

A Nixon Suggestion on Prayer

Washington

President Nixon, looking vigorous and refreshed after his state of the Union message, urged Americans yesterday to join in silent prayer to determine God's will for the country.

"Too often we are a little too arrogant," he said in a 15-minute address to 2500 government officials, diplomats and clergymen and laymen from across the country.

"We try to talk and tell Him what we want. What all of us need to do, and what this nation needs to do, is to pray in silence and listen to

God to find out what he wants us to do."

The occasion was the 22nd annual National Prayer Breakfast, which was held in the Grand Ballroom of the Washington Hilton Hotel and at times evoked the feeling of an evangelistic rally.

Senator John C. Stennis (Dem-Miss.), who served as chairman for the affair, visibly moved the audience by telling how much prayer by him and others had meant in his recovery from wounds suffered during a mugging a year ago.

"Short, silent prayers were my rallying point in

those days," he declared. "The chief surgeon told me, 'A high hand entered your case.' I know that he means what he said."

In the principal address, Senator Harold E. Hughes (Dem-Iowa), who is leaving the Senate at the end of his current term to become a lay religious worker, told the breakfast crowd how religious faith had rescued him from alcoholism more than 20 years ago.

Hughes, who received a standing ovation at the end of what amounted to a sermon, said that God can use men's "indiscretions" to "build up his people."

The National Prayer Breakfast, which was initiated by President Eisenhower in 1953, is sponsored jointly by members of the weekly Senate and House prayer breakfasts.

Mr. Nixon spoke of the prayer life of Abraham Lincoln and recalled a conversation he had had with his grandmother, a devout Quaker, when he was a boy. He said that when he asked her why Quakers prayed in silence, she replied, "The purpose is not to tell God what thee wants but to find out what God wants for thee."

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