

THE LEVEL OF ANXIETY AND PRAYER

Summary

This article presents the findings of empirical psychological research conducted to show how anxiety determines prayer. The research was carried out in 2003 and involved 254 people aged 18 to 25. Those persons belong to the Roman Catholic Church and are associated in the Light-Life Movement in Krakow. The research used R. B. Catell's the *16 Personality Factor Questionnaire* and *My Prayer Questionnaire* constructed at the Psychology of Religion Chair of the Pontifical Academy of Theology in Cracow. The people were divided into two groups: those with low level of anxiety and those with high level of anxiety. Within those groups the basic dimensions of individual prayer were being analyzed: motivation, role, understanding, forms, request, circumstances and the emotional climate.

Between the two groups of assessed people some differences occurred. They concerned the fundamental direction of people addressing God in prayer. Persons with low levels of anxiety want through prayer to enter into mutual relation with the Addressee. According to them, prayer consists in dialogue, which they consciously practice. It finds its expression in their activity: searching for conditions for prayer, regularity, using proper forms of prayer, making use of the Holy Scripture. Prayer strengthens their contact with God, which is confirmed by the feelings they experience.

Respondents with high level of anxiety aim during prayer at obtaining help in their needs, which leads them into resigning from conducting authentic dialogue with God. The frequency of prayer depends upon their needed help at present. Treating prayer as a means of obtaining living support is expressed through request, which has its own prosperity as an object. They are less self-dependent and they prefer group prayer. In respect of feelings, they tend to be insatiable and experience difficulty in concentration. Significant differences between persons with low and high level of anxiety concerned: motivation, understanding, form, object of request, opportunity and emotional climate so the majority of the analyzed dimensions of prayer.