



The Impact of Prayer

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Introduction:

I have to share with you this morning what God is speaking to my heart. We were talking last month about revival. One of the things that enables revival to take place is that people seek God – they pray. So this morning I am compelled to share with you some of the truths we have been leaning in our mid-week Bible study on Prayer.

I want you to know that we are moving into a time here at CLF where ministry is expanding. Any time ministry reaches new heights, it is important that the prayer effort increase.

If there ever was a time when God's people needed to pray it is now. For well over a year, our leadership has been praying and sharing the vision of what God wants to do here at CLF and we are on the threshold of taking those steps.

This fall we will begin "Family Connection", an outreach ministry that will take place once a month on Saturday evening. It will be geared to the "unchurched." How many of you have unbelieving or "unchurched" relatives or neighbors? This is something you will be able to invite them to. The gospel will be shared in the form of drama, music, and preaching. The theme will be on Christian values. The church needs to be praying about for those who will direct and minister in this outreach and the people God wants to reach through it.

In a couple of weeks a new small group will begin on Sunday night in the Campbellsport/Lomira area. This effort needs prayer. Michael and Diane Maxson are going to be hosting this group and Cort and Kathye Tangeman will be facilitating.

About five weeks from now our mid-week family night will resume again. Along with all that we currently offer, we will be adding a Spanish Bible study. We are not sure where God will take this, but perhaps this will be the start of a Spanish speaking full gospel church here in Mayville. **THAT NEEDS PRAYER.**

Along with these areas of ministry we are looking to purchase a vehicle so the ministry we do can be better served and expanded. We will be receiving a special offering in September to raise funds for that. Having a vehicle for ministry is nothing new here at CLF – this church has had one for many years and needs to replace the one we had to get rid of last year. **THE BODY NEEDS TO PRAY** and act on what God speaks to our hearts to do so this need will be met.

All of these ventures will help us to further the mission God has given CLF, which is to reach all people within the greater Mayville, Wisconsin area and the world with the hope of Jesus Christ. We want to compel those who do not follow Christ to do so and challenge those who do follow Christ to become fully devoted and Spirit-filled. We

express our devotion through evangelism, preaching, teaching, worship, prayer, healing, fellowship and the Biblical cultivation of a God centered family and community as demonstrated in Acts 2:42-47.

The vision of Christian Life Fellowship is to provide a home in Mayville, Wisconsin where people young and old, of all ethnic, social, and economic backgrounds can experience deep spiritual growth through a personal relationship of devotion to Jesus Christ. Our vision is centered upon the person of Jesus Christ and proclaiming His living Word. The reality of this vision is led by the Holy Spirit, supported through our philosophy of ministry and by our outreach and ministries of Christian Life Fellowship.

We strive to provide a caring family atmosphere where the love, mercy, grace, forgiveness, healing and miracles of Christ are experienced. Christian Life Fellowship encourages each person to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

So let's talk this morning about how prayer and how it affects all of these ventures and helps us to fulfill the mission that God has given to CLF.

I. Prayer is not to get things from God

If the purpose for prayer is not to get things from God, then what is it for?

I have a fresh understanding of prayer from our Wednesday Bible study. God is not some genie in heaven that is waiting for us to use some formula before he moves and responds.

Prayer is the tool that brings us into an intimate relationship with God. It is finding intimacy with God Himself. Often we pray for God to help us in our needs, in our times of sickness, in our times of distress, in our times of sorrow, but really those things are there for us to press in and get to know GOD. We find God's strength, we find God's comfort, we find God's will, we find God's provision, we find the mind of Christ as we come into unity with God. Through prayer we find God Himself.

Jesus prayed in John 17 – that we may be one even as He and the Father were one. The intercession of Christ was that we might be united with God. That means we bring our stuff, our agenda, our frustrations, our shortcomings, our will, and lay it down so God's will and agenda can be accomplished. After all, who is serving whom? Are we serving God or do we expect Him to serve us?

God always answers prayer. He responds based on the atonement of Jesus Christ. He doesn't respond because I beg, or am more sincere than someone else. He responds based on the fact of the work Jesus did on the cross through shedding His blood. So prayer is always answered. God doesn't always say "yes." Sometimes He says "no", sometimes He says "later,"

sometimes He says "yes," but He always answers. Prayers are not always answered the way you or I think they should be, or when we think they should be.

