

The Blessings of Prayer By Gene Taylor

One of the greatest blessings a child of God has is prayer, the right to communicate with God. Anyone who is striving to do the will of the Lord will have an active prayer life.

Give Yourself to Prayer

In several New Testament passages, the Christian is urged to give time to prayer. In Luke 18, Jesus taught a parable to demonstrate that people "always ought to pray and not lose heart" (Luke 18:1). The apostle Paul, in 1Timothy 2:8, encouraged men in every place to pray. In 1Thessalonians 5:17, Christians are commanded to "Pray without ceasing."

To "pray without ceasing" is not to have some incessant babbling on your lips but to have the attitude of mind to regularly and frequently pray. It means to have a willingness to talk to God -- to share burdens, to confess sins and to pray for strength and courage.

Many Neglect to Pray

Even though many commands and encouragements to pray are contained in Scripture, sometimes children of God neglect this glorious privilege. It is only at worship assemblies or in times of trouble, sickness or need, that some who claim to be Christians even give thought to prayer. Why the neglect?

Many reasons could be given which are too lengthy and varied to explore in this short article, so instead we will just consider one. Neglect of prayer usually indicates neglect in other phases of one's life as a child of God. The mind of such a person is often on worldly things. Prayer, which can so easily be put off, is postponed then forgotten.

A hymn often sung asks, "Ere you left your room this morning, did you think to pray?" Did you? Or were other things on your mind? If you did not think to pray, you let a great opportunity escape which can never be recovered. You should have at least thanked God for the new day and the breath of life that is in your body that enables you to experience and enjoy it.

Things for Which to Pray

Some may be hesitant to pray as often as they should because they do not know the things for which they should pray. If they were to properly study the Bible, they would know those things for which they should pray because it reveals them. According to Scripture, included in those things for which the Christian should pray are:

Those who persecute you (Matt. 5:44)

The Lord's will to be done (Matt. 6:10)

Daily bread (Matt. 6:11)

Forgiveness of sin (Matt. 6:12)

Kings and all who are in high places (1Tim. 2:2)

All men (1Tim. 2:1)

That you enter not into temptation (Matt. 26:41)

If you are suffering (James 5:13)

The sick (James 5:14-15)

Why the Emphasis on Prayer?

Why emphasize prayer? James 5:16 gives the answer: "...The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." It works! 1Peter 3:11-12 states that "the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are open to their prayers." He hears and answers in accordance with His will if the Christian prays in faith (James 1:6).

Conclusion

Make your life a life of prayer. If you are going to be truly like Jesus, it will be. Jesus was a man of prayer. He recognized its vital role. Often in His life on earth, He prayed. John 17 contains His prayer for His disciples. Matthew 26 has His prayer in the garden prior to His capture. He also spent time teaching His disciples to pray (Matt. 6:5-15). Be a faithful Christian. Be Christ-like. Be a prayerful person. -- Via Bible Talk

The Potency of Prayer By W. Frank Walton

"The intense prayer of the righteous is very powerful" (James 5:16 HCSB). James encourages us to pray for one another's difficulties and problems, whether spiritual or physical sickness (Ja 5:13-16). Earlier he had encouraged brethren to pray in steadfast faith for wisdom while facing trials, expecting a generous God to richly give what is best (James 1:2-8).

In our text, effective prayer cannot be a half-hearted, feeble petition, but it must be "intense" (Gr. *energeo*, "active...fervent"). Such prayers cannot be carnally selfish (James 4:2-3), which means we must pray in God's will, so that He will be glorified foremost by the answer (1John 5:14). If we are righteous by His grace, the Holy Spirit promises us that our prayers are potent in heaven. In this, prayer moves the Hand that moves the world.

So, humble, believing prayer in Jesus' name is extremely powerful. It can move our mountains, which are humanly impossible obstacles to move (Mark 11:22-24). Only God can move a mountain, but Jesus assures us that the prayer of His faithful children can move God. In fact, Jesus encourages us to pray persistently "and not lose heart." He urges persistence in prayer, like the poor widow who constantly pled for justice, until it was fulfilled (Luke 18:1). God's answers today are by providential means, within the laws of His natural order (Rom. 8:28).

God rewards such persistence because it evidences supreme faith and confidence in God's merciful power to help in our need. We are promised we may come "boldly" in prayer "before the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace in time of need" (Heb. 4:16). Weak, tentative prayers come from a weak, tentative faith. This does not honor God at all and will not be rewarded by Him.

A Moments Wisdom

If Christians spent as much time praying as they do grumbling, they would soon have nothing to grumble about.

For whatever high reasons, men of prayer must knock and knock- sometimes with bleeding knuckles in the dark.

God is not a cosmic bellboy for whom we can press a button to get things.

You pray in your distress and in your need; would that you might pray also in the fullness of your joy in the days of abundance.

Our prayer and God's mercy are like two buckets in a well; while the one ascends the other descends.

There is nothing that makes us love a man so much as praying for him.

Sometimes God delays the answer to our prayer in final form until we have time to build up the strength, accumulate the knowledge, or fashion the character that would make it possible for Him to say "yes" to what we ask.