

"The Necessity of Daily Prayer" (Matthew 6:5–13)(5.10.20)

Matthew 6:5–13 (NIV84)

5 "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

9 "This, then, is how you should pray:

" 'Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
10 your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us today our daily bread.

12 Forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.'

The word of God for the people of God.

Title: "The Necessity of Daily Prayer"

LET US PRAY.

INTRODUCTION:

Our sister church, just down the street in Oceanville, has a great message on their sign for our current day: Time on your hands? Spend it with Jesus. Prayer is several things, but spending time with God is one crucial aspect of praying. When Moses spent time in the presence of the Lord, his face shone brightly for some time afterwards.

BODY:

Daily bread makes this a daily prayer.

There are all kinds of implications for praying this daily. What does this requirement reveal to us.

All these things relate to our daily needs.

They relate to God's kingdom purposes.

Isn't that exactly what the Lord's Prayer is about?

Mark Rutland wrote: "My journey into soul restoration began thee, right that minute, in one of the darkest times of my life, when I discovered that I did indeed have a prayer. The greatest, most powerful prayer ever is a simple one – an ancient one – in fact. The prayer was originally taught by a Jewish rabbi almost two millennia ago. Now it came alive for me. Perhaps I should say it came alive in me. It became my life. I breathed it. I marinated my poor brain in it. I said it multiple times a day, sometimes scores of times. I clung to it, clutched at it as a drowning man clings to a raft in the middle of a storm-racked sea. It was my meat, my friend, my comfort in the night. I meditated on it, grew to cherish its words, its structure, its brilliant and magnificently anointed economy of language. Not a syllable is wasted, not a jot or tittle is superfluous. Yet its perfection is more, far more, than literary genius. Its power is supernatural. It is the greatest prayer ever taught or prayed. It heals, delivers, protects, empowers, and provides for those who pray it. Beyond even that, it is the only prayer that particular rabbi ever taught his followers. His name was Jesus. Nowadays most of those who pray the words that rabbi taught are Gentiles. They call it the Lord's Prayer or the Our Father."

What are some of the tactics that our Enemy uses?

The Screwtape Letters has entertained and enlightened readers the world over with its sly and ironic portrayal of human life and foibles from the unique vantage point of Screwtape, a highly placed assistant to "Our Father Below." At once wildly comic, deadly serious, and strikingly original, C. S. Lewis gives us the correspondence of the worldly-wise devil to his nephew Wormwood, a novice demon in charge of securing the damnation of an ordinary young man. The Screwtape Letters is the most engaging account of temptation – and triumph over it – ever written.

Have you ever found yourself playing for the other side? In my much younger days I was playing in an intramural basketball league on Otis ANGB on Cape Cod.

We are taking part in a cosmic conflict.

Max Lucado referred to a men's conference where he spoke on the topic of forgiveness:

"A couple of weeks after I returned home I received this letter from a man named Harold Staub.

Max, Thank you so much for speaking on forgiveness at Promise Keepers in Syracuse, NY, on June and 8. I was there. Just want you to know I went home, talked to my wife on many subjects about forgiveness – the best two weeks of my life. You see, she went home to be with the Lord on June 24, totally forgiven. How wonderful is his love. Thank you so very much.

When we called Harold to ask his permission to print his letter, he shared the touching details of his final days with his wife. He didn't know she was near death, nor did she. He did know, however, that some unresolved issues lay between them. Upon arriving home, he went to her, knelt before her and asked forgiveness for anything he'd ever done. The gesture opened a floodgate of emotions and the two talked late into the night. The initial effort at reconciliation continued for two weeks. The marriage enjoyed a

depth not yet known. When Harold's wife died suddenly of an embolism, he was shocked. But he was ready and now he is at peace.

What about you? Would you like some peace?"

Are your priorities the things of God?

N. T. Wright: "Some people use the Lord's Prayer in the same way that some use the Orthodox Jesus-prayer. Repeat it slowly, again and again, in the rhythm of your breathing, so that it becomes, as we say, second nature. Those of us who live busy or stressful lives may find a discipline like that very difficult; but, again, it may be precisely people like that who need—perhaps, physically need—the calming and nourishing medicine of this prayer to be woven into the fabric of their subconscious. Next time you make a car journey by yourself, leave the radio switched off, and try it. Yes, it takes time. What else would you expect?"

You might like, for a while, to take the clauses of the prayer one by one and make each in turn your 'prayer for the day'. Sunday: Our Father. Monday: Hallowed be thy Name. Tuesday: Thy Kingdom Come. Wednesday: Give us this day. Thursday: Forgive us our trespasses. Friday: Deliver us from evil. Saturday: The Kingdom, the Power and the Glory. Use the clause of the day as your private retreat, into which you can step at any moment, through which you can pray for the people you meet, the things you're doing, all that's going on around you. The 'prayer of the day' then becomes the lens through which you see the world.

CONCLUSION:

"Some years ago a sociologist accompanied a group of mountain climbers on an expedition. Among other things, he observed a distinct correlation between cloud cover and contentment. When there was no cloud cover and the peak was in view, the climbers were energetic and cooperative. When the gray clouds eclipsed the view of the mountaintop, though, the climbers were sullen and selfish."

My friends, we are all on a faith journey. We are people of The Way, those that follow Jesus, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We want to make sure that we are always properly equipped. The Holy Spirit is our guide. Prayer is our communications life-line. May your heavenly destination always be your true north. Keep your eyes always on Jesus.

As E. M. Bounds said, "We pray as we live; we live as we pray. Lord, for yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever.

Amen and amen. Let us pray.