



Message Series Guide

Without Ceasing

Part I – Why We Pray

I Thessalonians 5:17

Prayer isn't a ritual that depends on closing our eyes and saying just the right words. Any words will do, as long as they are sincere. We don't have to kneel, sit or lie face down to pray. The posture of our heart is more important than the posture of our body. There isn't a certain time or place we must pray. We can pray while walking, driving, or working. God responds to a two-word cry for help in the middle of a busy afternoon, just like He does to a focused prayer after praise and worship in the morning. Praying doesn't have to be complicated. What delights God is our simple words offered to Him from a devoted heart.

READ:

I Thessalonians 5:17 | Matthew 21:13a | Matthew 5:44 | Romans 12:12 | Philippians 4:6 | Colossians 4:2 | 2 Chronicles 7:14 | Acts 12:5-10 | Luke 5:16

- If God is sovereign and already knows what we need before we ask, why should we pray? Does God always answer our prayers? Why or why not? Why would a loving God not always answer our prayers just the way we want? What does it mean to pray with an expectant heart?
- What did Paul mean when he said, “Pray without ceasing?” How can we pray every day without ceasing? Why did you think Jesus wanted His house (the Church) to be called a house of prayer?
- How do these passages call us to prayer? Matthew 5:44; Romans 12:12; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 4:2.
- How does prayer allow us to participate in God's work in the world? How did prayer change Peter's experience in prison (Acts 12:5-10)? How have you seen God change circumstances through prayer?
- If Jesus is God, why did He often withdraw to lonely places to pray? What are some prayers that Jesus prayed that serve as great examples of how we should pray?

DISCUSS:

- Describe your daily conversations with God. What types of things do you regularly pray for? What has been your most powerful experience with prayer?
- When forming a lifestyle of prayer, it is best to establish a time and place for prayer. Discuss what times and environments have worked best for your personal prayer times. Is there more than one effective way to pray? Why or why not? What can hinder our prayers?
- The Bible refers to prayer or expresses a prayer in 61 of its 66 books. There are 650 prayers listed within the Bible, and approximately 450 of them have a recorded answer. How does that impact your view of “praying without ceasing”?

PRAY:

Pray this week that God would place inside of you a deep sense of why prayer is important to your Christian faith, and how you can become a person who “prays without ceasing.”

RESPOND:

Commit to participate with The Ridge's 21-Days of Prayer emphasis (January 11-31). Go to www.theridge.cc to view the prayer guide for further instruction and information. **Night of Prayer + Worship – January 29 at 6p**