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- *The effects of prayer*
- *Analogy of prayer to stove emitting heat*
- *Difference between worry and prayer*

The light of God's presence illuminates the souls of each of you.

Your dialog tonight centered in great measure upon your continuing concerns about prayer and the implications of the way prayer is offered as an indication of the influences of organized religion.

Prayer, as we have said, is energy. It is always a positive force in the world at large and within the person whose life is prayerful. Understanding what you do about prayer, we would offer that prayer cannot ever be selfish. When you pray for yourself, particularly when you are not peaceful, you are really praying first of all for peace, regardless of the initial purpose of that prayer. If you suffer from an affliction and pray to be cured, you are actually praying for peace, for you are praying to be relieved of the anxiety which opposes the entry of peace.

It makes no difference whether you pray specifically for peace or to be healed. It makes no difference whether or not you are aware of the need for peace when you pray for healing. In the final analysis your prayer is really an outcry for peace. You are really praying for God's peace, the energy from God to be absorbed within. And that is never selfish, for one cannot be selfish in desiring a closer connection to God's peace.

It is true, of course, that prayer is selfless, but it is also true that all prayer, of no matter what form, is never selfish. We do not wish to speak in riddles here, but it is important that you realize the effect of what you pray for and not the specifics.

It is peace that all humanity seeks. Above everything else, it is peace. Those who seek power and influence are really seeking the elimination of threats from others and the elimination of a sense of insecurity, the elimination of a feeling of inadequacy, the elimination of the feeling of being out of control. The elimination of all of these could result theoretically in the achievement of peace. It is for that circuitous reason that many throughout history have prayed for power and influence, have prayed for victory in battle, victory in any kind of competition.

When a group of athletes prays to be the victors, you do not feel that God takes sides and awards the victory to that team. It is so foolish to expect that God would respond in kind to the specifics of every prayer that is offered, for those specifics are not the real goals. They are only indications of the purposes which motivate that prayer, namely the achievement of peace.

If you offer specific prayers to God, you are more able to recognize God's response when what you pray for is peace. That peace will always be granted. It may surround your souls immediately. It may be recognized only in retrospect after the passing of considerable time. But the prayers which are offered consciously for the

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achieving of peace will ultimately be recognized by each of you to have been answered.

In praying for peace you are praying for openness. You are praying for receptivity to the energy originating with God. The nature of the prayer is unimportant. If you pray on behalf of another, you benefit another and in turn are also benefited. If you pray for yourself, you will receive benefit which may in turn enable you to enhance the life of another. Prayer is a kind of circle. It never exists functioning in a single direction. It emanates in all directions.

The warmth of the energy of prayer which we spoke of in your last meeting is omnidirectional. A stove does not emit heat in a very small field. It warms a room. Its energy is spread throughout the area. So it is with prayer. Prayer increases light, increases heat. That light, that heat, spreads in all directions. Indeed, when you pray for yourself, other souls are benefited through its light and warmth, the light and warmth of your own soul as it intensifies through prayer.

When you gather as a group like this and pray for strength of your own concerns, you are really giving strength to everyone gathered together. Prayer, therefore, does not function in a limited manner with restricted scope. Prayer is not like a laser beam in its restrictive sense. The prayer which is offered for whomever's benefit will be supportive of the souls of all present. So everyone benefits by the presence of prayer.

There is a difference between worry and prayer. You can worry about yourself in the absence of prayer. In the company of prayer, the worry is no longer present and is supplemented by a strengthening of your own spiritual being. If you are worried about yourself and yet think not of others, the worry expands and fills up a vacuum as it were, pushing away the positive energy coming from prayer and reducing the influence of that energy. If you are worried about yourself, pray for peace. The worry will dissipate. If you worry about yourself and do not pray, the worry controls everything.

If you worry about another, that worry becomes a negative force, a negative energy, which affects both you and the other for whom you worry. There is no way that a reaction of worry or concern about another which is negative can benefit anyone. If worry is changed into compassionate concern, the compassionate feeling is a positive, supportive feeling, not a fretful one, and that supportive energy will benefit the other immediately and recognizably.

One sometimes alludes to the "power of positive thinking." The positive thinking does not imply that one goes through life pretending that all is perfect. Positive thinking works when you confront issues with an attitude of support, of constructive behavior, of a desire for peace—not helplessness.

Prayer, as we have said, need not be voiced. It must only serve as a motivation for action within life. There is benefit for many in voicing their prayers. Such benefit must be recognized and acknowledged as a positive influence for many. When you

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gather as a group, you begin with prayer, for it is a way of sharing your spiritual connectedness. It matters not whether the prayer is silent or spoken out loud. It is still a means of binding your souls together.

When you receive guidance from God, it does not matter whether that guidance is verbal or nonverbal. The guidance is there. You are guided because you are open to it. The means of its expression are in a sense unimportant. You may go through many events in your life feeling the presence of God, all within the framework of silence. That feeling of God's presence may be just as real as when you are open to be a verbal channel for yourselves. Verbalized or not verbalized is unimportant, but you are together because the opportunity provides a means of focusing in on the reality of God's presence in your lives.

The group serves as a kind of catalyst for such attention. You could easily be quiet and center in and feel close to God on your own, alone. But the purpose of being together as a group is given direction by the joint sharing of such an experience, for you respond to one another's concerns and one another's interpretations and thereby grow. The presence of the group is no more valid than the activity of an individual, but it has its purpose.

These communions, these opportunities for channeling, are really the transmission of prayerful energy from God through us to you. Your meeting together is a kind of prayer, for it reaffirms the necessity and validity of searching for a higher purpose of life than merely going about one's daily activities. Life is more than merely a rat race of sorts, despite what it may seem at times. We suggest that it is important to continue beginning your gatherings in prayer. It is a means of focusing the energy, the collective energy of all of you, toward receiving the incredible power of God's peace, so that even for a brief moment in your lives you may perhaps feel the intimate and intense warmth of God's presence.

Our communication with you is through prayer. Your receptivity, whether in a group or as individuals, is only through prayer in the broadest sense of the word.

Our prayers are for your strength. With your understanding of prayer we may therefore say our energy is focused on your strength. Our prayers are for your understanding and your patience. Our prayers are for your ability to act and your capacity to withdraw and listen. Our prayers are for igniting the lights of your souls so that they may be strength-giving to all with whom you come in contact.

God blesses your lives with spirits that are strong and positive and resonant in God's presence.

Amen.