

THE ANATOMY OF THE CHURCH  
PRAYER...God's Master Plan For His Church  
Mark 11:15-18

*“Prayer is God’s invitation to enter His throne room so He can lay His agenda over our hearts.”* Henry Blackaby

Prayer doesn’t *lead us to an encounter with God...prayer is an encounter with God*. Anyone who spends *significant time* in prayer with God, as Jesus did, will come to *know the heart* of God. *Knowing the heart* of God is to *know the will* of God, and to *know the will* of God is to *come before Him* with an *awesome sense of accountability*. This is reflected in the *reverent submission* with which Jesus came to His Father in prayer.

This sense of *accountability* is one of the *great missing elements in the prayer life* of many people today, and typically it’s a result of the *loss of intimacy* with God in *abiding* with Him in *prayer*.

As each of us *seeks the heart of God* through the Scriptures, prayer provides an *intimate fellowship* with the Author of Scripture to *reinforce His love* towards us as expressed in the Bible. This deep awareness of *accountability* to God for eternal things will then *characterize our prayer life*.

I am convinced that *revival* in our land waits upon God’s people coming to Him, *personally, collectively, and corporately*, in prayer that is marked by this kind of *reverent submission* and *fear* of God...*totally and absolutely surrendered*.

Our *society and culture* is at a point where I believe that Christians *need to let the prayer life* of Jesus *penetrate us...* until we are *on God’s agenda* when we pray.

*“This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if*

*we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.”*

~I John 5:14-15

Then *what happened* when Jesus prayed *will happen* for us...*heaven and earth* will be *joined together*, and the *words we hear* from the Father *will center around* how God is going to carry out *deliverance* through the *proclamation* of the gospel throughout the whole world.

In such a time as this *what could be more important* for us than to *understand* what is *on the heart of God* regarding *revival* and *spiritual awakening* in our land and in our world?

## I. WHY PRAY?

- The Bible **INSTRUCTS** us to pray:

*“Rejoice in hope, persevere in tribulation, be devoted to prayer.”*

~Romans 12:12

*“With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.”*

~Ephesians 6:18

*“Pray without ceasing.”*

~I Thessalonians 5:17

- Following the **EXAMPLE** that Jesus gave us is one of prayer:

*“And He came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him. When He arrived at the place, He said to them, ‘Pray that you may not enter into temptation.’ And He withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and began to pray.”*

~Luke 22:39-41

- It is **DISOBEDIENT** to not pray:

Because we are *instructed* to *pray*, it is an act of *disobedience* if we don't *pray*...sometimes it's even a sin.

*“Far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you...”*

~I Samuel 12:33

- Prayer gives **GLORY** to God:

*“Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”*

~John 14:13

God answers prayers so He will be *glorified* through the *answer*...that His *wisdom, goodness, power, and grace will be displayed*. The primary issue in prayer is *not obtaining what we want*...but allowing God to *display His glory*.

- Prayer aligns us with **GOD'S PURPOSES**:

When you begin to seek God's *purpose* in your prayers, your *heart* will be *aligned with His will*. That's when you will really begin to see your *prayers fulfilled*.

*“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”*

~Matthew 6:9-10

Jesus' model for prayer teaches us first to *get in harmony with the divine purpose*. Once you understand that, you won't *view prayer* quite so *selfishly*.

...In **Luke 22:31** Jesus warned Peter, *“Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat.”* The Lord knew it was impossible for Peter to *lose his salvation*, yet He told him, *“I have prayed for*

*you, that your faith should not fail”* (**Luke 22:32**). If Jesus, the sovereign God in human flesh, prayed for *God's eternal plan* to be realized...how can we do any less?

- Prayer lets us know **GOD'S WILL**:

*“This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.”*

~I John 5:14-15

- God **ANSWERS** prayer:

*“The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”*

~James 5:16

God sovereignly uses our prayers to *fulfill His perfect plan*. Therefore, *our petitions* should *reflect our heart's desire*. At the same time, we show our *willingness to surrender our will* to God's own *holy purposes*.

- God **SPEAKS** through prayer:

*“In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”*

~Romans 8:26-27

- Prayer is how we **COMMUNICATE** with God:

*“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God.”*

~Philippians 4:6

- **Prayer keeps us HUMBLE:**

*“God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.”*

~I Peter 5:5-7

- **Prayer gives the believer VICTORY in spiritual warfare:**

Power over the *devil* and his *demonic activity*.

*“He said to them, ‘This kind (demon) cannot come out by anything but prayer’.”*

~Mark 9:29

*“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.”*

~II Corinthians 10:3-4

## II. WAYS TO PRAY:

### **TYPES OF PRAYING:**

- *Individually*...Private prayer closet.
- *Intercessory*...
- *Corporately*...

### **THE POSTURE OF PRAYER:**

- *Kneeling*...Acts 9:40; Acts 20:36; Acts 21:5; Luke 22:41.
- *Prostrate*...I Samuel 24:8; II Samuel 1:2; 9:6, 8; Ezra 10:1; Ezekiel 8:16.

- *Bowing down*...Nehemiah 8:6; Exodus 4:31; Exodus 12:27; Philippians 2:10.

- *Standing*...Mark 1:25.

- *Sitting*...

*...Also, praying with your eyes open, and praying while walking around, etc.*

## III. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE PRAY?

- **PURIFIES**...typically, one of the *first things that happens* when one begins to pray is their world begins to *crumble* around them. They begin to be *sifted*...they begin to be *refined*.

- **EDIFIES**

*Prayer is boring until it becomes personal...*

*When it becomes personal, it will become passionate...*

*When it becomes passionate, it fervent...*

*When it becomes fervent, it will become powerful!*

- **POWER**

*The Church has lost its power...*

*Because it has lost its purity...*

*It has lost its purity...*

*Because it has become prayerless!*

**JAMES**...the half-brother of Jesus was nicknamed “*Old Camel Knees*” because of how much time he spent on his knees in prayer.

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