

Prayer - (How should we pray?)

2-21-18

1. Andrew Murray, in his book *With Christ in the School of Prayer* writes, "Moses gave neither command nor regulation with regard to prayer: even the prophets say little directly to the duty of prayer. It is Christ who teaches us to pray."
2. Often serious prayer is driven by necessity. We don't pray because we should - we pray because there is no other option. (Ephesians 6:18)
3. Prayer cannot simply be taught by principles, seminars, or reading books. It has to be born out of an environment of understanding our need as a child of God. (Colossians 4:12)
4. Prayer is not a natural activity. It goes against our efforts to prove that we are self-sufficient. "I don't need any help - I've got this."
5. As another writer put it, "Prayer does not fit us for greater works; prayer is the greater work."
6. So - let's begin with a teaching from Jesus Himself. (Matthew 7:7-11)
7. Jesus is making the central point, that prayer to a loving Father is effective.
8. But also - the point is not that human persistence wins out in the end, but that our heavenly Father who loves His children will certainly answer our prayer.
9. In order for us to really understand the significance of verse 7-8, Jesus moves to an illustration in verse 9-10.
10. This further confirms Jesus' point that even we would not give those we love and who depend on us some unsatisfying or harmful thing when we are asked for something to satisfy a real need.
11. Notice the verbs "ask, seek, and knock" in verse 7 and 8. They are present active imperatives and could be read as "keep on asking, keep on seeking, and keep on knocking."
12. If evil or sinful human fathers willingly and freely give their children the basics of life - God will provide infinitely more (in measure and benefit) to those who belong to Him.
13. So - why do we often neglect praying or allow our prayers to become superficial?
14. The number one reason that is given is the busyness of our lives today. (Mark 1)
15. Notice what the Bible says concerning some of the areas we struggle with in our lives each day:

Prayer is the way you stand up to Satan - (James 4:7)
Prayer is the way you acquire wisdom - (James 1:5)
Prayer is the way you get laborers into the field - (Matthew 9:38)
16. Let's take a look at the days of the early church.
(Acts 1:13-14; 2:42; 4:24-31; 6:1-7; 12:1-5; 13:1-3; 14:23)

17. Oswald Chambers puts it all in perspective when he writes, "Remember, no one has time to pray; we have to take time from other things that are valuable in order to understand how necessary prayer is." (John 15:1)
18. If we desire to see all that God has for us - we too - must pray. But how are we to pray?
19. What should be the attitude of our hearts? What should be our expectation? What degree of hope and confidence should we have? How much depends on us - how much depends on God?
20. James 4:2 and 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2