

Prayer Is a Priority

Introduction:

1. There is an extensive outline with very much detail for those wanting to make a deeper study of this subject.
 2. We are not considering public prayer or prayer before meals but rather that habit of private prayer of God's saints.
 3. I fear a significant letdown after the great unity, revival, and zeal of several weeks ago. Prayer will keep us going.
 4. I could give examples of men outside Scripture, but it is not my manner. If Scripture does not move you, you are in sin.
 5. Let us consider for introduction and emphasis Ephesians 6:18; James 5:16-18; Matthew 17:14-21; and Acts 4:23-35.
- I. The POWER OF PRAYER
- A. Your voice can be heard in God's holy dwelling place, even in heaven (II Chr 30:27; Rev 5:8; 8:3-4).
 - B. Jacob wrestled with God in prayer . . . and prevailed . . . and was blessed (Ge 32:24-32; Hos 12:3-4).
 - C. Joshua prayed for the sun and moon to stop their movements against the Amorites (Joshua 10:6-14).
 - D. Hannah prayed for a son from a barren womb and got Samuel and much more (I Samuel 1; 2:20-21).
 - E. Solomon, intimidated by his office, asked for wisdom and got wealth too (I Kings 3:5-14).
 - F. Elisha prayed for twice Elijah's spirit – a hard but possible prayer that was answered (II Kgs 2:9-12).
 - G. Hezekiah was cured of a terminal illness and saw the sun reverse itself 10 degrees (II Kgs 20:1-11).
 - H. Jabez appears only once in Scripture in a genealogy, but he prayed effectually (I Chron 4:9-10).
 - I. Jonah's rebellion got him in a fishy mess, but God heard and answered his prayer (Jonah 2:1-10).
 - J. The thief on the cross prayed for his soul in the midst of guilt and hopelessness (Luke 23:42-43).
 - K. Cornelius prayed to God for further spiritual light, and God sent Simon Peter (Acts 10:1-6).
 - L. Peter was delivered from prison and guards chained to him by a church prayer meeting (Ac 12:5,17).
 - M. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much . . . like Elijah and rain (Jas 5:16-18).
- II. The PROMISES OF PRAYER
- A. Jesus taught that asking is the way to receiving, and James confirmed it again (Matt 7:7; James 4:2).
 - B. Jesus promised that our Heavenly Father is better than any earthly father (Matthew 7:9-11).
 - C. If two shall agree on earth as touching anything they shall ask, it will be done for them (Matt 18:19).
 - D. The LORD is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think (Eph 3:20; Jer 33:2-3).
 - E. Our LORD Jesus Christ promised the Holy Spirit to those who would ask the Father (Luke 11:13).
- III. The PRIORITY OF PRAYER (the importance we should put on prayer)
- A. We may have our greatest influence by prayer in our children, our families, our nation, our church, evangelism, against the devil, our health, our wisdom, our prosperity, our safety, spouses, Spirit, etc.
 - B. Five great men (Noah, Moses, Samuel, Job, Daniel) were great before God (Jer 15:1; Ezek 14:14).
 - C. It is a great part of New Testament Christianity (Acts 1:14,24; 2:42; 3:1; 4:31; 6:4,6).
 - D. We need to be a praying people to be delivered from this carnal and deceitful age in which we live.
 - E. How shall we obtain the grace we need without asking for it? For He has said we must ask for it.
 - F. How shall we truly pursue holiness without praying to the Holy God for His power and strength?
 - G. How can we allow things to distract or keep us from fellowship with God and obtaining His grace?
- IV. The PERSON OF PRAYER
- A. Prayer must be in the Holy Ghost (Jude 20; Ephesians 2:18; Eph 2:18; Romans 8:26-27).
 1. We walk in the Spirit without grieving or quenching (Gal 5:16-26; Eph 4:30; I Thess 5:19).
 2. We humble ourselves and pray by the Spirit's leading within us (Rom 8:15; Galatians 4:6).
 - B. Pray in truth (Ps 145:18; Pr 28:9) and righteousness (I John 3:22; Ps 84:11; Pr 15:8,29; I Pet 3:12).
 - C. Delighting in the LORD is an obvious and clear attitude for prayer (Ps 37:4; Is 58:13-14; Job 34:9).
 - D. Fervency is intense earnestness of the whole heart (Luke 22:44; II Kings 20:3; Jeremiah 29:12-13).
 - E. Boldness in prayer is Scriptural and proper (Heb 4:16 cp 10:19-22; Genesis 18:23-33).
 - F. Humility will denigrate us before Him and praise Him and His ability (I Peter 5:5-7).
 - G. Faith is essential to please God, especially in prayer (Heb 11:6; Matt 21:22; James 1:6-8).
 - H. Carelessness can be godly when based on His ability and promises (Phil 4:6-7; I Pet 5:7; Matt 6:34).
 - I. Reasonable efforts in our responsibility are necessary for effectual prayers (Ps 127:1-2; Matt 7:7-8).

