Clarion Review

Religion

A House of Prayer: Daily Devotion
Avril English
AuthorHouse UK
978-1-4772-3452-5
Three Stars (out of Five)

A House of Prayer is Avril English's daily devotional for readers who want to have a more active Christian prayer life.

In the ten-page preface, English tells the story of how the book came to be: it began with God telling her to ask for an electric typewriter for her birthday in 1989. This anecdote is an interesting start, but it leads to a fairly tedious narrative of how the book developed in starts and stops during the following decades. English's story includes failed attempts at publishing, personal struggles, God's effectualness in her life, and the insistence of friends and family that she write a book on prayer.

The introduction that follows the preface seems to backtrack, relating how English came to her faith. While in the hospital for surgery, English developed a relationship with another patient who told her about God and cautioned her to get rid of a book on Tarot cards that she had just received.

The bulk of the text contains daily, dated devotionals. Each day's entry offers a simple theme, such as "Complete Surrender," "He Will Be with Me," or "Keep Me in the Storm," followed by a short Bible passage and a prayer written by English. The entries also include a section called "Lessons To Be Learnt" that shares English's reflections on the Bible passage and are intended to encourage and exhort readers. Most of the devotions are between a page and a page and a half long.

English's thoughts may be applicable to the lives of most readers, covering typical and general topics like struggle and uncertainty. The book's content is accessible with even profound theological truths written in simple language. Readers may find English's prayers helpful and inspiring, but as with all scripted prayers, some may struggle to speak the words genuinely. The tone is formal but comfortable, which will appeal to many. English does not use

overly familiar language in relation to God; she sometimes calls him Father, but she stops short of addressing him as a friend or an equal. This seems to aptly represent both the closeness and reverence English feels in her relationship with God.

It is clear English reads scripture and prays often about everything in her life. Through this book, readers could build a daily habit of thinking about—and talking to God about—the spiritual matters most important to them.

Melissa Wuske