

“COMING HOME TO THE FATHER’S HEART THROUGH PRAYER”

FINDING THE HEART OF THE FATHER EVERY DAY

We often share with our counselees that in order to be able to fully “come home” to the Father’s house (God’s heart) and rest in that place, we must be willing to allow the Father to take us back to the homes where we grew up as children. We must be willing to allow Him to show us the places of blessing as well as the places where wounds occurred—so that we can walk in the freedom of forgiveness and His love. But in order for this to occur, we must know and believe that the Father’s heart is for us and that He so desires us to come to Him—just as we are. One of the best expressions of the true nature of the heart of God the Father (apart from Scripture) was written by Richard Foster at the beginning of his book, “Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home.” He titled this introduction, “Coming Home: An Invitation to Prayer,” and it is just as relevant for us today as it was when he wrote it in 1992. As you read this excerpt, allow these “truths” to bathe your soul and draw you closer to His heart.

COMING HOME: AN INVITATION TO PRAYER (by Richard Foster)

God has graciously allowed me to catch a glimpse into his heart, and I want to share with you what I have seen. Today the heart of God is an open wound of love. He aches over our distance and preoccupation. He mourns that we do not draw near to him. He grieves that we have forgotten him. He weeps over our obsession with muchness and manyness. He longs for our presence.

And he is inviting you—and me—to come home, to come home to where we belong, to come home to that for which we were created. His arms are stretched out wide to receive us. His heart is enlarged to take us in.

For too long we have been in a far country: a country of noise and hurry and crowds, a country of climb and push and shove, a country of frustration and fear and intimidation. And he welcomes us home: home to serenity and peace and joy, home to friendship and fellowship and openness, home to intimacy and acceptance and affirmation.

We do not need to be shy. He invites us into the living room of his heart, where we can put on old slippers and share freely. He invites us into the kitchen of his friendship, where chatter and batter mix in good fun. He invites us into the dining room of his strength, where we can feast to our heart's delight. He invites us into the study of his wisdom, where we can learn and grow and stretch . . . and ask all the questions we want. He invites us into the workshop of his creativity, where we can be co-laborers with him, working together to determine the outcomes of events. He invites us into the bedroom of his rest, where new peace is found and where we can be naked and vulnerable and free. It is also the place of deepest intimacy, where we know and are known to the fullest.

The Key and the Door

The key to this home, this heart of God, is prayer. Perhaps you have never prayed before except in anguish or terror. It may be that the only time the Divine Name has been on your lips has been in angry expletives. Never mind. I am here to

tell you that the Father's heart is open wide—you are welcome to come in.

Perhaps you do not believe in prayer. You may have tried to pray and were profoundly disappointed . . . and disillusioned. You seem to have little faith, or none. It does not matter. The Father's heart is open wide—you are welcome to come in.

Perhaps you are bruised and broken by the pressures of life. Others have wronged you, and you feel scarred for life. You have old, painful memories that have never been healed. You avoid prayer because you feel too distant, too unworthy, too defiled. Do not despair. The Father's heart is open wide—you are welcome to come in.

Perhaps you have prayed for many years, but the words have grown brittle and cold. Little ever happens anymore. God seems remote and inaccessible. Listen to me. The Father's heart is open wide—you are welcome to come in.

Perhaps prayer is the delight of your life. You have lived in the divine milieu for a long time and can attest to its goodness. But you long for more: more power, more love, more of God in your life. Believe me. The Father's heart is open wide—you too are welcome to come higher up and deeper in.

If the key is prayer, the door is Jesus Christ. How good of God to provide us a way into his heart. He knows that we are stiff-necked and hard-hearted, so he has provided a means of entrance. Jesus, the Christ, lived a perfect life, died in our place, and rose *victorious* over all the dark powers so that we might live through him. This is wonderfully good news. No longer do we have to stand outside, barred from nearness to God by our rebellion. We may now enter through the door of God's grace and mercy in Jesus Christ. [END]

PLEASE PRAY WITH US . . .

Father, first of all, thank You for providing us a way into Your heart . . . through Your Son. Thank you that when I look at Jesus, I am looking at You. And Father, as I read and reflect on who You are and the goodness of Your heart, please help me to take these truths deep into my heart and my spirit. I want to fully and freely enter in to Your heart of love for me so that I can love you more, love myself more, and love others more. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

From the Father's Heart,

Jerry and Denise Basel