

The Importance of Prayer in the Christian Life

Grace Community Church
Sundays in July 2021
Carl A. Hargrove



A challenge from Samuel's promise

Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you; but I will instruct you in the good and right way.

1 Samuel 12:23



THE NEED TODAY

Considering the voices from ministers of the past

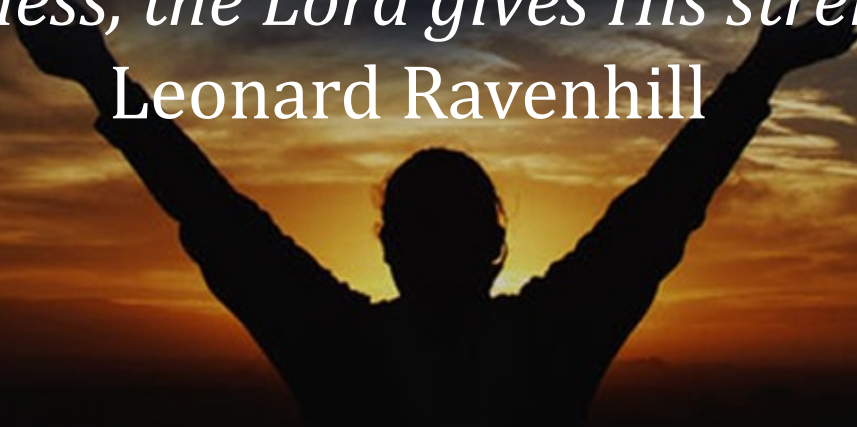
*There is no way that Christians, in a private
capacity, can do so much to promote the work of
God and advance the kingdom of Christ
as by prayer.*

Jonathan Edwards



For this sin hungry age we need a prayer-hungry Church. We need to explore again the "exceeding great and precious promises of God." In "that great day," the fire of judgment is going to test the sort, not the size, of the work we have done. That which is born in prayer will survive the test. Prayer does business with God. Prayer creates hunger for souls; hunger for souls creates prayer. The understanding soul prays, the praying soul gets understanding. To the soul who prays in self-owned weakness, the Lord gives His strength.

Leonard Ravenhill



Pray often, for prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge for Satan.

Prayer will make a man cease from sin, or sin will entice a man to cease from prayer.

In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart.

John Bunyan



Our prayer must not be self-centered. It must arise not only because we feel our own need as a burden we must lay upon God, but also because we are so bound up in love for our fellow men that we feel their need as acutely as our own. To make intercession for men is the most powerful and practical way in which we can express our love for them.

John Calvin



There is not a day which he does not devote at least three hours, the very one's most suitable for studying, to prayer. Once I was fortunate to overhear his prayer. My, what faith in his words! He speaks with the great reverence of one who speaks to his God, and with the trust and hope of one who speaks with his father and friend.

Veit Dietrich on Martin Luther



❑ Four guiding words

- ❑ Conscience—the response to the prompting of the Spirit and truth. You must decide on that basis and never let misguided guilt pressure you.
- ❑ Communion—the desire of the genuine believer is to spend time with the Creator. This must be viewed as a privilege, joy, and obligation.
- ❑ Consistent—the pattern we all hope to achieve. Consistency will not mean perfection. Consistency is always better than initial excitement that dissipates.
- ❑ Consecrated—be committed to the decision and finding a place of consecration.

❑ Resources to pray more effectively

- *Praying the Bible*—Donald Whitney
 - *Taking Hold of God*—Joel Beeke
- *Transforming Prayer*—Daniel Henderson
 - ECHO App
 - OneNote or equivalent



The Call to Prayer in Ephesians 6:18-20

**I. We Must Respond to The Call to Prayer
v.18ac**

**II. We Must Strive to Persevere in Prayer
v.18bc**

**III. We Must Have the Proper Subject and
Object in Prayer vv.18d-20**



- **Throughout the OT we can see prayer through many different windows**

- 1) Intense supplication (Job 33:26; Exodus 9:28; 10:17) to be earnest**
- 2) Intercede KJV—entreat 84x in OT**
- 3) To inquire (used only of Daniel to seek from a King)**
- 4) To bend, bow, to pray, to humbly submit (Ezra 6:10 (2x) Dan 6:10)**



5) To describe deep and intense pondering
(Psa 119:15, 23, 27, 48, 78, 97, 148)

A Christian's Meditation

- ❑ Meditation is vital to COMMUNION with God. You must learn to meditate on His person, which will create a greater desire to commune with Him. Thoughts of His greatness are an aroma to the Christian soul.



