

Topic: The Value And Importance of Persistent Prayer
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Deut. 4:7, "What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to Him?"

"O God who hears prayer, to you all men will come" (Ps. 65:2).

Two simple, yet highly important, truths that God has given to us in His Word about prayer.

- 1. God desires for His children to pray and expects that they will pray!**
 - A. The prominence of prayer by God's people in the OT and NT.**

(1.) In the Old Testament: Abraham (Gen. 20:17), Isaac (Gen. 25:21), Jacob (Gen. 32:9), Moses (Ex. 8:30), Hannah (I Sam. 1:10, 2:1), David (II Sam. 7:19-29), Solomon (I Kings 8:22-53), Daniel (9:4-19), and a whole slew of others.

(2.) In the New Testament: Early believers following Pentecost (Acts 2:42, 4:31), Paul (Rom. 1:10, 10:1).

(3.) Writers of NT books encourage it: The author of Hebrews (Heb. 13:18-19), James (James 5:13-18), Peter (I Pet. 3:7, 12, 4:7), John (I John 5:16), Jude (Jude 20).

(4.) Both John the Baptist and Jesus disciplined their followers to pray (Lk. 11:1; Matt. 6:5-13; Lk. 18:1-4).

(5.) Jesus modeled prayer for us during the days of His sojourn upon the earth (Lk. 11:1).

B. Christians pray! A prayerless soul is either: an ignorant soul, an unconverted soul or an indication that one's heart is far from God.

- (1.) Abraham**
- (2.) David**

2. It is God's will that believers be seriously "DEVOTED" to prayer. Many passages in the NT encourage us to make prayer a PERSISTENT PRIORITY in our personal and corporate lives. Notice all the emphasis in the New Testament on DEVOTION TO PRAYER.

A. Prayer was part of Jesus' REGULAR PRACTICE and should be part of our daily devotional time with God (Mk. 1:35, 6:46, 14:32, 35, 39; Lk. 6:12, 9:28).

B. Jesus encouraged PERSISTENT PRAYER. "Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should ALWAYS PRAY and NOT GIVE UP." (Lk. 18:1).

C. The 120 disciples practiced PERSISTENT PRAYER. "Those present were Peter, John, James, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. They all joined together CONSTANTLY IN PRAYER, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers" (Acts 1:13-14).

D. The early church was DEVOTED to prayer. "They DEVOTED THEMSELVES to the Apostles teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread AND TO PRAYER" (Acts 2:42).

E. The Apostles were DEVOTED to prayer. "And we will give our ATTENTION TO PRAYER and the ministry of the Word" (Acts 6:4).

F. Paul commands that Christians DEVOTE THEMSELVES TO PRAYER.

(1.) Rom. 12:12, "Be FAITHFUL in prayer".

(2.) Col. 4:2, "DEVOTE yourselves to prayer." The greek word translated, "devote" is an imperative. It is a command and it is given to every person who was in the Colossian church. Other translations say, "continue in prayer", "persevere in prayer", "be persevering in your prayers", and "continue earnestly in prayer".

(3.) "... ALWAYS KEEP ON PRAYING ..." (Eph. 6:18).

(4.) "Pray CONTINUALLY" (I Thess. 5:17).

G. The Apostle Paul prayed PERSISTENTLY.

(1.) "How CONSTANTLY I remember you in my prayer AT ALL TIMES" (Rom. 1:9-10).

(2.) "We CONSTANTLY pray for you" (II Thess. 1:11).

H. Paul praises other Christians who were DEVOTED TO PRAYER. Col. 4:12, "Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Jesus Christ, sends greetings. He is ALWAYS WRESTLING in prayer for you ..."

I. James reminds us of Elijah's FERVENT and DEVOTED prayer life.

"The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. Elijah was a man just like us. He PRAYED EARNESTLY that it would not rain, and it did not rain

on the land for three and a half years. Again, he prayer, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops" (James 5:16-18).

All of this shows that God's people are to be DEVOTED to prayer. The passages also prove to us that prayer is WORK and can NOT be RUSHED into or out of. Successful prayer requires that we give careful and constant attention to it and that we be dedicated to it. God is saying that we are NOT to pray occasionally, but we are to PRAY REGULARLY.