

JOHN DEVRIES

why pray?

40 days – from words to relationship



Grand Rapids, Michigan

DAY 2

Prayer is sitting on God's lap

My wife and I are blessed with thirteen grandchildren (as of this writing). The oldest is ten, and ten of them are boys! In that crowd is six-year-old Andrew, whose other set of grandparents, Nanna and Poppa Dykstra, are dairy farmers in Nova Scotia.

When he turned six, Andrew spent a week with Nanna and Poppa Dykstra on their farm, “helping” in the barn and on the tractor. Of course Nanna and Poppa doted on him, as loving grandparents will, telling Andrew they just couldn’t imagine how they got along on the farm without him!

When he left at the end of the week, their accolades rang in his little ears, and his head was swollen with pride—how he had helped them! They called regularly, and each phone call ended with talking to Andrew and asking when he could

possibly get back to the farm to help out. It was so hard without him, they said, although they were getting by—but they could hardly wait!

Well, the little fellow took this seriously —so seriously that in his prayer circle at Sunday school he offered lengthy prayers asking God to help Nanna and Poppa because they had so much trouble running the farm without him.

How my wife and I laughed when our daughter, Mary, told us this story! Then God nudged me a bit, saying, “John, you’ve been like little Andrew with Me! You’ve treated Me like a helper in the sky, thinking that all the work has fallen on your shoulders. You laugh, in love, at your little grandson’s inflated ideas of how he is needed on the farm, but don’t you think that I, with love and delight, have laughed at all your exaggerated and puffed up ideas of importance in My kingdom?”

Since then, I have often thought of little Andrew on Poppa’s lap as they lumbered off on the tractor to do some field work. This image strikes me as a picture of myself in prayer. Prayer is the dependent

relationship in which I sit on the lap of my heavenly Father and put my hand on His as He steers the tractor. After all, He not only owns and drives the tractor, but He also owns the farm! And when the old Enemy, Satan, plays tricks on my mind, tempting me to think I don't matter to God, I ask myself what experiences on the tractor must have been most memorable for Poppa Dykstra. The answer, of course, is that of all the hours spent on the tractor, none were so precious as when he had his little Andrew on his lap and together they drove out to work in the field. As my heavenly Father looks back, surely the moments of greatest delight in His relationship with me were when I, in childlike dependence and faith, climbed into His lap in prayer, put my little hand on His big hand, and said, "Father, could we drive the tractor over here?"

God warns me, as Poppa Dykstra warned Andrew, "Don't ever get on the tractor alone! I want you on the tractor, but only when I am with you!" In other words, don't try sitting alone in the driver's seat of your life. See yourself in a prayer relationship, in a

relationship of dependency, trusting God to guide you.

The fields that are ripe for harvest are God's. He owns the tractor, and He knows where to plow. Only when we, like little children, climb into God's lap in prayer, feel His arms of love around us, and experience the security of having our hands on His while He guides the steering wheel—only then will missions move!

I've had Andrew and other grandchildren on my own lap while mowing my lawn with a borrowed tractor. Feeling so comfortable and secure, more than once they've fallen asleep as we are riding. If you sometimes fall asleep in prayer while you are "sitting on God's lap," don't worry or feel as if you've disappointed God. If your Father needs you, He will wake you. Your quiet heart is a joy to Him. Prayer is meant to involve the same delight a little child feels on a grandfather's lap—and so much security that you might drift off to sleep!

PRAYER IS SITTING ON GOD'S LAP

Reflect/Discuss:

In what ways are you like Andrew, believing that his grandma and grandpa could not get along without him on the farm?

Meditate:

Prayer is a delightful position of dependency on God.

why pray?

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