



## Articles and Sermons :: The Prayer that Killed the Prayer Meeting! by David Smithers

**The Prayer that Killed the Prayer Meeting! by David Smithers** , on: 2013/1/12 16:28

The Prayer that Killed the Prayer Meeting! by David Smithers

"Is it really possible for just one prayer to kill an entire prayer meeting? As strange as it may sound there is a certain kind of so called, "praying" that has the potential to greatly hinder or even kill our corporate prayer meetings. I'm sad to say I have witnessed this happen many, many times. If you are currently responsible for a corporate prayer meeting or feel called to lead one, you will want to pay careful attention to the following exhortations.

The type of prayer that too often kills our prayer meetings is that religious oratory which pretends to address God but is really intended to teach or correct men. Some believers are compelled to showcase their spiritual gifts and biblical insight under the pretense of interceding during a corporate prayer meeting. Regardless if this is a conscious or unconscious action, such so called praying will only quench the Spirit of prayer and discourage other believers. Prayer meetings are first and foremost a place for vertical dialogue between God and man and not the appropriate place to sermonize and teach. A corporate prayer meeting will always provide some opportunity to learn more about God and the scriptures, but this is usually just the natural byproduct of an honest and humble interaction with God and not the primary focus for coming together to pray. If we allow our prayer meetings to function in such a pretentious and prideful way they will inevitably become tedious and uncomfortable events that cause people to spurn corporate prayer rather than seek it out as a biblical source of greater unity and power. Many fine Christian authors have come to the same conclusion as the following excerpts make very clear.

C.H. Mackintosh: Are our Prayers More like Statements of Doctrine than Utterances of Need?

"Often our prayers are more like orations than petitions-more like statements of doctrine than utterances of need! It seems, at times, as though we meant to explain principles to God, and give Him a large amount of information. These are the things which cast a withering influence over our prayer meetings, robbing them of their freshness, their interest, and their value. Those who really know what prayer is-who feel its value, and are conscious of their need of it, attend the prayer meeting in order to pray, not to hear lectures and expositions from men on their knees. If they want lectures, they can attend at the lecture hall or the preaching room; but when they go to the prayer meeting, it is to pray. To them, the prayer meeting is the place of expressed need and expected blessing- the place of expressed weakness and expected power. ...Not infrequently it happens that what we call prayer is not prayer at all, but the fluent utterance of certain known and acknowledged truths and principles, to which one has heard so often that the reiteration becomes tiresome in the extreme. What can be more painful than to hear a man on his knees explaining principles and unfolding doctrines? The question forces itself upon us, "Is the man speaking to God, or to us?" If to God, surely nothing can be more irreverent or profane than to attempt to explain things to Him; but if to us, then it is not prayer at all and the sooner we rise from the posture of prayer the better, inasmuch as the speaker will do better on his legs and we in our seats... Some of us seem to think it necessary to make one long prayer about all sorts of things-many of them very right and very good, no doubt-but the mind gets bewildered by the multiplicity of subjects. How much better to bring one object before the throne, earnestly urge it, and pause so that the Holy Spirit may lead out others, in like manner to pray, either for the same thing or something else equally definite. Long prayers are often very wearisome."

Charles H. Spurgeon: The Evil of Mistaking Preaching for Prayer!

"Beware of the evil of mistaking preaching for prayer. The friends who were reputed to be 'gifted' indulged themselves in public prayer with a review of their own experience, a recalling of their creed, an occasional running commentary upon a chapter or Psalm, or even a criticism upon the Pastor and his sermons. It was too often quite forgotten that the brother was addressing the divine Majesty, before whose wisdom a display of our own knowledge is impertinence, and before whose glory an attempt at swelling words and pompous periods is little short of profanity; the lecture was evidently intended for man rather than God, and on some occasions did not contain a single petition from the beginning to end. We hope that good men are leaving this unhallowed practice, and are beginning to see that sermons and doctrinal dissertations are miserable substitutes for earnest wrestling prayers, when our place is before the mercy-seat, and our engagement is intercession with the Most High. If each person will offer the petition most pressing upon his heart by the Holy Spirit, and then make room for another, the evening will be far more profitable, and the prayers incomparably more fervent than if each brother ran round the whole circle of petition without dwelling on one point. Compare your topics of prayer to so

many nails; it will be better for an intercessor to drive one nail home with repeated blows, than to deal one ineffectual tap to them one after another. Let as many as possible take part in the prayer of the church's desires; the change of voice will prevent weariness, and the variety of subjects will excite attention. Better to have six pleading earnestly, than two drowsily; far better for the whole meeting that the many wants should be represented experimentally by many intercessors, than formally by two or three."

What Does A Good Prayer Meeting Look Like?

