

DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF *Prayer*

Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He (Jesus) went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. (Mark 1:35)

The commitments we put first in our lives are important because we believe they are. Our priorities are the "yes's" in our lives. When we seek God in prayer, we experience God in power. Prayer always precedes great moves of God. So how important is prayer? It's the first and most important thing as seen modeled by Jesus in Mark 1:35. We are to pray about everything that concerns us, as led by the Holy Spirit, with a sense of passion and expectation whether individually or corporately.

Developing a culture of prayer must first be cultivated from the heart. It is never a good thing to be "prayer-less" as a Christian. The Holy Spirit desires to create a "prayer passion" within us which will lead us into the presence of God.

Some primary challenges to establishing a "culture of prayer" include:

- Having incorrect teaching/examples of prayer.
- Fearing public opinion of corporate prayer or ridicule and/or shaming of praying privately.
- False "traditions" taught about prayer, i.e., eyes must be closed, certain postures for praying, restricted locations for prayer, viewing prayer as a "last resort," downplaying the necessity of prayer, etc.
- Minimal knowledge/understanding of biblical scriptures.
- Last but not least, the continual societal initiatives to restrict public prayer and promote it as an infringement of one's rights being "politically incorrect."





As we continue to surround ourselves in powerful prayer environments, personally and corporately, we will ultimately perceive it as "communion with the Lord," and it will become a transformative, treasured opportunity. We come to understand that prayer not only changes things, but it also changes the "prayer." The result of a "transformed" prayer is more fruitfulness and the expansion of God's kingdom on the earth.

Some successes of a dynamic "culture of prayer" include:

- Prayer is nurtured and we experience greater access into God's presence.
- We become righteous examples to others pursuing a deeper prayer life.
- Passion for the Word of God significantly increases and with it more spiritual revelation.
- The fruit of the Spirit manifests more readily. (Galatians 5:22-23)
- We can be used by God in miraculous ways validating His reality, power and agape love for us.
- We become more like Jesus Christ bringing forth grace, mercy and light to dispel darkness.

There will be times when the pressures and demands of the day make us feel like we don't have time to pray. I encourage you to press through those times because you'll find quality time spent with God will add hours to the day! It's important to remember we can not serve God without first seeking Him. We're to do ministry "with" Him and not "for" Him. He's the source of all we do to bring others into the saving knowledge of salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ. As we pray, be mindful of the following: (1) Who is God - Praise Him; (2) Reverently make our petitions known; (3) Conclude our prayer with praise, thanksgiving and trust in God; (4) Prayer is often most fruitful when preceded by worship, i.e., song/music, lifting of hands in adoration, etc. Finally, our prayers are a sweet savor to God and He greatly desires to "commune with us."

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