

PRAYER

Prayer is one of the greatest weapons for the Christian church and Christian individual. It is to be employed for spiritual warfare and fulfillment of God's will and ways. Much is determined by the prayers of God's people; much is determined by the absence of prayers from God's people. Prayer is a life time pursuit to grasp and better ourselves for the Lord's glory and His kingdom's will. Because you are reading these pages, it is found in you that God has birthed a desire to pray. Many saints have said at the end of their lives, their one regret was that they wished they had prayed more. We will seek to change that, that this not be said at the end of our way. But let us be resolved as the Psalmist said, 'I give myself unto prayer'.

Prayer ministry is designed to begin in the one and birth to others. As Christ prayed, so His disciples came to Him and asked, "Lord, teach us to pray." And as the disciples prayed at Pentecost, it was the church praying that sent forth and commissioned Paul and Barnabas to begin reaching the world. Prayer ministry is designed for one purpose, for God's glory. 'Whether therefore ye eat, or drink or whatsoever you do (prayer), do all to the glory of God.' 1 Cor. 10:31 Prayer ministry becomes ineffective when that focus is lost from God's glory to man's desires.

In the prayer life it is always the battle, flesh vs. spirit; the "spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak". One must always be striving to maintain spirit over flesh. Too often in prayer meetings and prayer times, the focus is largely on self, rather than the Savior. Much time is spent on the here and now, rather than the eternal; and much time is focused on our will rather than His will. There are numerous dangers for us to consider and be aware of, that we maintain a pure prayer ministry that accomplishes much for His kingdom and glory.

And when you know that prayer is our weapon of warfare, and that much can and will be accomplished by he/she who wields it well; know that our Lord's enemy will come to stop and destroy such a weapon. Satan and hell work furiously against a person, church that sets themselves to pray. Learning these truths will help us to overcome and be victorious. Failure in this will lead us to exist and continue ministry without the power of prayer.

For these times of study on prayer and prayer ministry we will focus on 3 issues:

1. Necessity of Prayer;
2. Motivation to Pray;
3. Purpose to Pray

I. Necessity of Prayer

Necessity is Need. Necessity of prayer is our need for God. In such times, as we see happening across the world, our nation, homes and hearts of men, we need God more than ever. This necessity for God is not our desires and wants. It is our absolute dependence upon God, for God's Presence and Being. Desires and wants are allowed to be asked for, but they are not necessarily necessities.

All that is involved in the Christian life must flow out of the presence of God. His Divine Presence sends forth all His Being – grace, mercy, power. (Exodus 34). Our very service, worship, prayer, duty is found in our necessity of God to fill us, use us, empower us, lead us and guide us. Without this necessity of God upon us, we quickly revert to humanism. And in that, great sin comes forth to the Christian, to the church. For they stop seeking God, and turn to the arm of flesh. There is no power, nor ability found for God's kingdom in humanism. It is as vile as any blasphemy of idolatry or false religions. Guard against humanism in the prayer meetings, prayer gatherings, and prayer times.

Prayer is a part of all religions. And all religious people pray. However, the difference between Christianity and false religions is found in Who/who they are praying to. And whether these God/gods can and will hear and answer the prayers of their followers. False religions pray more than most churches and Christians, yet they are unmoved by their lack of unanswered prayers. They have no faith in the gods to whom they are praying, yet they faithfully pray out of duty. Christians must pray in faith, lest we become guilty of the same sin of praying out of duty, without expectancy.

Hebrews 11:1, 6 – “Faith is the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen.”
Verse 6 – “But without faith it is impossible to please God.”

Need for Christ. Christians intimacy with Him comes through our times of prayer and alone with God. Such alone times with God is necessity of our walk with God. Out of this comes our love for Him. Out of this comes our power from Him. Out of this comes His Divine revealing to us. And when we hear from Him and receive so much from Him, from this comes expecting His faithfulness to hear and answer their prayers.

The need for us to pray and to learn how to pray effectively is not on how much we pray, but in what we pray. Religionists may pray for hours and never attain; the Christian may bow their head and pray and within minutes God hears and answers. Prayer is about our relationship with God. Prayer is to remind us of our ever present need for God. Everything is held and done by God and He has created that His work is done through His people's prayers. The necessity of prayer is not about how much we are doing it, nor is it even about whether our prayers are answered, but being in Him and with Him and accepting His will and way. Necessity of prayer is all about being with God.

