

What is Prayer?

Introduction:

Faithful Christians are to be distinguished in their fervent petitions to heavens throne of grace/mercy. See I Thess. 5:17-18 and Phil. 4:6. It has been said: “prayer is the most abused right & neglected privilege that children of God have.” Does our prayer life reflect real faith in the power & privilege of taking everything to God in prayer? Prayer has been compared to a “golden key which, when kept bright by use, will unlock unto us the treasures of heaven.”

I. Facts About Prayer in the Bible:

- A. Our attempt today will focus on need to define prayer.
 - 1. some 85 prayers recorded in Old Testament.
- B. In New Testament – Christians are not only told to confess – but they to pray for:
 - 1. enemies – Mt. 5:44
 - 2. to be heard/seen of God not men;
 - 3. for daily bread; not to be led into temptation
 - 4. that sins might be forgiven – Mt. 6:5-15

II. What is Prayer?

- A. Prayer is sharing & Fellowship With God.
 - 1. Psa. 55:22-23
 - 2. We need times when we can get close w/God and concentrate our thoughts/attentions on Him.
- B. Prayer is a surrendering to God.
 - 1. Must surrender ourselves and our time to God.
 - 2. It is an acknowledgement that God is in control & that He can come to our aid when necessary! See Psa. 56:10-11; Heb. 2:13
- C. Prayer is desire expressed to God.
 - 1. Phillips Brooks: *a wish turned heavenward.*
 - 2. *Prayer is the desires of the heart expressed unto God.*
 - 3. Prayer involves desire: Rom. 10:1
 - 4. It is a desire expressed/addressed to God!
 - a) God must be addressed for our desires to be considered a prayer.
 - b) prayer distinguished from other speech b/c it addressed to God.
- D. Prayer is acknowledging and praising God. Mt. 6:9-10; 13

III. Types of Prayer:

- A. “Prayer” can be used in broad sense to include all various forms of prayer.
 - 1. See I Tim. 2:1; Phil. 4:6
- B. What is the difference between prayers & supplications?
 - 1. Weaver: “prayer” would include requests for fulfillment of needs that are always present. (wisdom; understanding; greater faith; etc.)
 - 2. “Supplication” could refer to requests made in specific situations.
 - a) cure for illness; removal of persecution; salvation of someone, etc.
 - b) the wording takes on the meaning of a very strong request – much like our word beg.
- C. Intercession – I Tim. 2 - prayer to God on behalf of another.
- D. Thanksgiving - involves a prayer of gratitude to God. (Psa. 75:1; I Tim. 4:4)

Conclusion:

- A. Let us endeavor to improve our prayer life.