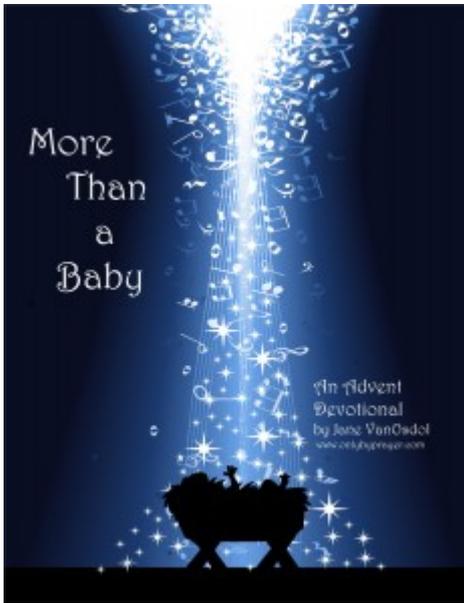


Advent Devotional Tuesday, December 10



Welcome to Day 10 of our **Advent devotional!** In today's devotional, we see the establishment of God's church and the importance that the church plays in our lives.

If you'd like a bit of background about Advent, please read [Day One's](#) entry. Keep persevering in your desire to draw closer to God during this season of Advent.

To read today's entry, simply click on the link below.

[**Advent Devotional Tuesday, December 10, 2013**](#)

National Day of Prayer: What Are You Praying For?

***In His name the nations will
put their hope. Matthew 12:21***



Thursday, May 2, is the **National Day of Prayer**. Let's all join together in praying for our nation. The theme this year is Pray For America. Here are two websites for you to access for **prayer** events to participate in.

[National Day of Prayer](#)

[One Cry Radio Summit and Unite Event](#)

We're never at a loss for things to **pray** about for our country, are we? It's especially true this year given some of the recent tragic events we've watched unfold in our country and around the world. Whether your church is holding an event, you're going to tune in to the national podcast, or you'll be praying at home, I'd love to hear what some of the requests are that you'll be interceding for this year. What issues are on your hearts and minds that you'll be praying about?

This is an important reminder for us to pray not only for our friends and families every day, but also for our country. Feel free to leave your requests/prayers below, and add to the list as God lays more requests on your heart.

Pray on!

Jane

Image courtesy of David Castillo Dominici / [FreeDigitalPhotos.net](#)

Butterfly Prayers and Prayer Boards

How many times have you said, “Sure, I’ll pray for you,” when someone shares a prayer request with you, but then you forget about it?

Or perhaps you hear about a situation on the radio that you want to pray for, or you want to add a particular country to your prayer list. It’s easy for these random thoughts and requests to fall into the black hole in our minds.

Part of the problem is that we often think of these requests or someone shares them with us when we’re out and about in the midst of a busy day or maybe when we’re at church. We’re usually distracted by what we’re already doing, so it’s easy for the request to get lost in the multitude of other things that are already going on.

Well, I’ve stumbled upon a few ways to deal with this situation.

One solution is an idea my sister Mary shared with me. When she fears she may forget to pray as promised later because of all the distractions of the here and now, she stops and says, “Sure, I’ll pray for you. Let’s do it right now.” And then she stops and prays with the person right then, trusting that the Holy Spirit will bring that request to mind later when she

needs to pray again.



Just lately, I've decided to try another tactic to capture these type of what I call "butterfly prayers" that flutter at me through my day. I decided to make a prayer board and hang it on the wall in my home office. I chose my office, because that is where I spend most of my time during the day. I've started carrying a small notebook in my purse, and as I hear of requests I need to remember, I write them in my notebook and then add my butterfly prayers to my board to help me remember them. What's different about these prayers is that often times they're for people or things not on my usual prayer lists—which makes me prone to forgetting them. And they're often requests that are time sensitive; they need intensive prayer for a set amount of time. Well, now every time I glance at the board, I see them.

