



Week 44 - Prayer on Steroids

Prayer on Steroids

The Bible makes mention of where and when to pray. Looking at the encouragements for prayer in the Bible, we are left with the impression that, as disciples, we are to live lives bathed in prayer.

Places and Times for Prayer

- Alone, in secret (Matthew 6:6)
- With the people of God (Acts 1:13-14; 12:5; 13-3)
- Early, first priority (Mark 1:35)
- At all times (Ephesians 6:18)
- In the Church (Matthew 21:13 - Jesus called His house, a house of prayer)
- At meal times (1 Timothy 4:3-5)

When we pray faith-filled prayers, God's promises apply to us in the following ways:

God's Promises about Prayer

He hears us (1 John 5:14-15).

He will answer when it is His will (1 John 5:14-15).

Persistence pays off (Luke 18:1-8).

Asking is okay (Matthew 7:7).

Faith, a pure heart, and a forgiving spirit are important aspects to answered prayers. Jesus teaches about the power of prayers lifted with the right heart:

And Jesus answered saying to them, "Have faith in God. Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted him. Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you.

Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father

who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions.” (Mark 11:22-26)

This passage tells us to not let unforgiveness, unbelief or double-mindedness hinder us from receiving God’s promises.

Praying with scripture

Richard Pratt was born again while attending an informal prayer meeting. His book *Pray With Your Eyes Open* recommends “building a case” before the Lord when praying. Explain to God why a specific prayer request should be granted, on the basis of His will, as revealed in the Bible. This is especially helpful when praying with others. As we place each request into the broader context of God’s character, Word, and will, faith grows. Fresh insights enrich the lives of those who make the effort to bring heart, mind, need, and God’s Word together in God’s Presence.

The central, and largest, book of the Bible is a hymn book. World-changing Christian movements use Psalters, the book of Psalms set to music and designed to be sung through once a month. Gregorian chant was the hymnbook of the fearless missionaries who civilized Europe. The Calvinists who pioneered commonwealths around the world used Psalters as the core of their devotional lives.

Prayer with Fasting

“Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.” (Matthew 6:16-18)

In this passage, the Lord Jesus taught his disciples to fast. Notice that he said, “Whenever you fast” not “if you fast.” Fasting should be a regular part of the disciplined Christian’s lifestyle and walk with God. Some victories only come when one is serious enough to seek God in prayer and fasting. In the book of Acts, we see the leaders praying in preparation for a mission:

“Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away” (Acts 13:3). (As a side note: if you have health problems, such as diabetes, seek medical counsel before going on an extended fast.)

Hindrances to Answered Prayer

- Unforgiveness (Mark 11:25-26)
- Doubt and Unbelief (James 1:6-7)

· Wrong Motives (James 4:3)

· Marital Strife (1 Peter 3:7)

Our daily need for God is so great that we must get these hindrances dealt with so we can be in right relationship with Him.

Confessions of a Few who Couldn't Live without Prayer

John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church: "Without prayer God can do nothing."

Martin Luther, a catalyst for the Protestant Reformation: "I have so much to do that I must spend the first three hours in prayer."

John Bunyan, author of the classic, *Pilgrim's Progress*, "In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart."

Dr. Yonggi Cho, pastor of one of the largest churches in the world, "No historic or modern revival has ever taken place without people realizing that they must pray. I don't mean sentence prayers or moments of prayer or words of prayer, but I do mean long and concerted prayer and fasting before God." It is commonly known that Dr. Cho prays at least three hours daily.

Review

1. Name some of the times and places for prayer.
2. What are three important aspects for answered prayer? What are some of the hindrances to answered prayer?