

Prayer and Fasting – **Matthew 6:5-15** (private times...not public)

Today we are going to be delving into a topic that is very popular to ask for yet is very under utilized. We are going to be talking about the most powerful tool we as believers have yet it is the weakest part of our faith. We are talking about prayer. How vital is prayer? Charles Spurgeon said, “**I would rather teach one man to pray than ten men to preach.**” Jesus said, “**My house is a house of Prayer.**” How much do we recognize or utilize our gift of prayer? How effective are we in our prayers?

E.M. Bounds – Collection on prayer – I have a copy if needed.

- I. What prayer is not
 - a. Prayer is not a magic formula, or an incantation. – Just because we “pray” doesn’t mean we get our requests automatically.
 - b. Prayer is not a Christmas list for God to fill - the idea behind James teaching in **James 4:1-3**
 - c. It is not a time for showmanship – **Matthew 6:5**
 - i. Of our vocabulary
 1. What I don’t mean: **Beloved Progenitor, we allot appreciations in favor of what you devised and bequeathed which was aimed at us concerning our victuals and sartorial. Ameliorate us subsist satisfactorily. Concerning our Holy Majestic Savior, Agreed**
 2. **WHAT?!!! What was that conglomerate mess of dribble? What was it saying?**
 3. **Dear Lord, we give thanks for what you have provided for us in the way of food, and clothing. Help us to be thankful. In Jesus Name, Amen**
 - ii. Our length of talk
 1. This is not about showmanship.
 2. **How many of us have heard of Peter Lutz? He was a Brethren Preacher in 1844. It is said that at one funeral, he prayed so long at the burial that all but one deacon left before he finished.**
 - iii. It is not a repetitious order of words. -**Matthew 6:7.**
 1. We are warned by this in **Ecclesiastes 5:2¹**
 2. We have an example of the heathens repetitions in **1 Kings 18:26**
 - iv. A time to spread news, gossip or information
- II. What prayer is
 - a. It is us speaking with God – Time of intimacy between us and God
 - b. It is a Sharing with God our fears, cares, concerns and emotions
 - c. It is part of our weapons of Spiritual warfare. – **Ephesians 6:18**
- III. What is required
 - a. A humble heart
 - b. A resolute heart. We are either all in, or we are not. If we go in not ready, as

¹ (Ecclesiastes 5:2 NKJV) - “Do not be rash with your mouth, And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few.”

- c. A child like faith and innocence. – **Elijah prayed for us and can I be honest...at night, when I hear my kids pray, I know that God probably hears their prayers faster than He hears mine.**
- IV. What should prayer accomplish
- a. It should bring our heart and lives in tuned to God
 - b. It should help us to be strengthened and encouraged as we look at our next hour
 - c. It should move us down to our very core of our being and shake the very fiber of our existence out of lethargy.
 - i. E.M. Bounds said, **we live Feebly because we pray feebly (I draw a direct line from when I fail in my life as a Christ right to when I fail in my life in my prayer)**
 - ii. E.M. Bounds also says, **"A holy life does not live in the closet, but it cannot live without the closet."**
- V. What are the marks of good prayer?
- a. Persistency
 - b. Intensity
 - c. Necessity
 - d. Passionate
 - e. Honest
 - f. Open
 - g. Consistency
- VI. How do we know if our prayer was effective or not?
- a. If we get up unfazed. Or unaffected, our prayer was ineffective.
 - b. True prayer leaves us exhausted emotionally, mentally, physically but charged up spiritually.
- VII. Methods of prayer
- a. Acronym formula
 - i. A. – Adoration – Praising God for who He is
 - ii. C. – Confession – Asking forgiveness
 - iii. T. – Thanksgiving – Thanking Him for His goodness and provisions
 - iv. S. – Supplication – Our requests
 - b. Layout formula - Found in Scripture – **Matthew 6:9-15**
 - c. Which should we use?
 - i. Which gets us into the prayer closet more consistently following the marks of good prayer?
 - ii. Which method brings our hearts to the very throne room of God more clearly and allows us to abide longer in that place of communion with God?

I know we did not cover fasting. We just do not have the time for that right now. I would encourage looking at fasting and how it relates to prayer in the Scriptures.

Prayer and fasting. This was a very small lesson in the depth that it could go. I will close with another quote by E.M. Bounds, **"Prayer is not learned in the classroom. It is learned in the closet."** This is just the basis. Now, let us start to put to practice what we have learned and let us become a people of prayer.