

SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



The Prayer Life of Jesus

KEY PASSAGE: Mark 1:35-38 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Matthew 7:7; 14:23 | Mark 14:35-36
Luke 6:12; 22:44 | John 17:15 | 1 John 5:14-15

► SUMMARY

How important is prayer in your life?

If you had to rate it, would conversation with your heavenly Father be in first place or would it fall somewhere lower in priority? For some of us, prayer is rare, except when we are experiencing trouble or have a need; then we come to the Lord seeking His help. Although we are encouraged in God's Word to always bring our needs and concerns to Him in prayer, we should also pray simply because we love Him, desire to offer Him our praise, and express our gratitude and delight in Him.

► SERMON POINTS

Jesus' Prayer Life

To grasp the importance of prayer, we need only consider what role it played in Jesus' life, and Mark 1:35-38 gives us insight.

"In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there. Simon and his companions searched for Him; they found Him, and said to Him, 'Everyone is looking for you.' He said to them, 'Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came for.'"

■ **Jesus got up early.** His days were very busy, but He took time early in the morning to spend with His Father, and this is a good habit for us to cultivate as well. If the

Son of God needed to begin His day with prayer, how much more do we? Talking to our heavenly Father first thing in the morning is not a matter of convenience but necessity. By submitting to God and asking for direction and sensitivity to the people around us, we'll be prepared to accomplish all that He desires for us that day.

■ **He went away to a secluded place.** Since Jesus was surrounded by crowds all day, He needed a quiet place where He could pray without being disturbed, and so do we. Our place of prayer could be a separate room in our home, a closet, or perhaps just a corner where we customarily go to meet with our heavenly Father. Although finding a quiet place may be difficult, it's worth the effort because we need a holy place where we can pray privately and receive strength, direction, and encouragement for all the anticipated and unexpected challenges awaiting us each day. Whatever we achieve in life will be accomplished on our knees before our heavenly Father.

■ **Jesus may have oftentimes prayed on His knees.**

When He was in the Garden of Gethsemane before His crucifixion, Mark 14:35 says, He "fell to the ground and began to pray." Whether He was face down or on His knees, the posture was one of humility, and that's the same attitude we should have as we approach our holy Lord God.

■ **Christ prayed to know the Father's will.** His prayer in Gethsemane was, "Yet not what I will, but what You will" (Mark 14:36), and this is an appropriate petition for us as well. Instead of first coming with our list of concerns and

requests, we should surrender ourselves to the will of God and consider what He desires. As we lay ourselves bare before Him, expressing our need for correction and help, not only does He come to our assistance, but our relationship with Him becomes more intimate.

■ **He sometimes spent the whole night in prayer.** When Jesus needed the Father's guidance in choosing His disciples, "He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12). Since Christ always did the Father's will, He persisted in prayer until He had the answer. We can have the same confidence that the Lord will hear and answer our prayers, but we must be patient as we wait for understanding. God knows exactly how and when to answer our petitions in His perfect time and according to His will for our lives.

■ **Jesus prayed for His followers.** Knowing that His crucifixion was the next day, and He would no longer be physically present with His disciples, Jesus prayed for them in John 17 and placed them in His Father's care, saying, "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one" (v. 15). Since we too live in a dangerous and wicked world, we need each other's prayers. Therefore, we must be vigilant and not let our enemy distract us as we intercede for others, because prayer is the most valuable thing we can do for them.

■ **Christ agonized in prayer.** When Jesus was facing imminent crucifixion, Luke describes His distress: "And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground" (Luke 22:44). The burden of what awaited Him was so heavy that He turned to His Father for strength. Although we will never experience distress equal to that of Christ's, we do understand what it's like to feel so burdened that we desperately need the Lord's help to endure it. And in our time of deepest need, we have the

assurance that God hears and is going to answer in a way that benefits us and glorifies Him.

■ **Jesus often prayed alone.** After a busy day of ministry, Christ sent the crowds away, and "He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone" (Matt. 14:23). A prayer partner is a wonderful blessing, but we also need time alone with our heavenly Father. There are conversations that we can only have with God as we pour out our hearts before Him. The Lord loves us more than we can imagine, invites us to ask, seek, and knock in prayer (Matt. 7:7), and promises to hear and answer us when we ask according to His will (1 John 5:14-15).

God is waiting for us to make time for Him, and He is willing to answer our requests. However, sometimes our disobedience and sin keep us from perceiving His answers. Therefore, we should always ask Him to search our hearts and show us anything that is hindering our prayers.

The most valuable spot in our homes is our place of prayer, and the greatest investment of our time is the moments spent in prayer. When we make this our top priority, we'll be amazed at what the Lord will do in our lives.

► RESPONSE

- Based on your actual practice, what place does prayer have in your life? Which characteristics of Jesus' prayer life do you need to make a part of your life?
- If your prayer life is not what you desire it to be, what changes would you like to make? How would these changes affect your relationship with the Lord?

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