in conversation at the instant access we have to our Father. “If you are going to see a chief in Africa, you don’t just walk in. You have to give prior notice. If it’s a paramount chief, you yourself must be a big man/woman to see the paramount. You need an appointment. There are some requirements to bring some drinks and so on... before you...enter into the courts and sit for the chief. And even then, you don’t have direct access to the chief. But I don’t need prior notice. Instant access to my Father...Isn’t that something?” he finished.

Another brother described his lifestyle of prayer and how “I ask God questions and I debate with Him and chat with Him... it is not just rattling off. A lot of times it is listening.” A further member explained how prayer had become a part of his life. “I would even be talking with people and I would be praying inside... so it moved... to a very personal impromptu level,” with the Lord “dealing with me at a different level, more intimate...more sensitive way.”

Need for fellowship - One worker testified that “I realized that [prayer] was one...way that Lord builds His relationship with His children. When I found that out, I spent more time doing it.”

Another leader admitted how prayer nurtured this sense of intimacy and communion. “The relational aspect between myself and God developed as the prayer time increased...I discovered that prayer was two-way, not just me coming with a shopping list...and going away. But I saw that if I spent time with Him, He spoke, and I must confess that that invariably happened if I prayed long.”

...it is possible to be... involved in ministry and miss what God wants you to do.

One man lit up when talking about how he fell in love with the presence of God. “Then He’s telling you what to do and you can get that information only when you sit with Him. ...You draw near to God and He draws near...He grabs you in a bear-hug!” he continued.

Shaped by prayer - One long-serving worker spoke of a deep, personal tragedy. “People thought...this guy will fold up... but God has asked me to be here.” He added, “I have known brothers in the ministry and they just throw in the towel. They just give up...because... their lives were not shaped by their time with God.”

...their lives were not shaped by their time with God.

Another group indicated a profound dependence on God, epitomized by one who “faced many challenging times and that’s when I needed to draw closer to God...I became stronger in prayer because I felt I had no place to go except to God.”

Finishing this thought, a further one added, “I wouldn’t be here by now if I had not been somebody who was dedicated to prayer, because, through prayer... God has taught me to surrender to Him.”

Questions for Reflection

Spend time prayerfully considering the following questions. Journal, if that is helpful.

- When you read the words, “You draw near to God and He draws near...He grabs you in a bear-hug,” what is your response? Do you relate at all? If not, can you sort out the reason behind this lack of connection?
- Are you involved in ministry but missing what God would have you do?
 - *Think about the last two major ministry-related decisions you have made.*
 - *Whose voice was the most influential voice in that decision-making process?*
 - *How much time did you spend in prayer before making that decision?*
 - *Did prayer shape the decision outcome? If so, how?*
 - *Do you sense that there is something that you are missing that God would have you do?*
 - *If so, make it a priority to intentionally explore this with the Lord.*

Tips for Integration 1

Think through what you really enjoy doing with the Lord.

- Maybe it’s walking in nature, enjoying back-lit clouds and the changing colours of the leaves.
 - *Think of a place and set a time now to walk in nature.*
- Or lingering over the Word, prayerfully chewing on it together with your Father.
 - *If you are comfortable with its form, practice reading the Word using the non-analytical Lectio Divina method.*
 - *Read a Psalm. Meditate on – prayerfully chew over - this Scripture. What elements do you recognise? Praise? Lament? As a response, write your own psalm to God that reflects your own life and context.*
 - *Keep it in your Bible as a reminder.*
- Or engaging in worship through song or service or creative prayer.
 - *Consider Michael Leunig’s book, A Common Prayer: A Cartoonist Talks to God. I particularly appreciate his prayer:*

“God bless the lost, the confused, the unsure, the bewildered, the puzzled, the mystified, the baffled, and the perplexed. Amen” (Leunig 1990, 11th prayer of the book. No page numbers).

- *Who do you know who fits this description? Pray for them.*
- If you would like to explore this more, Gary Thomas outlines nine natural tendencies towards engaging in prayer and worship in his book, *Sacred Pathways*.

Set aside 2-3 hours in your calendar in the next two weeks.

Whichever form it takes, choose a form of ‘holy enjoyment’.

Relish this stretch of time away from your normal. Be completely present with the Father.

With a sense of expectancy, ask Him what He would like to reveal to you.

Determine further how you can sew ‘holy enjoyment’ into your ongoing life routine.

The following contains an idea for how to spend part or all of the 2-3 hours. Alternatively, you can use it as a time of personal or communal prayer.

Tips for Integration 2

Prayer Stations

Set up various prayer stations. If you are doing this as a communal time of prayer, you will need to set up seven physical areas or stations of prayer. Set a time to spend at each station (5-10 minutes). Have these verses and instructions printed out for easy viewing at the appropriate station. Decorate with photos, Scripture and sacred symbols to add value to this time. Once the exercise has commenced, ring a gentle bell once the allocated time at a given station is over, and have those at each station move on to the next station.

If you are doing this individually, you can choose to physically progress from station to station, or to simply move from theme to theme while remaining still.

