

# Prayer on the train

By Elise L. Moore, C.S.

Prayer is effective. Let's not underestimate the far-reaching effect of prayer. In the early 1970's, I had a summer job in downtown Philadelphia. I rode the train to work. Each morning, I'd spend the time on the train reading a Bible Lesson for that week. I'd finish the lesson just about the time we were passing through a very depressed area of town. It was called a ghetto then.

It was so disturbing to me, reading wonderful Bible promises about God's love and care for His children, and then looking up to see grinding poverty. Each day I'd pray for the rest of the trip for that area of town. Finally, one morning an inspiration from God came to me that really helped. It was . . . that love was going on right there.

I realized that mothers were loving their children, that families were loving one another. And if love was there, then hope and goodness were there. These are qualities of God which lead into productive and legal activity. Love is one of the foundation stones of progress. In I John 4:12 it says, "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."

On the ride home, I usually talked with a friend. But one afternoon, he missed the train. So instead of reading the newspaper, I decided to pray. Since we began the trip in the depressed area, I began praying about the activity and power of God's love for the people there. I prayed this way until my station.

When my mother picked me up, the first question she asked was, "What were you doing at such-and-such a time?" Well, I was on the train, praying. "I knew it!" she exclaimed. It seems she had been sick all day. At just that time, the illness had suddenly lifted and vanished. She was sure this healing occurred because I was praying.

I was so embarrassed. I explained that I hadn't been praying for her at all, that I hadn't known she wasn't feeling well. And then I told her about how I had been praying.

It was then that my mother told me something that has stuck with me. She told me that prayer didn't have any limits on it. My prayer was blessing anyone who had a need and was receptive. If someone was turning to God for help, they would be blessed by those affirming God's goodness and power.

Perhaps that was God's way of letting me know that prayer for mankind was effective. Although the area of Philadelphia remained economically depressed that summer, I never felt that prayer was futile. I realized I was joining with hundreds, perhaps thousands of others, praying for evil and hatred and poverty to cease.

It's not that God isn't listening and we have to plead with Him. Prayer helps man to listen and respond to God.

Your prayers are effective. Praying until we feel assured of the presence and power of God does bless us and those who are touched by our thought. Affirming the power of God in the midst of poverty does help and heal. "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible." (Mark 10:27)

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