

Sermon Notes

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The Practice of Prayer.

More things have happened through prayer than this world has ever dreamed of - John Wesley.

Acts 4:23 – 31 “After they prayed the place where they were meeting was shaken”.

Today we will look at the last of the five principles we started out with, in Knowing God.

I believe with all my heart that if we earnestly will apply these as we seek to Know Him, they will open up to us a deeper relationship with God.

Listening to God.

Reading the Bible.

Regular fellowship.

Worship.

Prayer.

As with the other subjects we will not look at the theology of prayer, but the practices of prayer. We all know the importance of prayer, yet we all recognise the lack of it in our daily life.

Prayer Works.

The New Testament is full of answered prayer. The New Testament Church is constantly praying.

Down the centuries we see the power of prayer.

Any given church will have testimonies of answered prayer.

George Muller established and ran children's homes relying solely on God to provide every need the children had, they prayed literally daily for their daily bread, never asking any one for anything.

Not only did they survive but they set a standard of care that the government of the day sought to copy and many of the principles of education they introduced, are standard practice in our education system to day.

God's word tells us that the people of God will be the head and not the tail **Deuteronomy: 28:13**, as someone once said “the Church is not the periphery of the world, but the world is the periphery of the Church”.

How then do we see such answers to prayer?

What did the early Church and others such as Muller do to experience such answers to prayer?

The first thing to see is that if it was easy to do, then we would all be experiencing such prayer lives both in our personal life and in church life.

Like so many things in life, the principles are simple, but the practice is not easy.

Let us now look at the practice of prayer.

The Practice of Prayer.

We will split this into two parts, private prayer and public prayer.

Private Prayer.

➤ **Jesus - Our Example.**

Not only did He teach on prayer, but He also practiced personal prayer in his life.

To Jesus, prayer was as important as eating and drinking; in fact prayer should be to us as automatic as eating and drinking, part of our daily life.

- **Luke: 3:21** prays at His baptism.

- **Luke: 6:12** spent the night in prayer
- **Luke: 9:18; 11:1** reference to him praying on his own
- **John 18:1** Jesus praying in the garden before his arrest
- **Luke 5:16** Jesus often withdrew to pray

➤ **Jesus - Teaching on Prayer.**

In **Luke: 11:1** after He has been praying alone, his disciples ask Him how to pray. He then teaches them the principle of what we now know as the Lord's Prayer.

This teaches us the principles of

- **God as our Father.**
- **His holiness.**
- **His kingdom rule and reign on earth.**
- **His daily provision.**
- **The forgiveness and repentance of sin.**
- **His power to over come the world, the flesh and the devil.**

In **Matthew: 6:5 – 18** we see an extended teaching on this: -

- The importance to be heard by God rather than to be seen by men
- The need for the private place with no distractions
- Teaching on fasting
- The need and place of faith in prayer 7:7 – 12

➤ **Jesus - His Praying.**

In **John: 17** He prays for

- **Himself**
- **His disciples**
- **Lastly He prays for all future generations**

In **Luke 22** Jesus teaches the disciples the need to pray in times of temptation.

His prayer even at this time is to know the will of God and the strength to do it (note the angel giving Him all He needs to keep going)

➤ **Paul - Prayer His Passion.**

As you read through the New Testament books that Paul wrote, in every one we find him talking of his prayer for the Church and the fellow workers in the ministry. We see him launching into prayer for them. Paul knows the secret power of a prayer filled life. We are privileged to be able to read and pray some of these prayers, recorded in the letters to the Churches for example **Ephesians 3:14-21**. Take time to read and see how much emphasis there is on prayer, in the NT church

Public Prayer.

The New Testament Church is fired by prayer; it is birthed in an attitude of prayer

Acts: 1:14 *They all joined together constantly in prayer.*

Acts: 2:1 *They were all together in one place.*

Acts: 2:42 *They devoted themselves to teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer*

Acts: 3:1 *Going up to the temple at the time of prayer*

Acts: 4:24 *When they heard this they raised their voices in prayer*

Acts: 12:5 *Peter was kept in prison but the church was earnestly praying for him*

When God's people pray together - amazing things happen we find in the OT some good examples: -

2Kings: 19 - *Hezekiah*

2Chronicles: 20 - *Jehoshaphat*

Esther: 4:16 - *Esther*

Corporate prayer has down the history of the church and still is to day, the most powerful weapon in the hands of the people of God.

The answers to prayer are as long as history itself, every age and every type of person has received answer to prayer, for every conceivable request, it cannot be denied God loves to answer prayer.

How to Pray.

Praying on our own is something every Christian needs to do, it is not difficult

- **Make time.**
- **Find a place were you will not be disturbed with no distractions.**
- **Have your Bible with you.**

There are a number of ways to pray and different people pray in different ways.

- **Written down prayer.**
- **Need driven prayer.**
- **Inspirational prayer.**

In every case we need the Holy Spirit who helps us in our praying.

- **We can also pray at all times, in all places, in any given circumstances**
- **We may speak the wrong words, but if our heart and intensions are correct, then God will answer.**

Every person who has ever had a powerful ministry, has a strong personal prayer life without fail.

Hindrance to Prayer.

There are some things that will stop us from praying, above all else, the world the flesh and the devil.

Never under estimate the opposition you will face in your life of prayer. However don't let it intimidate you.

- **Time.**
- **Life's pressures.**
- **Life's pleasures.**
- **Unbelief.**
- **Cynicism.**
- **Things get worse when I pray.**
- **Anything that stops us praying.**

Meeting to Pray.

It is evident that when God's people come together to pray, God does amazing things. We see this in such places as **Acts 4 & 12** there are many, many examples down the ages of when people pray together - God does wonders.

He calls us to pray in **Isaiah: 62:6 – 7** God gives us the picture of His people asking and calling out to Him to bring his Kingdom on earth

I have posted watchmen on your walls o Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You, who call upon the Lord, give yourselves no rest and give Him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth.

What an amazing privilege we have been given to be able to pray and make a difference - God-s difference.