

PRAYER

ORDINARY PEOPLE / EXTRAORDINARY GOD

Introduction:

Before we begin, let's consider these questions:

1. "So, what happens when people pray? What happens when a man, woman, youth, or child pauses to pray to the God of Heaven?
2. What happens when couples and families pray together?
3. What happens when a church takes on a mantle of prayer?
4. What happens when a nation cries out to God?
6. What could happen when every country and people group on the planet is covered in day and night prayer?"
7. So, I want to take the next little while to talk about prayer as it relates to the 2026 vision
8. Be honest - have you ever thought that if prayer doesn't change the outcome, then why do we even bother to pray?
9. Second question: In Gethsemane, did Jesus pray the wrong prayer?
10. As you know, His first and second petitions were not answered.
11. But you know the story... Jesus leads the way when in His third prayer, He changes His request to ***"Father, let your will be done, not mine."***
12. What if your prayer is less about getting the answer you want and more about the need to surrender?
13. Prayer is an act of surrendering your will to God's will.

Taking the Position of Trust:

1. Surrender and Trust go hand-in-hand.
2. A life of surrender will produce the habit of trust, and habitual trust will yield a life of Surrender.
3. ***Isaiah 43:2 says, "When you cross deep rivers, I will be with you, and you won't drown. When you walk through the fire, you won't be burned or scorched by the flames."***
4. What the enemy intends to bring ruin and the most pain will actually become the place where you can reign with Jesus over the enemy.
5. Still, there are times when you experience EPIC battles with fear, doubt, anger, frustration, and disillusionment with God.
6. Hudson Taylor, the great missionary to China, said this, *"When I cannot read, when I cannot think, when I cannot even pray, I can trust."*
7. ***Isaiah 54:17 does not promise that there won't be any weapon formed against you, or that there won't be any times in your life that may seem too difficult or too impossible. What it does promise is that the 'weapons' that ARE formed against you, won't win.***
8. Sometimes when people pray, things still can go from bad to worse
What if prayer is less about victory and more about learning to surrender and trust in God in the midst of your process?

PRAYER IS TRANSFORMATIONAL:

1. Paul explains this in ***2 Corinthians 3:17-18, "For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. So, all of us who have had the veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord - who is the Spirit - makes us more and more like Him as we are changed into his glorious image."***

2. The word translated '**changed**' in **verse 18** is the same word used to describe Jesus when He was transfigured.
3. *Folks, prayer is less about changing people and circumstances and more about transforming you in the image of Christ."*
4. **Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for (trusted for), the evidence of things not seen."**
5. Most importantly, prayer aligns our hearts and minds with God's heart and mind

PRAYER THAT BIRTHS AWAKENING AND PRODUCES REVIVAL:

1. On September 23, 1857, at 12 noon, the middle-aged former businessman climbed the stairs to an empty room and sat down
2. The sign outside read: "*Prayer Meeting from 12 to 1 o'clock - Stop 5, 10, or 20 minutes, or the whole hour, as your time admits."*
3. As the minutes ticked by, Lanphier was completely alone. He waited, and when the minute hand of his watch pointed to 12:30 at last he heard the sound of feet coming up the stairs.
4. In a short time, what had become known as the Fulton Street meeting had taken over the whole building with crowds of more than 3,000.
5. Lawyers and physicians, merchants and clerks, bankers and brokers, manufacturers and mechanics, porters and messenger boys - all came
6. Within six months, 10,000 businessmen (out of a population of 800,000) were gathering daily for prayer in New York City.
7. The revival was in evidence from coast to coast, and even across the Atlantic and there were tens of thousands of converts.
8. The initial meeting that took place in September of 1857 was not extraordinary, just six ordinary men gathering to pray in a small room and by March of 1858, (6 months later) the movement had reached such heights that the news of its impact had traveled across the Atlantic
9. There was no evidence of a supernatural move of God beginning to take place in those quiet moments of united prayer.
10. Lanphier had no way of knowing that it was the beginning of a great national revival, which resulted in an estimated one million persons coming into the Kingdom of God

Intimacy Unites:

1. Jesus set such an incredible example for us.
2. ***Jesus, the greatest person who ever lived, was preeminently a man of prayer. Before launching out in public ministry, HE fasted for more than a month in the wilderness. Before choosing His twelve disciples, He prayed all night.***
3. Prayer is not just an invitation into a conversation with the God of the universe, which is amazing, but to experience intimacy with the Father
4. Jesus came and laid a foundation - ***"all that Jesus began to do and teach..." (Acts 1:1)***
5. THINK ABOUT THIS: All He began to DO: How He acted, how He related, how He lived gave us a window into true intimacy with the Father
6. The late Timothy Keller once said, *"The only person who dares wake up a king at 3:00 am for a glass of water is a child (a son or a daughter). We have that kind of access."*
7. Why settle for a superficial relationship with Jesus when you can have an intimate, face-to-face friendship?

