

Prayer Week

Why Pray?

January 2, 2011

Scripture Reading - Daniel 9:1-23

Why prayer week?

- Banner - Be joyful always; *pray without ceasing*
- **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (ESV)**
¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ *pray without ceasing*, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
- **Prayerful** - Jesus said that without Him we can do nothing. Therefore, in order to make a difference, we must be humbly and constantly asking for and depending on Jesus' strength, wisdom, and guidance in everything we do. *We must become a house of prayer where praying is not merely one of the many things we do but the foundation and power source of everything we do.* (John 15:5, Col 1:29, Jam 1:5, Mt 21:13)
- Not a lot of houses of prayer out there, but there are a few...
 - o Fresh Wind Fresh Fire by Jim Cymballa to all who attend all three prayer week events. (Brooklyn Tabernacle)

Why pray?

1) Relationship

- a. The best part of the good news of the Gospel is that it allows you to begin an eternal relationship with the God of the universe. The moment you trust in Jesus, you move from enemy of God to child of God and friend of God.
 - i. **John 17:3 (ESV)**
³ And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.
 - ii. **Philippians 3:7-8 (ESV)**
⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

iii. **Philippians 1:21 (ESV)**

²¹For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

- b. Once your relationship is established through faith, prayer is essential for developing and strengthening it.
- c. We all know good communication is critical for healthy relationships. No one had a healthier relationship with God the Father than His Son Jesus Christ. One of the reasons for this was that *Jesus MADE time to communicate with His Father in prayer.*
 - i. A day in the life of Jesus in Mark 1
 1. Morning - Teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath (1:21); Drives out demon (1:25);
 2. Afternoon - Goes to Peter's house and heals Peter's mother-in-law (1:30)
 3. Evening - Whole city gathers at His door (1:33); Heals many and drives out many demons (1:34)
 4. **Mark 1:35 (ESV)**

³⁵*And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.*
- d. Healthy communication involves two way conversation
 - i. Listening = Word of God and listening prayer
 - ii. Talking = Prayer
- e. Healthy relationships require not only healthy communication but apology and praise as well
 - i. Unconfessed sin breaks relationship down. Praise builds relationship up.
 1. Jess
 - ii. Most of Daniel's prayer was confession
 1. **Daniel 9:3-9 (ESV)**

³Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. ⁴I prayed to the Lord my God and made

confession,...⁵ we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. ⁶We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. ⁷To you, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame,...because of the treachery (we) have committed against you. ⁸To us, O Lord, belongs open shame, ...because we have sinned against you. ⁹To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him...

iii. Much of the rest of Daniel's prayer was praise

2) Worship

- a. Prayer is one of our primary means of praising and *worshipping* God
- b. The Psalms are full of prayers both confession AND praise
 - i. **Psalms 145:1-3 (ESV) - Praise**
¹A Song of Praise. Of David. I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. ²Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever. ³Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.
 - ii. **Psalms 118:28-29 (ESV) - Thanksgiving**
²⁸You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God; I will extol you. ²⁹Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!
- c. Note: Though most of Daniels' prayer was confession *much of the rest of it was praise*
 - i. **Daniel 9:3-9 (ESV)**
⁴I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession, saying, "O Lord, the great and

awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments,...⁷To you, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame...⁹To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him...

- d. According to Jesus, praise should be the first thing on our lips when we pray.
 - i. **Matthew 6:9-10 (ESV)**
⁹Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
- e. According to Jesus, *supplication* should be the next thing on our lips when we pray.

3) Dependence

- a. Though we often don't recognize it, we are TOTALLY dependent on God for EVERYTHING.
- b. God is honored when we not only to recognize but also *acknowledge* our total dependence on Him. A great way to do this is prayer.
 - i. **Matthew 6:11-13 (ESV)**
¹¹Give us this day our daily bread, ¹²and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
 - ii. **James 4:1-3 (ESV)**
¹What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? ²You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. *You do not have, because you do not ask.* ³You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.
 - iii. **James 1:5 (ESV)**
⁵If any of you lacks wisdom, *let him ask God*, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

iv. **Philippians 4:6-7 (ESV)**

⁶ do not be anxious about anything, *but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.* ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

1. Ex. An anxious Monday night before Christmas

c. After confessing his sins and praising God, Daniel finally *asks God* for what he needs.

i. **Daniel 9:17-19 (ESV)**

¹⁷ Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas for mercy, and for your own sake, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate. ¹⁸ O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. ¹⁹ O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name."

4) Glory

a. God is glorified when we relate to Him in prayer, praise and worship Him in prayer, and depend on Him in prayer, *but He may be most glorified when He answers our prayers.*

i. **Daniel 9:20-23 (ESV)**

²⁰ While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea before the Lord my God for the holy hill of my God, ²¹ while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice. ²² He made me understand, speaking with me and saying, "O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight

and understanding. ²³ At the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly loved. Therefore consider the word and understand the vision.

- b. Another recent answers to prayer in my life
 - i. No flu for Christmas Eve
- c. God is especially glorified *when He answers prayers for the impossible*
 - i. Daniel's impossible answered prayers
 - 1. Nebuchadnezzar's first dream (Daniel 2)
 - a. Daniel asks Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to pray and God reveals the mystery to Daniel in a dream (2:17-19)
 - b. The result is not only praise from Daniel (2:20-23) but praise from Nebuchadnezzar as well (2:47)
 - 2. We can assume the same in:
 - a. Fiery Furnace (Daniel 3)
 - b. Nebuchadnezzar's second dream (Daniel 4)
 - c. Hand writing on the wall (Daniel 5)
 - d. Lion's den (Daniel 6)
 - 3. We saw the same in mid-October when God miraculously healed my friend.
 - a. October 17 sermon *How Will You Respond to Tragedy?*
 - 4. I would love to see the same in the lives of the "30 to 50" in this upcoming year
 - a. Counted 75 this morning

Two challenges for 2011

- 1) Women - I'm AMAZED at how you make time for relationships and communication with others. *Make time for relationship and communication with God in 2011*
- 2) Men - We all know that watching TV while talking to your wife is a no no (Coke cloning commercial). *Turn off the distractions and give God your undivided attention in 2011.*

Prayer week is a great place to start. So is communion.