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The Naz Prayer Ministry



## The Agenda of Hope

A few years ago a police raid took place at a former discount furniture store turned outlet warehouse that had more recently morphed yet again into what appeared to be a fashion discount center. As it turned out, it was filled with knockoffs of Gucci bags and a host of other products with equally impressive labels sewn in. All over Ohio, there were probably style-conscious shoppers spilling into emergency rooms to be treated for shock.

Where there is the genuine or authentic, there will always be the knockoffs, the counterfeits.  
Prayer in no exception.

Religious practices all over the world include rituals that are commonly called “prayer.” Tribal communities turn to their shamans or witch doctors. Other traditions include spiritualists in any number of forms. And in every case, the practices that pass for prayer are rituals designed to manipulate the gods or spirits. Great effort is expended looking back on those times when there was a bumper crop or an exceptionally low death rate of livestock or less flooding of the river basin or any number of positive and desirable conditions. Next, the attention turns to identifying what specific variations of the rituals were used, at what times they took place, and who did or did not participate. The hope is to reproduce those same events and rituals and thus obligate the spirits to provide the same results as before.

This is a practice of prayer anchored in the agenda of the pray-ers.

But for the one who walks with the God of creation, who knows the wonder of grace and has discovered the reality of the eternal, prayer is anchored in God’s invitation to embrace *His* agenda.

Jesus Himself spoke of this in John 6:38:

For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will (NLT).

When facing temptation in the wilderness, Jesus resisted the response of the flesh and in prayer anchored Himself to the eternal realities of the Father. When facing the cross, He chose to set aside the human anguish that gripped Him and declared that the only thing that mattered was God’s perspective and purpose:

He...knelt down and prayed, “Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine” (Luke 22:41-42, NLT).

Prayer – authentic prayer – listens to the heart of the Father.

In Romans 8:26 when Paul reminds us that the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses, the example he chooses in making that point is how we pray. He rightfully notes that we really do not know how we should pray unless we take our cues from the prompting of the Spirit of God.

The lens of God’s agenda of grace and hope redefines the twists and turns, the pressures and the unexpected, into kaleidoscopes of wonder and peace. Walking through each day anchored in an attentiveness to His heart allows His medley of mercy to let hope and grace to be carried by the current of faith to His throne.

## Taking Our Next Step Together

Lord God, awaken us to a fresh perspective of prayer in which we are anchored to Your agenda of grace and truth. Help us to realize that we see only with earthly eyes and without the prompting of Your Spirit to the pulse of Your agenda, we can only ask in meagerness instead of the richness You long for us to experience.