

# PRAYER

*“One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples’.” —LUKE 11:1*

Prayer is, of course, the communication part of our relationship with God, and is paramount to the Christian life. It involves a perpetual state of heart, mind and spirit that remains unceasingly aware of God’s presence. Prayer becomes the setting for God to speak, and to show us things, not only in relation to what we are praying about, but things about ourselves.

Jesus was not asked, “Teach us how to pray”, as though there were techniques and methods, but simply “to pray”. Prayer is to come from the heart, presenting openly and honestly with thanksgiving our petitions before God. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words” (Matthew 6:7). The primary message Jesus gives here is that when our words exceed our hearts, as it did with the hypocrites, standing on the street corners “to be seen by men”, prayer becomes pretence.

Praying is about being alone with God, behind closed doors where our hearts are most earnest and genuine before Him. It is not a mechanism by which we come to God. There are no rules, no hoops we have to jump through, no mediator we need, other than the Lord Himself. Prayer is a matter of the heart, and we are all blessed with

the incredible privilege of voicing our hearts and minds directly with God.

God said to Jeremiah, “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13). Praying is seeking with all our hearts the heart of God, His will and His response to us. God answers prayers in many ways. Sometimes in His silence, He is telling us “no”, or perhaps a barrier must be removed in our lives or He may be waiting for the right time. Sometimes God answers in visions, dreams or words placed in our hearts. Just as there is no fixed pattern for praying, there is no fixed pattern God has in responding. He knows what pulls at our heartstrings, and speaks to each of us in His own unique way.

Prayer does not make us Christians, it rather changes our hearts. The word “repent” literally means to ‘change the mind’, and it is the change of mind, settling into our hearts that changes our disposition toward God, where we are brought into relationship with Him. We must not make the mistake of thinking prayer is powerful. It is God who is powerful, but the measure of our prayer lives will be the measure of our intimacy with Him.

***PRAYER: Thank you, Lord, for the privilege of having direct access to You. Thank You for understanding our hearts, and always being available to us.***

***TO REFLECT UPON: Am I praying daily?***