

PRAYING FROM THE HEART

“But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen.” —MATTHEW 6:6

The Christian life is living in a committed relationship with Jesus Christ, and that requires communication. All relationships will either grow or wither in proportion to the depth of communication that takes place.

When governments are in trouble, they have to take time to listen to the people. When industrial relationships break down, the invitation goes out to ‘get around the table’ and negotiate. When marriages hit hard times, there has invariably been a breakdown of communication. When the Christian life runs dry, it is too often because there has been a breakdown in our prayer lives. Even if God did not answer, and not one prayer has made a difference in our lives or in the world, praying is still necessary.

The test of our prayer lives is the praying that goes on in secret. Anyone can know the right language and pray in public, particularly when motivated by an audience. Jesus said, “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). To pray with practiced rhetoric or put on a pious voice is often a symptom of unreality with God. We need to approach God reverently and humbly, but confidently and naturally.

Jesus said, “Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.” (6:8). Because God knows what we need, does not mean we do not have to ask Him. His sovereignty and wisdom does not preclude the necessity or effectiveness of prayer. The nature of our belief in prayer is not that God is going to give us what we ask, but that He is going to give us what is right. If what we ask coincides with what is right, so much the better, but it is the will of God that needs to be paramount in our prayers. This conviction must permeate our sense of dependency on God, acknowledging the fact that God’s way is supreme and sufficient. We invite Him into our circumstances, not to fill a celestial list of what we think will make things better, but to fulfill His agenda in our circumstances.

Four key aspects of our prayer lives should be praying regularly, praying intimately, naturally and believably. We can no more keep secrets from God than we can be hidden from His sight. To skirt around the real issues is to ‘babble like pagans’, but praying from the heart, is what connects us to God’s heart, and brings us into relationship with Him.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, I am humbled and grateful for the immense privilege of talking heart to heart with You. I pray, Lord, Your will be done in my life in all things. Thank You.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I spending enough time with God in prayer?