Station 1

Ps. 46:10 - *Be still and know that I am God.*

Begin this prayer time by relaxing. Take a deep breath. Focus on Jesus, on God our Father, on the Holy Spirit. Be still...not just physically, but inwardly.

Station 2

Ps. 8:1 - *Oh Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

Allow yourself to be caught up in thanksgiving. Give praise and adoration to God. In addition to naming your blessings, move your heart simply toward an attitude and mind-set of gratitude.

Station 3

I John 1:9 – *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

Come before God and invite Him into the private chamber of your heart and mind. Let Him see your inner ugliness. (He sees it anyway!) Confess who you really are to Him, and allow Him to cleanse you in those hard to reach places. Accept His grace and forgiveness.

Station 4

Philippians 1:3 - *I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you.*

Intercede for those God has entrusted to you – your family and friends, for those you work with, love deeply or long to see come into the Kingdom of God. Into God's hands, I commit (say these people by name).

Station 5

Ephesians 3:17-19 - *And I pray that you...may have power...to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

God knows your burdens, your frustrations, your secrets. He knows your hurt or confusion. Nail those burdens to the cross. Release them to God. You might want to write it down and tear it up or burn it to demonstrate this release to God.

Station 6

Matthew 28:19 - *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...*

Spread a map out & begin to pray over the world. Pray that they will hear the name of Jesus and come to know Him. If you are currently serving in a nation or among a people group, or will be in the future, spend time praying for discipleship among that group.

Station 7

Find your own Scripture – *Use Psalm 139 as a suggestion.*

Whatever you are drawn to, find a passage to pray. Speak your prayer to God. Sit quietly and rest in God's presence. Spend some quiet time with Him. Bring your prayer time to a close by inviting Him to lead you into the rest of the day.

Developing Praxis

What action step can you take to regularly demonstrate a commitment to *holy enjoyment* with God?

- Action Step 1 –

- Action Step 2 –

Holy Spending of Time: Extended Time with the Father

The aim of this chapter is to grow in the time we spend with the God of all things. It is not simply about lengthening the quantity of prayer but deepening the quality of prayer. Your motivation may be to nurture intimacy with the Father, to listen well to Him, leaning into Him. It may be to reorientate yourself with the things of God, correcting any faulty alignment. Or it may simply be to gather Spirit-given ideas.

Voices from Scripture

Jesus withdraws - Woven throughout the gospels is Jesus' habit to withdraw to spend extended time with the Father. In Mark 1:35 He slips out in the early hours of the morning, while Luke 6:12 tells us how He spent the entire night in prayer. Luke 5:16 points out that withdrawal to pray was Jesus' usual practice. Other passages point to Jesus' familiarity with the Mount of Olives, a place He turned to during His dark hours before the cross.

Renewed strength & clarity - It is interesting to note that before Mark 1:35, the crowds were pressing in on Jesus. He both healed many physically and from demon possession. Though He was God, He was also a human, and it is simple to imagine His weariness. After Jesus withdrew and was found by the disciples, He gave instructions that they move on to another village. "The impression we get here is that Jesus had found both renewed strength and clarity of vocation"

amid competing claims upon His person and time, and that through prayer Jesus concluded that it was time to move on (Koenig 1992, 15).

Preparation for future challenge - Likewise, prior to Luke 5:16, Jesus was healing the sick. There was a different priority behind His need to withdraw this time. Here, His fame had spread and the crowds were seeking Him out. His coming away points to His need to be restored, reconsidering His priorities; removed from the demands of the crowd and the distraction and temptations of celebrity (Morris 1983) towards the will of the Father. This time also prepared Him for the coming clash with the religious leaders (Thomson 1959).

All of this points to a depth of quality in prayer that comes from spending extended time with the Father. Mutual conversation takes place and answers for moving ahead are given. So, if you are at all wondering if this is an effective use of your time, know that there is Biblical precedence and that you are in good company!

Questions for Reflection

Spend time prayerfully considering (and journaling) the following questions:

- Examine your own life rhythms and habits. How will you spend regular extended time with the Father? What will it look like?
- Think about the ministry responsibilities that are currently weighing you down.
 - *Take out your calendar and have a look at the last two months.*
 - *What was the most demanding situation you had to deal with?*
 - *Did you find yourself desperate for “renewed strength and clarity of vocation”?*
 - *How did this interval with the Father help you recalibrate?*
- Think about the future challenges coming your way (those that you know about).
 - *Are there priorities you need to reconsider?*
 - *What spread of time do you need to devote to God to prepare for what’s coming?*

Voices from Pioneers-Africa

An inviting and challenging model - Many within the Pioneers-Africa community also value this idea of withdrawing to pray or spending extended time in prayer. Though the Biblical references are few, they are consistent, and the Pioneers-Africa community takes this seriously. They set an inviting and challenging example for those of us desiring to grow in this area.

In...African culture, when we are cooking in our homes...we use firewood, and the longer you stay in the kitchen... you come back and you smell of smoke.

