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- *Praying for healing is praying for balance*
- *The power of prayer is in listening*
- *See God in the face of another*

God responds to the needs of every human being according to what is best for each.

We have spoken often of the meaning of prayer and of the supreme importance that must be given in the act of praying to listening. You all have concerns. You all want to find a way of living that enhances, that supports, that is loving, and that is listening. But too seldom in your expression of needs do you back away from those expressions for the purpose of listening. You pray for something that is important to you, and too often human beings are so busy praying that there is no opportunity for the listening, which is the way of acknowledging the answers to the prayers that are offered. You pray for recovery, but often do not avail yourselves of the signs of that recovery, particularly when those signs lie outside the framework of your expectations.

Prayer is a powerful force, but it is powerful because it is a process that moves in two directions. It is not just directed outward as a kind of plea or supplication. It is easy to ask and to ask and to ask again. It is more difficult—and yet here is where the power of prayer resides—to devote your energies to listening, to an ability to perceive what has already been given. For many, the most difficult component in their relationship to God is precisely the listening that is necessary. God does not respond in a loud voice or in massive gestures. The response of God is always quiet, it is always soft, and it is always perceived from within.

You may pray for rain and the rain comes. The fact that the rain arrives is in itself not a direct response to the prayer for rain. The response that is appropriate is the acknowledgement that rain, all rain wherever, is part of the system of creativity. It is part of the universe of All That Is, and the source for that rain is God. The response to the prayer is in your acknowledgment that God provides for all within creation. We do not say it is wrong to pray for rain; we say it is right to acknowledge from whence the rain comes. When you recognize the source of the rain, you are acknowledging God as the provider, and it is that knowledge that gives nourishment and provides light to life.

Praying for healing is praying for balance. When there is illness, when there is grief, when there is anxiety or any kind of suffering, it is an indication that life as experienced by that particular person is not in balance. If you are ill, it is because of an imbalance in your physical selves. Illness doesn't just happen. God's response to healing, therefore, is a return to balance. Sometimes what is needed is emotional/spiritual balance more than some level of physical balance, for often the problems of the body relate to problems of the spirit. It is not that the soul is ill but that in some manner the body has lost a sense of contact with the spirit.

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When you are under great personal pressure, you become consumed by what needs to be done, accompanied often by a fear of failure. There is little attention given to the spiritual reality that exists alongside what it is that creates the anxiety, the worry, the concerns. It is this losing touch with what is ultimately important that exaggerates, that intensifies, that complicates matters of the body. Praying for healing then is praying for a balance to be returned. When your consciousness is directed toward what is permanent, what is then temporal has less command for your attention. The changing of balance, the enhancement of the spiritual and a reduction in concerns for the physical, really bring about the most appropriate healing one could pray for. The physical body has an enormous capacity for self-healing. But that potential, that ability is released, unlocked, empowered because of the strength of spirit. When someone feels lost in their anxiety, lost in their suffering, there is little to help replenish and restore.

You wonder about the relationship of your prayers to matters of life around you that may not be associated with physical disability and yet affect your lives considerably. How do you find that connection to God and how do you employ that connection in the resolution of concerns? You find God first in the face of another. We have mentioned the importance of experiencing love in order to then become loving. You experience God through others and in recognizing God's presence in another, you are able to reflect that presence outward in many directions. Your recognition of God comes from beyond your own personal limitations. Your ability to use that recognition depends solely on your capacity to see God in someone else. It may be one individual, it may be many, but the validity of God in your lives is given power through your observation of God's presence in the actions and attitudes of others.

When you feel frustrated and out of touch with God, being consumed by that sense of separation will not lead to a revelation of God. When you feel somehow separated, look to others and you will find a glimpse of God in your lives. When you feel alone, that is the time to reach out and support another. You look for an opportunity to engage meaningfully with another human being. How often you have experienced spending time with another person who you felt was in great need of your presence, only to experience the radiance of God reflected by the other that in turn enriches your own lives. It is a truth that in reaching out you experience what it means to be the recipient of love. It is not in every instant that as you reach out to another you find yourselves the recipient, but it is so common. It is an essential ingredient that is experienced when you engage compassionately with another.

When you are open to serving another out of a loving concern, you are in a condition of being a listener. When you visit someone who is ailing, you often find it most helpful to just be there, just be a presence, ready to engage in conversation if that is appropriate, ready to share in a supporting and loving silence when that is

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appropriate. And yet in that silence you may sense an overwhelming loving peace that is beyond your own experience and understanding.

There are of course times when you have needs to be loved and may not feel at the moment that you can be loving. The reservoir, as it were, needs to be filled. Such moments are common to all human beings, but when you feel desperate, when you feel separated from others who share your concerns, when you feel no one cares, we urge you to look for ways to be caring and to be connected. It is in such moments that you see God in the face of another. When you recognize God, when you recognize the presence of God in another, you are empowered, you are given strength, you are given a clearer view of the path that is appropriate to take.

When you have issues or special concerns for which you pray, you are then able to bring your experience of God in another to a commitment to find the right way for your own actions. But this commitment does not grow in a vacuum. It grows through recognition, the recognition of God's presence. You can not be committed in theory to reflecting God in life around you. Such a commitment is empty and vain. But when you observe God's presence, the commitment follows naturally and you are strengthened for the journey ahead.

You connect to souls around you through commitment, either to support and uphold another or through a commitment that reflects shared beliefs. To be successful in achieving whatever goals you seek, your commitment must be based on your perception—not your imagination—your perception of God. All who are successful in their human lives in providing appropriate opportunities for spiritual growth are successful only because of their perception of God that forms the basis of commitment. Your perception of God is achieved through listening—not listening with your ears necessarily, but listening with your hearts, listening with your eyes. You can learn much about others by looking into their eyes. The eyes tell what words cannot say. Such listening is essential for your own growth and the growth of others.

Each of you is blessed in your ability, your potential to listen. But we challenge each of you to go beyond yourselves and be willing to listen to the one in whose company you stand. It is in that listening that your vision, your perception, is made astoundingly clear.

We are blessed in our lives by our vision, by our capacity to understand the divinity of another soul. It is the way we communicate; it is the way we relate. We recognize this through listening. You within human form can also exercise the same skills. Each of you has them. All human beings have them. Many never exercise the ability to listen and yet they continue on the path to spiritual growth. But for those of you who are aware of what is permanent in life, you are given the opportunity to exercise that awareness in ways that bring meaning to others, bring meaning to commitment, bring meaning to love.

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Be warmed by the light of your souls, but be willing to be warmed by the light of other souls, and it will be from that light that you will in turn be given light. Absorb it, magnify it and reflect it outward. Be blessed in your listening, be blessed in your vision, be blessed by the God you see in another.

Amen.