



Week Commencing 28th July 2019

Notes for next Sunday's sermon on Prayer: Practicalities

Next Sunday will be the third in our series on prayer; the first two talks having been given on Saturday morning from 930am at Tewanin.

Let's look at 7 practical helps:

DAY 1: Read Luke 18:1-8.

BIBLE

The Bible is full of invitations to pray and examples of prayerfulness. To take just one passage: Luke 18:1-8 – Jesus teaches some wonderful (life-changing) truths;

- God is not distant and careless [He is our Father]
- we are not hopeless and cut off [we are His children]
- God does not need to be hammered [He hears us always].

You can almost see the Trinity in this parable. There is the Father (willing and able), there is the access (through Jesus the Son) and there is the zeal to pray (by the Spirit).

So the Bible is like a dear Friend persisting with us – will we respond and speak to Him?

RELATIONSHIP

If you have a relationship with God (through Jesus – animated by the Spirit), it should deepen and develop. Like a friendship or a marriage, it should get better or something is wrong. And because of who God is (loving, merciful, gracious, powerful, patient etc.) there is no obstacle on His side to a growing and deepening relationship.

This may sound very impractical but there is nothing to help you pray like remembering who you are dealing with. The more you think about Him the more you “want to know Christ” (Phil 3:10).

DAY 2: Read 2 Timothy 3:10-17

Remember that *without* Bible and relationship:

- you may fall into confusion about God or yourself
- you may think independence is safe when it isn't
- you may neglect the One who is the key to life
- you may end up in sad and empty ritual.

Remember that *with* Bible and relationship:

- you can experience God's fellowship that beats everything
- you can draw near to Him and find He draws near to you
- you can be His instrument for life-changing issues
- you can honour Him, bless others and strengthen yourself.

DAY 3: Read Romans Luke 5:15-16; Luke 6:12, Luke 9:18 and Matthew 6:6

SET A TIME...ANY TIME

Jesus set aside time for prayer! Luke 5: 15 – 16, when Jesus simply needs to withdraw and pray because of the overwhelming response to his ministry; Luke 6: 12, before choosing his disciples, in other words, to make wise decisions; Luke 9: 18, again, praying alone, when he asks Peter who the crowds say he is.

We need to find a set time (“go into your room” Matt 6:6) as best we can and adopt ‘any time readiness’ as well.

In other words, plan your set time with the Lord and then be ready to pray at any time through the day. Every Christian who is growing and strengthening has worked out that a set time is essential – a time of quality prayer and reading (if not quantity). And have a mobile prayer life too, at any time.

FREE AND PLANNED

Your prayer life can become stale and tedious unless you spend some time in free and honest and personal prayer with the Lord. Tell Him how you are – the struggles, the sins, the sadnesses and the gratitude.

But your prayer life will drift (and may become self-focussed) unless you do some planning. Even using a scrap of paper to note down the five things you want to specially pray about. A booklet (like a prayer diary) can set out the people and things you should be praying for (family, leaders, ministries, missionaries – and people you’ve promised to pray for!). We need free *and* planned.

BALANCE

Watch carefully to see that you keep self and others in your prayers – confession and thanksgiving – home and beyond – expectancy and humility. Don’t get unbalanced.

DAY 4: Read Luke 11:1-11

PERSEVERANCE AND QUICKENING

Don’t give up too easily. Set yourself to know the Lord. Tell Him you want to draw near and pray. Ask Him to help you pray. Don’t give up because it’s (often) hard work and go off and do something easier or sillier.

There have been times when I’ve been praying, and the dry labour of prayer and intercession gets quickened by the Holy Spirit. I find myself thinking more keenly, more clearly and the words come fast. I think this is because “the Spirit helps us” (Rom 8:26).

You are not alone in your prayers. The God who speaks in His Word and listens to your prayers is at work to help and encourage you.

If you implement these 7 things your prayer life – and life will be transformed. Take action.

With thanks to the Reverend Simon Manchester