At least one hour - Several brothers and sisters spoke of praying for “no less than one hour” prayer a day. One brother represents the community well in saying, “one of the reasons why I usually would go an hour, is because Jesus also told them in

the Garden of Gethsemane that you could not even wait for me an hour. So, it means that to Jesus even one hour is not even the minimum.” Another uncle gave an example. “I see in Jesus someone who is not just hit and run in prayer. There is nothing wrong with short prayers. It’s just that, if the Master Himself took such time, what on earth was He telling God in a 40 day fast? It was so long...you want to imitate Him and... it will involve staying long.”

Need for extended prayer - Another element involved in extended prayer was the content of prayer and the communion that takes place. One brother's motivation is "to stay closer. I want to stay in His presence...If the communion is sweet, it's not just going to be for five minutes."

Yet another member gives several reasons for the length of time, including time needed to focus his wandering mind, the number of things he wants to tell God, but he also finds "that the longer I stay in the presence of God, the more clearly I sense what He is saying to me. If I pray five, ten, fifteen minutes, I'm really not sure what God is telling me. But if I stay longer...what I'm receiving becomes more stable."

A further leader shared with humour, "Like I understand it, prayer is a fine-tuning of our will towards God's will and you know how stubborn some of us are... I guess that's my reason why I would tarry...because it takes a long time before I would get going in step with the will of God."

Questions for Reflection

Spend time prayerfully considering the following questions. Write your responses, if this helps.

- Think about your prayer life. How much time would you spend in prayer each day?
 - *Remember when you were dating someone or courting your spouse?*
 - *What kind of time did you spend together?*
 - *Was this time – extended, lingering time - a priority?*
 - *How does your time with the Father currently echo this priority?*
- Think about the quality of your prayer life.
 - *When you begin to pray, do you need time to "focus your wandering mind"?*
 - *Do you keep a notepad close to write things down and leave for later?*
 - *Do you keep your phone out of reach so that texts or notifications don't distract?*
 - *Does it take you a while before you begin hearing from the Lord?*
 - *What are some practical ways you can better enable this two-way conversation?*
- Is there something you sense the Lord is trying to communicate with you but you haven't spent enough time truly *leaning into* Him, to hear what He is saying?
 - *If you are not hearing from the Lord, do you give up?*
 - *Or do you stay there long enough to hear?*
- Is there an area of your life where you need to fine-tune your will to God's will, allowing Him to gently *bend* you to His will?
 - *Read the following story.*¹

This is the transcript of the ACTUAL radio conversation of a British Naval Ship and the Irish, off the coast of Kerry, Oct 95. Radio conversation released by the Chief of Naval Operations 10-03-02:

Irish: Please divert your course 15 degrees to the South, to avoid a collision.

British: Recommend you divert your course 15 degrees to the North, to avoid a collision.

Irish: Negative. You will have to divert your course 15 degrees to the South to avoid a collision.

¹ This seems to be an urban or naval legend, as dates and countries involved differ (Britain and Ireland in one account, the USA and Canada in another). See the [Wikipedia page](#) outlining the legend (Unknown collection of contributors Last edited 2 August, 2017), or the [Irish version](#) quoted above (Unknown 2017).

British: This is the captain of a British navy ship. I say again, divert your course.

Irish: Negative. I say again, You will have to divert your course.

British: This is the aircraft carrier HMS Invincible. The second largest ship in the British atlantic fleet. We are accompanied by three destroyers, two missile cruisers, and numerous support vessels. I demand that you change your course, 15 degrees north, I say again, that is 15 degrees north, or counter-measures will be undertaken to ensure that safety of this ship.

Irish: We are a lighthouse. Your call.

- *Although this is a comic example, is there an area of your life where you are being stubborn with the Lord?*
- *How are you allowing Him to bend you to His will?*
- *How are you seeking to continually fine-tune your will to His?*

Tips for Integration

Setting a timer - If you struggle with spending extended time in prayer, you may want to learn with me from one of our African brothers. When he was in college, he sought to cultivate his habit of prayer. He says, in “the beginning it look like an unending time...each day... you set your alarm for 30 minutes and you are there praying...I move it up to 45 minutes... Before I know it, it’s already one hour... You [are] growing in this thing.”

Over the past couple of years, I have learnt from this brother. I wanted to pray for a longer time. Not just for the sake of long prayers. That could quickly become legalism. But for what could happen during that time. So, I set my alarm for 20 minutes, then 25 minutes, 30, then 40, 45, and finally an hour. Now the hour slips away far too quickly. But just as our muscles need to be stretched over time, so too it took me a while to become comfortable with regular, extended prayer. Set yourself a challenge, for example:

- Start by getting up 15-20 minutes earlier than usual so that you can spend more time in prayer (or choose the amount of sleep you are willing to sacrifice to stretch yourself in this area).
- Begin by praying the Lord’s Prayer. Don’t rush through it. Linger over each petition.
- *How do you hallow the Father’s name?* Spend time doing so.
- *What does His kingdom come, His will be done in heaven look like?* Use your holy imagination to bring Scripture passages to life. *On earth* What do you long to see happen with the reign of the King? Continue in this vein.
- If you enjoy colouring, sketch some of these prayers as an act of worship.
- Keep track of how these images change over weeks and months of prayer.