I've also added a few other things to the prayer board that I want to be reminded of frequently. **Let's look at a some ways to use this prayer board and brainstorm what you may want to add to it.**

First of all, to make the board, I just purchased a bulletin board. You can stop there if you want and be ready to go, but I also covered mine with colorful paper. I added a few sparkly stickers to the top and purchased some fun tacks. That's certainly not necessary, but it spiffs it up a bit. Then I hung it right where I would see it frequently. (Just a home improvement hint: my husband recommends using Velcro strips. They're fast, forgiving, and don't leave holes in the walls!)

Now for a few ideas on how to use t



- Add those butterfly prayers that you need to pray for frequently.
- Hang your current scripture memory verse on the board.
- Put a picture of a missionary you're praying for on the board.
- Put a picture of your sponsored child on the board.
- Are you praying for a certain country or geographic area of the world this week? Add that to your board.
- Choose a name of a persecuted Christian (see Open Doors) to pray for each day/week and add that name to your prayer board.
- Don't forget your pastor. I'm sure he or she would appreciate the additional prayers.
- Add any lesson/character trait you're working on. For example, for the last two years I've attended a spiritual retreat. Each time I was at this retreat, the Lord has given me a one-word concept He wanted me to work on. The first year my word was *joy*. This year the word is *focus*. I've added that word to my board.

Be sure you change out the information on your board as you're done praying for past requests and new ones come along. You may even want to change the decor on the board to match the seasons and spiritual holidays to help you focus on them as we celebrate them throughout the year.

These are just some ideas to get you started. I'm sure you can think of others, and I'd love it if you'd share those in the

comments section below.

Enjoy your prayer board and ...

Pray on!

Jane

Church's Got Talent by Mary Kane



American Idol, America's Got Talent...the Gong Show! Everyone is trying to prove that they have talent! You may not know it, but God has given you talent also. The question is...what are we to do with these talents. To do the study [Church's Got Talent](#) just click on the link!

Photo *Red Piano* by Salvatore Vuono

www.freedigitalphotos.net

Prayer of Examen

As 2011 has kicked off, **I've been evaluating my life and what I want to do for this year.** I'd already been thinking about this for a few days when I was in church on January 2. My pastor Dave Rodriguez introduced a type of praying that was perfect for the mindset I was in. It's called the Prayer of Examen. Richard Foster has a chapter on this type of prayer in his book *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*.

Basically, the **Prayer of Examen** is an inward spiritual practice, where we analyze what is going on inside of ourselves. It has two components:

1. **The first is where we examine how God was working in or through us throughout our day and how we responded to Him, and**
2. **We examine our conscience to see where we need to be cleansed, purified and healed. See Psalm 26:2,3.**

An important thing to remember, however, is to do this *with* God. Prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to reveal things to you. God can help us to see the truth, but also He will do it in a loving way.



So, as I was in church, Pastor Rod suggested we all go through the Prayer of Examen in the context of looking over the past year of 2010. Here are the questions he suggested we answer.

1. **Looking over the past year, for what am I most grateful or thankful?**

2. When or where in the past year were you cooperating most fully with God's action in your life?
3. When were you resisting?
4. Beginning today, how do you want to live your life differently?

Take some time to prayerfully answer these questions. What do you want 2011 to look like for you?

While my church did this in the context of one year, many people pray the Prayer of Examen on a daily basis. You can ask yourself these same questions using the last 24 hours as your context. Here are some ways it may help you to do this on a daily basis, or at least semi-regularly.

Perhaps you **take a walk** every evening; you could answer these questions as you're walking. Or maybe you like to journal, and you can **journal your answers**. Perhaps you want to **mentally run through the prayer** as you're lying in bed at night.

Whatever way you decide, incorporating the Prayer of Examen into your life may help you to grow spiritually as you invite the Lord to help you analyze your heart.

Pray on!

Joe

Resource



[Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home](#)

By Richard Foster / HarperOne