

"The Problem with Prayer"

Colossians 4:12

"There is a vulgar notion that prayer is a very easy thing, a kind of common business that may be done anyhow, without care or effort. . . . We should plow carefully and pray carefully. The better the work the more attention it deserves. To be anxious in the shop and thoughtless in the closet is little less than blasphemy, for it is an insinuation that anything will do for God, but the world must have our best." (Charles Spurgeon)

"Prayer has been ordained only for the helpless. Only he who realizes his helplessness will be passionate for prayer. Prayer is our expression of needing God, entrusting ourselves to God, because He is all-powerful."
(John Piper)

"The puritans said, "we should pray until we pray". That is we should pray long enough and honestly enough, at a single session, to get past the feeling of formalism and unreality."

- Paul was faithful in praying for Christians to grow in obedience to God's Word and His will (Philippians 1:3-11; Colossians 1:9-14; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3; Romans 1:9-12) and faithfully prayed that God would open doors for the gospel to be shared (Colossians 4:2-4; Romans 1:13-17; cf Acts 4:29-31).
- Why can I pray? *"Since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that He opened for us through the curtain, that is through His flesh...."* (Hebrews 10:19-20)
 - I can pray because Christ's death and life gives me access to God the Father (Hebrews 4:14-16; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 10:19-22).
- Why do I pray? *"I love you, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised...."* (Psalm 18:1-3)
 - Because I am poor and needy (Psalm 109:22).
 - Because apart from Christ I can do nothing (John 15:5).
 - Because He is my source of help when I'm in distress (Psalm 18:6).
 - Because He is my source of help when I am anxious (1 Peter 5:6-7).
 - Because He is my only source of forgiveness (1 John 1:8-9).

"I worship thee, knowing that thou hath made me capable of knowing thee, the author of all beings, of resembling thee, the perfection of all excellency, of enjoying thee, the source of all happiness. While Jesus is representing me in heaven, may I reflect him on earth, While he pleads my case, may I show forth my praise."

- I praise God for being *infinitely* wise (Romans 11:33), and I'm shocked He freely offers me His wisdom in Christ (James 1:5-8).
- *God is love*; He perfectly loves; (1 John 4:8), and I'm shocked He offers me salvation through His great love demonstrated for me in the work of Christ (Romans 5:8-9).
- *God is all-powerful*; there are no limits to His power (Psalm 115:1 & 3) and through His great grace He offers us strength because we are so weak in ourselves and so strong in Him (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).
- How should I pray? *Corporately and Individually.*
 - *Corporately*: It was normative and expected for New Testament believers to gather *corporately* for prayer (Acts 1:14; Acts 2:42; Acts 4:24 & 31; Acts 6:4; Acts 12:5). It would be non-biblical to imagine a Christian who didn't pray *corporately*. You will not love your brothers and sisters in Christ, as you ought, if you do not pray with them and for them.

(continued →)

Worship: God is For Us (City Alight)

Lord From Sorrows Deep I Call (Matt Papa)

Service Times: Sundays: Revelation Class 4/Prayer 4:30/Church 5:30; Tuesdays: (In-Home) Bible Study: Women 6:30/Men 6:30 & 7;
Thursdays: Prayer 6:20/Church 7

- *Individually*: We have been called to pray spontaneously (1 Thessalonians 5:17) and in discipline, privately (Matthew 6:6), not to be seen by men (Matthew 6:5). Unfortunately the freedom to pray anywhere (John 4:21-23; Hebrews 10:22) can lead to us praying nowhere.
- Important thoughts about prayer to have a fervent prayer life...
 - Prayer is hard work; it is a discipline (Colossians 4:12; Hebrews 5:7).
 - Reverence is believing and obeying God in sincerity (1 Samuel 12:23-24; Hebrews 12:28; Ephesians 5:21; Hebrews 5:7).
 - Pray against “self”...
 - Self-sufficiency says, “I don’t need to pray corporately or individually.”
 - Self-conceit says, “I don’t need to daily repent of my sins in prayer.”
 - Selfishness says, “Prayer is about my physical desires and wants, not about God’s glory and mine and others spiritual needs.”
 - Start with Scripture, let God speak before you speak. Pray scripture to set the tone of your prayer time (1 John 5:14-15; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Galatians 5:22-23).
 - Prayer is an expression of weakness. We don’t even know how to pray as we ought. So the Holy Spirit completes our weak prayers to make them pleasing to God (Romans 8:26-27).
 - Seeing, knowing, and feeling our needs makes us prayerful. We are known by God, we hide nothing from God, and we share everything with Him (Psalm 139:23-24).