

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE – JULY 2018

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Prayer:

THE NEED FOR PRAYER:

- *“The news about him was spreading and large crowds were gathering to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses But Jesus himself would often slip away to the deserted places and pray.”* Luke 5:15-16
- *“Devote yourselves to prayer.”* Col. 4:2
- *“... we will devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word.”* Acts 6:4
- Prayer changes me inwardly, making me an instrument of God’s grace.
- “Prayer is to faith what research is to science.” – PT Forsythe.
- “To pray is to change. Prayer is the central avenue that God uses to transform us.... In prayer we learn to think God’s thoughts after Him: to desire the things He desires, to love the things He loves, to do the things He wills.” Richard Foster – [Celebration of Disciplines](#).

HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE PRAYER AS A SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE?

- It is God’s chosen method of access into His presence, where we encounter Him relationally and are comforted, directed, and strengthened.
- It is hanging with God where my nature catches glimpses of eternity and is caught up in Heavenly mindedness.
- It is the means in which we catch up with God and what He is doing in our life, in our community, and in our world. It is where we catch a glimpse of God’s bigger picture and learn to lovingly submit to our role in His plan.
- It is a means of getting me past myself [my limited comprehension and understanding] and deeper into God [the well-spring of life, truth and ultimate meaning].
- It involves both meditation and contemplation through reflection on Scripture and on God Himself.
- Prayer is God’s ordained means of relational contact whereby I am purposefully transformed to become more like Jesus, more aware of my status as a child of God, and more useful for God’s purposes.

WHY WOULD YOU INCORPORATE PRAYER AS A DISCIPLINE INTO YOUR LIFE?

- Jesus instructed us that we should pray, and Scripture teaches that we should pray without ceasing.
- It is a strategic and intentional priority to relate with God... otherwise prayer will become minimal and marginalized.
- It is God's ordained and initiated method to sync up our fallen nature... getting past our spiritual poverty in our physical state into the riches of the spiritual state.
- It is the means by which I am comforted, encouraged, and conformed to the likeness of Jesus.

HOW MIGHT YOU INCORPORATE PRAYER AS A DISCIPLINE INTO YOUR LIFE?

- To be a discipline, it needs to be intentional and strategic. It needs to be done regularly and often.
- It needs to be regular and consistent to develop into a means to encounter God, to hear from Him and be realigned by Him.
- It may necessitate regular times of daily involvement or times during the week end... as when I commute to work, or contemplate throughout the day.
- There are different modes or forms of prayer that have been described through the ages, both personal and corporate. These include:
 1. Discursive Prayer which is an ongoing spoken conversation that occurs while I'm doing life.
 2. Mental Prayer that is done quietly in my mind whenever God prompts me to seek Him or His guidance.
 3. Centering Prayer which is a means of stilling the mind so I may focus more closely on God.
 4. Prayers may include complaint, praise, worship, submission, relinquishment, guidance, and intercession, etc.
 5. ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication
- It may also involve times of retreat for specific equipping or refreshing.