In closing let's consider some of the key aspects of a healthy and vibrant prayer meeting. There is not enough space here to rightly define all of the various expressions of a good corporate prayer meeting. Yet, it is safe to say that in a truly healthy corporate prayer gathering, each person has room to express his or her own heart to the Lord. Each believer is encouraged to listen and cooperate with the needs and prayers of the whole corporate assembly. Healthy corporate prayer meetings usually have some kind of defined leadership, but that does not mean that the meeting revolves around the prayers of one or two leaders while everyone else just listens. No, a healthy prayer meeting is designed by God to be a true concert or harmony of prayer, where each individual believer's cry of need and worship contributes to the overall chorus of fervent intercession. There is no room for individualistic pride and ego to parade itself around and steal the time and space needed for the cries of the humble and needy! True corporate prayer is a united team effort and the prayers of pride, pretense and hypocrisy will strip it of its joy and blessing every time!" (David Smithers).

References:

"Prayer and the Prayer Meeting" by C. H. Mackintosh

"Only a Prayer Meeting" by Charles Spurgeon

Complete article can be found at the following link:

[http://towel.mysitehosted.com/~awakeand//index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=173&Itemid=30](http://towel.mysitehosted.com/~awakeand//index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=173&Itemid=30)

**Re: The Prayer that Killed the Prayer Meeting! by David Smithers , on: 2013/1/12 18:06**

A good word of exhortation and yet I stand convicted as a prayer facilitator. Dear God may I apply the wisdom of this post.

Bearnaster.

**Re: , on: 2013/1/12 18:56**

Dear Bear:

I also have failed in the flesh in this area too and I pray that God will break me and bring me to the end of myself. OH dear Lord Jesus please let no unwholesome word proceed from my mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

Kenneth

**Re: , on: 2013/1/13 0:41**

One of the most profound prayer meetings I led was in Wales at the revival conference, in Moriah chapel of all places where the Welsh revival began. I felt so strongly impressed by the Spirit in the middle of the night, that I awoke one of the speakers, we were sharing a room, and asked him to join me in prayer, which he gladly did. The next morning I followed the instructions of the Lord and told the people that the only prayers to be prayed that morning was for those who had been touched by the glory of God to stand up and give Him glory for it, or by those who had not been touched by His glory and stand up and call on it, or by those who had but had lost their first love. People stood up all over the hall and prayed to God, the vast majority with much tears and passion. It lasted an hour and a half with people still standing at the end to pray.

I am always amazed at "teaching prayers." The vital aspect of prayer, in the prayer meeting, is to remember what prayer is. If God is not a living reality in your life then He will not be a living reality in your prayers. One can send prayers into the atmosphere, as men would launch rockets into space, or one can boldly come before the throne of grace (the bold p

art is in the coming there at all) and speak to God. If one is truly before the throne, there is no likelihood of preaching or teaching, rather trembling, tears and awe. If it is dignity your after, then the throne-room is not the place to be as one is more likely to be on their faces. Revival happens when the reality of the throne-room opens up to the people, when God "rends the heavens and comes down." .....bro Frank

**Re: , on: 2013/1/13 9:29**

Amen brother Frank, encouraging testimony. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." And Jesus prayed to the Father: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17). "Do it again Lord, do it again!"

KM

**Re: The Prayer that Killed the Prayer Meeting! by David Smithers , on: 2013/1/13 10:50**

God bless you brother Ken!

i'm sighing in my spirit, coz i KNOW what i a truly unprofitable lazy servant i am.

thats just some pious self abasement, thats the truth! God has me under SO MUCH conviction these days, i dont even know left from right.

My brother Frank appolus knows what i speak of....that dear man has most patient with me as a brother.

Frank, i always love the Words God gives you....i'm just grieved your a thousand miles away.

God bless all you dear saints, neil

**Re: , on: 2013/1/13 19:09**

Hi Ken, we are going to be holding a series of meetings in July, at Pastor Brian Long's church. Please come and join us, you too Neil. We have a good friend of mine coming over from Scotland to lead worship, many of SI members will know Aileen Gilchrist from the Godly music right here on SI. She led worship for us in the Greenock revival conference. We are praying, not presumptuously, that the Lord will grace us with His presence.....bro Frank

**dear brother Frank, on: 2013/1/13 20:49**

God willing, i will be there, with all joy. in Jesus love, neil

**Re: , on: 2013/1/14 10:21**

Brother Frank, thank you for letting me know. I will send you an email about the meetings. Kenneth

**Re: The Prayer that Killed the Prayer Meeting! by David Smithers - posted by DEADn (), on: 2013/1/14 10:36**

This is such an intriguing article. Do you suppose it is a reflection of the human heart deceiving its own self? What an enigma we must be to the Eyes of God.