6) A specific request (1 Sam 12)

7) The expression of a "reverent heart requesting before an awesome God" (Ex 33:18; Num 12:12; Judges 13:8)

8) To implore God's mercy

☐ Ex 33:19 (God will be gracious)

☐ Job 19:16 (entreat)

☐ Psa 51:3 (pity, mercy)

☐ Deut 3:23 (besought the Lord)



- 9) Close to entreat, but to come apart from human strength (Ex 32:11; 1 Kings 13:6)**
- 10) The outpouring of worshipful praise and communion with God. More than half the occurrences of this word are in the Psalms.**
- Application: prayer must be approached humbly, and it allows us to express a host of concerns and emotions.**



I. We Must Respond to The Call to Prayer v.18ac

- v.18a With all prayer and petition, pray (praying)...18c perseverance *and* petition
- Ephesians 1:15ff
- Ephesians 3:15ff
- A Call to Respond Today



II. We Must Strive to Persevere in Prayer v.18bc

One the greatest disciplines in life may be perseverance—sustaining an effort when faced with challenges to complete a goal or task. Prayer requires perseverance.



Perseverance and Prayer

- *“to continue to do something with intense effort, with the possible implication of despite difficulty”*
- Romans 12:12
- Colossians 4:2



- In the Spirit
- Examples of *in the Spirit* in chapters 5 and 6
- The Battle Illustrated from the *Screwtape Letters*



III. We Must Have the Proper Purpose in Prayer vv.18d-20

All the saints, on my behalf—bold utterance

- **The utterance he needed**
- **The message he preached**
- **The irony of his condition**
- **The boldness he desired**
 - **In today's climate, boldness in speech is needed more than recent history.**



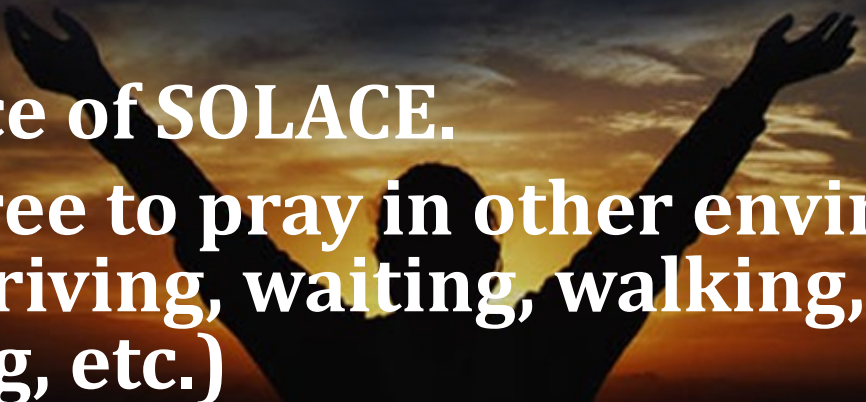
- **Boldness is bound to faith in what we proclaim** (2 Cor 3:12; Rom 1:16)
- **Boldness should never be confused with harshness** (Col 4:6; 1 Peter 3:15)
 - The importance of this in pastoral ministry
- **Boldness may speak to a person's sincerity and provide a testimony for Christ** (Acts 9:27, 28)



- **Boldness it not intimidated** (Acts 13:46; 26:26; 1 Thess 2:4)
- **Boldness always finds its source in the grace of God—** Acts 14:3 *Therefore they spent a long time there speaking boldly with **reliance upon the Lord**, who was testifying to the word of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands.*



11 Helps To Develop In Prayer

1. Spend time **MEDITATING** on the greatness of God.
 2. Increase your **KNOWLEDGE** of prayer by reading and listening.
 3. Follow the Daniel **PRINCIPLE**—divide prayer into sessions.
 4. Develop a **TENDER HEART** by praying through tragic news.
 - ☐ Avoid the frustration response. **PRAY OR BE SILENT!**
 5. Find a place of **SOLACE**.
 - ☐ But be free to pray in other environments (travel, driving, waiting, walking, running, exercising, etc.)
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6. Fight the wandering mind with lists, pictures, and notes.

❑ Strive for the PRAYER ZONE

7. Gain a prayer PARTNER.

8. Develop the habit of praying SCRIPTURE.

9. Use TECHNOLOGY to log your requests.

10. Start with a very reasonable amount of time and allow the experience and Spirit to move upon your CONSCIENCE.

❑ Remember, consistency is better than the greatest initial commitment that wanes.



11. Look to the EXAMPLE and CHALLENGE of our PRECIOUS Lord and Savior. Particularly, you should CONSIDER His actions in view of His suffering.



The Call To Be An Alert Watchman

- *Be on the alert with ALL perseverance and petition for ALL the saints (Eph 6:18)*
- *Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day... (Matt 24, 25)*
- *Savage wolves will come...therefore be on the alert (Acts 20:31)*
- *Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it (Col 4:2)*
- *Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith...(1 Cor 16:13)*
- *Be on the alert...Your adversary, the devil prowls (1 Pet 5:8)*

☐ Matthew 26:36-46 and the penetrating words of Jesus

