



Too Busy to Pray?

By Jonathan Graf

A colleague of mine, Mike Jebb of Strategic Prayer Initiative, has discovered something interesting about prayer—or the lack thereof. He develops research tools to help churches analyze their people's levels of prayer. In his test studies, he discovered that the number one reason people do not pray (more than 80%) is busyness.

That is the main reason in my life as well. While I may want to have a longer prayer time, often as I try, I continually think about the things I have to do—and soon go to them. Too many of us view prayer as something we have to do in a chair first thing in the morning. We don't have time for thirty minutes of prayer then, so we forget about prayer. But it doesn't have to be that way. We can overcome busyness by looking at more creative times to pray.

A few years ago, my family moved from Colorado Springs, Colorado to rural Indiana. The country property we bought has 19 acres—13 of them are mowed grass! Even with two 60-inch cutting surface mowers, it takes us around six hours to mow each week. I have discovered that mowing provides a great place to pray! In fact, I now love to mow. If I get frustrated with something at work (I work in a home office), I go out and mow—and pray!

What are your moments of mindless activity? We can pray in the car, on the mower, in the shower, as we are walking to the mailbox. Brother Lawrence, the author of the classic, *Practicing the Presence of God*, used to pray while washing pots and pans.

Busyness need not be our excuse. Find the times you are doing something “mentally mindless,” where you don't have to engage your brain. You can keep doing the task while thinking about something else. Then use those times to connect with God! Mike Jebb teaches people to pray during a very unique time. Partially as a way to prove they do have time, he instructs them to mute the TV during one two-minute commercial break and use the time to pray. Many people start muting the TV multiple times, and even turn it off altogether to pray.

My Grandfather Graf, who was a pastor from the 1940s to the mid-70s, had an interesting habit. As a little kid, I remember something that happened a lot when he played games with us. When it was his turn, often you'd have to get his attention—he seemed to be in a “trance” or daydreaming. We would say, “Wake up, Grandpa, wake up.” He would come out of his “trance” by sighing and saying, “Bless the Lord, bless the Lord.” I didn't realize it at the time, but I do now, that he was communing with God. Any opportunity to daydream took his mind right to the throne room. That's what I want for my prayer life. How about you? I'm looking for those mindless moments—to pray!

Jonathan Graf is author of The Power of Personal Prayer and the president of the Church Prayer Leaders Network. The CPLN will be holding its 8th annual national prayer convention at Shandon Baptist Church in Columbia, June 11-13. Go to www.prayerleader.com for more information.

