



A Fresh Take on Praying

Ephesians 6:18a NIV

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.

What Are Your Thoughts on Prayer?

Now we move to an aspect of living within the protection and care of Christ that strictly speaking is not a part of the "Armor of God". We have here though a critical component to living within the natural realm while immersed in the supernatural. A bit of clarification regarding the original Greek text would be helpful. Literally, the passage reads, "Through every prayer and petition, praying ones in each season of time in the Spirit". Verse 18 is actually not two sentences, but rather one that continues on into verse 20. However, our section that we are considering is a complete thought so we will examine it carefully.

Prayer is much like eating vegetables. We all know we should, but most don't give it real dedication. If you pray, then you are a part of the majority of people, regardless of religion. The whole world prays in some way or another. It may not be certain who the object of the praying is or even if there is one, but there is within the human personality an urge to call out beyond ourselves for help and insight. Our verse though is not pushing for prayer. That is a nearly universal experience. It is looking for praying ones which is considerably different. Someone who prays admits to a need or a desire that is not within one's own capacity to acquire. That is a natural, knee jerk reaction to difficult circumstances. A "praying one" though is someone who is locked in on Christ. This is the state where praying describes you, identifies your personality. Your mind is consistently turning to Jesus and thinking about Him, either because you are asking for direction, calling for help or thanking Him for some gift of the day. Praying becomes the way you consider everything, how you evaluate. A student describes how whenever she is cooking, her mind keeps thinking about God. That is it. A lawyer while reading the specifics of a case goes to God for understanding. That is it. A nurse as she does her rounds prays for the patients while checking the charts. That is it. A banker getting ready for a staff meeting asks the Lord for guidance on how to put the agenda together. That is it.

An interesting Greek term is used here that can be translated "time", but the NIV renders as "occasions". It is Kairos and speaks of the ebb and flow of life. Kairos is the specified moments of the day, particular parts of it. Seasons is often the meaning. We might use it to say, "It is time for a change." "Time is slipping away." "Give it some time." It is not the hour that matters when it comes to being a praying one, it is the moment. As soon as you sense God's presence, realize you need Him, have the desire to be with Him, you pray. The time to pray is now. It is here. Praying comes upon us. It washes over us. It sweeps us along. The Bible says that the times are in the Spirit. Like a blue heron in the sky or a dolphin in the ocean, our times are within the Spirit. We think of praying as something done to God, pointed at Him. Praying is in Him. He is the source of praying, the force behind praying and the course along which all praying travels. Prayer, outside the Spirit is just gibberish, babbling. The Spirit is how praying occurs and why it takes place.

In Luke 18, Jesus told a parable to show the disciples that they must always pray and not give up. It was the tale of a poor widow who was desperate for legal help, but the judge did not fear God or care about people. For some time she kept going to him, asking for justice against her adversary. Many times she went to the judge wanting for her case to be heard but he wouldn't do anything about it. Finally, tired of the poor widow's persistence, he made sure she got justice. This story had one point and one point only. It wasn't about poor widows, unjust judges or the rightness or wrongness of one's cause. Jesus certainly was not implying that the Father is unjust. He tells us to keep praying no matter how things look, regardless how it seems to be going. We see this exemplified by a lesser known person of the Old Testament, Hannah. Unable to have children, Hannah was forlorn. Each year she went with her husband to the Temple to worship and offer sacrifices to the Lord, hoping that as she prayed, this would be her time God would grant her request for a baby. The Bible said this happened year after year. Hannah was a praying one. Her sorrow was so great over not having children that one year her distraught condition caught the attention of the High Priest who was managing the Temple. In fact, her fervency was so intense as she called out for God to deliver her from infertility that as Hannah prayed silently, her lips were moving at the same time and the priest thought Hannah was drunk. When he confronted Hannah about coming into the Temple inebriated, she insisted she wasn't. Hannah told the priest she was heart-broken over her lack of children and had come to pray. The priest, hearing the voice of the Lord, told Hannah she could go in peace and trust the Lord in this. That is what a praying person does. She keeps praying despite how things look. And of course we know now, she soon enough had a son....and following that, five more children came along. Praying people just keep on praying.

Moses also was known for his praying. As the leader of the nation of Israel, his top priority was to know God, so he met with Him regularly. There was a special place he had called "The Tent of Meeting". He went in there to be with God and when he emerged, Moses had a supernatural glow about him. Moses never knew what to expect from those times with the Lord, but He was always certain of this. God would be there. The Bible has an astounding revelation about you, and it is often miscast as primarily a statement of what you should or shouldn't take into your body. It is much more profound than that. **Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?** (1 Corinthians 6:19 NIV) Prayer does not start outside you, it begins within. That is where God is for you to be reached. Wherever you go is your Tent of Meeting. It is a wonderful discovery if you are ready for it. The joy of God and His peace and wisdom is available to you day and night! Wherever you are He is there. It really is possible to follow the Bible's call to pray without ceasing. Whenever Moses came out of the Tent of Meeting there was a supernatural glow that possessed him which everyone could see. God was simply showing the world what happens in actuality every time you are with Him. You are changed by God. There is a miracle that occurs each time you meet with God. You are transformed in some way,

Put this puzzle piece together with me. When Moses met with God, the glory of God transformed his appearance. Then, after he told the Israelites what God said to him, he covered his face with a veil so they could not see the glow fade. Remember our key verse. We are to be praying ones "in the Spirit". If prayer, at least for praying ones, is in the Spirit, then what was witnessed with Moses in a physical way is what is true for all those who pray in the Tent of Meeting within. **Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.** (2 Corinthians 3:17-18 NIV) An amazing promise is made here to all praying people. You are being transformed into the likeness of the Lord with ever increasing glory. This transformation is happening now, and it is a continual work of God as He remakes you into His shape and likeness. Just like Moses as He entered in the Tent of Meeting, when you slip into the presence of the Spirit of God as you pray, a miracle takes place. Christ in you grows in glory. And just like He swept out the money changers in the Temple of Jerusalem, He will sweep out everything in you that keeps you from being a true house of prayer.

I have a friend who was lost and hopeless as a high schooler. She was bright, her father was highly educated, but she was making lots of bad decisions. She was heavily into drugs and sexually active. My friend was broken. Someone shared the Gospel with her though and she came to Christ for salvation. She enrolled at a Christian college and for a while she felt like she didn't fit in with all the clean cut students there. She began to enter into concentrated praying. Slowly her heart grew soft and God began to transform all of the anger and guilt she felt about her past. She met a Christian man who loved her and now she is a professor. The transformation the Spirit of God brings to us is real and pervasive. Once you enter into the Tent of Meeting with the Spirit and pray, He works out of you the bitterness and fear and despair and anger and grievances and even the addictions that kept you chained and puts in you peace and joy and hope and contentment and the ability to love and forgive with the very capacity Christ Himself has. You are not made for bondage but rather for freedom. Embrace the good life. Pray.