Developing Praxis

What action step can you take to regularly demonstrate a commitment to *a holy spending of time* with God?

- Action Step 1 –

- Action Step 2 –

Communal Prayer: Seeking Communal Discernment

The purpose of this chapter is to develop communal prayer. There are several benefits from such prayer, primarily communal discernment that can be gathered for moving ahead into mission matters, and communal courage as those steps are taken.

Voices from Scripture

Communal Prayer – Communal prayer began with the Trinity: The Son leaning into the Father in prayer, empowered by the Spirit. Jesus nurtured this idea of communal prayer through the plural tense utilized in the Lord’s Prayer, and later, His John 17 teaching on unity. Prayer was a core reason for the early church to gather (Acts 2:42; 12:5), furthering their sense of Christ community.

Gathering for prayer, then, became a key characteristic of the early church as they regularly met together, sharing life, coming before God in dependent expectation, and witnessing Him at work in answer to prayer. Together they grew in authentic maturity, correcting misguided or “counterfeit response[s] to the presence and activity of God’s Spirit” (Longenecker 1981, 360), as displayed by the situation involving Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:19). Together, they were acutely aware that answer to prayer came through the Spirit’s enabling.

Communal Discernment – As they came together, they, as a group, heard from God. The choosing of Matthias in Acts 1:24-26, the choosing of the seven in Acts 6:4, 6 and the sending of Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13:3 all bear witness to the communal nature of the decision-making and sending process. They did not do it independently, but as one they sought to hear from God and obey Him.

Communal Courage - Acts 4:24-31 is perhaps one of the most powerful prayers found in Scripture. Although there was much at stake for those praying, it is important to note that the prayer is not for safety or protection, but for boldness and further enabling, that the gospel would be known and God glorified. It is evident that the early church cared more about God’s Kingdom purposes coming to pass than their own well-being. Starting with praise and recognition of who God is, the prayer moves into a quick reminder of things past, then a passionate request for boldness and healing power. “God’s response is immediate, direct and unmistakable” (Plymale 1991, 86). The prayers were answered through the Holy Spirit coming, who enabled them to do exactly what they requested – speak boldly in a way that God’s “redemptive aim was not thwarted” (Green 2001, 192).

Such prayer plays an integral part in the advancement of God’s word and saving purpose (Peterson 1998, 394).

Questions for Reflection

Spend time prayerfully reflecting on the following questions. You may want to journal.

- Do you prefer to pray privately or with others?
- What do you find yourself doing the most?
- Think about your team or church situation.

- *How do you practice prayer as a team?*
- *How do you practice prayer within your church or with church friends?*
- *How about within the larger Christian community?*
- *Do you value this time, or is it an obligation?*
- Within your prayer time with others, have you ever practice communal discernment?
 - *If so, think about this time.*
 - *What were the practical steps taken to arrive a discernible answer?*
 - *Was this valuable, frustrating?*
 - *Did you submit to the process? If not, why not?*
- Think about an important, upcoming decision.
 - *How could you practice communal discernment?*
 - *Plan the steps that this would involve: Who would you ask? Where would it take place? What would the process and time-frame be?*

Voices from Pioneers-Africa

Community: A Cultural Value – Within Pioneers-Africa we can see that community itself is valued, and in relation to that, communal prayer is valued. Seeing the world through communal or collectivist eyes, the well-being of the group is more important than personal well-being. Being a member of a group is an essential aspect of someone’s identity. So, too, as a communal or collective culture, Pioneers-Africa instinctively values group prayer as they gather for half or all-night prayer, or take seriously the need to come together with others.

In conversation with several Pioneers-Africa members, one leader stated, “I take it seriously gathering with other people to pray.” Another affirmed modelling prayer by noting how others “were helped to learn to pray as we gathered together.” Two of them spoke of how deeply they valued their prayer partners, while still another added, “There are times when I am praying in a group, I feel like...this is the fellowship of the Brethren...

Praying in a group... is the fellowship of the Brethren.

There is so much power that is released upon us when we pray in a group.”

Questions for Reflection

Spend time prayerfully considering the following matters. Journal if you so choose.

- Remember a time when you were more courageous because of communal prayer.
 - *How did this make a difference?*
 - *Who was involved, and how did they influence you?*
 - *Has this experience changed how you pray or who you involve in prayer?*
- Is there something you sense the Lord is trying to communicate with you as a team or leadership group, or within a broader community of believers?
 - *If so, how can you intentionally explore this as a team or leadership group...?*
 - *Think practically – topic, time, venue, those invited...*
- Think about the last time you experienced the “fellowship of the Brethren” in prayer.
 - *What were the benefits of meeting together?*
 - *How did this strengthen you and your ministry?*
 - *How can you make it a regular part of your life and ministry?*

Tips for Integration

Practicing Communal Discernment – Identify something that lies heavy on your heart or mind. State it simply to be shared with others.

Ask them to pray over this matter without quick response.

Plan a time when you can gather, continue in prayer, and share what you have heard. Try not to react against something that may be outside of your way of thinking, but openly and respectfully chew over these matters together.

What kind of unity has been expressed? Is more prayer needed?

