

WHY WE PRAY

Most Christians have some conviction regarding prayer. At a bare minimum we know we *should pray*. But like anything, a successful prayer life needs direction. Yes, we *should pray*, but “*Why? What does it do?*” For many people, prayer is either obligatory or crisis driven. Many Christians feel obligated to pray because they have been taught that the Bible tells us to pray. Duty, then, becomes their primary motivation for prayer. For others, prayer serves as the vehicle for navigating or avoiding crisis. In crisis-driven prayer models it is the effect of sin that is the main motivational factor.

In truth, we *should* pray, and the Bible really does tell us *to* pray. It is also true that the impact of sin does necessitate fervent prayer. Our spiritual victory is linked to our prayer life. But why we pray goes deeper than that. Why does the Bible tell us to pray? For starters, legalism is not the basis for our faith in God. We don’t earn anything because we pray (Mt.6:1-8). Therefore, prayer is not part of a religious framework for pleasing God. Also, no amount of prayer will completely remove all difficulty and adversity from this life. In this life we will undoubtedly have trouble (Jn.16:33).

The reality, and paradox, of prayer is that it brings us into agreement with who God is, with what He thinks and feels and with how He leads. We can’t manipulate God and we can’t re-imagine God. Prayer draws us into who God really is, not necessarily who we want Him to be. His leadership can be troubling for us when we don’t understand the *whys* and *whens* of His choices -but prayer connects us to His heart. The scriptures declare that God takes pleasure in His people (Ps.149:4). When we experience this pleasure, it redefines our trust in Him -and His leadership.

So often our prayers are rooted in fear. We fear what will happen to our nation, our friends and neighbors or health and finances if we do not pray, or at least pray a certain way. But how many of our prayer meetings are grounded in fascination with God? Where His beauty and His power are central to the songs we sing and the language of our intercession?

Prayer is designed to escort us into the knowledge of God. As we come to know God we are empowered to walk with God. Prayer is relational at its very essence. Both our intercession and our worship are designed to revolve around both *who He is* and *what He is doing*.

Knowing God allows us to pray the will of God and it is His will that God is committed to. We pray because He is our life-source. We pray because He is gracious. We pray because He is willing and able. We pray because He is worthy...He is worthy of our attention and our affections.