

Growing Together in Prayer

John 15:1-8

“There has never been a spiritual awakening in any country or locality that did not begin in united prayer.” (A.T. Pierson)

Why We Pray

Christ's Claim of Authority

- Jesus has all divine authority

Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” (John 8:58)

- Jesus has full humanity
 - Israel the failed vine
 - Jesus as the True Vine (15:1)
- The authority, goodness, and wisdom of the Vinedresser (15:2)

Our Access to God in Eternity

- Life with him (15:3-5)
- Death without him (15:6)
- Eternal priorities

“Pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” (Acts 6:3-4)

In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. (Luke 6:12)

Our Access to His Spirit's Power on the Earth

- With access to God made possible through Christ, it is only logical for the believer to utilize it.
 - Prayer is a resource for our earthly lives
 - We should pray to ask for things from God, according to his two conditions (15:7)
 - We should *not only* pray to ask for things from God

We had to call a halt to what was virtually a proliferation of shopping list prayers in order that we might learn...how to worship the Lord in prayer before we ask a thing. The worship session [of a prayer] may test how near we are to the Lord or how far we are from Him personally. With the danger, you see, of turning our dear Lord, the Lord of Glory, into a kind of tradesman, to whom we have practically nothing to say beyond making our requests at the

counter and getting what we want. And then, “Goodbye Mr. Shopkeeper, you are a handy man to have around when I need you.” That hardly indicates close fellowship. Is that all the Lord is to us? (William Still)

- With the assurance of salvation in Christ, it is only logical for a life of gratitude to follow.

Prayer and Abiding

- We cannot abide in Christ without prayer, and we cannot tap into the full power of prayer without abiding in Christ (15:7)
- Prayer leads to fruitfulness, and our fruitfulness glorifies God (15:8)
- Prayer strengthens the Church

What We Pray

Exalting Christ in Prayer

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked...But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:1,4-6)

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. (Colossians 1:19-20)

Enveloping the World in Prayer

- Pray for large-scale awakenings to the truth of Christ
- Pray for the Church and the Word to reproduce locally and globally
- Pray for false doctrine to fall on deaf ears

Empowering the Church through Prayer

- Above all, pray for God's glory through this body of believers
- Pray for growth: in the Gospel, through accountability, in diversity, in hospitality, through gifting, in unity, and in our prayer life as a church (*Philippians 1:3-6*)
- Pray for each other individually with great urgency and consistency
- Pray for the elders

God's name, God's kingdom, God's will must be the primary object of Christian prayer. Of course it is not as if God needed our prayers, but they are the means by which the disciples become partakers in the heavenly treasure for which they pray. Furthermore, God uses their prayers to hasten the coming of the End. (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)