

Prayer

A prayerless church member is a hindrance. He is in the body like a rotting bone or a decayed tooth. Before long, since he does not contribute to the benefit of his brethren, he will become a danger and a sorrow to them. Neglect of private prayer is the locust which devours the strength of the church. ~ Charles H. Spurgeon

We must make prayer a PRIORITY in our personal life and in the life of our church!

The need to be in conversation with God is no different than in any relationship.

To foster closeness and to continue a strong connection to your spouse, parents, children, or best friends meaningful communication is a requirement.

Deuteronomy 6:5ⁱ is a command from God to His chosen people to develop a strong, intense bond to the Lord with love.

⁴ "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Jesus validated this command in Matthew 22:37 in answer to a question about the greatest command of God.

When we love someone, we love them with all our being!

- We talk to them, we implore about their ups and downs, and we seek the best way to respond.

In our relationship with God, we love Him with all our being!

Prayer is our way of reminding ourselves of the place of Jesus in our life.

- During the darkness of the human experience, the love for Jesus must be considered – in conversation.
- In the longings of our heart, our love for Jesus will bring us into conversation with Him.

I know of no better thermometer to your spiritual temperature than the measure of the intensity of your prayer. ~ Spurgeon

The intensity of your desire to be with God is the standard we set for your spiritual depth.

Intensely wanting God in your life will be realized in your INTENTIONAL efforts to put Him there.

Paul told the church of Thessalonica to “*Pray without stopping*” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

- Develop an attitude of continual prayer.
- Allow your relationship with God, through Jesus, to become second nature.

Being Intentional in your relationship with God involves making it PERSONAL.

Matthew 6:5-6

⁵ “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

Remember, your relationship with God is independent of your relationships with others.

Don't seek public opinion to validate your relationship with God.

“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 6:1).

Don't use long, wordy prayers.

⁷ “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.” (Matthew 6:7-8).

Go to your private space. The Lord will reward those who make their loving relationship with Him personal.

⁶ *But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you” (Matthew 6:6).*

A man who prays much in private will make short prayers
in public. ~ D.L. Moody

Remember, in your personal relationship with God...

Be sure to make God the PRIORITY!

Matthew 6:9

⁹ *“Pray then like this: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.’”*

God is our heavenly Father – a personal God, because of our adoption into His covenant with God chosen people through Abraham.

He is above everything else in our existence.

- **Above all others in our personal life.** Because He is personal to us.

Ephesians 4:4-7

⁴ *“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ⁶ And because you are sons [and daughters], God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son [a daughter], and if [a child of God], then an heir through God.”*

It was natural for the only Son of God, Jesus, to use this term.

Now, because of the Grace of God through the atonement of our sins by the death of Jesus Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit now in us, God allows us to address Him as our true Father in heaven.

Calling on the name of the Lord is to be handled with delicate, loving care.

God’s name is to be *hallowed* – “His name is to be treated as holy – distinguished above all others” or “His name is to be held in distinct reverence – the standard of holiness.”

Exodus 20:2-7

² *“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.*

³ *“You shall have no other gods before me.*

⁴ *“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or*

that is in the water under the earth. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. ⁷ “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

God loves you and wants to PROVIDE for your needs

Jesus says we should want God’s covering of blessing in our life (**Matthew 6:10-13**).

- His rule,
- His provision,
- His forgiveness, and
- His protection

Do you want these things in your life?

How can you live without them?

Matthew 6:33 “...seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

ⁱ All quoted scripture texts will be from the English Standard Version (ESV) unless otherwise noted.