Necessity of God. He holds our breath in His hands. (Daniel 5; Job 12) He knows how many breaths we take, how many steps, how many hairs upon our head. He knows all about us and within us. Our dependence must be upon Him for the things that are upon us and around us. For such a times as this, He has caused us to be born, in this day and time; in this place. He has caused us to hear and respond rightly to the Gospel and be saved. And He has birthed within us the call to pray for the necessity of His will to be done here on earth, as it is in heaven.

The range of these things to pray about, and over, is extreme. Some of the things, listed below, are life threatening and catastrophic; but there are others things of a more simplistic nature that requires of us to trust, ask and continue on. There are extreme needs that are presented to our prayer groups; there are lost souls to be prayed over daily; there are numerous issues to be often bringing before the Lord. Regardless of the nature of these petitions or supplications before Him, we are to be faithful to 'continue in prayer' before Him.

A persevering spirit of prayer is needed for these necessities to pray. The need to pray is constant, the needs to pray over are never ending. This is the life that prays moment by moment for the needs produces a necessity to pray unto Him. Samuel Chadwick said, 'a prayer life is a life that prays.' And our knowledge of knowing how much the need to pray is upon us compels us to go deeper with Him.

One of the battles of the prayer group will be, consistency. Great men and women of God developed a prayer time and never ceased all their life.

--David Livingstone;

--John Wesley;

--George Mueller;

--Rex Andrews;

--TW Hune, Don Miller;

--Andrew Murray & EM Bounds;

These Christians stayed before God, day in and day out. There was no hit and miss; there was no stopping & starting. The most affective prayer group will be the one that stays before Him.

Example – "100 year prayer meeting" 1727 – over 300 missionaries sent out by Moravians; Count Zinnedorf;

This is the spirit of prevailing before the Lord. This comes out of realization of our the necessity of prayer before God, with God and by God.

FERVENCY – URGENCY – EMERGENCY

Fervency – “the fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”; Intensity demonstrates the great necessity in prayers. Without fervency it becomes mundane and the fire burns out. All attacks of Satan seek to squelch the fervency of a prayer meeting and prayer gathering.

Urgency – “give me children, lest I die”; the urgency of our prayers is to demonstrate the necessity of prayer for the desired petition. Lost souls are one breath away from eternity, and we know not that they are not ready.

Emergency - “you have 40 days to repent”; “Moses, step aside, that I may consume them in a moment”; Such times of emergency are life and death. There are times of trials, tribulations, but then there are times of crisis, cataclysmic. These times mostly are unexpected, yet sometimes they are forewarned.

--What it is Not

Recognize the things consistent with God's will and ways;

Anything anti-God is not for or about the spirit of prayer;

--What it is

God's heart & mind;

God's kingdom;

God's will and way;

II. PURPOSE OF PRAYER

Purpose of praying is to accomplish God's will in God's way. Purpose of prayer is for God to reveal His will and way. Purpose of prayer is to move God for those things the Holy Ghost has stirred His people for. And out of this moving of the Holy Ghost we have the instruction, 'praying in the Holy Ghost'. From these prayers comes things to be prayed for and things prayed against.

--life & death;

--lostness & salvation;

--good & evil;

1. Who am I talking to?

Now, any person from nursery right on up to senior adult class could affirm, 'we are praying unto God'. Yet, one of the sins of the church today, is that we know too little of God. Paul writes, "that I may **know** Him". Peter writes, "grow in grace & **knowledge** of our Lord". Jesus prayed in John 17, 'this is life eternal, that they might **know** Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent.'

To know God and about God comes from the Word of God. God has revealed so much in the Scriptures of that which leads us to worship:

1. Names of God;

2. Attributes of God;

3. Word/Deeds of God;

That which we know of Him in the Word is consistent with what He has done for His church, people throughout the church's history.

