

Pathwork on
Prayer

The Pathwork Lectures speak often on prayer – what is it, what makes it effective, etc. This quote from Pathwork Lecture 65 *Question and Answers*, gives still another helpful slant on Prayer.

10	<p>QUESTION: In a recent discussion in our group, one of our friends expressed the thought that prayer was indicative of weakness and he was therefore opposed to it. I was taught that prayer is the means by which God's power is released onto human life. Perhaps you would be willing to tell us about prayer in general, and I have also three specific questions. One: is it valid for us to pray for others?</p>
11	<p>ANSWER: Yes, certainly, it is valid to pray for others. But the question may arise in some of you, "What if I pray for something for another person that this other person cannot receive due to his own inner obstructions?" This is a valid question. Nevertheless, prayer is good, right and beneficial. But the prayer is not necessarily answered exactly in the way you thought, or as the person involved may desire it. This may not be possible. But it certainly brings out harmonious currents and forces. That takes effect. It is like your love touching the heart of another person. When you pray and wish well to another person, it generates a pure strength, a pure effect that produces results around you. Let us suppose that this cannot affect the person involved because he or she is so cut off from reality, from the spiritual forces. This strength nevertheless works and takes effect in the universe and therefore benefits many, including yourself and even the particular person who is in darkness, but at a later time. For the love and goodwill you generate by praying for another person definitely makes an imprint on the cosmic forces, and, it also has a definite effect on your own soul by the unselfish love and well-wishing, by the constructive desires that have nothing to do with your selfish aims. The best prayer for another person can be formulated in words asking that the other person receive guidance, inspiration, and insight most necessary at the particular time. That includes everything.</p>
12	<p>What you said about a friend who feels prayer to be a weakness is, of course, an emotional, subconscious and illogical reaction that has probably nothing to do with his conscious ideas on the subject. I believe that the person in question is well aware of the fact that this is one of those typical wrong conclusions you will often find in the unconscious. It is of tremendous importance to find such wrong conclusions in the unconscious mind. Many of you have similar unconscious misconceptions without being aware of them. To find these illogical conclusions is the first step toward creating order in your inner universe, your soul. In truth, it is actually a sign of strength if you can ask for something. Not being able to ask because of pride is nothing but weakness. But to find out where and in what way this element of error exists -- and it exists in all of you to some extent -- is the basis for correcting such misconceptions which may lie only in your emotions and not in your thoughts at all. Then, and then only can you replace the misconception with the right concept. But find out</p>

	<p>where you feel that way, even if you do not think you do. Not everyone may feel it about prayer. But many of you may feel it about asking another human being for a favor. Basically it is the same thing.</p>
13	<p>QUESTION: These are merely extensions, but I will present them anyway. Will praying for others be productive of constructive results in securing peace.</p> <p>ANSWER: Oh yes, indeed. If prayer has effect, sooner or later, on one individual, it certainly has effect on humankind as a whole. I do not mean that the desired result manifests immediately. But I would like to add something more. Prayer is most constructive if one also gains a bit of insight about one's own inner errors. How can this be combined with the prayer for peace? It can be done in the following way: What goes on in your world is exactly the same thing on a larger scale as what goes on between two or three or four human beings. From the point of view of spiritual truth and spiritual reality, there are no big and little issues. The tiniest issue in a domestic quarrel, for example, is of exactly the same impact and importance as big international issues. This may sound fantastic to you. Nevertheless it is so, my friends. You think that because many lives are involved, the larger issues are more important. Little do you realize that, in truth and reality, your inner deviations and errors affect and involve just as many lives in the long run. You think that because the question of life or death exists in international quarrels, it is more important than the little, inner, subtle rights or wrongs in your private lives. But you ignore that with these subtle private undercurrents you contribute to the so-called big and important issues. In fact, the former are the cause of the latter.</p>
14	<p>I can very well understand your difficulty in grasping what I say here. To be able to understand what I say calls for your innermost depth. In creation there is only one question: right or wrong, truth or untruth, light or darkness. From our view it makes no difference whether such conflict exists in one soul or involves many. One causes the other and it is therefore the same. If you deceive yourself and your motives and thereby create a confused and disharmonious situation -- for your self-deceptions and confusions are bound to negatively affect other people -- you, together with the other people involved, create very unfavorable chain reactions and vicious circles. Not only does the very same principle underlie what manifests in world politics, but is partly responsible for it. Each emotion, each attitude, each current of the soul leaves an imprint on the cosmic forces and consequently returns to you, often in a roundabout way, until these negative forces are exhausted.</p>
15	<p>If you try to comprehend the thought I present here, you will gain a great deal of insight and understanding. In your prayer for peace, try to find where, in your own surroundings, you act in ways that are similar to the actions and reactions of nations. By such discoveries, you will contribute more to peace than through other approaches. Find the similarity, then you will gain the insight and understanding that it is all one and the same. The so-called big issues could not exist if the many little issues in thousands of individual cases were not a precedent to the creation of the same situation on a larger scale.</p>

16	<p>This contemplation should help in a double way. One: it would contribute to your personal insights. Your philosophical understanding would increase and thus facilitate your incentive for purification. Two: you would recognize, without the slightest trace of guilt, how you personally contribute to and are in a small measure responsible for the world's unrest. Not in the sense, as many people would believe, of not participating in political activities, but in the sense that your personal conflicts add to the general world conflict. Try to see this, and if you really try, you will find it.</p>
17	<p>QUESTION: Does prayer have any effect on the wills of those who are indifferent to spiritual values?</p> <p>ANSWER: The effect may not be immediate, but, as I said before, sooner or later it will have an effect. But often, it is not only that such a person is responsible, but many other people, too, as well as yourself. If you have clearly examined your real motive for praying and have no illusions about it, your prayer is bound to have some effect. The prayer may open for you a way to help such a person, a way of help you had not seen before. Thus, your sincere prayer may directly reach such a person.</p>
18	<p>Prayer is always constructive, provided one has no hidden selfish motives, no self-deceptions, and provided it is combined with action. The best deed is very often a recognition of deeply hidden trends in one's own soul. By virtue of such self-honesty, the outlook for a new direction may often present itself whereby such a person will be helped if not directly by you, then indirectly through others.</p>
19	<p>Prayer depends entirely on the "how" and with what motive. This may seem self-evident. You may ask, "What motive can I have?" Sometimes there are hidden motives and emotions, other than the obvious, loving ones. If these are not recognized, the prayer will be much weaker and therefore have less effect. By such honest recognition, you truly combine the deed with the prayer.</p>