

prayer & fasting

Reasons We Should Pray

1 Thess. 5:16-18

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Objective Sentence: Everyone should pray because the basic essentials of spiritual life are provided through prayer.

Introduction: Have you ever been having a great day spiritually. A day where you have faced some challenges and temptations and dealt with them well? Here is an example of an individual having a good day and his prayer. Dear God, So far today I've done very well. So far I haven't gossiped, I haven't lost my temper, I haven't been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish or over-indulgent in any area of my life. I'm very thankful for that and for the time that I have shared with you thus far. But in a few minutes, God, I'm going to get out of this bed, get my shower, go to work and from then on I'm probably going to need a lot of your grace and help so that I will represent you honorably in every situation I encounter. Amen

- #1. ***Our Spiritual Life Depends on Prayer*** (Ro. 8:5 they who live according the flesh set on their minds on the things of the flesh and they who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.)
 - A. ***Charles Spurgeon:*** We must remember that the goal of prayer is the ear of God. Unless that is gained, the prayer has utterly failed. The uttering of it may have kindled devotional feeling in our minds, the hearing of it may have comforted and strengthened the hearts of those with whom we have prayed, but if the prayer has not gained the heart of God, it has failed in its essential purpose.
1. **Prayer is a life; it's not a luxury** (E.S. Jones)
 - a. **2 Thessalonians 5:16-18** *Andrew Murray:* Where there is much prayer, there will be much of the Spirit; where there is much of the Spirit, there will be ever increasing prayer.
 - b. *Pastor Dan:* Those who live without depending upon prayer don't have much of a life.
 - c. *Pastor Dan:* Five prayers that were answered in my early years that have been responsible for any and all the success I have experienced in all my years of serving the Lord. 1) God show the world a miracle; 2) Somewhere out there at the other end of the rainbow is the one you have set apart for me. 3) Youth With A Vision 4) Baptism in the Holy Spirit 5) Honeymoon prayer.
 - d. *Mother Teresa:* Try to feel the need for prayer often during the day and take the trouble to pray. Prayer enlarges the heart until it is capable of containing God's gift of Himself. Ask and seek, and your heart will grow big enough to receive Him and to keep Him as your own. In prayer we come into contact with God.

- e. **Luke 11:2** Answers to prayer are based on relationship
 - f. **Swinnock:** We lie to God in prayer if we do not rely on Him after prayer
 - g. **Phil. 4:19 Pastor Dan:** To cultivate an effective prayer life we must learn to develop a daily dependence upon God for every need—everyday . You must put yourself in a position where the only hope you have for success will come through God’s supernatural intervention. L
 - h. **Author Unknown:** Prayer is where everything begins and ends in the Spirit. Nothing that God is going to do will happen without prayer
 - i. **Smith Wigglesworth**, who is known as the Apostle of Faith. He made a great impact n the world through his powerful healing ministry in the later part of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century. He was asked how much time he spent in prayer each day. He responded, “I rarely spend more than a half hour of prayer at a time but I never go a half hour without praying.
 - j. **George Mueller:** When asked how much time he spent in prayer, George Mueller’s reply was, “Hours every day. But I live in the spirit of prayer. I pray as I walk and when I lie down and when I arise. And the answers are always coming.
 - k. **John 4:23-24** Worship in Spirit and truth.
2. **Through prayer we learn to surrender to God (Ro. 12:1 ... present ... a living sacrifice ...)**
- a. **Phil. 4:6-8** Don’t worry about anything but in everything by supplication and prayer ...
 - b. **E.M. Bounds:** Faith that creates powerful praying is the faith that centers itself on a powerful person **Phil. 3:10-12**
 - c. **Matthew 8:2** The leper looked to Christ worshipped Him and received a great miracle
 - d. **E. Stanley Jones:** Prayer is a will to die on the level of a defeated, empty, ineffective, short-circuited life, and a will to live on the level of a victorious, full, effective, and cosmic connected life. It is self-renunciation in order to find self realization. Your petty self is renounced in order that your potential self might be realized. Prayer is the wire surrendering to the generator, the flower surrendering to the sun, the child surrendering to education, the patient surrendering to the surgeon, the part surrendering to the whole—prayer is life surrendering to Life. **Col. 3:1-3**
 - e. **Samuel Chadwick:** Great grief prays with great earnestness. Prayer is not a collection of balanced phrases; it is the pouring out of the soul. What is love if it is not firey? What are prayers if the heart is not ablaze? They are the battles of the soul. In them men wrestle with principalities and powers...the prayer that prevails is not the work of lips and fingertips. It is the cry of a broken heart and the travail of a stricken soul. (**Ro. 8:26-31**)
 - f. **Scroggie:** Without time for prayer, nothing can be accomplished.
 - g. **John Bunyan:** He who runs from God in the morning will scarcely find Him the rest of the day.
 - h. **Martin Luther:** If I should neglect prayer but a single day, I should lose a great deal of the fire of faith.
 - i. **Samuel Chadwick:** The one concern of the devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work and prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but he trembles when we pray.

Closing and Invitation: Jim Cymbala, in his book “Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire” talks about the miraculous growth of the Brooklyn Tabernacle because of its dedication to prayer. In 1972 he was asked to pastor part-time a small church in a shabby two-story building on Atlantic Avenue in New York City. The location was bad. The people were few. The facilities were falling apart. In fact, he tells about how a pew broke one Sunday night, spilling several people onto the floor as he preached. As he prayed one day about what to do,

the Lord spoke to his heart, “If you and your wife will lead my people to pray and call upon my name, you will never lack for something fresh to preach. I will supply all the money that you will need, both for the church and for your family, and you will never have a building large enough to contain the crowds I will send in response.” After the Lord spoke to his heart he went back to the church and told them that from this day forward the health of Brooklyn Tabernacle would be measured by its Tuesday night prayer meeting. That first night 15 people came. God began to move. The church grew. The prayer meeting became larger. They were forced three times to seek larger facilities. By 1985 they were running 1600 each Sunday service. Hundreds came to the Tuesday night prayer meeting. Miraculous conversions began to take place. Today, besides the Tuesday meeting, there is a prayer ministry in which each hour of each day of the week, someone is in prayer for the church and its pastor. Its choir is world famous. Its pastor is asked to preach all over the world. But most importantly, lives are being drastically changed by the power of God.

A. W. (Aiden Wilson) Tozer (April 21, 1897-May 12, 1963) made this observation Have you noticed how much praying for revival has been going on of late—and how little revival has resulted? I believe the problem is that we have been trying to substitute praying for obeying, and it simply will not work. To pray for revival while ignoring the plain precept laid down in Scripture is to waste a lot of words and get nothing for our trouble. Prayer will become effective when we stop using it as a substitute for obedience." The thing I have noticed in our prayers and prayer meeting today is that we have learned the terminology of the spiritual life: we are binding spirits that are creating chaos in cities, states and countries, we are making great claims for our healing, commanding the devil to take his hands off everything that he has his hands upon and so much more. We have developed the terminology but not mastered the power that makes our words relevant.