

Powerful Prayer

Intro: The Bible has over 500 different references concerning prayer. This tells me that God is very much concerned about prayer and that if He takes that much time to put that many verses in His Word about prayer...He's pretty serious about the importance of it and so should we.

One of the biggest issues facing the church today is not that we don't pray, but we often don't pray effectively. In fact, The Bible is very clear on how Christians should pray and if we expect to have an abundant prayer life with God, our prayer life should model what the Bible clearly says about prayer.

Churches spend the majority of time stating that they need this or that they need that to accomplish the mission of Christ which is winning souls...we say that if only we had better facilities...if only we had more people...if only we had this program...if only we could do this or that...but loved ones, written in Scripture is the secret to accomplishing the mission of Christ effectively....we must **pray**.

We must be a people that are driven to prayer. When things are bad...we must pray...when things are good...we must pray...our time should be guarded against anything else that will steal that precious time in prayer away from our Heavenly Father....

We will never ever ever be effective saints in the Kingdom until we understand the importance of prayer and until we make time daily for it.

We talk often about how horrific the country is getting...Billy Graham once said, "To get nations back on their feet, we must first get down on our knees."

Other people often complain that they aren't able to pray because they can't use big words or they can't remember things...but Charles Stanley once said, "An unschooled man who knows how to meditate upon the Lord has learned far more than the man with the highest education who does not know how to meditate."

"Prayer is more powerful than habits, heredity, and natural tendencies. It can overcome all these. It is more powerful than the forces that hold the planets in place. Prayer, though it comes from the heart of an unlearned child of God, can suspend the laws of the universe, if such be God's will, just as the sun stood still when Joshua prayed. There is no other power on earth that the enemy of souls hates and fears as he does prayer. We are told that 'Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees.' " (Matilda Andross)

Church, we must come to an understanding that only through prayer will great and mighty things happen...the best days are yet to come, Amen! These great days will be accomplished with unified prayer. When a church begins to pray together...things begin to happen.

God chooses to move through the power of prayer...however, churches have neglected prayer and have sought after quick fixes to things...the Word tells us over and over again though that only through prayer can things happen!

*"Oh brother, **pray**; in spite of Satan, **pray**; spend hours in prayer; rather neglect friends than not pray; rather fast, and lose breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper - and sleep too - than not pray. And we must not talk about prayer...We Must **Pray** in right earnest. The Lord is near" Rev. Andrew A. Bonar*

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As a Church, we need to lay a foundation about prayer...if this is not accomplished loved ones...our prayer lives will not be as effective as they should or could be.

1. Prayer should be a daily thing...

a. *Psalm 5:3, "O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch"*

i. Don't get caught up in the details such as...you have to pray this way or you have to pray here or you have to pray at this time...To be honest...I don't think God is as concerned about that as He is that He just wants us to pray daily unto Him.

b. *Psalm 63:1, "O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirst for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water."*

2. Prayer always expresses our continual need for God

a. *Hebrews 4:16, "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need"*

b. Prayer reminds us that without God and His Grace and Provisions...we can do nothing...

c. *John 15:5, "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing"*

d. *E.M Bounds once said, "No learning can make up for the failure to pray. No earnestness, no diligence, no study, no gifts will supply its lack."...in essence, brothers and sisters...we need God and that's what prayer is all about...our continual need for Him.*

3. People connecting w/ God daily in prayer are literally unstoppable.

a. Read 1 Kings 18:30-39 (Elijah and the prophets of Baal)

b. God promises to supply our every need when we pray

c. God's Word assures us that God's power is available to all that pray and believe

d. There's not a thing that prayer can't change...there's not a mountain that prayer can't move...there's not a disease that prayer can't cure...there's not a soul that prayer can't reach...there's not debt that prayer can't meet...

e. With God all things are possible...because people understand the power of God through prayer...

f. It was earnest prayer that parted the red seas for the Children of Israel...it was prayer that slayed the giant Goliath...it was prayer that shut the mouths of the lions against Daniel...it was prayer that spared the three hebrew men...it was prayer that brought the power of Pentecost through the Holy Spirit...

g. *"The reason why we obtain no more in prayer is because we expect no more. God usually answers us according to our own hearts." Richard Alleine*

4. Prayer reminds us of who our Heavenly Father Truly Is

a. He's a God of All Authority

i. *Psalm 24:1, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein..."*

b. He's a God of Eternal Supply and Provision

i. *Psalm 50:7-12, "Hear, O my people, and I will speak...For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the hills, and all the moves in the field is mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine..."*

c. He's a God that knows our need even before we ask

i. *Isaiah 14:24, "The Lord of hosts has sworn: 'As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand..."*

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ii. Psalm 33:10-11, "The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; he frustrates the plans of the peoples. The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generation"

Everyone in this room can have prayers that move mountains. I am thankful that God is faithful to hear us when we call on Him. Obviously prayer was an important concept for Christ and He spent time teaching the disciples how to pray.

