



DETOURS

OVERCOMING SPIRITUAL
ROADBLOCKS IN
MINISTRY

Devotion #3 - Why Pray?

John 15:4-8

March 2021

What exactly is prayer, and how does it fit into the work which the Lord calls us to do?

At its heart, prayer is a form of communication. It is a conversation with our Heavenly Father. But dialogue is only the start. Just as in earthly relationships, communication is essential for growth and health. It is the same with our relationship with God. As the apostle John reminds us, we need to abide or remain in Christ. As we remain, we grow in relationship with him.

Prayer is the communication key that unlocks and enlarges that relationship. If we want to abide in Christ and grow that relationship with him, we need to pray. 🌲🌲🌲

But prayer is much more. Prayer is our entryway into a working dynamic and partnership with God. God calls us to be co-labourers with Him in building the kingdom of God. He uses our prayers to bring transformation and change. God, in His sovereignty, has chosen to work through the prayers of his people, or as John Wesley put it, "God does nothing except by prayer."

Growing up, I spent a lot of time staying with my grandmother. I loved visiting Granny's house on a Friday because that was baking day, and I got to help. Looking back, I'm not sure I was much help. Granny would measure all of the ingredients out. I would get to pour the ingredients into the bowl. It took a lot longer to get things done when I was helping. But it did build a relationship between my grandmother and me, and we eventually got a cake or cookies to enjoy.

It is the same way with prayer. On his own, God could do things faster and more efficiently. Instead, he chooses to work with and through us. As we cooperate in prayer, we see the Lord bring transformation to our situations, and we get to grow in our



Rest Stop

- How important is communication in your relationship with your spouse, or with your best friend?
- What happens to that relationship when you forget to communicate?

relationship with the Lord. As we come to the Lord in prayer, he inspires us through the Holy Spirit. The Lord will give us discernment and direction for what we need both to pray and to do. As we respond and pray into that guidance, God moves to answer our prayers, and transformation happens. In effect, we pray his Kingdom purposes into reality. 🌲🌲🌲

John Calvin also reinforces the idea that prayer is the power tool for kingdom building. He said that we are not to expect anything from God unless we have asked in prayer. In his Institutes, as he talks about prayer, he says, "we dig up by prayer the treasures that were pointed out by the Lord's gospel, and which our faith has gazed upon." (1)

Prayer is the primary power tool through which God reveals his will in a particular situation, and then through prayer, we can dig up the treasures and see His Kingdom advance. So everything we do needs to include the work of prayer.



Rest Stop

- How have you experienced prayer as a working dynamic between you and God?
- How have you seen prayer direct or influence the work which you do as deacons?

R.A. Torrey, the American evangelist and pastor, wrote that "Prayer is the key that unlocks all the storehouses of God's infinite grace and power. All that God is, and all that God has, is at the disposal of prayer. But we must use the key. Prayer can do anything that God can do, and as God can do anything, prayer is omnipotent." (2)

Prayer is the doing before we do. To be effective in any aspect of ministry, we need to be drawing close to God, receiving His direction and guidance. Once we have our directions, we can begin to pray and step out in obedience to that prayer.

Bathing the work of ministry in prayer keeps it on track with the Lord. He will guide and keep us on course. As we do, we will find the treasures promised in his word become real, and God's kingdom is advanced.

"Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always."
[1 Chronicles 16:11]

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The Scenic Route

(optional)

Think about an issue that you are currently facing. It could be something personal or a situation you are facing as a deacon.

Ask the Lord to give you a Bible verse which relates to your situation. (The Holy Spirit may just bring a Scripture verse to mind as you sit quietly and listen to him, or the Holy Spirit may guide you as you use a concordance or Bible app to look for appropriate Scriptures.)

Spend some time each day praying through the Bible verse(s) you have found, inviting the Lord to unlock his storehouses of power and grace in the situation.

***If you choose to do this as a group exercise** you could work together to come up with a list of Bible verses to pray into. Then debrief together at a later time about how you have seen the Lord work through your prayers.

(1) John Calvin, (trans by F.L. Battles), *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1975), III, 20, 2.
(2) R.A. Torrey, *The Power of Prayer and the Prayer of Power* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987) p. 17

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