Be careful not to unhelpfully commentate on the matter at hand. Ensure that God's voice is the loudest in the room.

If you do not sense that an answer has been given, make another time to meet and spend more time in prayer. Otherwise, move into obedience.

Developing Praxis

Vision and corporate prayer are inextricably linked. God clarifies vision within and through corporate prayer. God motivates people to action through corporate prayer. Prayer is the body of Christ humbling itself before God, worshiping God, listening to the Holy Spirit, and submitting in obedience to the will and purpose of God. (Lingenfelter 2008, 41)

What action step can you take to regularly demonstrate a commitment to *communal discernment* with God's people?

- Action Step 1 –

- Action Step 2 –

For Jesus' Holy Fame: Moving into Guided Action

The aim of this chapter is to listen well to the things on the Father's heart, and to move into action out of that place of listening. This is so that mission initiative and Kingdom advances will be made for the sake of Jesus' holy fame among the nations.

Voices from Scripture

Jesus, a listening Son – In Luke 6:12, the choosing of the twelve is portrayed differently in the various gospels. It is only Luke who tells of Jesus retreating to pray, spending the whole night in preparatory prayer (Marshall 1978), and the next morning calling and designating the twelve. Luke implies that this decision of choosing the twelve, the ones on whom Jesus would build His church, was important enough to come before the Father for extended time.

Thus the choice of the Twelve is made only after seeking God's guidance (Marshall 1978, 238).

Early church initiatives - In the moments of mission initiative, we can see in the life of the early church a reflection of instances when Jesus spent time in intimate communion with the Father, out of which came clarity of action. Acts 9:11b indicates that it was while Paul was praying that Ananias received a word from the Lord. In Acts 10 and the story of Cornelius and Peter, these men were praying when the revelation came, ultimately seeing the gospel penetrate the Gentile world as never before. It would be reasonable to conclude that had Cornelius not been a man of prayer, he would not have had an initiatory role in the Gentile mission.

It reinforces the idea that prayer is one of the primary ways in which God reveals His plans, allowing people to hear and obey by participating in His kingdom work (Green 2001).

Finally, through Paul's recounting of his story in Acts 22, it is reiterated that he was at prayer (vs. 17) when he fell into a trance and received a word from the Lord. In these instances, God intervened through a vision, given while praying, communicating the radical role he had for each of these men.

Paul's example - Through prayer, Paul was strategically brought under God's reign, bringing the gospel message to lands never reached before. He was both told where to and where not to go through God's revelation. Through prayer, the Gentile world was unlocked. This included the involvement of a Gentile centurion and a greater acceptance from Peter, an important figure in this mission. Healings, open hearts, and receiving the Holy Spirit gave greater power and boldness for proclamation and miracle work. The church was given a mission task and empowered to complete it through interaction with God in prayer.

Here we have the example, invitation and challenge to spend time in prayer, listening to the Father, expecting to hear, and moving into guided action when we do hear. What an extraordinary privilege to join God at work in the world!

Questions for Reflection

Spend time prayerfully considering the following questions or practices:

- What do these Scriptures tell you about the role of listening in prayer?
- Do you habitually spend time listening in prayer?
 - *When was the last time you did this? What did the Lord say to you?*
 - *When was the last time you did this for your spouse, child, parent, sibling?*
 - *When was the last time you did this for a team-mate or co-worker?*
- Spend some time listening to God on behalf of another person.
 - *Identify who that person is. Name them and bring them before the Lord.*

- *You may want to say something like, “Father, I bring --- to you. Please entrust me with something to encourage and strengthen them. What would you like to say to me about them?”*
- *Now, (with all due respect), be quiet.*
- *Anticipate that the Lord will give you a word of encouragement, a Scripture, a picture or phrase for them.*
- *It is often the first thing that drops into your mind. Don’t over-think it. Just receive it.*
- *Write it down and pass it onto them. I often preface it with, “As I was praying for you, this came to mind. Bring it before the Lord and let Him confirm it.” Or something to that effect.*

Voices from Pioneers-Africa

Identifying the need – One of our Pioneers-African brothers voices the need that many of us have experienced. He observed, “When we Christians don’t pray, we always go there, making assumptions, thinking it’s the Lord. But if we spend time in the Lord, ask the Lord for things, the Lord will definitely reveal His mind to us.” Another leader spoke of the past, “when I was praying... I knew God was saying no.” But he did not listen to the Lord that time and the opportunity failed.

Personal Leading - Several Pioneers-Africa friends articulated God’s leadership in seeking a life-partner. “But as I prayed one morning, God said to me, don’t you see that I’m not involved in this. I’m not the one who is leading you.” Later, he saw God provide a wife in an unexpected way.

Mission Initiative – In the experience of many Pioneers-Africa members, breakthroughs have occurred through prayer related to unreached areas and peoples. Admittedly, sometimes the “fruit is so small,” as one man explained regarding the handful of men he disciplined while on the field. “But He is the Lord of the harvest, so I can’t complain.” At other times, a breakthrough led to a greater openness, where “there is something broken. We are no longer enemies.” While at other times it led to more obvious fruit.

