

SPIRITUAL MAINTENANCE

When You Pray *Matthew 6:5-13*

What is Prayer?

- The simplest definition of prayer is talking with God
- It is primary method for believers to communicate their needs, desires, requests, problems, and to fellowship with God
- Prayer is an act of our faith **James 1:6 (KJV) 6 *But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.***
- Prayer is act of our dependence on God
- We pray or approach God, in the name of Jesus **John 16:23 (KJV) 23 *And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.***
- We pray in the power of the Holy Spirit **Romans 8:26 (KJV) 26 *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.***
- We have the Holy Spirit to *help* us pray
- The Holy Spirit helps us in our *weaknesses*, i.e., wandering thoughts, lack of focus, distractions, etc.
- The Holy Spirit helps by *interceding* for us
- The Holy Spirit takes our groans, interprets them and gives them to God in prayer
- Prayer is ongoing dialogue with God **1 Thessalonians 5:17 (KJV) 17 *Pray without ceasing.***
- It doesn't mean you're "always praying", but it does mean to continue in prayer, persevere in prayer, as you go about your day
- The key to answered prayer is praying according to the will of God, which the Word of God **1 John 5:14-15 (KJV) 14 *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.***

When You Pray....Have the Right Motives

- In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught on a wide range of topics, and one of them was prayer
- Jesus said, "*When you pray...*"
- Jesus is saying believers are *expected* to be people of prayer
- Not only are believers to be people of prayer, but we must also pray with the right motives
- The motives behind our prayer determine God's response to them
- Motives can be good or evil

The Motive to Be Seen By Men

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men.

- When we pray... don't be a hypocrite
- Jesus said, don't be like the hypocrites who "love" to pray
- They loved to pray in public to be seen of men
- Their place of prayer was the synagogues and the street corners
- If we love to pray in public and not in private, we are hypocrites
- Their posture of prayer was standing up
- They took pride in their prayers

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- The **product** of their prayers was the applause of men
- There is nothing wrong with praying in public
- If we only pray in public, then our motive is not to fellowship with God, but to garner the recognition of men
- The recognition of men was all the reward they received
- When we desire public recognition and that is all the reward we get

The Motive to Be Heard By God

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

- The right motive to pray is to be *heard by God* and not the hypocritical recognition of men
- There is a willingness to prayer
- The believer has a designated place of prayer, a prayer closet
- Every believer *needs* a prayer closet, a private place for you to pray
- Your prayer closet is a place where you're not disturbed or interrupted by your spouse, children, phones, TV, etc.
- Your prayer closet is a place where you can get alone with God and *unobserved, undisturbed, and unheard*
- We get with God in our prayer closet because God is in secret
- God is in secret because God is not interested in a public show, but in *substance*
- The reward of *secret* prayer is *open* blessings
- The believer who prays in secret will be rewarded in two important ways:
 1. The strength and the presence of God will be on your life
 2. God will answer your prayers
- If these are the benefits of prayer, why don't more believers have a *designated* time and place to pray?

When You Pray...Be Deliberate, Not "Deep"

7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. 8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

- In Jesus time, the religious people had a tendency to pray long, public prayers
- These prayers *were* impressive
- The words we use, and the length of our prayers does not determine our devotion to God
Ecclesiastes 5:2 (MSG) 2 Don't shoot off your mouth, or speak before you think. Don't be too quick to tell God what you think he wants to hear. God's in charge, not you—the less you speak, the better.
- Jesus says when we pray, don't use vain (empty) repetitions
- Some believers think long prayers equal devotion to God; they think the longer they pray the more God will listen to them
- There are times when long prayers appropriate and even necessary at times, but the length of prayers is not a measure of devotion to God
- Remember prayer is a matter of the heart, not a matter of words and length
- God, your Father is aware of your needs before you ask

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- If God already knows what we need, why should believers pray?
- Prayer demonstrates our need for God and our dependence on Him
- Because God already knows what we need before we even ask, we can rest in God and His promises

When You Pray.... Follow Jesus' Pattern

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

- Jesus says after this manner, or follow this pattern
- That doesn't mean every prayer is the same, but it should have the same elements:
 - To Whom we pray - *Our Father* – God is our Father
 - Praise – hallowed be thy name
 - Supplication – prayer requests
 - For God's purposes - *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*
 - For our physical needs - *Give us this day our daily bread*
 - For our spiritual needs - *And forgive us our debts,*
 - For the spiritual needs of others - *as we forgive our debtors.*
 - Deliverance - *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:*
- Another way to follow Jesus pattern of prayer is to pray, A-C-T-S which stands for:
 - Adoration – giving praise to God
 - Confession – acknowledging and repenting our sins
 - Thanksgiving – expressing gratitude to God
 - Supplication – making requests of God
 - Don't worry about anything, but pray about everything ***Philippians 4:6 (KJV) 6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.***

There is Power in Prayer

Jeremiah 33:3 (KJV) 3 Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.

- God says we can call on Him in prayer
- When we pray God will answer
- God will show us great and mighty things
- God will do things through prayer we can't figure out on our own
- We saw God do great and mighty things when an NFL player collapsed and went into cardiac arrest on the football field
- People in the stadium and around the world prayed for that young man
- Doctors said the next 72 hours would be critical
- Today, just nine days later he was completely released from the hospital to recover at home
- There is power in prayer!