
How to Pray! Part VI

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We are Called to Prevailing Prayer

Matthew 26:36-46; 27:45-46

Does this seem unfathomable and unrealistic to you? Consider that our Prevailing Prayer unlocks the warehouse of God's endless love, forgiveness, grace, and power. Prevailing Prayer subsequently moves us so we can move others to know Him, too. Prevailing Prayer will help move the church to move the world! Prevailing Prayer is our fervent, consistent, and to a degree, persistent prayer until we get through what we are dealing with, whether it is in our personal life or our intercession for another person. Prayer is the conquering force, as it must conquer our will so we can take hold of His. It places the ramps to lay siege to the problems of life while surrounded by the fortress of His love. The real questions we have to ask are *why am I not doing this? Why is my church not doing this* (Psalm 2:8; Matt. 6:5-15; 12: 9-21; Luke 18:1; 1 Thess. 5:17; Heb. 10:22)?

Maybe to you and/or to your church, prayer is a means to getting what you want. When we are praying for some kind of emotional or physical healing, are we really seeking Him or just expressing our wishes (Matt. 7: 7-12; Luke 18:1-8)? Are we seeking His truth or ours? The Pharisees did not want the truth or what God had; they only wanted their postulations and the power to rule (Matt. 23). Are we robbing God of the opportunities He tries to give us? Do we mix them up with habits, pride, and traditions? Do we make grandstand pretences, showing off our faith while we have a heart full of soot? Do our attitudes, desires, and passions line up with the precepts of His Word, or express our own selfish political agendas? Passion is paramount, but it has to be grounded in God's truth, not the ideas and desires of man. We must seek initiative and inspiration from Christ, not from traditions. Do not practice your faith through the filter of traditions or habits. Rather, filter faith through the clarity of God's Word! Prevailing Prayer will help us navigate through what is selfish and not right to what is of God and is His plan. It is all about being conformed to Him, not to our ideas or desires.

Prayer is not just about what our own needs are. It is about putting our lives and experiences in Him, sharing our days and lives, both in times of urgency and times of happiness, times of stillness and times of stress, and bringing others into our thoughts and prayers. It is about getting spiritual direction for all we do in life. Continual and effective prayer will build our relationship with God. We will come to realize that He is in charge of all that happens in our lives, and that we are in His Hands. How we interact with Christ as Lord and respond to others is rooted in how we communicate. Our spiritual growth and how we connect to God with an effectual relationship is determined by how effective our prayer life is. It can be put this way: all we do in life is based on our ability to communicate, and our principle communication is to our loving Lord!

We are made for prayer. However, prayer is not just a means to fill our needs. It

is not a tool used merely to get our way and will. Prayer is to bring us closer to Christ. Never waste your time with God seeking what you cannot have. Just as the role of the Holy Spirit is to intercede for us, we are called to do the same for one another (Mark 11:16-17; 1 Cor. 6:19; Heb. 7:25). So, do we?

To further receive His empowerment, we must pursue prayer significantly, earnestly, and uncompromisingly with humility because Christ and His wonders are already at our disposal. To be conformed to Christ is never a platform to manipulate Him or demand what we want! God is not our divine bellhop who delivers the luggage of our wishes! Prayer is not just for a crisis or a dilemma; if this is all we do with it, we are expressing a serious emptiness of our trust and His work in us. If you never talked to your best friend except when you urgently needed his or her assistance for some personal problem or to help you move, how “best” would your friendship be? To keep that friendship “best,” a deeper relationship of genuine trust and communication must be pursued joyfully. This is how we are to approach God with our appeals! When we make Him irrelevant in the rest of our lives, we will be blinded to His opportunities and empowerment. However, prayer will open our eyes to Him and what He has for us.

The key to practicing prayer more effectively is to know more about Him. The disciplines of the faith will help empower your prayer life as your prayer life will empower your faith and discipline. Each begets the other; each needs the other. The disciplines of daily reading and knowing Scripture will help expose what you need to pray for. Fasting will help empty your self-will and make you more focused on Him. Fellowship will help you see the needs and opportunities of others, and so forth.

Questions to Ponder

Read Matthew 26:36-46; 27:45-46

1. When you pray are you seeking His truth or yours?
2. How would you define Prevailing Prayer?
3. Have you ever gotten frustrated asking, why am I doing this?
4. Why do you suppose most Christians do not have a prevailing prayer life?
5. Does prevailing prayer seem unfathomable and unrealistic to you?
6. How does the fact that our Lord and Savior died in your place affect your prayer life? How would this shape your walk in Him? Your relationships? Your ministry? Your work? Or?
7. Can you describe the depth of Jesus suffering? How does this impact your prayer life and the call He has given you?

8. How does the fact that our Lord bore this suffering for you and for me affect your prayer life? When, if ever, has the impact and reality of Jesus' death hit you? How has your life made a difference? How can your life still become even more different so it reflects Christ's character and not self-character? How is prayer a key force to help you?
9. How the loss of self control or impulsiveness or exhaustion taken over your prayer time? What can you do?
10. How does the fact that this passage in Matthew testifies how we can do our worst while God shows Himself by doing His best to give you more confidence and faith in Christ?
11. Do you fully realize what Jesus did for you? What can you do to more fully understand the depth of His sacrifice on your behalf? How will this empower your prayer life?
12. How does knowing what Christ has done fuel your intercession for another person?
13. Do you realize that your prayer life is about putting your life and experiences in Christ, sharing your days and life? How so? How can it be better?
14. What do you need to do to bring others into our thoughts and prayers?
15. Have ever thought that you are robbing God of the opportunities He tries to give you when you do not pray?
16. How do some churches tend to mix in our habits, pride, and traditions in with prayer?
17. How can your prayer life become more fervent and consistent?
18. How does your persistent prayer get you through whatever you are dealing with, whether it is in your personal life, church or suffering?
19. What needs to happen for your church to have a collative prevailing prayer life? What are you going to do about it? What do you think will be the consequences and results of your church being more committed t prayer?
20. What gets in the way of most churches so they do not do real effectual prayer?