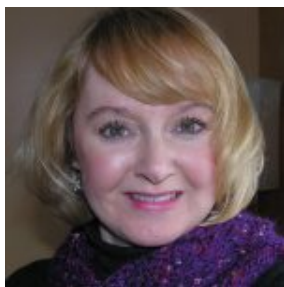


Long Prayer Lists



Jane VanOsdol

One of the things I have always liked about prayer is being able to pray for the concerns of my family and friends. I usually write these requests in my prayer notebook so I don't forget about them. But, I have to admit that lately I've felt frustrated over how long this list has become! It took me so much time to get through my list each day that it was becoming more of a chore than a privilege to pray—at least that's what my attitude was. Something needed to change, but I wasn't sure what to do about it; I still wanted to pray for everyone, but I wanted prayer to be something I looked forward to, not a long list to endure. There didn't seem to be too much connecting with God going on.

After many frustrating days, I finally asked God to show me what to do about this. A little later an idea began to form in my mind that I thought might work for me. Now, maybe this is obvious to all of you, but to me it was just the spark I needed to to try and get my prayer life back to two-way communication, instead of my one-way laundry list. I'll share it with you, just in case anyone else has the same struggle.



On Monday of the week during my prayer time, I write down in my notebook all my people and concerns I need to pray for that week. I have my notebook split into several narrow columns. Each column heading is either a person's name or subject headings like "Friends," "Church," "Country" etc. I then start the week off by praying for all those concerns. The rest of the week instead of going down each column in order and praying the same things all over again, I am instead quiet and ask the Lord to show me what to pray for that day. In the short time I have been doing this, I am finding that God will bring various people or topics to my mind from my list and maybe put a verse in my mind to pray for them, or bring a new concern to my mind about them to pray for. I then add these things to my prayer journal next to the original information. He has also given me entirely new subjects not yet entered in my journal to pray over.

So far, this has been a huge help in relieving my frustration, while still covering my family and friends in prayer. I feel my prayers are more Spirit directed. If you've dealt with the same frustration and have overcome it, I'd like to hear about what works for you. Enjoy your prayer time this week and pray on!