

WHY PRAY?

Why pray?

- Prayer is a natural and necessary part of life
- Prayer is primarily communion with God
- ‘Prayer is a dialogue between two persons who love each other’ – Rosalind Rinker
- ‘Not to pray is not to love.’

Prayer is Personal

- We can pray anywhere, any time
- It is not a matter of *position, place* or *posture* (although we may have a favourite place of prayer). Prayer is a matter of the heart. See John 4:19-24
- ‘Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests’ (Ephesians 6:18)

1. An act of obedience

We pray because God tells us to pray. See Luke 18:1; Ephesians 6:18

2. Proper Perspective

Prayer helps us to see ourselves as we really are. See Psalm 8:1-4

‘When I come into God’s presence, I am undone’ – Barry Silverback, missionary-apostle

3. Dependency on God

It is easy for us to become self-dependent. Prayer reminds us of our need of the Lord.

- ‘I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go’ – Abraham Lincoln
- ‘Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees’ – William Cowper
- Not my brother, not my sister,
But it’s me, O Lord,
Standin’ in the need of prayer’
- ‘Only he who is helpless can truly pray. As long as we are conscious of our helplessness... we shall expect nothing of ourselves... This means giving God the opportunity to help us in our helplessness’ – O.Hallesby

4. Guidance

When we pray we are more likely to hear God’s voice. See Acts 10:10ff; 13:1-3

- ‘I have so much to do I must spend several hours in prayer before I do it’ – John Wesley

5. Spiritual nourishment

Prayer is an expression of our hunger for God. See Psalm 63:1-5. We need daily nourishment

Prayer – Why Pray?

- ‘To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing’ – Martin Luther
- It takes more effort not to breathe than to breathe.

6. A sense of dignity

It is an honour to talk with God. This enhances our sense of dignity and worth. See Psalm 8:1-5

7. Unity

- Have we striven for unity of doctrine rather than unity of prayer? See John 17:21
- Charismatic renewal broke down barriers (since re-erected?)
- Many trends towards united prayer in last two decades (eg the Call)

8. Passion

Through prayer we express our passion for God. See Psalm 84:1-7

As we dwell in his presence we enjoy his blessing and find his strength. Sustained by prayer we can make a difference. See Romans 12:11; Rev 3:14-16

- ‘I will not let you go unless you bless me!’ – Jacob (Genesis 32:26)
- ‘I have one passion—it is he’ – Ludwig von Zinzendorf
- ‘I am very frail and very faithless, often it seems to me, but these words breathe my desires and hopes and strivings to be what Christ would have me be’ – John Alexander Dowie

SOMETHING TO THINK OR TALK ABOUT

Read Luke 11:1-13

Remember: You don’t have to answer all the questions. Choose those that are most relevant to you.

Biblical

1. Luke tells us Jesus was praying ‘in a certain place’ (1). What kind of places did Jesus choose for prayer? How long did he pray? Read Matthew 14:23; Mark 1:35; Mark 6:46; Luke 5:16; 6:12.
2. What do you think about the ‘Lord’s Prayer.’ Did Jesus intend us to pray it exactly as he gave it? Or is it intended to be a pattern or model for prayer? Or both? (2-4)
3. Note how the prayer begins (1a). What can we learn about the nature of prayer from this?
4. What does ‘hallowed’ mean?
5. What differences are there between Luke’s version of the prayer and Matthew’s? (See Matthew 6:9-13). Do you think Jesus might have taught on this more than once and that he himself might have expressed it differently?
6. If we put Matthew’s and Luke’s versions together, how many specific petitions are there in the Lord’s Prayer?

Personal and practical

7. 'What do you think the phrase 'Your kingdom come' means? When we pray this prayer what are we actually asking for?
8. Try to rewrite verses 11 and 12 in 21st century language.
9. What do verses 11-13 tell us about God's willingness to answer our prayers?
10. What does verse 13 tell us about how we go about receiving the Holy Spirit?

About Dr Barry Chant

Barry Chant is Senior Pastor of the Wesley International Congregation in Sydney, Australia. He is a regular speaker at church services, seminars, conferences and conventions. Hundreds of thousands of his books have been sold around the world. He has degrees in arts, theology and ministry, a diploma in education and a PhD in history. He was the initiator and former president of Tabor College, Australia.

Terms of Use

This material is not for sale. You are free to download and reproduce it for personal use or for free distribution to groups such as your local church Bible study group or Christian fellowship. Please include the following acknowledgement:

'This study is copyright © Barry Chant 2006. Reproduced with permission from www.barrychant.com.'

This study is one of a series of seven studies on this theme. The rest can be found at www.barrychant.com.