



Study

7

Prayer As A Lifestyle

- Review last study's homework
- Pray without ceasing
- Incorporating prayer into the mundane
- Instant in prayer
- What to do with answered prayer

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

The Gospel of Luke is also known as the *Gospel of Prayer*. In this Gospel, Jesus is praying all the time.

1. Note what circumstances Luke records Jesus praying-
 - a. Luke 3:21 _____
 - b. Luke 5:16 _____
 - c. Luke 6:12 _____
 - d. Luke 9:18 _____
 - e. Luke 11:1 _____
 - f. Luke 22:32 _____
 - g. Luke 22:41 _____

Prayer As A Lifestyle

In our past studies in this series on prayer we have looked at the Scriptures which instruct us to set aside time to deliberately focus on prayer. This is an important spiritual discipline.

2. In what way does Acts 3:1 show that the early Christians considered setting a specific time aside to pray?

Beyond setting specific time aside to pray, the apostles announced that spiritual leadership demanded that they be “devoted” to prayer (Acts 6:4).

3. Why was Cornelius considered a good man? (Acts 10:1-2)

We read in the Book of Acts that the early Christians would pray at set times, pray continually, and then have special times of urgent prayer (note Acts 12:5). We would do well today to follow this example. Sadly, although spiritual leadership fundamentally involves prayer and leading others in prayer, all too often when a spiritual leader calls those in his charge to prayer too few respond. Someone has said that the true size of a church is not how many are present Sunday morning but how many are at the church’s prayer meeting.

4. A Christian is filled, led, empowered and gifted by the Holy Spirit. According to Romans 8:26, how does this effect how we pray?

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5. In the Apostle Paul's list of the 27 things needed to develop sincere Christian community (Romans 12:9-21), how does he say we should pray?

6. Based on Romans 15:30, how did Paul seek to motivate believers to pray?

7. What types of prayers are called for in Ephesians 6:18?

"Praying at times" writes the great apostle of prayer to fellow believers, "in the Spirit". Paul seems to be saying that if we can attune our spiritual ears to the leading of the Holy Spirit we can sense what we should be praying for at that time.

8. Have you ever experienced this type of Holy Spirit leading or prompting to pray? Describe one such moment-

With all prayer "and supplication" adds the Apostle. Supplication is *requesting*. Some people teach that prayer should not be seen as something you do to make requests of God. This is too selfish they argue. But when we pray our requests to God we are confessing our dependency upon Him. When we pray our requests to God and He provides in response to our praying, He is the One who is glorified. Therefore, we join with the Apostle Paul and pray with supplications.

9. What does the Apostle say in Philippians 4:6 is the answer to a lot of our anxiety?
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INCORPORATING PRAYER INTO THE MUNDANE

Some people don't pray much and still others don't pray for much. One reason for the former is that some people regard praying as something you must be fully focussed on. To them, this requires a set time, perhaps a set place, and especially peace and quiet. This is what the monks and nuns of the Medieval period largely thought of prayer. But, if we recall what we see in the Gospel of Luke about the way Jesus prayed, we notice that He prayed nearly all the time in the midst of whatever He was doing.

Therefore, it is reasonable, right, and required that we pray when we are walking, waking, weaving, welding, whining, winnowing, whipping, whistling, working, wandering, or whatever.

10. Read Colossians 1:9 and tick the following correct answer-
When Paul told the Colossians he prayed for them without ceasing, he was probably-
- Having a prayer breakfast with the political leaders of his day
 - In the middle of a prayer and praise conference
 - taking a year off from preaching to do a prayer retreat
 - In a Roman jail, manacled in chains, somewhere.
11. What did Paul tell the Colossians to combine with their steadfast praying? (Col. 4:2)
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What are you thankful to God for right now?

INSTANT IN PRAYER

It seems that God is happy to hear from His children anytime. Some of us lead lives that are far from routine which means that having a regular early morning prayer time is quite difficult. The good news is for those who can't quite make a regular prayer time a part of their routine is that they can pray *instantly*.

12. Although no-one would have known it at the time, how was Nehemiah being spiritual at the moment of Nehemiah 2:4?
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Being instant in prayer involves being in a spiritual state of listening to God as well as speaking to Him. Nehemiah needed instant wisdom and prayed instantly to get it. We too can pray constantly in the sense that we are ever "listening" and always prepared to pray instantly.

13. In First Thessalonians 5:17 Paul tells his readers to constantly pray. But in First Thessalonians 1:2 and 3:10 he has told them something else. How do these preceding references (1Thess. 1:2; 3:10, see also 2Thess. 1:11) affect his instructions in 1Thessalonians 5:17?
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14. What does Second Timothy 1:3 reveal about the Apostle Paul?
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When I was a younger man I drove around Australia. By the time I arrived in the Pilbara (in far north west Western Australia) I knew no-one where I was staying. I arrived at a church which was pastored by a White Australian but was mainly comprised of Aborigines. The first meeting I attended was their prayer meeting. They treated me very coolly upon my arrival. But when I joined in the prayer meeting and they heard me pray, their entire attitude toward me changed! Suddenly, I was their brother.

WHAT TO DO WITH ANSWERED PRAYER

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRAYER AND PRAISE

15. Read the story in Luke 17:12-19. Why was Christ somewhat outraged? In what way does this show us how God expects us to respond to Him answering our prayers?
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In his book, *More Than A Theory*, Dr Hugh Ross lists three types of miracles. Firstly, he writes, there are “**sustaining**” miracles. These are the miracles that makes life and matter possible. It includes the miracles of physical laws which govern the universe which God has fixed (Jer. 33:25). It includes God’s ‘sustaining’ of the world (refer Heb. 1:3). Secondly, there are “**transformational**” miracles where God is able to take that which already exists and by divine power transform it. For example, God took dirt and transformed it into a Man. Christ took water and transformed it into wine. God used the apostles to transform diseased people into well people. Thirdly, there are “**creative**” miracles where He speaks things which are not into existence. Genesis 1 tells us that after the six *days* of creative activity, He ceased from creative miracles in this dimension (He will one day do away with this dimension and create a New Heaven and a New Earth, a new dimension governed by different physical laws, Rev. 21-22).

Sometimes we are disappointed with God’s seeming lack of answers to our prayer demands. But, I wonder whether we appreciate the abundance of miracles which God has already provided for us?

16. What possibly positive affect does praising God have on our mental health according Philipians 4:8?
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Prayer that works is prayer that brings us into awful fellowship with God. This is made possible through praying privately, for others, in the Spirit, by the Scriptures, with a pattern, and continually. Prayer that works involves working at prayer. History bears testimony that nothing great has ever been achieved for God and His glory without working prayer.

Let’s pray.

Amen.