

The Importance of Prayer

by Sandra G. Clopine

“O God, You are my very best favorite!”

These words ring clearly in my mind, although a pastor's preschool daughter prayed them years ago. Alexa was kneeling beside me during a Sunday evening service. I can still hear the animated, childish enthusiasm in her voice. Alexa prayed to the God she adored.

I'm reminded of another young child who came to me while I was itinerating to return to Africa. Phil held one of my prayer cards in his hand, exclaiming, “Every time I look at this, I'm going to pray for you!”

Adults can easily discount prayers like Alexa and Phil's, for they are just children. But God looks at them differently; in fact, Scripture confirms this.

Jesus Set the Example

In Matthew 19:13–15, little children were brought to Jesus. The disciples rebuked those who brought them, probably feeling that Jesus was too busy to be bothered by children. Jesus, however, responded, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them; for the

kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these (verse 14). He then laid His hands on them and blessed them.

The tenderness and respect Jesus exhibited probably shocked those who stood by. The Greco-Roman mindset viewed children as insignificant. Children were necessary for a family's survival, but they were not valued in them-



...selves. Many unwanted infants were abandoned and left to die. Those who were rescued were often raised as slaves or prostitutes. Some pagan societies today still hold to these notions.

Christian societies must be different. We need to adhere to Christ's example of loving chil-

dren. Why do we find in “Christian America” an attitude that considers children a burden or inconvenience? Why do we see multiplied thousands of babies aborted each year, children left homeless, and others treated like playthings in the hands of pornographers? How sad that millions of prospective intercessors have been eliminated, or have had their childhood trust shattered.

God help us as a Fellowship to invest our best in children. Sunday School, children's church, Missionettes, and Royal Rangers provide instruction and practical experience in prayer. Children of all ages can enjoy God's presence and believe Him for their needs.

Those who have counseled at children's camps have witnessed powerful prayer meetings involving little people. When encouraged, children find it easy to yield to God. I can think of no greater thrill than seeing a move of the Holy Spirit on children. To hear them pray and worship God in other tongues—in languages they have not learned—can convince the most skeptical adult. No wonder Jesus stated,