One team “started with prayer and went to a village... that was very difficult to access with the gospel... [they were] deeply involved in idol worship.” Others had tried and failed.

Another breakthrough is that we have been able to take territories... through prayer... God has broken through...these villages.

But through prayer, they were led to this village, and a church exists today.

As one member witnessed, I “have to pray about it and continue praying about it... until I see a solution.”

Prayer, then, is one of the primary means for cooperation in God’s mission in the world (Lincoln 2001, 177).

Questions for Reflection

Spend time prayerfully reflecting on the following:

- How is the Lord “revealing His mind to you” at the moment?
 - *Who does it relate to?*
 - *Are you over-analysing this or quickly moving into obedience?*
- As God leads you, is there an area where He is saying ‘no’ to you, where He is not leading you?
 - *Think about an area of ministry that you are ambitious about.*
 - *Is it your ambition or God’s?*
 - *If it’s yours, are you willing to relinquish this? Truly?*
- Think about a missional breakthrough that you long for.
 - *What new initiatives should you or your team launch into?*
 - *Have you spent extended time in prayer and fasting, asking for this breakthrough?*
 - *What is one step of obedience that you can take?*

Tips for Integration 1

Listening walks – Sometimes we conjure up the idea of sitting still as we listen to God, ensconced in our favourite chair, cup of coffee at hand, the world quiet around us. A lovely idea for some. For others of us, the reality is often far from this!

Listening walks can help with this. One African brother shared that “I realized that God has given me a gift of intercession...I...walk and I hear, pray for this person.” Another leader finds that if he goes early to the office or onto the porch, he can listen well. At other times he practices walking prayer, sometimes walking for hours and miles on end. This has become a precious time for him.

Choose nearby place where you can go to walk, pray and listen.

Do you have a porch or roof? A nearby park?

Choose a regular time that best suits to walk, pray and listen.

You could get up 20 minutes earlier. Or take a lunch break and walk around a big block. Or intentionally walk to and from the office or the shops.

For a more creative option, google the nearest prayer labyrinth location and book a time to pray using this well-worn pray pathway.

Tips for Integration 2

Listening for those you lead – Have you ever carved out time for the sole purpose of listening to the Lord on behalf of those you lead, those you work with, those entrusted to you? Here is a simple listening prayer exercise to facilitate this process.

- Write the names of all your team-mates or colleagues (or appropriate circle of people) on separate pieces of small paper.
- Place them in a container – hat, jar, pot...
- Take out one name.
- Follow a variation of the above pattern for listening:

- *“Father, I bring --- to you. You know their situation, their --- (family, ministry, church, future...) situation. You know what they are wrestling with. Please entrust me with something to speak into their life.”*
- *Be quiet before God, listening to Him on their behalf.*
- *Anticipate that the Lord will give you a word of encouragement, a Scripture, a picture or phrase for them.*
- *Write it down and pass it onto them. Let them know that you are standing with them, that you spent time in prayer because they are important to you and you are a co-labourer in their ministry.*
- Intentionally take this person with you throughout the day, praying for them on and off through the rest of the day.
- That evening, ask the Lord if He wants to add anything to what He has already entrusted to you for them. If appropriate, pass that on. Or continue to pray into it.
- Go through all the names in the following days, weeks and months.
- When you are finished, start the process again.

Developing Praxis

What practice can you commit to regarding *guided action*?

- Action Step 1 –
- Action Step 2 –

Holy Advance: Engaging Forces of Darkness

The objective of this chapter is to be reminded of some Scriptural tools given to us as God’s children, as we engage with forces of darkness, with the aim of advancing the Kingdom of God for the glory of God.

Voices from Scripture

Prayer as a weapon – Prayer is much more than a weapon, but at times, we forget that it is also a weapon, based on intimate relationship with the Creator and Controller of all things. Through the paradigms seen in Gethsemane and taught through the Lord’s Prayer, the disciples were introduced to a key strategy to battle against the enemy. This was through Jesus’ own prayer, for “Peter and the disciples would survive the temptations precisely because Jesus had prayed for them” (Tostengard 1980, 285). It was also through His exhortation to prayer against temptation. At the end of the Gethsemane scene, in the same way that “Jesus goes to that darkest place near death with only one weapon: prayer,” so too the “weapon he offers them is not a sword, but prayer” (Tostengard 1980, 286).

The disciples learnt from Jesus, both in word and example, that temptation and difficulty were conquered through “persistent, intense, submissive prayer” (Green 1986, 39).

Hallowed be Your Name – Turning to the Lord’s Prayer, in this first petition, we see a call for God’s holy character and nature to be revealed is an echo of the John 12:28 phrase, “Father, glorify your name.” For only God’s name, the basis of which is His character, can see God’s kingdom established, only His holiness can found His kingship and rule (Lohmeyer 1965). “What we pray for is that the name, self-declaration, and knowledge of God may win the field as the only truth of all the reality distinct from himself. The sanctifying of God’s name, undertaken and accomplished by God himself as we ask of him in the first petition, is the glorifying of his name” (Barth 1981, 160).

