

A CHRISTIAN IN PRAYER

Luke 11: 1-4

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: Most Christians don't spend enough time in prayer as they should and some Christians don't really know how to pray. Prayer is communicating with God and is done in the name of Jesus as He instructed. So, how, when, with whom, for what is a Christian to pray? Is prayer reciting some phrase or passage of scripture? Is there some designated form of prayer that one is supposed to use? Prayer should be a natural thing with a Christian.

I. WHEN SHOULD A CHRISTIAN PRAY?

1. Setting a particular time each day to pray is very helpful in creating the habit of praying:
 - Some examples in the Bible:
 - David was called a man after God's own heart - Psalm 55:17
 - Daniel had set times he would pray - Daniel 6:10
 - Others are also mentioned who had set times to pray.
 - One would do well to imitate the example of those mentioned in the Bible who had a habit of prayer.
 - Find some time each day to be alone with God in prayer.
 - Early morning or late at night but make a special time to be alone with the Lord.
2. Prayer is NOT to be limited to some "set time":
 - Sometimes there are special needs that need to be prayed about.
 - Jesus prayed on important occasions - Luke 6:12-13
 - Paul prayed during difficult times - Acts 16:25
 - Nehemiah prayed on the "spur" of the moment - Nehemiah 2:4-5
3. The goal of praying for the Christian is to be able to "pray without ceasing" - 1 Thessalonians 5:17
 - Having set times will help develop the habit of praying.
 - Praying spontaneously as needs arise will help develop one to "pray without ceasing.."

II. DOES A CHRISTIAN NEED TO PRAY WITH SOMEBODY?

1. Jesus taught His disciples to first pray "in secret." - Matthew 6:5-6
 - Private prayer should be the most frequent of one's total prayer life.
 - In "secret" prayer:
 - a close union and fellowship with God is formed, just "you and God."
 - it reveals just how much one really wants to pray and talk to God.
 - secret prayer is not trying to impress anyone else.
 - secret prayer also shows how sincere one is trying to be with God.
 - God will reward one openly when there has been secret prayer - Matthew 6:6
 - Secret prayer should be one's priority.
2. Jesus also taught there were times to pray with others - Matthew 18:19-20
 - The early church/christians prayed together often:
 - When trouble came up - Acts 4:23-24; 12:5, 12; 16:25
 - In times when someone was leaving - Acts 20:36; 21:5
 - A spirit of unity and strength comes when Christians pray together and should be done as often as possible.

III. HOW SHOULD A CHRISTIAN PRAY?

1. Jesus taught His disciples how to pray - Luke 11:1-4
 - The "Lord's Prayer" is a model, a guide in learning how to pray for it reveals what a proper prayer includes:
 - To "whom" one should pray - "Our Father in heaven"
 - Offering praise to God - "Hallowed be thy name"
 - What to ask for:
 - God's purposes for one's life - "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done"
 - For one's physical needs - "Give us this day, our daily bread"
 - For one's spiritual needs - "Forgive us our sins"
 - For the spiritual needs of others - "For we also forgive those indebted to us"
 - Jesus also stressed the importance to be simple in one's prayers - Matthew 6:7-8
2. Some have learned how to pray using "A C T S"
 - A = Adoration
 - praising God, 1 Chronicles 29:10-13
 - spending time in sincere praise helps develop the proper spirit of humility.
 - C = Confession
 - acknowledging one's sins before God.
 - understanding how sin breaks one's fellowship with God causes one to want forgiveness.
 - confessing one's sins brings cleansing by the blood of Jesus Christ - 1 John 1:9
 - T = Thanksgiving
 - being sincerely thankful is important in one's prayer - Philippians 4:6
 - being thankful has many benefits to the one praying:
 - it causes one to acknowledge God's existence, love and care
 - it reminds one of God's goodness
 - it helps one to shift focus from what one does not have to what one has.
 - kinds of things to be thankful for:
 - Health, Family, Friends, God's guidance and previous prayers answered
 - invisible things to be thankful for:
 - having been adopted into God's family as one of His children.
 - the forgiveness of sins
 - the promise of eternal life
 - the assurance of His continued presence.
 - God's children have every reason to be thankful and to be know for "abounding in thanksgiving" - Colossians 1:12; 2:7; 3:15; 4:2
 - S = Supplication
 - supplication is making requests of God - Philippians 4:6
 - not making prayer a spiritual "shopping list"
 - including others in one's prayer brings him/her to a very noble area of prayer - intercession.
 - intercession is something God wants His children to do - 1 Timothy 2:1

IV. WHAT SHOULD A CHRISTIAN PRAY FOR?

1. God reveals what a Christian should pray for in His Word:
 - Pray for self:
 - for physical daily needs - Matthew 6:11
 - for personal growth in being more Christlike and in more devotion to God - Colossians 1:9-12

- Pray for one's family:
 - one's wife/husband, children, parents, sisters, brothers, etc.
 - for one's family nurturing and growing in the ways of the Lord - Ephesians 6:4
- Pray for one's community:
 - for peace to prevail - Jeremiah 29:7
- Pray for one's church:
 - for love and unity to prevail - John 13:35; 17:20-21
 - for each member to grow spiritually - Philippians 1:9-11
 - for the Gospel to be freely preached, shared - 2 Thessalonians 3:1
- Pray for one's nation:
 - for one's nation to repent and come back to God - Psalm 33:12; Proverbs 14:34
 - for the national leaders to govern wisely and unselfishly - 1 Timothy 2:2
- Pray for non-believers:
 - for their salvation - Romans 10:1
 - for the effort of those witnessing, teaching about Jesus - Ephesians 6:18-20
- Pray for the sick:
 - for their restoration to health - James 5:14-15
 - for their spiritual strength and peace of mind - James 5:16
- Pray for the poor and oppressed:
 - for the homeless, fatherless, unborn children - Proverbs 29:7
 - those in other nations who are being oppressed by their own leaders and outside influences

2. Develop a system of daily praying:

- for instance on Mondays, pray for one's family:
- on Tuesdays, pray for one's Church.
- on Wednesdays, pray for one's community.
- on Thursdays, pray for one's nation.
- on Fridays, pray for the world.
- on Saturday, pray for the afflicted
- on Sunday, pray for the Church services

CONCLUSION:

1. The important thing for a Christian to do is to PRAY regularly:
 - always, in everything, earnestly, vigilantly, without ceasing.
2. Prayer and Bible study are the means by which Christians grow in the blessings of God and every Christians should arrange his/her life to include both prayer and Bible study every day.
3. Christian! How is YOUR prayer life?