



Christian Life Fellowship

Becoming fully devoted followers of Christ



The Value of Prayer September 23, 2007

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Introduction:

This morning we are going to look at the core value of praying. As we begin this morning I want to ask you a question. What do you get out of prayer? Of what value is it to pray?

Today, let's explore the significance of a strong prayer life. Prayer is one of the important tools that God has given

I've come to believe that more than changing *things*, prayer changes *me*. More than anything else, prayer is a place of change where transformation happens. Prayer is a tool where I can seek God's will, lay down my own agenda, my own ideas, my own insecurities, my own doubts, my own sin and allow God to change me.

The central significance of prayer is not in the things that happen as results, but in the deepening intimacy and unhurried communion with God at His throne of control in order to discover a "sense of God's need in order to call on God's help to meet that need"

E.M. Bounds, The Weapon Of Prayer.

There are times that we are hundreds or thousands of miles away from someone or something and we can breathe a prayer and know that God will take care of that person. As powerful and wonderful as the internet is, prayer is better. The authority and power that Jesus has given us to make a difference in our world is incredible.

I have learned a few simple things about prayer that I want to share with you this morning. If you have been a follower of Christ for any length of time, you already know these things and probably do them regularly.

If you want your prayers to be answered.....

I. You've got to forgive

Prayer will help us change our attitude toward others who have mistreated, offended, disappointed or failed us in some way. If you want God to hear you, then the key to that happening is forgiveness. It is a startling thing to think that we can pray and God might not hear us.

You may ask the question; "Doesn't God hear all our prayers?" Well, actually no He doesn't. Jesus spoke about this and His words are found in **Matthew 6:14-15: For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.**

Forgiveness is not an option when it comes to prayer and having God hear and answer. Life is too short to not forgive, especially when you and I are extended God's forgiveness for all our shortcomings, failures and faults that He could hold against us. You may say, "But Pastor Dave, you don't know what he or she said or did to me. You don't understand how deeply that hurt or how much I have suffered over what happened."

Is holding on to whatever you are holding on to worth God not forgiving you and His not listening to your prayers? Jesus is very clear here that prayer is the tool that will help us deal with our own heart of unforgiveness so that we can receive answers from God.

II. You've got to ask

Prayer will help us change our attitude of independence. All too often we think we have to take care of things. We have to do what only God can do. God is sovereign and He can do whatever He wants to do. But He invites us into the process of advancing His kingdom, overcoming sickness, establishing righteousness, spreading the good news and He responds to our asking. **John 15:7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.**

There are times in our walk with God that we don't ask. Perhaps we are afraid that God might say no. Perhaps we are afraid that God might answer and give us what we asked for and we aren't sure we are ready to handle it. There are many reasons why people don't ask. Perhaps we are intimidated by God Himself.

There are times we don't ask because we think we are bothersome to our Lord. There are times we don't ask because we have come to Him so many other times already. Why don't you ask God in prayer for what you really want Him to do so He can be praised and glorified? God's word indicates that we don't *have* because we don't ask.

God uses prayer to get us involved. He wants our faith to be built in the process of prayer and when we ask and He provides, it is a tremendous faith booster.

Hebrews 4:16: Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of

need. We are told that we should come with confidence to His throne of grace so we might receive mercy and find His divine influence to help us in our time of need.

The worst that can happen when we ask our Heavenly Father for something is that He might say NO. We have to keep in mind that when we ask, He will respond and He only wants what is in our best interest. It is not His intent to hurt us or disappoint us or bring fear to us. He wants to help us and sees what is best for us.

In our final thoughts this morning I'm going to talk about the fact that if you want your prayers to be answered, you've got to believe.

III. You've got to believe

One of the changes that comes to us by praying is the development of our faith. God wants us to have faith. It doesn't have to be great in quantity, but it has to be alive and undaunted by its surroundings.

I was thinking about the mustard seed analogy. Jesus said if you have faith the size of a mustard seed great things can be accomplished. A mustard seed is the smallest of all herb seeds, yet it grows so that birds can lodge in its' branches. Mustard seeds generally take 3-10 days to germinate if placed under the proper conditions, which include a cold atmosphere and relatively moist soil.

I had to think of how that small seed faces its' surroundings in order to grow. It is dark, cool, moist, but seems insignificant even to the soil that covers the seed. In the natural it would appear that nothing much would come about from something so small and so insignificant. Yet undeterred by its' surroundings, or the way things might appear, that seed grows and the end result is something magnificent. So it is with our faith.

If we are going to pray, we have to believe that what we are asking for will happen, even though it may appear that our prayer, or faith is small compared to the need or obstacle. Faith and belief have to be undaunted by surroundings.

Mark 11:24: Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

A tale is told about a small town that had historically been "dry", but then a local businessman decided to build a tavern. A group of Christians from a local church were concerned and planned an all-night prayer meeting to ask God to intervene. It just so happened that shortly thereafter lightning struck the bar and it burned to the ground. The owner of the bar sued the church, claiming that the prayers of the congregation were responsible, but the church hired a lawyer to argue in court that they were not responsible. The presiding judge, after his initial review of

the case, stated that "no matter how this case comes out, one thing is clear. The tavern owner believes in prayer and the Christians do not."

[J.K. Johnston, Why Christians Sin, Discovery House, 1992, p. 129.](#)

James tells us in his letter that when we ask God for wisdom, we must believe. **James 1:6-7: But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord;**

Conclusion:

Here is the challenge. If you want God to answer your prayers, make sure you forgive people of whatever they have done against you, make sure you ask God and make sure you believe that He will answer regardless of how insignificant you think your faith is or how big the obstacle might appear.

Prayer still is powerful enough to bring changes. It changes us. It will make us more aware of our failures and God's forgiveness. It will make us more aware of His oversight in the big and small things in our lives and it will cause us to depend on Him and trust His word no matter how large the obstacle or how small our faith.

Keep praying.