

Spiritual Fitness - Prayer (2)

Two perspectives on prayer

“No man is greater than his prayer life. The pastor who is not praying is playing; the people who are not praying are straying. ..Poverty-stricken as the Church is today in many things, she is most stricken here in the place of prayer. We have many organizers but few agonizers; many players and pay-ers, few pray-ers; many singers, few clingers; lots of pastors, few wrestlers; many fears, few tears; much fashion, little passion; many interferers, few intercessors; many writers but few fighters. Failing here, we fail everywhere.”

Those words written by Leonard Ravenhill in his classic book, “Why Revival Tarries”, cannot fail to stir our hearts in reminding us of our poverty. However, negative motivation alone is insufficient and unhelpful.

Pastor Bert alluded to a very important learning process that also applies to prayer. We will soon forget what we have been told but if we are praying and involving one another in prayer, we will grow deep in God.

Who we are determines how we live.

Trace the transformation of Peter and John from fishermen (Matt 4:18), the call of Jesus upon their lives to be fisher of men (Matt 4:19) to fulfilment of the purposes of God in their life (Acts 1 onwards). Our study on prayer in the life of the disciples cannot be divorced from their discipleship because prayer is fundamentally about growing deep in God.

Our study on prayer this week necessitates a reflection of our discipleship journey with Jesus in a community, and the transformation of our prayer life, along with every aspects of our life.

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Warming Up

1. Share with one another the wonderful grace of God in saving us.
2. In our discipleship journey, share examples of answered prayer and how those instances increased your faith level.

Into the Topic

Read Acts 4 – Focus of Prayer

3. What were the disciples doing that caused them to be hauled before the Sanhedrin? What was Jesus' promise to them in these situations (Luke 12:11, 12)?
4. What or who is the focus of their prayers? Use your imagination in picturing the mood and faith level of their prayer meeting.

Read Acts 12- Answered Prayer

5. What was the description of the church in verse 5 and verse 12?
6. What was Peter doing in verse 17 and why was he encouraging the rest to do likewise?

Moving Forward

The 'Remove and Replace' principle tells us that there are already habits occupying our mind, time, energy and effort that must be removed before we can replace them with intentional and purposeful time of prayer.

7. Ask the Lord to impress upon our hearts the areas we need to start over.

Life Together

Listening to the two sermons on prayer does not require just behavioural modification from prayerlessness to being prayerful, but there must be thoughtful reflection on our discipleship. Prayer, personal and corporate, must be viewed in the context of discipleship and cannot be divorced.

The early disciples have got it right in that they have a right view of Jesus as the Resurrected Lord in whom salvation is found. The right view of God and of themselves as disciples resulted in right behaviour (bold proclamation of the Gospel – Acts 4:2, 31, 33; earnest united prayers – Acts 4:24, 12:5, 12). The principle of transformation before multiplication can be clearly seen here because only disciples can make disciples.

By the grace of God, let us determine to follow God wholeheartedly and see the transformation in our lives and in the church. Then, we await the multiplication of disciples in our society.

Picture every members of BCEC, living victoriously whatever their season of life (as a student, as a young professional, families). Picture us coming together in earnest prayer, and boldly proclaiming Jesus to our colleagues, neighbours and relatives. Picture them coming to Jesus.

Picture now our Heavenly Father who longs for His children to come to Him in prayer and His willingness to give us every good thing.

It is possible because of Jesus.

Leader's Guide : Spiritual Fitness - Prayer (2)

These notes are primarily for the Into the Passage portion, and are to be used just as guidelines or commentary notes. Most of them are my own thoughts, so take that with a grain of salt. Let the Word of God lead you to truth, not these notes.

Into the Passage

Read Acts 4 – Focus of Prayer

3. What were the disciples doing that caused them to be hauled before the Sanhedrin? What was Jesus' promise to them in these situations (Luke 12:11, 12)?

The disciples were testifying about Jesus. True to what Jesus had promised, the Holy Spirit gave them words to say.

4. What or who is the focus of their prayers? Use your imagination in picturing the mood and faith level of their prayer meeting.

God is the focus of their prayers. The use of 'Sovereign Lord' was indicative of their faith that God is in control of every situation, even in the midst of persecution. Praying in unison was also suggestive of shared value that God is their God and that prayer is important.

The place where they prayed shook because of the Holy Spirit's visitation (?), similar to what happened in Acts 2:1. It was a visible manifestation of God's presence and their faith must be high.

Read Acts 12- Answered Prayer

5. What was the description of the church in verse 5 and verse 12?

Their prayers were earnest, and it wasn't just a handful of disciples but many disciples.

6. What was Peter doing in verse 17 and why was he encouraging the rest to do likewise?

Peter was giving thanks to God for answered prayer and the repeated testimony of answered prayer will reinforce their faith that God is able, He hears the prayers of His saints and answers them willingly.