

Leadership Retreat

Call to Pray

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Greater Baltimore Church of Christ

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Introduction:

Do you have a passionate pray life?

How Important is pray in the life of a Disciple? / Why?

PRAYER: Webster Dictionary:

The act of asking for a favor, and practically with earnestness.

We are constantly on a stretch, if not on a strain, to devise new methods, new plans, new organizations to advance the Church and secure enlargement and efficiency for the gospel. This trend of the day has a tendency to lose sight of the man or sink the man in the plan or organization. God's plan is to make much of the man, far more of him than of anything else. Men are God's method. The Church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men

Quotes:

Luther said there were some days in his life that were too busy, that he could not spend only but three hours in prayer

History tells us that James, the half brother of Jesus, knees were like that of a camels hide, and he spent most of his life on his knees in prayer

If we seek to feed the fire of our prayers with the fuel of Gods word. All our difficulties in prayer will disappear, (From *how to pray*, by R. A. Torrey)

In addition, being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. (Luke's *Gospel, Cha: 22 v.44*)

PRAY: & READ

Nehemiah 1-11

One of the great spiritual needs we have is to develop a living prayer life, Prayer in our lives needs to move beyond dry repetitions and a list of wants. There needs to be a revival of passion in our prayers.

I. THE ATTITUDE OF PRAYER (1:4)

A. This prayer we are about to study comprises the prayers which he prayed day and night during this period of petition to God.

B. Two terms identify his attitude as he approached the Father:

***Weeping & Mourning.** This is the natural reaction to sin and being away from the Father. **Psalm 39:11-12** "You rebuke and discipline men for their sin; you consume their wealth like a moth-- each man is but a breath. Selah. "Hear my prayer, O LORD, listen to my cry for help; be not deaf to my weeping. For I dwell with you as an alien, a stranger, as all my fathers were." **Jeremiah 3:21** "A cry is heard on the barren heights, the weeping and pleading of the people of Israel, because they have perverted their ways and have forgotten the LORD their God." **Mark 14:72** "Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times." And he broke down and wept."

***Fasting. Joel 2:12** "'Even now,' declares the LORD, 'return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.' The Bible treats fasting as a spiritual discipline. It is never commanded. However... Jesus fasted on occasion. Paul and Barnabus fasted before appointing elders. It appears that fasting is a voluntary action in which one dedicates himself totally to the Lord. / a time of consecration

C. **Weeping, Mourning, Fasting** - the absolute need of God. We come before God humbly, yet willing to approach Him. In our fears, weaknesses, heartaches, sins, and distresses, we turn to the only one who can deliver us. I believe that Nehemiah's prayers were passionate because he came to God in the right attitude.

What is your attitude like? When you are faced with bad news/ the unexpected loss of a loved one, Lost of your Job, failing health, Ministry not producing fruit, Marital relations flat, Dating relationships not working out, Relationship with God is not where it should be.

II. THE ADORATION IN PRAYER (1:5)

A. Nehemiah starts of his pray, by adoring God, He recognizes God Greatness, His Majesty, and embraces Gods promises--. A Great & Awesome God. **Deuteronomy 7:21**

"Do not be terrified by them, for the LORD your God, who is among you, is a great and awesome God." (**God would deliver Israel from her enemies**). **Exodus 15:11** "Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you-- majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?" (From the Song of Moses). ** **When you spend time in prayer, it should be a special time, It should be GOD there is none like you.** Nehemiah calls God "Awesome!" **Psalm 47:2** "How awesome is the LORD Most High, the great King over all the earth!" **Psalm 111:9** "He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant forever-- holy and awesome is his name."

Is there a Godly reverence in your prayers?

B. A God who keeps his covenant of love. With those who love and obey him - these are the conditions of the covenant. Deuteronomy 7:9 "Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands." Deuteronomy 7:12 "If you pay attention to these laws and are careful to follow them, then the LORD your God will keep his covenant of love with you, as he swore to your forefathers." 1 Kings 8:23 "and said: "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below--you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way." (Two Chronicles 6:14; Nehemiah 9:32). Daniel 9:4 "I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed: "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands,"

C. In our prayers, passion will be restored when we praise God for who He is, and when we thank him from the heart for his "covenant of Love".

III. THE ADMISSION IN PRAYER (1:6-9)

A. I am a servant / YOU are servants. To be a servant is to be in submission to another. We are servants of God! The Bible tells us that Nehemiah begins a time of **admission** and **confession** in his prayer by acknowledging that God is his Master! In the New Testament, The **disciples often called Jesus "Master"** Why? Because they- recognize his authority. **2 Timothy 2:21** "If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. ***This passage is talking about spiritual cleansing, separation from sin, consecration, and sanctification.*** Nehemiah does not only admit that God is his Master... he also admits his sin.

B. In our prayer we need to confess we are wicked. Nehemiah is deeply penetrated by the feeling of his own sin and guilt. **We have not obeyed** – The Bible say that wickedness is sin wickedness. **Genesis 6:5** "The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time." Wickedness in this case included thoughts of the heart. **They were far away from God in their intentions and hopes. Romans 1:18** "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness...". **Romans 3:23** "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..." **We all struggle with wickedness** - even if it is only in our thoughts. **Our prayer**

lives will take on new passion when we come to God with the right attitude, and when we adore Him, and when we admit to him our own sin.

IV. THE ASSURANCE IN PRAYER (1:8 - 11)

A. Why can we come to God in these ways, and why will they revive our prayer life? Because we can trust God. God has always desired us to trust Him, depend on Him, and turn to Him.

B. Nehemiah asks God to remember three things: Remember the covenant (8-9). Remember who you redeemed (10) Remember me (11). Four times in the book, Nehemiah asks God to remember him (5:19, 13:14, 13:22, and 13:31) Nehemiah prays for his compatriots, but for himself as well.

C. When you pray, ask God to remember...His promise to forgive, to save, to inhabit... His church ... You as an individual.

Closing:

Nehemiah's prayer was passionate because in it one can find... The Right Attitude. Adoration of the Father. Admission of Sin. Assurance that God will do what He says he will do.

One reason our prayer lives have been weak is that we come to God with partial hearts and we do not really want Him to see us as we are. Nehemiah did not come as a perfect individual ... but a confessing believer. That is what we need to do. Our natural man says that the way to energize our prayer life is to be righteous and come to God to show Him how good we are. In addition, we should strive to be holy. Our rebellion against God does have something to do with His answers to us. However, our prayer lives are not energized through good works. Our prayer lives become passionate, energized, and dynamic when they are fueled by a deep need for His presence, his power, his forgiveness. How about your prayer life?