- V. The POISON OF PRAYER
- A. If you live with unconfessed sin, you can shorten the LORD's hand (Psalm 66:18; Isaiah 59:1-2).
 - B. Asking amiss to consume it upon some personal lust (James 4:2-3; Psalm 78:18; John 6:26).
 - C. Improper relationships hinder prayer (I Pet 3:7; Matt 6:14-15; Luke 6:31-38; Psalm 18:25-26).
 - D. Forget an answer to your prayers, if you ask without faith (James 1:6-8; Matthew 21:17-22).
- VI. The PERSUASION OF PRAYER (it is righteous to reason with God in prayer)
- A. Remind God of promises He has made (Genesis 32:9-12; Number 14:17-21; Nehemiah 1:8-9).
 - B. Remind God how His answer will be perceived (Exodus 32:11-12; Psalm 58:6-11; 86:17).
 - C. Remind God of the practical affect of His answer (Psalm 6:5; 30:9; II Kings 19:15-19).
 - D. Remind God of the righteousness of the situation (Genesis 18:23-33; 19:29).
 - E. Remind God of your integrity and faithfulness (II Kings 20:3; Nehemiah 5:19; 13:14,22,31).
 - F. Remind God that He should wake up and sleep no more (Psalm 44:23; 59:4-5).
- VII. The PRACTICE OF PRAYER
- A. Three times a day (Psalm 55:17; Dan 6:10) and early in the morning are taught (Ps 5:3; Mark 1:35).
 - B. Weeping, which may indicate a fervent heart, is good (I Samuel 1:10; II Kings 20:5; Hebrews 5:7).
 - C. Fasting or depriving yourself of pleasure works (I Kg 21:27; Mt 17:20-21; Jonah 3:5-10; I Cor 7:5).
 - D. Kneeling is a Scriptural position of humility, worship, and begging (Psalm 95:6; Acts 20:36; 21:5).
 - E. Private prayer is far superior to public prayer (Matthew 6:5-6; 14:23; Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16; 9:18).
 - F. Wrestling is one of the most intense sports, so consider this when praying (Gen 32:24; Rom 12:12).
- VIII. The PARTICULARS OF PRAYER
- A. Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, as did John, after they observed Him pray (Luke 11:1).
 1. It is not a prayer for rote memorization. It is foolishly repeated verbatim as if magical.
 2. It gives us an outline of prayer to follow in mentally constructing our own prayers.
 - B. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (James 5:16b).
 1. **Prayer.** A solemn and humble request to God. Rather our effort it asks for God's help.
 2. **Effectual.** Producing its intended effect; effective. Only some praying is effectual praying.
 3. **Fervent.** Of persons and actions: ardent, intensely earnest. Casual efforts will get nothing.
 4. **Righteous.** Just, upright, virtuous; acting rightly or justly. Prayers of sinners are ignored.
 - J. Prayers can be short and avoid Pharisaism (Matt 23:14; I Kings 18:36-37; I Chr 4:10; II Chr 14:11).
 - K. Prayers can be long to show a fervent heart (Deut 9:24-25; Nehemiah 1:4; Luke 6:12).
 - L. Praise God in your prayers (I Samuel 2:1-10; Jeremiah 32:16-25).
 - M. Thank God in your prayers (Philippians 4:6-7; Colossians 4:2; Hebrews 13:15).
 - N. Confess to God in your prayers (Daniel 9:4,20; Ezra 10:1; Nehemiah 1:6).
 - O. Prayer is with understanding (I Cor 14:15) – not tongues by the Spirit nor form/tone without thought.
 - P. Prayer should be in the glorious name of Jesus Christ (John 14:13-14; 16:23; Acts 4:23-35).
- IX. The PURPOSE OF PRAYER
- A. Job prayed and sacrificed for his sons when they had feasts among themselves (Job 1:5).
 - B. Pray for wisdom (James 1:5). He has offered you wisdom as He did Solomon (I Kings 3:5).
 - C. Pray for the Holy Spirit, which we need in greater degrees each day (Luke 11:13; John 4:10).
 - D. Pray for those in authority for our benefit under their rule (I Timothy 2:1-2; Jeremiah 29:7).
 - E. Pray for holiness and godliness with God revealing our sins (Psalm 139:23-24; 26:2; Job 34:31-32).
- X. The PERSEVERANCE OF PRAYER
- A. Perseverance or persistence in prayer is important (Luke 16:1-8; 11:5-8; Matt 15:22-28).
 - B. We are not to give up (I Thessalonians 5:17; Colossians 4:2; Ephesians 6:18; Romans 12:12).
- XI. The PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER (the spirit we ought to have about prayer)
- A. What is man that Thou art mindful of him? It should deeply impress that God will hear our prayers.
 - B. We greatly esteem the fellowship and conversation of others we love and/or respect. This is God.