

Principles of Prayer

Prayer

This morning I feel led to speak to you about prayer. Nothing highly academic; nothing bible school like... I just want to talk about three fundamental concepts of prayer.

Before we delve into this, let me start by asking some questions for you to consider...

Is prayer an optional activity for the Christian believer?
Do we believe that prayer changes things?
Do we believe that God hears our prayers?
Do we believe that God answers our prayers?

Can anyone this morning tell me of a prayer that they have placed before God that he has answered?

Turn with me to Psalms 107:28 HCSB

Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He brought them out of their distress.

So Does God help when we ask?

This leads me to point #1 – ASK

God is a gentleman and doesn't force himself on anyone. He wants us to willingly choose to serve him. We are to come to him willingly and with a joyful heart. Let's quickly look at four scriptures about asking God for help in prayer.

Matthew 7:7 CEV

"Ask, and you will receive. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened for you"

Mathew 21:22 CEV

"If you have faith when you pray, you will be given whatever you ask for. "
See also... (Mark 11. 27- 33; Luke 20)

Mark 11:24 CEV

"Everything you ask for in prayer will be yours, if you only have faith."

John 14:13-14 CEV

“Ask me, and I will do whatever you ask. This way the Son will bring honor to the Father. I will do whatever you ask me to do.”

Can we therefore agree that there is an expectation upon each of us that we ask the Lord in prayer for what we need?

Can we further agree that it is in fact an expectation that we come to the Father and make our request known to him?

Did you know that worry is a sin? It clearly shows a lack of faith in God’s ability to provide. The apostle Paul tells us in Philippians 4:6

Philippians 4:6

“Don’t worry about anything, but pray about everything. With thankful hearts offer up your prayers and requests to God.”

So why are we told have “thankful hearts”? Today I declare - it is because of what he has done and because we can rejoice in what he will do!

Principle Number One:

We need to ask in faith believing and being thankful that he will fulfill his promise to take care of our needs

This leads me to Point #2 - Pray in Faith

2 Chronicles 7:14-15 HCSB

“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place”

Did you catch that “IF”?

Friends, we are to pray earnestly and humbly as we respond in obedience to the restorative work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Know this... Faith is one of the gifts of the Spirit. When you are in tune with the Holy Spirit in your lives you will pray in faith. Praying in faith comes from a platform of peace not duress because of the faith you have in Jesus. If you want real spiritual power and anointing; If you truly seek and believe; If you want your prayers always answered, this is the position from which to ask. Ask believing in faith.

Don't have enough faith to believe? Press into the Holy Spirit and ASK him in prayer for the gift of faith!

Remember **Proverbs 15:8?**

"The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, But the prayer of the upright is His delight."

Jesus told us how important real faith is...

Matthew 9:22

"But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, " Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well."

Matthew 9:27-29

"When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, " Son of David, have mercy on us!" And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, " Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, " Yes, Lord." Then He touched their eyes, saying, " According to your faith let it be to you."

There are a great many scriptures to support this, but I will leave studying them out to you. For now, the point must be made that Jesus expects us to Ask in faith, believing. My Friends, these principles are key components of answered prayers.

Principle Number Two:

When we pray we must be earnest, humble and obedient to listen to the Holy Spirit

Point Three – Pray with Preparation, Expectation and Thanksgiving

Ephesians 6:10-19 HCSB

"Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by His vast strength. Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the tactics of the Devil. For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. This is why you must take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand. Stand, therefore, with truth like a belt around your waist, righteousness like armor on your chest, and your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace. In every situation take the shield of faith, and with it you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is God's word."

*Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert in this with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints. Pray also for me, that the message may be given to me when I open my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel. For this I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I might be **bold** enough in Him to speak as I should."*

When we pray we change things, the enemy doesn't like that...

We must be prepared as we pray we must

- Embrace his truth – all of it, no cherry picking
- Accept his righteousness and who we are in him
- Embrace the restorative work of the Holy Spirit in our lives
- Know the promises of God's word and ASK for them
- We must embrace our faith – not the feeling or emotion but real deep faith and ask if our faith is insufficient for more
- We must take up our rightful position as saved sons and daughters of the almighty
- We must humbly and peacefully yet boldly come before the throne

Philippians 4: 6-7 HCSB

Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Jeremiah 29:11-13

For I know the plans I have for you" — this is the Lord's declaration — "plans for your welfare, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. You will call to Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.

Principle Number Three:

Prepare for Prayer with Expectation and Thankfulness knowing God is faithful and just and wants you to have a hope filled future.

Conclusion:

- We need to ASK in faith believing and being thankful that he will fulfill his promise to take care of our needs
- When we pray we must be earnest, humble and obedient to listen to the Holy Spirit

- Prepare for Prayer with Expectation and Thankfulness knowing God is faithful and just.

Friends, when we are walking in the will of the Father, when we thankfully ask him to help, knowing that he will, when we have prepared, when we are sincere and humble in our requests and when we are willing to receive the answer... prayer is more than words uttered... Prayer becomes a most powerful tool for changing the world.

What does all this mean in a nutshell: We just need to humble ourselves to ask believing and rejoice in expectation.