

NEW YEAR – NEW HABIT

For many, the entry into a New Year means New Year's resolutions which may include getting your body in shape, eating better, an educational pursuit, or going after that job promotion, to name several that readily come to mind. It's been said that it takes twenty-one (21) days to develop a new (good or bad) habit. As Christians, we should forever be growing and looking for ways to draw closer to God so that we do not become stale in our spiritual journey, for the short time we have here.

Since the beginning of Church of the Highlands (COTH) in 2001, the leadership has set the people's hearts to be a people of prayer. Our rally cry is simply this, "Pray First," in every situation, whether good or bad. On January 6, we started 21 days of church-wide prayer. Recall the number of days it takes to develop a habit. This is one of those good ones! Each day, for 21 days, we either meet at a particular campus location or connect online for one (1) hour of praise, worship, and individual prayer. During the weekday, we come together in some form or fashion at 6 am. If you want to draw closer to our Lord, then I encourage you to become a man or woman of prayer. My parents were and still are.

Prayer should be our first response, not our last resort. Many times people act in haste and then want God to bail them out of the situation. Sadly to say, been there, done that. We find in Scripture that Jesus was a model God/man to follow when it comes to prayer. When we pray, as Jesus did in the Garden of Gethsemane, you and I will find that our will, will yield to God's will, if our heart and motives are right.

Out of the COTH prayer guide, I've extracted several bulleted examples of when we should pray. "Let's pray:

- Before the day begins ...
- Before you go to bed ...
- Before you go to work or school ...
- Before you send that e-mail or text ...
- Before you eat, drive or travel ...
- When bad things happen ...
- Before bad things happen ...
- In every situation – PRAY FIRST!"

You get the point! Prayer changes things, and the first place we should look for change is in our own lives.

Although our 21 days of prayer and fasting has ended, COTH has archived all the prayer services. If you would like to start from this day forward, you can connect at your convenience at <https://21days.churchofthehighlands.com/media> to commit yourself to daily worship, prayer, and some personal prayer focus for the next 21 days.

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If you're already a man or woman of prayer, then likely there are other ways you can be closer to God this year, than in the past. The Holy Spirit will show you, if you ask Him with a sincere, hungry heart.

With a spiritually, hungry heart, I'm going after God with stronger intensity in several areas of my life's service and ministry. I want to look back on 2019 and exclaim, "WOW," look what the Lord has done!

*David L. Hamil
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