This is the reason of defining the aspects of worship in prayer time. Worship in prayer time is all about God. Worship is reciting His Names; His attributes; and His works. It is declaration about what God has said about Himself and revealed about Himself. And the more the Christian knows about their Lord, the greater their faith should be in the One to Whom they are praying unto. But when little is known of Him, then other means must occupy to Whom we are praying. This is dangerous, for men will rely on what other men have said/prayed; what their opinion might be; or traditions of religion. Herein, Satan can manipulate about "Who we are praying Unto"

2. What allows and/or hinders our prayers?

The one section of this study is about the promises of God. Within the promises of God we have multiple verses declaring our access before God for the things of our heart, desires, and life. We have multiple verses giving us permission to ask, seek, knock. These are great reminders of our allowance to come before God. Yet, we also should know, that there are things that hinder praying before God. And these are as much as important as the promises of God. They work together not separately for the life of prayer.

Especially prayer groups must be accountable before each other for the sake of the one not hindering the prayers of the group.

Examples:

--the sin of Achan;

--unbelief; Mark 9;

--praying against God;

--Holy Ghost – resist; quench; grieve; limit;

3. What are we praying for?

As Christ prayed, it is our example, 'Let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless, not My will be done, but Thine.' The will of the Father is what we are praying for. Praying for things that please Him, agree with Him and bring glory to Him. To lose this, subverts us to lesser things that are not about God, but about man, and this is vanity.

Scripture teaches us what these things are for God. Paul wrote, 'let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.' Praying the mind and heart of God is absolutely right. God reveals His heart and mind as we are still before Him. "Be still and know that I am God". How much more should our prayers be about what's on God's heart and mind, rather than what's on our heart and mind.

This is the difference in the prayer movement today. Much time is spent on the physical, here and now; rather than the eternal. Prayer meeting times are consumed with physical requests and needs, and never a spiritual request is made. Not that physical requests are not to be shared and prayed over. But there should be as much spiritual as physical requests. There is much unbalance in this today. Guard against this when sharing requests; Give ear to this when you hear the prayers being offered up. Ask, 'are we praying more physical or spiritual? Are we praying God's heart or ours?'

4. What are we praying against?

Satan's activity, self, sins, hell, demons, anti-God, these are the things that we recognize against God's will and ways. And just as we prayed for the things of God's will and way, so we must pray against these things that are against Him.

Evil is always present in our day. Minds and hearts are evil affected. Satan owns them, manipulates them, whispers to them and guides them. God causes us to pray and uses our prayers against evil. Christ prayed, 'deliver them from evil (Evil One)'.

Example: God's Spirit reveals evil coming to pray against it. A forewarning.

Purpose of Prayer:

1. changes history;

Hezekiah;

Ahaz;

Moses;

Hannah;

2. moves heaven & hell;

--heaven to advance, hell to retreat; N-S-E-W directional prayers of land, nations, Rees Howell
WW II prayers for Britain & Ethiopia;

III. MOTIVATION TO PRAY

Motivation to pray is a great concern among church prayer groups and individual Christians. Many are stirred in a moment to pray more, to be more about prayer. And as quickly as the fire comes, it goes out. Satan, sin and self are the great extinguishers of prayer life. We are told by Paul in Corinthians that 'we are not ignorant of his devices'; but it would seem many in the church are. It is one thing to not know that we have lost our passion to pray; but it is quite another to know and continue on without passion to pray.

Recognizing Satan's tactics to rob us of our priority and passion to pray is a major offensive against the church. For Satan knows that if he can keep the church, the Christian from praying and prevailing, he takes the ground. Much ground of homes and hearts have been surrendered to evil due to the Christian loss of motivation to pray. Understanding this significance is needful, in this day and age of mounting evil and wickedness. We cannot afford to lose any more ground. This is why, motivation to pray, is so important day in and day out.

Scenarios

"Right now matters for ever." - RC Sproul

"The prayer life is a life that prays." – Samuel Chadwick

What does God see and hear going on right now? World; city; church; hearts & minds;

Remembrance of what is at stake if we pray and if we do not pray.

At times, because the flesh grows weary, and the attacks of Satan are harsh to keep us from prayer; we must focus on the importance of it and these are the motivations needed to 'continue in prayer.' So that when we get weary and ready to stop pursuing, these thoughts of reality and pray move us to begin to seek Him again. Far too many have had good intentions, only to let one day, turn into a week, turn into a month, turn into a normal way of life. This is a masterful attack by Satan to keep us from the throne room of God.