**Re: , on: 2013/1/14 11:04**

Hi Deadn, I believe it is more of a reflection of people's walk and intimacy with the Lord. Whenever there is a lack of intimacy, it has to be replaced with some thing. So if you take away intimacy from the equation then you are left with ego and pride, none of which can exist before the throne.

Brother David Ford one time, prior to speaking and instead of praying, got down on the floor of the platform, on his face, fully stretched out and just lay there for what, for many, was an uncomfortably long time. Even the fact that he was on the floor made many uncomfortable.

Many on SI know the accounts of revival from the past. If you study them to any degree you are going to hear the phrase "awareness of God," or similar phrases. And in my opinion, some men and women, when they pray are actually standing before the throne speaking to God while others are simply speaking. And why would that be? Well, it takes humility to

approach the throne. We know that God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble. This grace represents His presence.

Now grace means unmerited favor, and in truth and in reality we would have no business coming before the throne, yet the Lord Jesus has made a way for us to come into that place. The greatest tragedy of a professing Christian is to not come before that throne and speak to God the Father, God Almighty Himself. It's in that place, in His presence, that we are changed, we are anointed, we are forgiven, we are encouraged, we are empowered, we are captivated, we fully realize our need, we experience the fullness of God, we experience the abundant life, we know joy inexplicable, we are envisioned, we are sent and finally, we are ruined for this life and all that it has to offer.

There is something unique about the corporate presence of God, the shekinah glory of the living God coming down. We are made in such a fashion as to operate as a Body and when we experience His presence as a Body then collectively our heart burns. Notice the singular, there is one heart of Christ and we are part of that. When we come together and stand as one, in unity, then we experience something unique if God so blesses us with His presence. We desperately need this today, this missing element is the crisis of the Christian age.....bro Frank

**Re: , on: 2013/1/14 12:44**

Amen brother Frank.

In Romans it says "in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."

I recently listened to a sermon by Katz on "Attaining to Sonship", which was spoken during the later days of his life to, I believe, the group where he ministered in Minnesota. In the beginning of the sermon he exhorted the saints that if they believed and yielded to the reality of this message that it would be their last call. "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing" (John 16:23).

"Though God has many children, He has few "sons" in the Hebraic understanding of that word. And He waits for a certain consecration for that crisis "crossing over" before He can say over us, "This day, I have begotten thee."

"For the earnest expectation of the creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God."

This sermon has taken me to a whole 'nother level, if I may say this in a biblical sense, of my understanding of maturity and completeness in Christ. Not only am I coming to believe and understand that this is attainable for me today, but for each of us.

OH dear saints may we gather together no more like children "tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."

Dear Lord and Captain of this great salvation, do it again Lord. Do it AGAIN!

KM

**Re: The Prayer that Killed the Prayer Meeting! by David Smithers - posted by iceman9, on: 2013/1/14 18:44**

Good post - thanks soldout2him.

**Re: The Prayer that Killed the Prayer Meeting! by David Smithers** , on: 2014/1/23 14:47

\*bump\*

**Re: - posted by narrowpath, on: 2014/1/25 17:29**

by appolus on 2013/1/13 5:41:44

One of the most profound prayer meetings I led was in Wales at the revival conference, in Moriah chapel of all places where the Welsh revival began. I felt so strongly impressed by the Spirit in the middle of the night, that I awoke one of the speakers, we were sharing a room, and asked him to join me in prayer, which he gladly did. The next morning I followed the instructions of the Lord and told the people that the only prayers to be prayed that morning was for those who had been touched by the glory of God to stand up and give Him glory for it, or by those who had not been touched by His glory and stand up and call on it, or by those who had but had lost their first love. People stood up all over the hall and prayed to God, the vast majority with much tears and passion. It lasted an hour and a half with people still standing at the end to pray.

I am always amazed at "teaching prayers." The vital aspect of prayer, in the prayer meeting, is to remember what prayer is. If God is not a living reality in your life then He will not be a living reality in your prayers. One can send prayers into the atmosphere, as men would launch rockets into space, or one can boldly come before the throne of grace (the bold part is in the coming there at all) and speak to God. If one is truly before the throne, there is no likelihood of preaching or teaching, rather trembling, tears and awe. If it is dignity your after, then the throne-room is not the place to be as one is more likely to be on their faces. Revival happens when the reality of the throne-room opens up to the people, when God "rends the heavens and comes down." .....bro Frank

Dear Frank,

I think it is time to set a record straight. When it comes to this particular prayer meeting, actually, by your own admission you practised "teaching prayers" there and then. You grabbed the microphone from the moderator, took control of the meeting and commanded people what to pray and what not. A number of people observed the same and felt a grieving of the spirit. One intercessor went out of the meeting and interceded for the situation and it was alright in the end.

Philip