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# Anchored

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## Prayer

There are some practices that help everyone as followers of Jesus remain anchored through the storms that will no doubt come in 2020. My desire is that people adopt these practices as a constant way of life. Today we are going to look at the practice of prayer.

As followers of Jesus, we are learning to live in a constant state of connection to the Holy Spirit. We must invite Him into every moment and learn to always be with Jesus in everything we do. How do we accomplish that in the chaos of life and the pull of the digital world we live in? To experience the life of Jesus, to follow the Way, we must adopt the lifestyle of Jesus.

The goal of a disciple in Jesus' time was not just to learn information from a Rabbi in a teacher student relationship. The goal was to be with him so that you could be like him (Luke 6:40). Disciples followed every movement and listened to every word of their teacher so that they might become like them.

### **Jesus Was Constantly in Prayer**

Prayer was not a compartmentalized activity—it was ongoing (John 11:42). It encompassed all His life.

Paul in the same tradition as Jesus encourages us to do the same in his letter to the Thessalonians:

*Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NIV)

If you can learn to spend one ordinary day with Jesus, you can spend your every day with Jesus, one day at a time.

## **Prayer for Jesus was First One of Praise**

*Berakah* – prayers of wonder, praise, thanksgiving, and acknowledgement of unmerited divine blessing in every situation.

Jews were instructed to even bless God in the evil times, not because the Jews believed that evil, injustice, poverty or oppression was God's will, but it was a statement that God reigned, that He was sovereign and would in the end bring His benevolent love and mercy to the situation.

You can see this in the prayers of Jesus

- + Luke 11:2
- + Luke 10:21
- + John 11:41-42
- + John 17: 1-2

Try giving praise to God several times a day, every day this week.

## **Prayer for Jesus Was Passionate**

Passion characterized the prayer life of Jesus (Hebrews 5:7; Mark 14:32-36; Matthew 23:37).

Prayer is the excavation of the human heart before God. God craves your honesty, sincerity, human dialogue and passion in both joy and sorrow.

God would rather have your honest grief, as you pour out your heart to Him than a dispassionate rote prayer that conveys nothing but sounds nice.

## **Prayer for Jesus was Intimacy with God**

Intimacy is the main purpose of prayer.

Prayer is not designed to change God; it is designed to change us. Prayer is not asking God to bless our activities, rather prayer takes us into God's presence, shows us His will and prepares us to obey Him.

Prayer as transaction rather than an intimate relationship can decline into a practice more of duty than joy, an occasional and awkward exercise with little connection to life.

Jesus' prayer life is characterized by intimacy with the Father – "Abba Father" (John 14:36).

Jesus shows us that prayer is the natural cry of the young child for a parent.

## **Anchored by Prayer**

Jesus knew the effectiveness and the power of prayer. He had an intimate relationship with the Father that created both the motivation and the desire to spend time with the Father. This intimacy drew out of Jesus a passionate, honest, outpouring of both praise and intercession on a constant basis.

As disciples of Jesus we too need to model a life of dependency upon God through prayer that will anchor us through the year ahead.

## Discussion Questions:

1. Do you pray to get from God or get God? Explain the difference in your own words? How does praying to get from God effect or reveal your view of God?
2. What attitudinal change have you noticed from spending time giving God praise no matter what the circumstance you face at the moment?
3. How do you grow your times of prayer to be more passionate and intimate with God?
4. Why not try some different types of prayer this week?
  - + *Breath Prayer* – This is a form of contemplative prayer linked to the rhythms of breathing: (1) breathe in, calling on a biblical name or image of God, and (2) breathe out a simple God-given desire. (2 Peter 1:3-4)
  - + *Contemplative Prayer* – a receptive posture of openness toward God. Waiting on God with a heart awake to God's presence and His Word. Intentionally trusting and resting in the presence of the Holy Spirit deep in our own spirit. (Romans 8:26-27)
  - + *Fixed-Hour Prayer* – Regular and consistent patterns of prayer of attending to God' throughout the day. Set a reminder on the hour to stop and pray, integrating being and doing in your daily life. (Psalm 119:164)
5. Spend time in prayer for the following:
  - + Pray for one another that you would grow in knowledge and intimacy with Jesus.
  - + Pray that you would be sanctified and a heart to be sent to those who don't know Gods name
  - + Pray for the lost that you know by name
  - + Thank God for His love and compassion on us