

Making the Most of Prayer

Making the Most of Time to Pray

- Setting aside sufficient time for prayer
 - How much time you should spend in prayer is not something that I can tell you, but I can tell you what you should be looking to get out of your daily time in prayer and that should help you to have better be able to decide what you think is sufficient:
 - You want to have enough time set aside that you can pray for everything God wants you to pray for (or everything that you feel you need to pray for)
 - You want to have enough time that you can actually be experiencing spiritual intimacy with God
 - You want to get to the point where it's common for you to see answered prayer
- Praying throughout the day
 - Not only should we have daily time specifically set aside for prayer, but we should pray as we go about our day (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

Knowing What to Pray For

- Knowing what to pray is important...
 - Knowing what to pray affects how much impact we get from prayer. Some of the things we can pray for are more impactful or more significant than others, so knowing what to pray for is part of making the most of prayer.
 - Not only that, but there are specific things that God wants us to pray for that He communicates to us that He wants us to pray for
- There are two places we get knowledge of what we should pray for
 - God's Word
 - If you've never done your own Bible study on what the Bible says we should pray for and made your own list of the things it says we should pray for, then I would highly recommend that you do.
 - God's Spirit (Romans 8:26)
 - We need to learn to recognize when the Holy Spirit is telling us to pray for something. In order to do that, we need to expect that He will sometimes tell us to pray for specific things

Following Principles for Effective Prayer

Praying in Jesus Name (John 14:13-14, 15:16, 16:24)

- Praying "in Jesus' name" means praying by that authority of Jesus, but it also means praying for things on Jesus' behalf, or in His interest. Praying for the things that He wants to do in response to prayer, but not apart from prayer.

Having a Lifestyle of Obedience (Hebrews 5:7; 1 Peter 3:7; Psalm 66:18)

Praying with Faith (Matthew 21:21-22; James 1:5-8)

- What is Faith, and what is Doubting?
 - Faith is a choice, not a feeling. Faith is the belief that something will happen, but beliefs are choices, not feelings.
 - Doubt is a lack of that choice
- How should we pray with faith when we're not sure what God's will is?
 - When we don't know what God's will is, we should pray with expectation that God will do what is best.
 - That type of prayer is acceptable to God (Luke 8:2-3)
 - Even Jesus prayed this way (Luke 22:41-42)
 - We should also have high expectations of what God is willing to do
 - We need to avoid the trap that we as Christians sometimes fall into of having low expectations of what God is willing to do.
 - A lot of times our weak expectations of what God is willing to do aren't coming from accurate thoughts about God's love, or God's desires, they're just coming from places of doubt in our hearts, and we need to try to overcome them, because they will indeed hinder our prayers.
- Don't let doubt keep you from praying
 - Even though we shouldn't doubt God when we pray, the Scriptures show that sometimes God is gracious in answering our doubtful prayers. (Mark 9:24)

Praying with Thankfulness

- Thanksgiving is often connected to prayer and is commanded with it
 - Ephesians 1:16; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:2, 5:16-18; 1 Timothy 2:1
- Thankfulness is an attitude and an action. You need both the attitude and the action
 - **Thankfulness is realizing that someone did something for you that you didn't deserve or that they didn't have to do, valuing/apricating that they did it for you, and expressing that appreciation.**
 - No one is thankful for things they deserve or are entitled to. (Luke 17:9)
- There are a lot of benefits we get from thanksgiving
 - Thankfulness empowers worship (Psalm 100:4)
 - Thankfulness strengthens faith
 - Thankfulness increases joy
 - Thankfulness leads to inner peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
 - Thankfulness honors and pleases God
 - An attitude of thankfulness is edifying to others (1 Corinthians 14:14-18)

Persevering in Prayer (Luke 18:1-8)

Being Close to God

- There are multiple examples in Scripture of people who were close to God, who got to see His power in special ways that people who weren't close to God didn't get to see.
 - Today I want to specifically look at two examples.
 - Moses (Exodus 33:11)
 - Enoch (Genesis 5:24)
- Intimacy with God is something we all need to be pursuing as Christians.

Having Unity in Prayer

- Matthew 18:19-20
- Cooperate prayer is a big part of Acts description and pattern of the church (Acts 1:14, 2:42, 12:5, 14:23)