

Stark Road Summer Series

"Why we believe"

#2 -Why we believe in prayer, and in prayer meetings

Definition of Prayer. Prayer is the communication between men and God where a broad range of privileges and responsibilities men have, can be satisfied in direct communion with God.

I. A Historical Sketch of the Development of Prayer in the Scriptures.

- Eden. Gen 3:8 God initiated the restoration of communion.
 - Abraham. Acts 7:2 The God of Glory appeared unto our father Abraham.
 - Abraham. Gen 18:22 Abraham stood yet before the Lord.
 - Jacob. Gen 28: Jacob's dream of a ladder from earth to heaven. (Bethel)
 - Moses. Ex 3:2 The burning bush.
 - Moses. Ex 25:22 The mercy seat. 'I will commune with thee'
 - Samuel. 1 Sam 12:23 'but God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.
 - David. 1 Sam 23:2 David enquired of the Lord. V4. He enquired again
 - David. Psalm 27:4 One thing I have desired of the Lord...to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple
 - David. Psalm 69:30 I will magnify Him with thanksgiving
 - Daniel Dan 2:17,18 Desire mercies of the God of Heaven concerning this secret. Possibly one of the first accounts of collective prayer.
 - John 4:23,24 The Father seeketh such to worship Him
 - Hebrews 4:16 Let us come boldly before the throne of grace.
 - Hebrews 10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart... as worshippers.
- Conclusion: It is very clear that God has initiated and encouraged men to have communion with Him, and has progressively led men to worship Him. What the Father has revealed, the Son has procured, and the Holy Spirit has enabled, so we pray to, and worship the Father, through the Son, and by the Holy Spirit.
- Song of Sol 2:14. Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.

II. How does the New Testament encourage us to believe in Prayer?

- The Lord Jesus requires it. Luke 18:1 'Men must pray, and not to feint.
- The Lord Jesus left us an example to follow. (by his life) Mark 1:35
- The Lord Jesus left us guidelines as to what form our prayers should take. Matt 6:5-15
- We have the example of the early church. Acts 2:42, Acts 4:23-31, Acts 12:5
- We have the teaching of the epistles. 1 Tim 2:1-8, 1 Thess 5:17,18, Phil 4:6,7

III. Elements of Prayer

- Prayers. The approach to God with petitions, recognizing His power to supply the need.
- Supplications. Based on a perceived need, making entreaty to God.
- Intercessions. The approach to God seeking an interview, with a view to recognizing the mind of God about a matter, or a person. The outcome could be for or against the subject under discussion. Rom 11:2
- Thanksgivings Showing appreciation for the mercies received
- Worship. An attitude that gives God the place He ought to occupy, in life, in thought, and in devotion. Reverence, Loyalty, Honor, Life lived for eternity.
- Confession To agree with an accusation, and freely admit it.

IV. Priority of these elements in the pattern prayer for believers

- Worship Will it promote reverence for God?
- Intercession Will it glorify God, and bring blessing to others?
- Petition Does it acknowledge my dependence upon God?
- Confession Do I confess my need for restoration and preservation?
- Thanksgiving Do I express my appreciation for all I have received in the past?

V. The Problem of Unanswered Prayers of Godly Men

- Abraham. Gen 17:18 O that Ishmael might live before thee.
- Moses. Deut 3:25 Let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan
- Elijah. 1 Kings 19:4 O Lord, take away my life
- Paul. 2 Cor 12:8 I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.
 - Abraham received Isaac by the miraculous birth according to God's promise
 - Moses, as a picture of resurrected saints, appeared with the Lord on the mount of Transfiguration.
 - Elijah, did not die a natural death, and also appeared in the mount of Transfiguration as a picture of the saints who will not die, and will be caught up at the rapture.
 - Paul saw his infirmity as a base to display the power of God, and received sufficient grace (enablement) from the Lord.

Lesson: Heb 11:40 God having provided something better.

VI The Value of Collective Prayer

- Dan 2:16-18 Daniel enlisted the help of his three friends to pray for the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream
- Matt 18:19 'If two of you shall agree...it shall be done for them of my Father' The Lord used a musical term to indicate harmony.
- Acts 12:12 'Many were gathered together praying' The answer to their prayer, (Peter's release from prison) is recorded between mentions of the prayer meeting. Isaiah 65:24 'Before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear'
- James 5:14 'Is any sick among you, let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him' No doubt a special case, possibly involving discipline, but it illustrates the cumulative power of collective prayer.

VII. The Subjective Benefits of Prayer

- 2 Cor 3:7 Moses face was radiant after being face to face with God
- 2 Cor 3:18 The Spirit of God, in a similar way, transforms us to His image, as we spend time face to face with the Lord
- John 16:24 Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. The joy of answered prayer is seen in Hannah who could say, 'for this child I prayed'
- Acts 4:13 'and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus'

VIII. The Proper Attitude for Prayer

- Matt 6:5-8 Avoid ostentation and insincerity
- Matt 7:7
 - Ask Be spontaneous
 - Seek Be diligent
 - Knock Be persistent