



ThinkOne: PRAYER

*Royal Rangers:
70 nations,
Six regions,
One
foundational
discipline—
Prayer*

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Author and speaker Edwin Louis Cole often made a vivid statement that Royal Rangers can easily picture: “Too often we build our tents and pitch our altars, rather than build our altars and pitch our tents.” There is no substitute whatsoever for the “altar” in our lives, which is prayer. In fact, E. M. Bounds said, “A person who does not pray cannot possibly be called a Christian.”

We build an altar each time we bow our heart or bend our knee to pray, and when we do, we can anticipate a divine meeting with God. Jesus taught His disciples “they should always pray and not give up” (Luke 18:1).

There are six essential principles of prayer that serve as the foundational disciplines of effective ministry.

PRINCIPLE #1: Faith is the Condition of Prayer

In 1 Chronicles 5:20 we read, “He answered their prayers, because they trusted in him.” Faith is the only condition God places on prayer.

Jesus said He could perform no miracles in Nazareth due to unbelief (Mark 6:1-6). James instructed his readers to “believe and not doubt.” In fact, he said doubters “should not [expect to] receive anything from the Lord” (James 1:5-8). Unbelief is a sin because it casts doubt on the reliability of God’s Word.

Two things build confidence in our prayer life:

1) *Praying in the will of God.* Lewis Drummond put it this way, “Christian prayer is God-centered, not self-centered. It’s not getting things from God; it’s finding out what God wants and getting ourselves into cooperation with that.” Hear the words of the Apostle John, “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us” (1 John 5:14). Praying in the known will of God always leads to a bold prayer of faith (Matthew 6:33;

Colossians 3:1).

2) *Hanging out in the presence of God.* We usually need to pray long enough that the Holy Spirit can give us the inner assurance that our prayer is heard (Psalm 38:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:17).

God is true to His word! He reveals himself as the one who “rewards those who earnestly seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6). He provides assurance that “If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.” We, like Jesus, can say, God, “I know that you always hear me” (John 11:42).

The very act of calling out to God is an act of faith sufficient to move mountains (Matthew 17:20). God is eager to hear your voice and to respond. Cry out to Him in full assurance that He hears. Faith, not word choice or volume, is the only condition God places on approaching Him (Hebrews 4:16).

PRINCIPLE #2: Obedience is the Power of Prayer

The obedient person is submissive, humbly accepting the authority and legitimacy of the One to whom he or she prays. Obedience is not merely the avoidance of sin. That is far too passive. As Rangers, we must actively seek to do what pleases God. John said, we “receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him” (1 John 3:22).

Edwin Louis Cole said, “Power is released into the life of the believer to the degree of his or her obedience and no more.” (1 Samuel 15:22; Proverbs 21:3.) King Solomon would agree, “If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law, even his prayers are detestable” (Proverbs 28:9). King David echoes this point, “If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened” (Psalm 66:18). Elsewhere the Psalmist said, “God is present in the company of the righteous” (Psalm 14:5). James states emphatically, “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (5:16).

As we actively obey God and do what pleases Him, the power of our prayers increases dramatically. Jesus affirms, “If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you” (John 15:7). Obedience is the power of prayer.



PRINCIPLE #3: Godliness is the Fruit of Prayer

Sin will keep you from prayer –just ask Adam and Eve. Sin caused them to hide from God (Genesis 3:8)– but prayer will keep you from sin. The Bible says that King Rehoboam “did evil because he had not set his heart on seeking the Lord” (2 Chronicles 12:14). There is a direct connection between seeking God and growing in righteousness. King David said, “You who seek God, may your hearts live! (Psalm 69:32). To discipline yourself in godliness, you must discipline yourself to seek God. Christlikeness is formed in prayer.

PRINCIPLE #4: Passion is the Soul of Prayer

Passion is born when we recognize a need and determine to do something about it; like the drowning person gasping for air. Prayer becomes passionate when we realize how much we depend upon God. When we discover we need him more than air, we “call out to the Lord” with a cry (Joel 1:14).

We cling to God in prayer when we realize:

- How weak we are and how powerful He is (Psalm 34).
- How foolish we are and how wise He is (James 1:5; 3:7).
- How mired in sin we are and how free He is (Isaiah 64:6).
- How unfaithful we are and how true He is (Psalm 50:15).
- How frail we are and what a Healer He is (1 Kings 17:17-22; Mark 10:46-49)

Prayer born from a passionate dependence on God has soul and calls to the One who can mend the deepest human hurts-- our own and those of others. Passion is the soul of prayer.

PRINCIPLE #5: Perseverance is the Test of Prayer

Psalm 13 records a difficult time for King David; he was discouraged and God seemed very distant. In these difficult times –due to finances, sickness, or loss– God may appear to pay no attention to our cry. Yet, like David, we persist in prayer because we trust in His unfailing love (Psalm 13:5). Like the persistent widow Jesus described in His parable, we persevere in spite of silence or delayed answers (Luke 18:1-8).

