

Why do we Pray?

Intro.

I want to thank each of you- FSM prayer partners, for being here tonight and for making the commitment to pray for the students and programs of FSM.

Why do we have prayer partners for the students?

I could ask an even more fundamental question, “Why do we pray?” Is it just to get stuff from God? Is that why we 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. ¹⁰For 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? ¹²Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³If 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!

III. God's answer to prayer is often different than we anticipate

A. Think about if, if God knows that our greatest need is Him, and He has given us prayer as a way of spending time with Him, then does it make sense that God would answer our prayers in a way that would drive us to Him?

B. So we pray for wisdom and God brings a challenge into our lives where we need to exercise wisdom.

So we pray for strength and God puts a mountain in our path that we need to exercise faith to move.

So we pray for patience and God brings a trial to test us.

C. But how often do we see challenges, mountains, and trials as an answer to our prayers? These are the very things that we often are praying for God not to give us.

D. Laura Story has written a song title, "Blessings". Let me read a part of it.

Conclusion

God knows our greatest need is a relationship with Him. He has given us prayer as a way for us to come into His presence.

Let us allow prayer to draw us closer to God.

Let's allow prayer be a way for us to care for one another as we lift each other to God.