Your Kingdom Come – Continuing on, this is a subversive prayer for the two spheres of God’s dominion to come together, for evil to be done away with and Yahweh to reign supreme (Wright 1997). It is trusting that the disciples of Jesus will receive what God Himself sees their need to be

To pray for the coming of God’s kingdom will direct our attention and our prayers to mission (Chester 2003, 167).

(Dunn 1992) as they take up this mission to see God’s kingdom come. Only in God’s economy does the fulfilment of this prayer require the death of the ruler. It is the outworking of mission that brings this petition to life (Lohmeyer 1965).

Drawing these petitions together, it is within the intimate relationship of Father and child that God’s name and character are hallowed when His will as ruler is done, leading to the coming of His Kingdom.

Forgive us our Sins, as we Forgive... - This is the crux of the good news of Jesus Christ. It is the nature of God to extend forgiveness, to graciously wave His hand at the debts piled high, although only because costly payment was made in Christ. His followers, reflecting family likeness, are also to extend such forgiveness (Lohmeyer 1965), which “is central to the mission of God and the mission of God’s people. In the cancellation of debt that cannot possibly be paid back, God provides the indebted with a new start characterized by the transformation of the radically forgiven into those who also radically forgive” (French 2002, 25).

If you didn’t live forgiveness, you were denying the very basis of your own new existence (Wright 1997, 54).

Lead us not into Temptation - There are a few interpretations regarding temptation, mainly the temporal and the eschatological. The temporal points to the temptation to lie or steal, speak badly of others or have unclean thoughts or be filled with pride (Goetz 1986), (O’Neill 1993). It is the cry for strength to resist the enemy, whose very aim it is to lead God’s people astray (Cullman 1994). It is the temptation for God’s people to exalt their own names rather than God’s, to do their own will rather than God’s, to establish their own kingdom rather than God’s (Garland 1992), a very real temptation. Others see this temptation as pointing to the final, eschatological trial (Jeremias 1984, Cullman 1994). It is not a prayer to miss out on the hardship, to be preserved from it (Lohmeyer 1965), but rather to stand firm and stay faithful, a cry that God would “Grant us one thing, preserve us from going wrong!” (Jeremias 1984, 202)

This cry for salvation from trial can also lead to the interpretation of temptation as testing. This interpretation helps to reconcile other passages (James 1:13) which tells us that God does not tempt us (Chester 2003). Additionally, we are not to test God as the People of Israel did in the wilderness, but rather reflect trust in His overarching control and involvement in the world. The prayer not to test becomes more frequent and fervent as the eschatological age builds.

A final interpretation is one represented by Jeffrey Gibson, who defines this temptation as the temptation to test God. “Do not allow us to do what the wilderness generation...who grew dissatisfied with your ways and doubted your will...did...and put you to the test” (Gibson 2015, 163).

In summary, to “follow Jesus and say the Disciples’ Prayer is to pledge oneself to demonstrating and proclaiming a certain way of ‘being’ in the world, a way that mirrors and magnifies the very character of the God of Israel as Jesus made him known” (Gibson 2015, 164).

Questions for Reflection

Spend time prayerfully considering the following questions:

- As you reflect on prayer as a weapon against the enemy, what are the elements that make this possible?
 - *Even though it may seem obvious, list these elements.*
 - *Meditate on them - the death of Christ, His shed blood, the precious and powerful nature of His name, His resurrection, the fact that He is now seated at the right hand of the Father on high and so on.*
- Evaluate your relationship with God, our source.
- Is there distance between you and God that needs to be put right before you continue battling the enemy?
 - *Rectify this before you go on.*
- Garland is quoted above as saying, “It is the temptation for God’s people to exalt their own names rather than God’s, to do their own will rather than God’s, to establish their own kingdom rather than God’s.” Don’t rush through these questions – or their answers.
 - *What temptation are you wrestling with right now?*
 - *How do you want to exalt your own name?*
 - *How do you want to do your own will?*
 - *How do you want to establish your own kingdom?*
- This is conquered through “persistent, intense, submissive prayer.”
 - *What do you need to submit to the Father?*
 - *How are you persistently, intensely praying into this?*
 - *Are there trusted people who can join you in this?*
- God’s Word is the only offensive weapon listed in Ephesians 6.
 - *Is this a real weapon for you in the battle against the enemy?*
 - *What is a Scripture that you are currently praying?*
 - *Identify a Scripture to memorize and add to your toolbelt of weapons.*

Voices from Pioneers-Africa

Deep, spiritual awareness – Most of our African brothers and sisters have grown up with a deep, spiritual awareness. Because of the relatively open involvement of friends, family or even church members with traditional religions, fetish priests, visits to shrines, curses, worship of ancestral spiritual and other various rituals, there is a distinct knowledge of the need to combat the work of the enemy, and the need of many to be delivered from the ongoing effect of such a background. One brother identifies that, “part of praying is to engage the powers of darkness by asking God to do that which He only is able to do... to evoke the authority that God has given us as His children to confront... to command them in the name of Jesus.”