But perseverance is also needed in the daily grind. It is instinctive to cry out to God in trouble. But when life is moving along well, at a normal pace, consistent prayer can suffer. The Word says, “Blessed is

the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway” (Proverbs 8:34).

Periodic difficulties and the daily routine will equally test our commitment to pray. Paul commands us to be “faithful in prayer” and to “pray continually” (Romans 12:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:17). If we pass the test of perseverance, we will receive God’s blessings (Hebrews 10:36). Persevering prayer = much blessing; no prayer = no blessing. Perseverance is the test of prayer.

PRINCIPLE #6:

Building God’s Kingdom is the Function of Prayer

By way of intercession, petitions, fasting, praying the Scriptures, and corporate prayer, “God’s Kingdom comes” (Matthew 6:10). John Lindell writes, “If we pray, the rest of the work is easy.” If we work, we work; if we pray, God works. The Psalmist understood this well: “Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain” (Psalm 127:1).

If Royal Rangers is to achieve its fullest potential to reach, teach, and keep students for Christ, it will be accomplished first through prayer. E. M. Bounds said, “Prayer is the soul of a man stirred to plead with God for men.” The marks of a strong ministry are wet eyes, calloused knees, and a broken heart. Most people who come to Christ can point to someone who had been praying for them. Building God’s Kingdom is the function of prayer.

God is calling Royal Rangers worldwide to ThinkOne. In previous articles we discussed our *purpose*, evangelism; our *distinctive*, Pentecostal-Charismatic; our *leadership ideal*, God-called leaders using God-methods; and our *motive*, to build a community to extravagantly love the hurting world. These will only be achieved if we have discipline. Prayer has been described as the Christian’s bedrock discipline. George Buttrick said, “Prayer is not a substitute for work, thinking, watching, suffering, or giving; prayer is a support for all other efforts.”

Please think back on the words of Edwin Louis Cole from the opening: “Too often we build our tents and pitch our altars, rather than build our altars and pitch our tents.” As leaders, let’s remember the prominence and priority prayer must have in our lives and ministry. God alters lives at the altar; prayer is foundational to all our efforts.

Let’s **THINKONE: PRAYER**. God has established Royal Rangers in 70 nations, six regions, and gives us to **one discipline, prayer—that we might not sin against the Lord and this ministry by failing to pray** (1 Samuel 12:23).



Royal Rangers Africa Summit

Royal Rangers International, in conjunction with The Kenya Assemblies of God (KAG) and the Africa Assemblies of God Alliance leadership, will convene a region-wide summit for nations in Africa who currently have an established Royal Rangers ministry or plan to introduce the ministry in the near future. Nations with an established (or soon to be established) Men’s Ministries department are also strongly urged to attend.

Royal Rangers International (RRI) is an Assemblies of God ministry designed to help establish Royal Rangers in nations around the world, then strengthen and serve them. Royal Rangers in Kenya has experienced God’s blessing and has grown in close to 200 churches since the year 2000. KAG and RRI are partnering together to offer this summit because they believe God is prepared to expand and strengthen this great boys’ ministry throughout the entire continent.

The purpose of the summit is three-fold:

1) *Share* – RRI will present Royal Rangers’ vision, its adaptable evangelistic and discipleship curriculum, and its training programs designed to develop adult and youth leaders. Nations with a developed Royal Rangers ministry will share what is taking place in their countries;

2) *Contextualize* – Together we will discuss how to sharply focus Royal Rangers to minister to the deepest needs of African boys;

3) *Relate* – We will consider how RRI can support Royal Rangers development within Africa and how nations may provide mutually beneficial assistance to one another.

The Summit will take place May 1 – 3, 2007 in Nairobi, Kenya, at the East Africa School of Theology campus. Contact RRI if you desire an invitation or further details.

RRI National Leadership Award (NLA)



A new award is available for National Commanders starting in 2007. The new recognition, known as the National Leadership Award (NLA), was approved by the RRI Council at its 2006 meeting in Costa Rica. The award is designed to annually honor National Commanders for their commitment to personal and ministerial growth. The recipients will be awarded a medal, a ribbon, and a handsome certificate to proudly display. National Commanders will have the opportunity to earn the distinction each year, based on points accumulated in the previous year. Each successive year's recognition will be in the form of a number pin to be worn on the ribbon. For example, if a National Commander has earned the NLA 3 times, he would receive a number "3" pin to attach to his ribbon.

