

11/27/05

Prayer, Pt. 1

Now that you have come to Christ and have seen the importance of the word of God, you also need to understand the importance God places on prayer to change the believer, the church and the world.

* The natural tendency to do everything and when everything fails, then we resort to pray, it should be the first thing we do!

If we know the word of God, then we will know how to pray, so we want to look at what the scriptures have to say about prayer.

Jesus said, "Whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive". Math. 21:22

* The context is under the requirements of a disciple, one of denying self!

Jesus said, "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The Spirit is truly ready but the flesh is weak". Mk. 14:38

E.M. Bounds said the about prayer and the church, "When the church is in the condition of prayer God's cause always flourishes and His kingdom on earth always triumphs. when the church fails to pray, God's cause decays and evil of every kind prevails. A prayerless pastor, church and Christian

are denying God's ability to direct and provide and man's privilege to ask and receive."

We want to ask three questions regarding prayer.

- I. What is prayer?
- II. How do we know what to pray for?
- III. Why should we pray?

I. What is prayer?

A. The scriptures tell us prayer is communication, man talking to God. Lk. 11:1-2

1. Our relationship to God is that of sons and daughters and He is our Father in heaven.
2. Our heavenly Father is interested in our needs.
3. Our heavenly Father is interested in hearing from us.
* Don't make your voice quiver or pray out of you normal voice, be yourself!

B. The scriptures tell us that prayer is not simply a tool or avenue to get my will, desires or wants accomplished but God's.

1. We are to pray according to the will of God so that He can answer our prayer.
1Jn. 5:13-14

- a. There are men that teach that if you pray “Your will be done”, it is a lack of faith”, this is unbiblical, Jesus did!
 - b. God’s will is found in God’s word, there are general and specific promises given to us.
2. We are to understand that prayer is to tap into the things of God, not simply to get things from God as Daniel sought the Lord for the plan for Israel. Dan. 9:1-3
- a. Prayer begins with God and ends with God.
 - b. Prayer is prompted by God and answered by God.
- C. The scriptures imply emphatically that prayer is a proclamation of total dependency on God. Ps. 73:25-26
- 1. God was obscured by the prosperity, the evil and the difficulties of life, until he went into the sanctuary of the Lord.
 - 2. God is to be our primary love: Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You.
 - 3. God is to be our primary strength; My flesh and my heart fail: But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.
- * Prayer brought him back to reality!

- D. The scriptures tell us that prayer is a matter of heart posture, not physical posture necessarily.
- 1. Jesus told of a Pharisee and a tax collector who went to pray, one prayed with himself the other prayed to God. Lk. 18:11-14
 - a. The Pharisee saw himself as self-righteous.
 - b. The publican saw himself as unworthy and humble.
 - 2. The position of the body can be on our feet, knees, backs, face to the ground, hands lifted up to heaven but if the heart is not humble, only desiring to be seen of men, God does not hear, it is hypocrisy. 1Kings 8:22, 54
 - a. There is a place for some of these in public.
 - b. There are others for private demonstration to God.

Illustration

Jesus is our greatest example of our need to pray as He prayerfully depending on the Father for everything.

* Prayer is not on option but an essential as the air we breath!

This is what prayer is!

II. How do we know what to pray for?

A. By knowing God's word which reveals God's will.

1. "Behold, I come in the volume of the book it is written of Me, to do thy will, O God". Heb. 10:7, Ps. 40:6-8
 - a. The revealed will of God we said is found in the word to be obeyed.
 - b. Then He will reveal His personal will!
2. "I beg you by the mercies of God that you present your body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and perfect will of God". Rom. 12:1-2

B. By praying in the Holy Spirit.

1. We have one weakness, we don't know what we should pray for as we ought, so the Spirit makes intercession for us. Rom. 8:26-27
 - a. The Greek is singular not plural as in the English.
 - b. The Spirit makes intercession.
2. We can pray in our heavenly language or our earthly one. 1Cor. 14:14-16

- a. Paul tells us he is in control while under the Spirit's influence.
 - b. When I don't know what to pray for, I pray according to the will of God by the Holy Spirit.
 - c. Not all speak with tongues and it is not the evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.
3. We are to pray in the Holy Spirit in order to build up ourselves in our most holy faith. Jude 20
 - a. Now this is a general command to all believers.
 - b. And if all don't have the gift of tongues how are we to fulfill this command?
 - c. If I do not speak in tongues, then I can fulfill this command by Romans. Rom. 8:26-27
- C. By knowing what Jesus taught in prayer.
- * Jesus gave an example of prayer for content not a pattern, nor can it be the Lord's prayer, for there are petitions for the forgiveness of sins. Matt. 6:5-13
1. Prayer is not to be used to bring attention to myself. Vs. 5
 - * By the manner of delivery, superlatives, etc.
 2. Prayer is not for man's ear but for God's. Vs. 6