8. Jesus said in **Matthew 5:14**, ***"You are the Light of the world - like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden."***

9. So, we as the adopted children of our Father in Heaven are called to not only BE THE LIGHT but to CARRY THE LIGHT.

We Have to Become Awake and Alive:

1. ***"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere..." Acts 1:8***

2. Like DNA that genetically connects us to our earthly parents, there is likewise a connection so deep within us (the Holy Spirit) that divinely connects us to our FATHER.

3. Prayer is the connection that cultivates the relationship.

4. Too often, we recite the words of the Lord's prayer but do not understand or contemplate their meanings - ***"Our Father in heaven..."***

5. We could stop there with the word "Our" and be satisfied with the divine connection with the God who created everything!

6. **Hebrews 2:11 says, "So now Jesus and the ones He makes holy have the same Father."**

7. "Then the next word, 'Our Father.'

8. A life of prayer with "Our Father" is possible

The Lost:

1. Consider the work of Count Zinzendorf, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, John and Charles Wesley, Jeremiah Lanphier, Evan Roberts, Jim Cymbala, Andrew Murray and countless others

2. These ordinary people had so stewarded an Intimate Prayer relationship with an extraordinary God, that the result was Awakening and Revival to be seen as fruit in their lives

3. When you commune with God, He gives you His heart for the lost

4. Revivals often begin with one or two people who have been given a burden for a people and who unite in prayer to a God who cares.

5. ***"They met together and were constantly united in prayer..." Acts 1:14***

EARS to HEAR and a HEART to RESPOND, 'HERE I AM':

1. Our story finds a couple in what must have been a most difficult time because they could not have a child.

2. The story of Samuel

3. All because the boy had Ears to Hear and A Heart to Respond, ***'Here I am'. 1 Samuel 1:1-17 & 3:1-10***

Four Ways to Cultivate a Conversation:

1. Imagine a little boy or girl with a set of walkie-talkies. No doubt many variables could be wrong to one degree or another that would cause a conversation to be *'un-hearable'*.

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4. If anything is clear from scripture, is that God speaks to His people.

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me." John 15:4

5. Here are Four Ways to hear God's voice from Isaiah the prophet:

6. ***"The Sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakes me morning by morning, wakes my ear to listen like one being taught. The Sovereign Lord has opened my ears; I have not been rebellious; I have not turned away."***
Isaiah 50:4-5.

- a. Pray Every Morning
- b. Expect God to Speak to You
- c. Listen to God's Voice and be Ready to be Taught

Isaiah 55:3 says, "Come to me with your ears wide open. Listen, and you will find life. I will make an everlasting covenant with you. I will give you all the unfailing love I promised to David."

- d. Silence the noise
- e. When You Hear God Speak, Obey Him

Ephesians 5:1 - as children of our God, we ought to imitate Him.

The highest form of worship is imitation.

James 1:23-25 says, "For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully in the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it."

Prayer and Mission:

1. Houses of Prayer

Rick Warren once said, ***"You judge a church's health not by its seating capacity, but by its sending capacity."***

The disciples were gathered in unified prayer, waiting for the Holy Spirit's arrival, and the church was born and went to the world

Mark 11:17 gives us the answer, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations."

The word translated as house from the Greek word oikos means family, house, or household.

2. Consider that in the New Testament, of Jesus' 132 public appearances, 122 were in the marketplace. Of the 52 parables Jesus told, 45 had a workplace context. Of 40 miracles recorded in the book of Acts, 39 occurred in the marketplace."

3. All of us are being called to be houses of prayer and bring the Kingdom of Heaven to our circles of influence.

Transforming Cities:

1. If we as believers profess to take all that Jesus taught seriously, then we have to be focused on 'Transforming Cities'.

2. Did you know that the word Ecclesia was a word used within the Roman government?

3. We were designed to be instruments carrying His heart so powerfully that we would constantly be about Transforming Cities.

4. When God's people pray, God hears from heaven, and things change.

5. When people pray, God changes them and the world around them.

6. What will happen when you pray?

7. The world is waiting to find out