The award is based on a point system. The following is an overview of the criteria to earn the award and the complete criteria for the award can be found on the RRI website:

CRITERIA TO EARN NLA

The following are the minimum requisites to receive the National Leadership Award (NLA):

1. The NLA program is limited to National Commanders.
2. The National Commanders must earn at least 200 points using the evaluation sheet from each of the following three evaluation categories:
 - a. Training and personal growth—minimum of 75 points from this category.
 - b. Leadership responsibilities—minimum of 75 points from this category.
 - c. Administration and reporting—minimum of 50 points from this category.
3. The National Commander must consistently wear a clean and professional looking Royal Rangers uniform.
4. Must complete the Leadership Training Course and National Training Camp in order to participate in the program.
5. Must complete the Regional Report described in the Administration category.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. The NLA evaluation form must be completed early January 2007, and sent with all documentation requested to the Regional RRI Coordinator postmarked before January 15, 2007.
2. The points recorded on the evaluation sheets must represent those earned the previous calendar year (i.e., January 1 – December 31, 2006).
3. The Regional Coordinator and the Director will give (or send) recognition to the National Commanders during the months of February and March 2007.

In most cases, National Commanders will receive the award at regional gatherings, such as the upcoming EuroLeader Conference in Norway or the Africa summit in Kenya. Nations without a regional meeting will receive their award from the RRI office in Ozark, MO., USA, once the application has been processed, provided all the guidelines above are kept and the application is received by the deadline. Please make sure you follow the instructions and get the recognition that you deserve for all of your hard work. Again, please note that the complete criteria can be found on the RRI website.

The Letter

Dear friend,

How are you? I just had to send a note to tell you how much I care about you.

I saw you yesterday as you were talking with your friends. I waited all day hoping you would want to talk with me too. I gave you a sunset to close your day and a cool breeze to rest you and I waited. You never came. It hurt me, but I still love you because I am your friend.

I saw you sleeping last night and longed to touch your brow so I spilled moonlight upon your face. Again I waited, wanting to rush down so we could talk. I have so many gifts for you! You awoke and rushed off to work. My tears were in the rain.

If you would only listen to me! I love you! I try to tell you in blue skies and in the quiet green grass. I whisper it in the leaves on the trees and breathe it in colors of flowers, shout it to you in mountain streams, give the birds love songs to sing. I clothe you with warm sunshine and perfume the air with nature scents. My love for you is deeper than the ocean, and bigger than the biggest need in your heart.

Ask me! Talk with me! Please don't forget me. I have so much to share with you!

I won't hassle you any further. It is YOUR decision. I have chosen you and I will wait.

I love you.

Your friend,
Jesus

--Author unknown



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RRI Global Leaders Encounter

RRI is planning an exciting worldwide gathering of Royal Rangers July 14-18, 2010 near Springfield, Missouri, USA called the RRI Global Leaders Encounter (GLE). The theme is "One Family" and attendance is limited to National Commanders, national staff members, organizational leaders, presidents, superintendents, bishops, missionaries from around the world, and special invited guests. The GLE has been scheduled immediately before the U.S. Camporama so that delegations can enjoy

both of these events on the same trip to America. Please mark your calendar. This is an opportunity you will not want to miss! In the meantime, please send any ideas you might have or topics you would like covered at the Encounter to your Regional Coordinator (or to Andy Whitman, the RRI Communications Coordinator, if your region does not yet have a Coordinator). We are eager to hear from you. All ideas received by next April will be considered. Additional information will be provided mid-2007.

EuroCamp 2007 — Keep On! Lillehammer, Norway

During the week of July 31 – Aug. 4, 2007, an estimated 5,000 Royal Rangers from all over Europe will travel to Lillehammer, Norway for EuroCamp. This special event takes place every 4 years and is similar to National Camporama in the USA, but instead of boys coming together from the 50 states, boys and girls will gather from 23 nations across Europe.



During the day, Rangers will participate in sports and compete against each other in activities designed to test their outdoor skills and use their God-given talents. Many workshops and craft stations are offered that allow Rangers to exercise their creativity through various artistic means.

Special services will be held each evening and are the spiritual highlight of the camp. Rangers will enjoy worship bands composed of their own peers, have the opportunity to express themselves through drama, and hear challenging messages from God's word. The services are usually conducted in English, but translation is available through headsets into the many languages used throughout Europe. Historically, many young people give their hearts to the Lord, or are motivated to a deeper Christian walk during these services.

RRI staff members and Rangers from the USA will be attending as part of a special delegation to EuroCamp 2007. European Royal Rangers should visit www.RoyalRangersEurope.net to learn more and register for the camp, or contact Matthias Reinartz at pr@royal-rangers.de. Anyone working with Royal Rangers outside of Europe should contact RRI about receiving an invitation at: RRI@royalrangersinternational.com.

www.RoyalRangersInternational.com

Stay connected to what is happening around the world by visiting the RRI website. The site is your one source for program information, reports, and details on upcoming global events. Be sure to read *RRI 360°*, the official newsletter for Royal Rangers leaders around the world, which is archived on the site. You can also read current news, like the progress of the program in Asia Pacific, or the recent RRI office move.