One leader told of how “I used to experience demons... but I think that I have the gift of discerning of spirits.” Continuing on, “There was this day a few months ago...I just felt that the door was opening... I saw some ripples at the door. And then I saw this man, physically ... I knew he was a demon, because he emerged out of that ruffle. And then, we had an encounter... And I prayed, I rebuked it.”

When another leader was first learning about spiritual warfare, however, he “was very surprised to see evil spirits coming out of people.” He is no longer surprised, but equipped for this reality. He further discerned “a difference in the various localities when I pray.” When working in one region, “I pray four hours... I see the impact.” In another area, “with two hours prayer, I achieved the same thing.” In a third place of ministry it took even more prayer. “I don’t know how to describe...that, but it’s what I would call Spiritual Warfare.”

You can’t be a minister in Africa if you don’t understand spiritual warfare.

For many of us, this is outside our experience. And yet we need to learn from others as we grow in this area of spiritual awareness, developing spiritual discernment so that we can better engage with forces of darkness for the sake of the Kingdom of God among the nations.

Questions for Reflection

Spend time prayerfully reflecting on the following matters:

- Think about the stories from our Pioneers-Africa community. Is your own experience quite removed from what you have just read?
- If you are currently involved in mission, review your own mission context. How have you grown in spiritual awareness in the past few years?
- What are some strategies the enemy tends to use in your mission context that you did not identify in your own home context?
- How can you continue to develop awareness around spiritual engagement within your own context?
- What are some other Scriptures you can examine to build this picture?
- If you are not currently involved in mission, interview a mission practitioner who has experience among the people/place of your future mission context. Adapt the questions above to build your awareness.

Tips for Integration 1

Interviewing a local believer - Who is a local believer you can speak with about this? Here are some questions that may help you get started:

- I’m trying to develop spiritual awareness within this new culture. When you think about ways that the enemy deceives people within this culture, what do you see?
- When you think about ways that the enemy has manifested himself in this country, what have you seen or heard about?
- What have you experienced in your own life?
- As an outsider (or new to the culture), what is something I need to be aware of as I continue to grow in this area?

Tips for Integration 2

A Case Study - Here is a story told by a PI-Africa member:

A few months ago, I was in my bedroom. I had just finished praying during the midnight hours. As I was going to lie down, I felt the door opening. Somehow, I knew - a demon wants to enter through it. So, I started watching the door, and all of a sudden, I saw some ripples at the door. I saw a physical form, barely a man. He was smiling, coming to me, and I was a little fearful. I knew he was a demon because he emerged out of the ruffle I saw at the door. And then, we had an encounter. I prayed and I rebuked it. When it continued to come closer, I rebuked it in Jesus' name and it retreated. Then I woke my husband, told him about it and we prayed together.

- As you were reading this case study from an African mission worker, what you were thinking? What were you feeling?
- What can we learn from the cultural 'workplace' of this mission worker?
- What explanation would you give for this event? (Identify the underlying assumptions about God, humankind and the world that you just expressed.)
- What cultural influences and insights can we learn from this case study for personal application?
- Which cultural influences and insights do we need to further reflect on, potentially guarding against in our own lives and in the lives of those we are discipling?

Appraise this from the angle of your home culture:

- How is this different from your own cultural experience?
- Compare this expression of the spirit world with your knowledge and experience within your own culture.
- Where do you place it in your theological framework?
- What are cultural insights that enhance growth in this area?
- What are cultural insights which may not be translatable and require further reflection
- What are cultural matters that create barriers towards growth in this area? (Try and be practical here!)

Developing Praxis

Identify five Scripture passages that relate to Spiritual Warfare.

Commit to memorizing them over the next five weeks.

Find someone to keep you accountable (and join you!)

Choose a step to actively demonstrate your commitment to *engaging with forces of darkness?*

- Action Step 1 –

- Action Step 2 –

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3:18	123	1:13	35
3:18b	123	3:9	123
Ephesians		Revelation	
6:12	94	7:9	iv

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Vita

Kathryn R. Pocklington was born in Melbourne, Australia on October 17, 1972. When she was two and a half, her parents, elder sister and herself, moved to Manila, Philippines, where her parents were involved in mission work. In Manila, she attended the international school, Faith Academy, for her elementary years. On return to Melbourne, she attended Strathcona Baptist Girls Grammar School for her high school years. On finishing school, Kathryn studied at the Bible College of Victoria (now Melbourne School of Theology), graduating with a B.Th. and Dip. Missiology in 1994. She then travelled to the USA, where she attended Asbury Theology Seminary, graduating with a MA in Biblical Studies and a MA in Intercultural Studies in 1998.

After returning to Melbourne and working for several years, Kathryn joined the mission organisation Pioneers, where she worked at the National Office for one year, before moving to Delhi, India in 2003 to be involved in cross-cultural life and service. In partnership with a local Delhi church, she ministered in a slum community of 45-50,000 people, involved a mix of community development and disciple-making. Working with a gifted team of Indian women, her primary role was to oversee the income generation project, which was one aspect of the larger, integrated ministry. She lived in Delhi for almost eight years, relocating to Australia in early 2011.

On her return to Melbourne, Kathryn remained with Pioneers, joining the Pioneers of Australia National Office, where she now leads the Training & Development team.