 **A Community Teaching Moment**

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**Situation: Participation in group prayer**

A general understanding all around is that community prayer is different than private personal prayer. While people pray individually, there is a sense of “flow” when all are participating together and aware of subject matter, rather than a disjointed pace in which people pray with no awareness of what others have spoken. It is also to be understood that prayer is TO our Father, and not to be directed toward things we’d like people to know. Community prayer becomes more “natural” with more practice and as we become more familiar with one another’s prayer style/language.

**Infant:** An infant can’t participate in verbal prayer as far as we know, though YHWH knows what is happening in their spirit! The key for an infant is to hold still long enough ***to receive*** the needed care that they don’t like or think they don’t need. This is also true for older children and adults who have not yet mastered this ability to receive. So infants won’t generally have much problem receiving prayer!

**Child response**:   A child has learned to care for their ***own needs*** but is in the process of understanding the need to also care for others appropriately. They may be shy and uncomfortable about praying out loud but with encouragement certainly can, whether in a family or a community setting. Their prayers may generally be more focused on their direct personal concerns, simple and straightforward, for themselves and people close to them. They may certainly also be encouraged to pick Scripture references to include. We encourage children to participate in prayer but may provide guidance as needed. As personal prayer life grows, the ability to pray corporately may also grow. We do not want to ignore moments when the Ruach inspires prayers, which could be at any age.

**Adult/parent response**:  An adult or parent recognizes that one needs to care for ***one owns needs as well as others.*** Their prayers may be personal or community in nature, expressing awareness of their own needs as well as concerns others have. As one matures in prayer life, the scope of prayer and concern for others seems to widen, from personal, family and community, to all of Yah’s people. Though all may at times return to personal childlike concerns and needs, because we are all as children to Him, still there seems to be an overall move toward more Scripturally based prayer and intercession and praise. Maturing adults/parents are more likely to be praying more from the perspective of asking for Yah’s perspective/heart to become theirs, rather than regularly asking for His favor to do something for them. It is desirable to hear Scripture incorporated in prayers as one prays for self and others and this seems more likely as one matures in faith.

**Elder response:**  An elder has raised their own children and is ***now looking toward the needs, growth and maturity of the entire community***, seeing what may be needed especially for those who didn’t have a parent or a previous faith community that was able to instruct them wisely.

1) same as 1 and 2 choices of an adult or parent

2) **plus** may use this the opportunity of corporate prayer to share with entire community of all ages to teach those who never had the advantage of such opportunities to learn. Such teaching might be both by personal modeling and by providing suggestions/training for growing in prayer life. Elders may need to redirect inappropriate prayer content or address an issue such as prayer coming from a victim perspective toward a more productive stance.

**Php 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.**

**Jas 5:16 Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.**

**Col 4:2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;**

**1Th 5:17 Pray without ceasing.**

**Act 6:4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.**

**Jas 4:8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded.**

**Eph 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.**