D.L Moody once said, *"I'd rather be able to pray than be a great preacher; Jesus Christ never taught His disciples how to preach, but only how to pray."*

Prayer should begin with Praise

1. We worship God for who He is through praise.
2. The Lord taught us to pray by saying, *"Our Father, Who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name..."*
3. Praise exalts God and puts focus on Him so that He is positioned to work in our lives. In other words...praise gets us out of the way and puts God first and foremost in our lives.
4. Praise puts our mind in proper focus of who God is
5. The Bible says in *John 4:23*, *"...True worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks"* (NIV).
 - a. Worshipping in the spirit elevates worship from just being something that's just physical and mental but instead it becomes something more. It must be heartfelt. Our spirit locks into God's spirit to unite in worship.
 - i. If worship is not done through the spirit it stops being about God and starts being about us. We

begin to worship the song and music rather than God...we begin to worship the feeling we get from service rather than God Himself...we begin to seek worship that pleases us or blesses us or enhances us rather than worship that blesses God and pleases Him.

- b. Worshipping in truth means that we must be walking and abiding in the truth of God to be worshipping in the truth.
 - i. If we are not living as God desires us to live, our worship will be meaningless. Once again, if we are to worship in truth...it means we must be living by the truth.
 - ii. Judah and Jerusalem had forsaken God and God spoke to Isaiah in several verses in chapter one of Isaiah.
 1. *"Ah, sinful nation, a people loaded with guilt ...the multitude of your sacrifices, what are they to me? Stop bringing meaningless offerings! When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood..."*
 2. God refused to honor their worship because they were not walking in the ways of the Lord

Repentance Should follow A Time of Praise

1. Confess your sin to God and acknowledge need for Jesus
2. Just as praise puts our mind in proper focus on who God is...repentance puts our heart in proper position for God to move.
3. The Bible clearly says that if we hold sin in our lives...God will not hear us from heaven and will not answer our prayer

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- a. *Psalm 66:18, "If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened" (NIV).*
 - b. *1 John 3:21-22, "Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him" (NIV).*
 - c. *James 5:16, "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a **righteous** man is powerful and effective" (NIV).*
 - d. *Leviticus 16:6, "Aaron is to offer the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household" (NIV).*
 - e. *2 Chronicles 7:14, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways: **then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land**" (NIV).*
4. God WILL NOT bless over sin. If there is unreported sin in your life, God will not violate His Word to rain blessings down upon you until you are in right standing with Him. If blessings are coming down upon your life...it's because someone who is in right standing with God is praying them down...
5. We know from God's Word that He will listen to a repentance prayer of someone calling out for forgiveness. His Word makes this very clear...but according to Scripture, this is the only prayer by a sinner that God hears and responds to:
- a. *Romans 10:13, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (NIV).*
 - b. *Acts 3:18-19, "But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer. Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing*

may come from the Lord" (NIV).

Ask In Faith

1. God wants us to approach Him with our needs my friends.
2. There is never a bad time to approach God in prayer....
3. **It's never too early...***"But I, O Lord, cry to you; in the morning my prayer comes before you" (Psalm 88:13, NIV).*
4. **It's never too late...***"Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice" (Psalm 55:17, NIV).*
5. **There is nothing too small to ask God for...***Peter asked Jesus to pray for his mother-in-law's fever, In Nehemiah, they prayed that God would make their hands strong so they could work; Mary asked Jesus to turn water into wine*
6. **There is nothing too big to ask God for...**
 - a. *"For nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:37)*
 - b. *Jeremiah 32:27, "I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?" (NIV).*
 - c. *Matthew 21:22, "If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer" (NIV).*
 - d. *Psalm 37:4, "Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart" (NIV).*

Yield To The Plan and Purposes of God.

1. The last part of effective prayer before God is to make sure that we yield to His Will. Often times, we are so busy with life that we rarely just stop to sense God's Will for our lives. Prayer is one of the best ways to learn what God has been trying to speak to us.
 - a. Yielding to God's Will in prayer means that we desire His outcome...not our outcome.

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- b. Yielding to God's Will in prayer means that we wait on His time table and not ours...This means that we don't get bent out of shape when things don't happen at the drop of a hat...we don't know the future...only God does so we need to trust in His ability to order our steps.
- 2. Often times, people think that if we yield to God, we won't give us the things that we want...it will only be the things that He wants....Just think about that for a second....the longer your walk with God and the more you become like Him....You will begin to want the very same things that He wants and And because you are growing in Christ...your will be be tied to His will and together you will be one with Christ. How awesome is that?