--Promises of God;

The promises of God comes from know God's Word. Found with in the Scriptures are multiple promises from God to His people. The more we know what God has said, the more we can rest in it. Knowing that God cannot lie, and that which He promised shall come to pass. When we don't know the Word of God, we rely on something other than Him.

Too many in the church are not good students of the Word. Many pastors and church members have confessed that they do not read the Bible. Many have been in the churches for decades and have never read the Bible through. 'Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman needeth not to be ashamed; rightly dividing the Word of God.' Negligence of the Word limits the possibilities of prayer.

Often a Christian will be given a sure word from the Lord. We call these promises verses. A promise verse is directed from God to that soul, and they are to anchor on it all their life. Faith and trusting God for His faithfulness regarding His promise to them. And when we go to prayer, we find the same thing needful, have a promise verse to anchor your prayers on as you approach Him.

"I will's of God – when God says "I will", that is an absolute. There are over 2000 'I will's of God in the Bible

--Contrast of God – Reciprocal Responses of God and man;

God's Nature and the Contrast of Himself revealed to us:

--God is Light; God dwells in the thick darkness;

--God is gracious & merciful; God is angry & fury;

--directions – God above, God beneath; God within/without;

--God's descriptive ways; God cannot look on sin, yet God sees all things; God will not hear certain prayers, yet God hears and knows all things;

Reciprocal Responses:

God has set forward His ways directly related to our ways. He responds according to our responses. Lists of these responses directly linked to our nation; our churches; our families; and our own hearts.

These are both positive and negative in responses.

Mark 8:38 – ashamed of God; He is ashamed of us;

Jonah 3:8 – 10 – if people repented, God would repent of evil;

II Timothy 2:12 – if we deny Him; He will deny us;

James 4:8 – Draw nigh unto Him, He will draw nigh unto us;

Leviticus 26:23, 24; 27, 28 – if we walk contrary to Him, He will walk contrary to us;

II Chronicles 24:20 – if we forsake Him, He will forsake us;

Deuteronomy 7:12 – if we keep and do, He will keep;

Hosea 4:6

I Samuel 15:23, 26 – rejected the Word of God, God rejected him;

Zechariah 7:13 – God cried to people, and they would not hear; now they will cry to God, and He will not hear;

There are 27 of these reciprocal response from God to us, based upon our response to Him. This again is another clear teaching of what you 'sow is what you reap'. Understanding the nature and responses of God is directly linked to all 3 areas of prayer for worship; confession and petition.

--Reality of What It is All About

Bottom line of everything from our existence to our service to Him, to our death is about one thing – ETERNITY!

One of the things least talked about, least understood is eternity by God's people.

Two things that will motivate us to press on and press in is:

1. Horrors of hell;
2. Glories of heaven;

Eternity is the priority focus for motivation to pray. However, the present moments of our reality are also pressed upon that impacts our future eternity. Our nation is under Remedial judgements right now. These remedial judgements have huge impacts on our future as a nation and for the state of the church.

Remedial Judgements:

Remedial judgements are sent from God, allowed by God and caused by God to remind a nation, church, or person that they have sinned against Him. The remedial judgement is sent for the sake of the people/person to recognize their sin, confess and repent. Unfortunately, usually it takes hardships, trials and tribulations to bring us back to where we need to be before Him. Always, our motivation must be, 'are we right with you Lord?' Recognizing the reality of our situation tunes us into what is going on in our world, day and time. Such judgements remind us to be much before the Lord. This becomes more of a role of intercession as we plead for our nation, church and family or person.

But as we see these remedial judgements refused and rejected. God's people "not getting serious about being serious about the most serious thing", then the judgements increase. IN Leviticus chapter 26, the warning is given and then when not heeded, it increase 7X greater judgement. So the remedial judgements go from 'bad to worse'. And what comes after worse – EPIDEMICS.

EPIDEMICS – the judgements on our nation, homes, streets, churches and individual hearts is life and death. Our future is at stake as a nation. And the impact on our generation and the next generation is a huge motivation to pray. Understanding these EPIDEMICS are crucial:

1. Drugs/Alcohol;
2. Plagues of Disease – cancer, STD's, flesh eating disease, etc.
3. Great Evil – mass shootings, homicides, murder-suicides & suicides;
4. Children – sexual abuse; neglect;
5. LGBT;
6. Natural Disasters;