

# PRAYER

**Intro:** Easier to speak about prayer than to pray. Truck load of books written on the subject. PBC and Library Mary Welch “Hands of Prayer” in 2008.

**What is prayer** “It is the mutual articulated communication between God and man”. Or simply Psa 25:1 “To thee, O Lord, I lift up my soul.”

God is personal and we are His image bearers. Our model par excellence is Jesus. “Abba Father”.

Hannah – lips moving ever so slightly 1 Sam 3:13,15

David – a man after Gods own heart with loud voice Psa 3:4, 5:2, 88: 1, 120:1, 130:1

**God has chosen to tie himself in with human instrumentality to accomplish his divine Will. He will accomplish his Will in and through his people.**

## 1) Duty of Prayer

Psa 27:8 “Thou hast said, “Seek thee my face”, My heart says to thee “Thy face O Lord do I seek.”

Luke 18:1 ...“men ought always to pray and not lose heart.”

Matt 6.6 “But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door....”

**Illustration:** Borden of Yale training for China Inland Mission (now OMF) died 25yrs read prayerfully 1 chapter NT in Morning 2 chapters OT at Night.

## 2) Discipline of Prayer

We all function better with some degree of discipline in our lives. Fruit of the Spirit is self-control. Learning to say yes and no to the whims and fancies of the flesh.

Secret place Matt 6 and Lord's Prayer

### Concentric circles of

Acts 1:8 "And you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth."

What is my Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, to the ends of the earth?

**Illustration:** John G Paton's fathers example in the discipline of private devotions. His father's little wooden shed. Charles under house room.

Have you not known those times where you have come to the corporate prayer times of the Church feeling a certain lethargy or heaviness yet you have gone away refreshed in meeting God with His people.

Acts 4.31 ...When they prayed the place was shaken...

When we have corporate calls to prayer this year on Sunday nights will you be there? Make it a priority now in your mind and heart to be there. You won't regret it at all.

### 3) Delight in Prayer

This comes sovereignly to us by the Spirit of God. We sense his presence, his nearness and hand upon us, his breath and divine assistance as we pour out our hearts in adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplications.

We pray in the Spirit, we pray constantly and without ceasing. And God meets us and we find fresh delights. Rewards us as we pray in secret.

**Illustration:** Borden of Yale after hearing of a need “Lets pray about it”. This attitude was infectious among his friends. A natural turning to God in faith knowing He delights to hear our hearts desires. This produced a Spirit directed proper enthusiasm modelled amongst his friends.

**Illustration:** Charles Byrne preaching on “Prayer” at Maylands evening 1993.

The preaching was out of a felt experience of the Almighty, Holy God.

Hearing Charles pray at Yandina in 1985 during a service. I had to open my eyes and take a look around as I felt transported into the delightful presence of God like never before.

It was while our Lord was praying that he was transfigured.

Luke 9:29. Sometimes God meets us in a special way we sense his presence his hand upon us his smile.

Delight yourself in the promises of God for these promises ...

“The promises are streams coming down from the heart of Christ” Andrew Bonar

Rom 8 Spirit groans – pray in the Spirit.

Isa 40:31

#### 4) **God Demonstrated His love** towards us in while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Rom 5.8

Rom 5.2,3 Rom 8.32. Justified by faith, enter into a life of faithful prayer sharing.

“God be merciful to me a sinner.” Tax collector.

God has no dumb children. Adopted and much loved children of the heavenly Father.

“The prayer of a righteous man is powerful in its effects.” James 5:16

**Illustration:** Mary Welch and the 89 yr old women visiting her in sever snow storm.

Lessons were learnt here about the duty, discipline and delight in prayer. God graciously ministers to his dying saint and puts new energy into the life and service of his willing sacrificial servants.

#### **Questions for reflection:**

- 1) Have you ever prayed asking God to develop and mature your prayer life? What specific things come to mind in relation to achieving this?
- 2) In what areas do you struggle in prayer? Are you willing to share this with someone else in the congregation and look for ways to develop?
- 3) Outline some specific answers to prayer that you have had in the past month/year and give thanks again for God’s unfailing faithfulness to you.
- 4) In what way has God spoken to you today about your prayer life?