

Christian Discipleship Week 3 - Prayer and Discipleship

“Lord, teach us to pray” one of the disciples asked Jesus. Prayer is one of the most important aspects of Christian discipleship, and yet one of the hardest. We know we should pray, but find it difficult to do so, whether on our own, with one or two others, or in groups. Prayer is basically talking to God - maybe in Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication. But our focus is on prayer as asking God for His help / blessing.

So why pray?

- We have an enemy
- Jesus is still praying
- Protection from sin
- The Apostles prayed
- Means of finding joy
- Prayer works
- Jesus prayed
- Answer to worry
- God tells us to pray

Prayer is a God-appointed way of enabling us to be involved in His work. God does not need us, we do not change His mind, but prayer means we work together to achieve His purposes. So what stops our prayers being effective?

1. **We do not pray.** James 4:2 *“You have not because you ask not.”*

The greatest issue most of us have is that we do not pray, or at least we pray sporadically. Why do we not pray?

- Feel we have no time.
- Not believe it will work
- Not sufficiently concerned

“The greatest thing anyone can do for God and for man is to pray. It is not the only thing. but it is the chief thing. The great people of the earth today are the people who pray. I do not mean those who talk about prayer; nor those who say they believe in prayer; nor those who can explain about prayer; but I mean these people who take time and pray. They have not time. It must be taken from something else. This something else is important. Very important and pressing, but still less important and pressing than prayer.” SD Gordon

2. **We pray for the wrong things.** James 4: 3 *“You ask that you may spend ...on ..pleasures”*

How do we know what to pray for? Those things that are mentioned in God’s word, in accordance with His will, that tend to His glory.

3. **We pray for the wrong reasons .** Matt. 6:5 *“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites”*

Prayers to impress other people, or to enhance our own glory will probably not be answered!

4. **We harbour sin in our hearts.** Psalm 66:18. *“If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened;”*

5. **We harbour bitterness in our hearts.** Isaiah 1: 15-16 *“I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood”*

Read Colossians 1:9-14, 4:2-6. What can we pray for with confidence?