There are times when we don't receive from God

1. When we fail to ask – Jesus told His disciples one day that they did not have because they did not ask. Ask and it will be given.
2. When we ask amiss – we ask according to the dictates of our hearts. We ask selfishly so our own lusts can be met. That is something we have to lay down.
3. We may not ask because we think our faith is too small. Jesus said if we had faith the size of a mustard seed we would say to the mountain, "be removed and cast into the sea" and it would obey us.
4. When we hold onto something and choose to not forgive. God will not hear us if we hold iniquity in our heart or if we will not forgive as freely as we have been forgiven.

Not too many months ago I had to do this very thing. My attitude toward someone was wrong, and in our study on prayer, God began to deal with me and so I talked to the individual and confessed my wrong attitude and I can tell you it was humbling for me to do, but necessary. Not only did my attitude toward that individual change, but my relationship with the Lord changed as well.

Prayer has to be a priority in your individual life. It is the avenue of communication and communion with God. If you want revival in your life then

you have to make prayer a priority. NOT TO GET SOMETHING FROM GOD, but to be near HIM.

Have you ever thought someone was pretty cool and you just wanted to be close to that person? You couldn't wait to talk to them, to hear their voice, to hold their hand? Something inside you just melts when they walk in the room? When those feelings stir in your heart for God, that is revival. You know Christ is waiting for you and you can hardly wait to be in His presence. That happens from developing a prayer life with the Lord.

If we want revival in our church, then we have to make prayer a priority corporately as well. As your pastor I want to call you to prayer. Other things will call to us but we have to set priorities.

I was talking to someone this week along these lines and I said, "Whatever we really want to do, we will find the time and money and the way to do it." When individual or corporate prayer is not a priority, then it is time to examine our heart before God. Have I grown cold in my relationship? Have I allowed other things that are temporal to interfere with what should be top priority in my life, that being my relationship to Christ?

We have prayer once a month here at CLF, on the first Saturday of every month at 6:30 PM. It is a time that we have set apart for this fellowship to come meet God in prayer. What we do at that time is pray. We seek God together and the intimacy of His presence in this ministry.

I know God's word directs us to pray at home in our closet with God. But we also have the example of the early church gathering daily during the hour of prayer to seek His face. There is something much different that takes place when a group of people gather for the purpose of prayer that doesn't happen when we pray alone. I want to encourage you to plan that as a priority in your life. As often as you can be here, be here. I've shared with you several reasons why we need to pray together because of new ministry, but more importantly, God wants to meet with us, and if we don't do that we cheat Him and ourselves. Beside all this new ministry, our nation is at the threshold of a presidential election. Our senate defeated the marriage amendment act just a couple of weeks ago. OUR NATION needs God and the manifestation of God in this country will be seen through

the praying church. Let's gather this next Saturday at 6:30 PM and seek God together.

II. Prayer is about relationship

Matthew 6:9-13 This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'

Each phrase of the Lord's Prayer has to do with relationships – either our relationship with God or our relationships with others.

Often when we get to praying, we find there are some things there that are out of place in relationships. We need to confess that and correct those things that are out of place with God or with others. Prayer affords us the opportunity to do just that. Whenever we pray we are emphasizing our right relationship to God in heaven.

Did you notice that the Lord's Prayer covers every relationship we have with God? When we say "our father", that is the **Father/child** relationship. When we say "Hallowed be thy name", that's the **deity/worshipper** relationship. When we say "Thy kingdom come", that's the **sovereign/subject** relationship. When we say "Thy will be done", that's the **Master/servant** relationship. When we say "Give us this day our daily bread", that's the **Benefactor/beneficiary** relationship. When we say "forgive us our trespasses", that's the **savior/sinner** relationship. When we say "lead us not into temptation", that is the **Guide/pilgrim** relationship. And when we say "Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever", that's the **Creator/creature** relationship.

Three habits will help us prepare for a meaningful time of prayer.

Anticipate – God coming to see us. His arms are open with gifts that will change our lives. He has a plan for your life, and you should remind yourself before going to bed at night that the Lord is here.

Acknowledge – As you begin your time of devotion with God, acknowledge that He is present. For some it helps to imagine Jesus sitting in a chair nearby, ready to speak and listen.

Acclimate – be comfortable. Get in a posture that requires little thought. Sitting, kneeling, standing.

Conclusion:

God's Word challenges us so let's respond to that challenge. If we desire to become fully devoted followers of Christ, and we desire for this fellowship to fulfill the vision God has given us, then we need to examine our priorities, our hearts and seek God individually and corporately in a way that shows He is a priority. In seeking God this way, we will be in step with Him as we experience renewal and revival.

I close with that scripture from **2 Chron. 7:14**. **If my people, who are called by my name, will 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.**

God has obligated Himself to His word and if we meet His stipulations, you can be sure He will fulfill His promises. Let's be people of prayer