

The Importance of Prayer?

Intro.

“Why do you pray?” Is it just to get stuff from God? Is that why you pray?

Let me tell you what I think is the primary answer to why pray and then I will try to make the case.

Central Truth: God wants us to pray because He wants to spend time with us.

I. Do we pray to **inform God** because He doesn't know what we need?

A. Psalm 139:1-4

¹ You have searched me, LORD,
and you know me.

² You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.

³ You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.

⁴ Before a word is on my tongue
you, LORD, know it completely.

B. God is omniscient, He knows everything about everything. There is nothing He doesn't know about. He knows what you are going to say before it is even a thought in your mind.

C. He knows you better than you know yourself. How can I say that? Do any of you know how many hairs of hair are on your head?

Matt. 10:30 says God knows the number of hairs on your head. Why does Matthew tell us that? Is it because God is a number freak? NO.

The context tells us that this is to let us know how much God cares about us. Matthew's point is if God knows that, then is there anything He doesn't know about you and care about?

So we don't pray to inform God.

II. Do we pray because **God wants us to get down on our knees and beg** before He will give us what we need?

A. Luke 11:9-13 Jesus said:

⁹ “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. ¹¹ “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for^[a] a fish, will give him a snake instead? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, though you are evil,

know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him

B. Romans 8:31-32

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all— how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

C. These verses tell us we serve a good and generous God who delights in giving good gifts to His children.

D. But the scriptures also teach that often we don't receive because we don't ask.

James 4:2b "You do not have, because you do not ask God."

So we don't pray to beg from God- He delights in giving to us when we ask.

III. What if God's idea of prayer is the **supplying of our greatest need-** our need for communion with God?

A. Hunger may drive the runaway child home and he may be fed, but he needs his parents even more than he needs dinner.

B. How often do we hear about people who pray and pray, and in the last hour God answers their prayers. Why is that? Is it because God doesn't want to answer their prayers?

C. God knows that the greatest need of our soul, the need that goes beyond all other needs, is **our need for communion with Him.**

D. What often happens when God answers our prayers immediately? We cease praying and spending time with God.

E. God's purpose in prayer is not to make us beg. He **wants us to spend time with Him** so we might come to know Him. This is our greatest need- a relationship with God.

John 17:3 "This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."

F. There is a story of a father who loved to play a game with his small children.

The kids would climb into his lap and he would hide a coin in one hand and if they guessed the right hand, the kids could keep the coin. Why did the Dad love this game? It wasn't the coins. He loved having his kids close and in his lap.

The same is true of our Heavenly Father. But unfortunately, too often, we focus only on the gifts in God's hand and ignore the hand of God Himself.

G. God does give good gifts to His children, but He offers us something even more special- **He offers us Himself.**

H. So prayer is a way for us to spend time communing with God. I want to suggest to you that is why we should pray!

IV. Practical steps to praying.

A. Pray specifically - otherwise you can't tell if God answered your prayers.

1. Not: "God bless my day today."

But: "God, help me get into a spiritual conversation with Pete today."

2. I would encourage you to create a prayer journal and write down specific requests.

B. Pray with anticipation- be looking for the answers to your prayers

1. How often do we pray and say God doesn't answer prayer because we weren't looking to see how He was answering.

2. When you see God answer your prayers you can record them in your prayer journal next to the specific prayer request.

C. Pray God sized prayers

Eph. 3:20 "Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine."

1. Dawson Trotter, founder of Navigators, "Why pray for peanuts when God wants to give us continents."

2. Jenny and Sally met weekly before school to pray that their entire high school would hear the gospel before the end of the year. They weren't sure how God was going to answer, but they prayed all year. Right before the end of the year, they had a professional athlete come to their school to do an assembly. During the assembly, he shared his testimony of how he became a Christian.

D. Realize that often God wants to work through you to answer your prayers.

1. It's been said, "Nothing of eternal significance happens apart from prayer."

2. For example, you cannot save anyone. But God may want to use you to share the gospel with your friend, so they can get saved.

E. Develop a plan for praying.

1. When will you pray?

I would encourage you to do it in connection with your devotions.

Pick a time that you are able to do it consistently every day. And remember you can talk to God all throughout the day about whatever is on your mind.

2. What will you pray?

a. What do you think God wants to do in FSM, at school, in your friend's lives, at home? I would challenge you to pray for those things.

b. Use a prayer journal to help organize your prayer time. You can write down things that you want to pray for daily.

You can write down each day of the week and on each page put saved friends, unsaved friends, FSM, family members, missionaries that you want to pray for weekly

3. Who will you pray with?

a. Find one or two others and meet together weekly to pray and encourage each other. You could do this before/ after school, before/after FSM or Sunday School, etc.

b. praying with others helps to keep you accountable.

Conclusion.

God loves you. Jesus died for you so that you can have a relationship with God. He wants to spend time with you. He is never too busy. Will you make it a priority to spend time daily with God?