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Developing a Personal Prayer Life
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Prayer should be a natural function of our everyday life and at the very heart of our relationship with our Lord. The heart of our prayers should always be the expression of our love for the Lord, and of our desire to personally know Him.

“I love them that love Me, and those who seek Me early shall find Me.” Proverbs 8:17

Our need is not to be better informed about the methods and principles of prayer, but rather, to be stirred to spend quality time in prayer.

Our prayer should always include the expression of our total dependence upon the Lord. We were created to live in a dependent relationship with Jesus - looking to Him in an attitude of worship and prayer for all things.

“I am the vine, you are the branches: He that abides in Me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without Me you can do nothing.” John 15:5

Prayer is the means whereby this dependent relationship finds its outworking and completion. It is through this union with Jesus in prayer that the Lord meets our needs. Thus, prayer is at the very heart of our Christian experience and growth.

If you are searching for some new revelation, personality, or fad to follow, you will easily be led into some form of deception. The foundation of our spiritual life must be established on an active, personal prayer relationship with Jesus, as being the Lord of our lives and of all that pertains to us.

When Jesus called His disciples, He said:

“Come you after Me, and I will make you (cause you) to become fishers of men.” Mark 1:17 (comment added)

Note that the emphasis is on our “becoming,” rather than upon our “doing” (fishing). We are prone to rush out and at once begin to work for the Lord, forgetting what Jesus really said.

Our calling is to work with the Lord, rather than for the Lord. Therefore, there must be a time of preparation before we can be effective in serving the Lord. “Fishing for men” will follow as the normal outworking of a life of prayer and communion with the Lord. If this were practiced as the Lord taught, most of the problems that we have in our Christian experience would vanish.

The enemy greatly opposes anyone whom he finds earnestly praying. If possible, he would cause them to “do” something - anything, rather than let them alone to spend time in prayer with the Lord. The devil knows the value of prayer, and will seek to hinder it at all costs. The saint who is determined to pray must discern the source of these hindrances to prayer, and then rise above all opposition and distraction.

At this critical hour in which we live, the Lord is calling His people apart to serious times of prayer. Throughout the Body of Christ, the glitter and charisma of personalities and special ministries is fading. At the same time, the door into the prayer closet is opening wider for those who desire something more from the Lord, and are willing to enter and pray.

“But you, when you pray, enter into your closet, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father which is in secret: and your Father which sees in secret shall reward you openly.” Matthew 6:6

It is here that the battle must be won. All else has failed to bring the Body of Christ to its desired spiritual maturity.

Comparing Isaiah 50:4 with Mark 1:35 we see that Jesus began each day in prayer alone with His Father.

“The Lord God has given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakens morning by morning, He wakens My ear to hear as the learned.” Isaiah 50:4

“And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He (Jesus) went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.” Mark 1:35 (comment added)

His disciples noticed this, and were stirred with the desire to pray.

“And it came to pass, that, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said to Him, Lord teach us to pray....” Luke 11:1

The answer that Jesus gave unfolds the method of prayer, rather than the words to pray.

“And He said to them, When you pray, say, Our Father which is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.” Luke 11:2-4

We are to begin by acknowledging our relationship to our Heavenly Father (our Father), and worship Him (hallowed be Your name). Only then can we pray for His will to be done, and share our needs. In other words, Jesus said, “You do not need to be taught how to pray. You will learn to pray by praying.”

Prayer is more than telling the Lord what we think He should do, and all the wonderful things that would happen if only He would do as we ask. Real prayer begins when we enter into such communion with Jesus, that the Holy Spirit can pray the will of the Father through us.

This is taking hold of the willingness of the Lord, not overcoming His reluctance. He may reluctantly give us something that we continually press Him for - to our own hurt. Note the children of Israel who pressed Him for meat, rather than being satisfied with the Manna that He had provided. He gave them quail, but Scripture tells us that it brought leanness to their souls.

“And He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.” Psalm 106:15

There are no shortcuts, or push-button methods of entering into His presence. “Prayer” means spending quality time with the Lord.

When the Lord’s people come to an understanding of the value of having a set apart place of prayer for communion with Him, and often enter into this place, they will be on their way to a life of fruitfulness, in His purposes.