

## Bold to Pray

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*But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. Matthew 6:6 NRSV*

My friend Shirley once told that her mother insisted that she learn to pray the Psalms every day. It was a spiritual habit that she should develop, and she should be bold when she prayed.

As she grew older, Shirley became increasingly aware of the horrors and tragedies in the world. She was particularly affected by the construction of the Berlin Wall. The last bit of concrete and barbed wire went into place on August 13, 1961. The barrier separated German families and neighbors and divided a people into East and West. The wall was both a physical presence and a symbol of a humanitarian crisis and oppression. Soon after the wall was completed refugees began crafting escape plans to flee from the tyranny of East Berlin to the freedom and opportunities of the West. Many people died, trying to escape the horrors, and Shirley was heartbroken.

Shirley's mother was both practical and faithful and she told Shirley to go to her secret closet and pray for the end of the Berlin Wall, the end of tyranny, and the reunification of families and friends. Shirley protested, claiming that her prayers would not change the hearts and minds of those leaders. What could her simple little prayer do to change history?

But her mother insisted, and Shirley did as she was instructed. Every day, as she prayed the Psalms; every day, Shirley prayed for the end of the Berlin Wall.

Even when she was grown and had left her mother's house, Shirley continued her daily habit of praying the Psalms and included her prayer for the de-construction of the Berlin Wall along with her other petitions for family and friends and unjust circumstances. Every day she prayed. For more than 28 years she prayed that God would relieve the misery and suffering caused by the Berlin Wall. Finally, on the night of November 9, 1989 Shirley heard the answer to her prayer on the evening news.... the Wall had fallen, and reunification could begin. Shattered families and lives could be restored.

Shirley shared her story to encourage others to be bold when we pray. We ought not ever try to put a limit on God's mercy and power. God can and does hear our prayers. God can and does answer the prayers of the faithful in God's own timing.

Rev. Shirley Lynn touched the lives of many people, having loved and taught and prayed for all. She passed away on July 2, 2020 just a few days short of her 85th birthday.

*Lord, in your mercy hear our prayers. God of grace and power, thank you for giving us faithful leaders who teach us to boldly pray in your name. Amen.*

*Blessings,*

*Rev. Dell King*

*Interim Associate Pastor*

