

Prayer and Fasting (Part 1)

Devoted to Prayer

“Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant [devoted] in prayer.” - Rom. 12:12
See also Acts 1:14; Acts 2:42; Acts 6:4; Colossians 4:2

Why should we be devoted to prayer?

- We have been commanded to pray.
 - Romans 12:12; Matthew 6:5-13
- Prayer is essential to our communion with God.
 - “But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” - Matthew 6:6
- We are in a spiritual battle.
 - “praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints” - Ephesians 6:18
- Prayer is key to maintaining spiritual vitality.
 - “And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. ... I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” - Luke 18:1, 8
- God chooses to work through our prayers and can do far more than we could ever ask, think, or imagine.
 - “For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ... Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us” - Ephesians 3:14, 21

Why aren't we devoted to prayer?

- We are busy and distracted.
- We question the effectiveness of our prayers.
- We don't plan to pray.

Pairs for Being Devoted to Prayer - F.A.D.E.S. (from John Piper)

F - Free and Formed (content of prayer)

- Free - fairly unstructured; bringing to God what is on your mind and heart
- Formed - organized
 - Use the Bible (the Psalms and recorded prayers in Scripture)
 - Use devotional/prayer guides
 - Use written prayers (Valley of Vision; Book of Common Prayer)

A - Alone and Assembled (location of prayer)

- “But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” - Mt. 6:6
- “When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.” - Acts 12:12

D - Desperate and Delighted (tone of prayer)

- “How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?” - Psalm 13:1
- “I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.” - Psalm 9:1
- “do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” - Phil. 4:6

E - Explosive and Extended (length of prayer)

- Nehemiah 1:5-11 contains a longer prayer from Nehemiah. But then chapter 2 says, “Then the king said to me, ‘What are you requesting?’ So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said to the king,…” (Neh. 2:4-5a)
- Lift up quick, focused prayers.
- Have longer times, both alone and assembled, of prayer that contain both speaking to God and listening to Him (meditate on His Word).

S - Spontaneous and Scheduled (when you pray)

- Be mindful of the Lord’s continual presence and lift up quick prayers throughout your day.
- Schedule times for both individual and corporate prayer that are uninterrupted and not rushed.