

SOME PRINCIPLES OF PRAYER

Luke 11:1-13

Introduction: The secret of a Christian's failure is most often his/her failure IN prayer. Not TO pray but IN prayer (Pharisee and Publican's prayers). It has been said that "when we work, we work, when we pray, God works." All those that God has used mightily have been people who knew HOW to pray and to whom prayer was both a priority and a necessity. *John 14:12-13; 15:7*

People read books on prayer, talk about prayer, ask for prayer, but somehow churches of today are anything but praying churches as a whole. There are a few real prayer warriors, yes, but the vision and discipline of biblical praying is just not found anymore, only rarely.

The disciples had the experience yet, they, too fell short in their prayer life and felt it deeply.

I. THE DISCIPLES ASKED JESUS TO TEACH THEM HOW TO PRAY

1. Why the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray:

- The disciples never once asked "Lord, teach us how to witness or teach us how to perform miracles, or teach us how to teach." But one of them did ask, "***Lord, teach us how to pray...***"
- Think about what it must have been like being around Jesus, how busy He always was.
- Imagine how the disciples tried to explain all the things Jesus did and the authority and power He showed.
- The disciples began to suspect that there was something very different in Jesus' prayers.
 - Everybody prayed, so His prayer wasn't just prayer. It was the way Jesus prayed in relation to all He was and what He was doing.
 - Prayer was not just a religious thing to do when Jesus prayed.
- Jesus knew that He could do nothing of His own strength. He needed God, the Father.
- The disciples were believers in Jesus, but in order to become more like Jesus, they needed to learn how to pray as Jesus prayed.

2. Jesus' attitude in prayer:

- The most central and basic principle that governed the life of Jesus was that "***..the Son can do nothing of Himself...***"
- To Jesus, prayer was a way of life, an absolute necessity; a means of communication with the Father and means of bringing the power of God down to humanity.
- Jesus was consistent in His prayer life:
 - In the midst of a busy schedule, Jesus often left everybody to go off and pray.
 - When choosing His disciples, Jesus retired to pray.
 - When Jesus stood at the tomb of Lazarus, He raised His eyes heavenward and prayed.
 - When Jesus fed the 5,000, He looked up toward heaven and prayed.
- Think about this truth: Jesus, the Son of God, perfect man and Creator, always pleasing God the Father doing all the mighty works He did, His deeds, and ministry **TOOK ABSOLUTELY NO CREDIT!!!** (*John 14:10*)

- When we work, we work. When we pray, the Father works.
- Jesus knew that if anything was to be done, the Father must do it! Why do we have a problem with this?
- The disciples not only saw Jesus in prayer, but saw Jesus' life of prayer, therefore one of the disciples, speaking for the others said, "*Lord, teach US to pray...*"

II. TRUTHS ABOUT PRAYER TO CONSIDER

1. Prayer should demonstrate a total consciousness of one's need, a sense of complete inadequacy along with a sense of God's complete adequacy and willingness.
2. Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance, but laying hold of God's ever present willingness.
3. Prayer is not for emergency use only, when we get in a tight and need someone to bail us out.
4. Prayer is not an "Aladdin's Lamp" or a trip to the wishing well for our wants and needs.
5. Prayer is a means of intimate communion, fellowship and dependence upon God the Father who has promised to work in and through us with His Son, just as God worked through Jesus.
6. Prayer is for everyday living, moment by moment.
7. Prayer is the means of claiming God's promises and knowing and becoming abandoned to God's will. *John 14:10-14*
8. There is no activity in the believer's life which does not require a prayerful attitude.
 - By ourselves, we can do nothing.
 - Faith for a committed believer is expressed in intimate, prayerful living. *Luke 5:5-11*

CONCLUSION:

1. For a committed believer, it is never a matter of living by who and what he/she is and with his/her abilities, training, experience, etc. It is a matter of living by faith in God's Word, in Jesus Christ and being totally dependent upon God, the Father, through a life of prayer and a life of praying without ceasing.
2. If you want to obey the Father and be like His Son, Jesus, then you must make prayer your only way of life.
3. Follow the example of the disciples when they asked, "*...Lord, teach us to pray...*"