

The Power of Influence

*To this end I labor;
struggling with all his energy,
which so powerfully works in me.*

Colossians 1:29

There's no single face of today's working woman. Laurie home schools most of her seven children. Cindy is a stay-at-home mom who telecommutes part-time to her downtown office, while Nancy travels to a different city most weeks for her corporate job. Judy, a single woman, works as a hospital chaplain, and Anne quit her job a year ago to care for her eighty-two-year-old father.

Whether our work takes us around the block or across the nation, we can become women of influence by becoming women of prayer. "Influence isn't about power and getting what we want," says Judith Couchman in *Designing a Woman's Life*. "It's about servanthood and giving our best to others, whatever our position in life." Powerful, effective prayers make a difference as we partner with God to accomplish His work. With a servant's heart, we can build relational bridges and be a witness to God's love and saving power to those with whom we interact.

Whatever our station in life, we can pray powerfully as we intercede persistently for others. We need to keep at it, as we would our work. "A lack of endurance is one of the greatest causes of defeat, especially in prayer," writes Dutch Sheets in *Intercessory Prayer*. "We don't wait well. We're into microwaving; God, on the other hand, is usually into marinating."

Prayer as a priority will help us juggle the multiple, often conflicting, duties of work, home, husband, children, friends, ministry, and, yes, even ourselves. In *Space for God*, Dan Postema says, "I used to write in my daily calendar '7-7:30 a.m.—Prayer.' But many times I passed that up. It was one more thing to pass by that day. Now I write '7-7:30 a.m.—God.' Somehow that's a lot harder to neglect."

When we pray, asking God to center us on Him and His good purposes, we'll find the balance we need in our work and life. We can ask for guidance and energy in determining priorities. We can lift up requests for a positive and helpful attitude at work and intercede for coworkers in conflict. We can pray for the ability and desire to serve with excellence, whether we work in the home or offsite. And we can thank God for the jobs we have—for the ability to shape and influence lives, whether they're our children's, our colleagues', or our clients'.

Prayer: Lord, I praise You and thank You for my work. You are full of goodness and grace. My occupation gives me the ability to shape lives and influence people in positive ways every day, whether it's taking time for teachable moments with my kids or being a listening ear for a coworker. Thank you for my job and the ability to be a "missionary" wherever my feet tread. Season my words so that others may taste and see that my Lord is good.

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