- * To often people are speaking to man!
- 3. Prayer is not to be vain repetition. Vs. 7
* I use to pray like this as a Catholic!
- 4. Prayer is not informing God about something He doesn't know. Vs. 8
* His desire is that we ask, even as we of our children!
- 5. Prayer is marked by certain characteristics. Vs. 8-13
 - a. Our relationship, His dwelling and His holiness. Vs. 9
 - b. God's Kingdom to come and His will to be done. Vs. 10
 - c. Our dependency for our daily bread. Vs. 11
 - d. God's forgiveness of our sins. Vs. 12
 - 1) Be on guard for those who teach that you no longer have to ask forgiveness for sins after salvation!
 - 2) Forgiveness from sin is for salvation, as a Christian it is for ongoing fellowship.
 - e. Our deliverance from the evil one, Satan. Vs. 13a
* He will always come back at an opportune time!

Illustration

The prayers of the Bible clearly give evidence, that men and women knew what to pray for because

they knew God's word and were directed by the Holy Spirit.

This is how we know what to pray for?

III. Why should we pray?

A. Prayer is commanded by Jesus.

- 1. Jesus said, "Men ought always to pray". Lk. 18:1b
 - a. Prayer is an obligation to God.
 - b. You live in an attitude of prayer.
- 2. Paul said, "That we are to pray without ceasing". 1Thess. 5:17
 - a. Prayer is to be a regular practice.
 - b. Prayer is to mark a total dependency.

B. Prayer keeps me from losing heart.

- 1. Jesus said, "Men ought always to pray and not lose heart". Lk. 18b
 - a. My daughter was a difficult infant.
 - b. If my wife had not been a Christian, she would of lost her mind.
- 2. Paying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints. Eph. 6:18
 - a. Payer will open you eyes.
 - b. Don't trust what you see but what God reveals to you.
 - c. The servant of Elisha saw the Syrian army around the city and feared but

Elisha prayed, “Lord open his eyes”.
2Kings 6

C. Prayer protects me against anxiety.

1. Jesus said we are not to worry about the things of life but to learn from the birds and lilies of the field that if God provides for them daily, how much more for us.
Math. 6:25-34

* The birds and lilies of the field are used to teach us to depend on God.

2. Paul taught we are to be anxious for nothing but in all things by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving are to make our request known to God. Phil. 4:6

* All is to be brought to God in prayer!

3. Paul declares that the result is the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guarding our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Phi. 4:7
 - a. The purchase of this building was not very logical but God directed us and the peace of God was very evident.
 - b. The gymnasium was another direction of God without pressure.

D. Prayer is in order to see God work.

1. God told Jeremiah, “Call on Me and I will answer you, and I will show you

great and mighty things which you know not.” Jer. 33:3

- a. Our confidence is to be in God not our finances.
 - b. Our direction is to be by God’s leading.
2. Jesus said, “Pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers to His harvest.” Matt. 9:38
 - a. The bigger the ministry, the more people will be needed for ministry.
 - b. The responsibility is to every believer to find their place in the church body.

E. Prayerless lives are a sin.

1. The nation of Israel came to a place where they wanted a king like all the other nations.
2. The people were confronted by Samuel of any charges they might have against him but they assured him they had none.
3. The prophet charged them with their wickedness and they asked Samuel to pray for them.
4. Samuel said, “Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you. 1Sam. 12:23

Illustration

Martin Luther said, “I have so much work to do that I cannot get along without giving three hours daily to my best time to prayer”.

This is why we should we pray?

Conclusion

These three questions regarding prayer are very informative.

- I. What is prayer?
- II. How do we know what to pray for?
- III. Why should we pray?

Corrie ten Boom in her devotional for March 7 shares the following on prayer. “May we pray about little problems of my life, or only about the big ones? One day when I had a bad cold in the concentration camp, Betsie, my sister, prayed for a handkerchief for me. We laughed at the silliness of that prayer, but only a few minutes later a woman came by with a handkerchief for me! We do not know what God considers important. We do know that He answers prayers-even tiny ones.”

Now that you have come to know Christ, you need to be a man and woman of prayer!