

# Chapter-2

## Prayer Popping

As a prayer popper, I stay in touch with God. I send lots of spiritual postcards. Little bits and bytes of adoration, supplication, and information attached to prayer darts speed in God's direction all day long. A friend of mine calls postcards "maintenance mail." Instead of waiting to write a Pulitzer-prize winning letter, she sends frequent postcards to maintain the relationship. It is a good means of communication, certainly better than nothing. But thinking that any relationship will grow when I'm only willing to commit two or three minutes of time or 2 inches by 3 inches of space is delusion. How often can I receive postcards from a friend that say "All's well, hope you're okay, thinking of you, back soon," and believe that I am really important? Though God probably appreciates my regular check-ins, "Hi God, Bye God" doesn't feel much like a formula for creating intimacy or a relationship with much depth.

For me, intimacy requires more than a minute here and there; it requires time. **And it requires time after time of time.** The word "intimacy" has its roots in an alteration of the Latin *intime* (Merriam-Webster-online). Although there are no etymological connections, adding a space results in the sweet coincidence of *in time*.

Since words elude me when I need them most, I learned long ago that I cannot count on *quality* time with God when I want to pray. I need *quantity* and regularity. **Quality is not something I can predict.** My husband, Andy, and I might schedule an elaborate evening out with candles and a gourmet meal, but there is no

guarantee that we'll have a wonderful time. Much of our intimacy has been created in the daily-daily of spending time together—chopping onions and peppers side-by-side in the kitchen, reading together on the couch, sitting on the front step watching our sons ride bikes, and making plans for our life together.

So I need a way to pray that gives me time. I need a way to pray that does not require lengthy, prize-winning words. I need a way to pray that suits my short attention span, my restless body, and my inclination to live in my head.



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by Sybil MacBeth

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