

What Prayer Is for the Christian (Part 1)

Just what is prayer?

Revelation 8.1–6

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • October 28, In the year of our Lord, 2012

Scripture Reader and Reading: Michael Crisp – Revelation 8.1–6

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Larry Amberg – Songs on Prayer

Prelude:

I. Just what is prayer?

- A. Is it merely a tranquilizer before going to bed?
- B. Is it just for getting God to bless us,
 - 1. regardless of what we want from Him, and
 - 2. without regard to submitting ourselves to Him?

II. Revelation 8 shows prayer in all its glory,

1 When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound (Rev 8.1–6).

Persuasion:

I. What Prayer Is for the Christian

- A. Prayer Is the Supreme Resource
 - 1. Prayer puts us in touch with the Creator of the heavens and the earth!
 - 2. Revelation 8 shows that He responds to our prayers.
- B. Prayer Is an Extension of Our Relationship with God
 - 1. It is not a magical step to get things from a distant God.

2. We are His children, His friends, His servants.

C. Prayer Is a Costly Privilege

1. Is prayer the least we can do?
2. Is prayer our last resort?
 - a) We can approach God because of the blood of Jesus.

D. Prayer Is Transforming Power

1. Revelation 8 shows things changing on the earth.
2. E. g., compare Pro 21.1 with 1Ti 2.1ff.

1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD,
Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes."
(Pro 21.1)

2 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions,
and giving of thanks be made for all men... (1Ti 2.1).

E. Prayer Is a Natural Response

1. What does our relationship with God mean, if we do not pray?
2. Do you find it natural to speak to the people whom you love?

II. If We Want Prayer to Be Effective

A. Delight in the Lord

4 Delight yourself also in the LORD,
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.
(Psa 37.4).

B. Forgive

15 "But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt 6.15).

C. Believe

22 “And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive” (Matt 21.22).

D. Be Persistent

1 Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart... (Luke 18.1).

E. Be Humble

9 Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, “God, I thank You that I am not like other men— extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ 13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Luke 18.9–14).

F. Pray By Jesus’ Authority

13 “And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it” (John 14.13, 14).

G. Remain in Christ

7 “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you” (John 15.7).

H. Have the Right Motives

3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on

your pleasures (Jam 4.3).

I. Be Righteous

16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much (Jam 5.16).

J. Obey God

22 And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight (1Jo 3.22).

K. Pray According to His Will

14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us (1Jo 5.14).

L. Seek to Have Your Other Relationships in Good Condition

7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered (1Pe 3.7).

Exhortation:

I. Prayer is for the Christian.

A. If you have not yet become one,

B. then hear Isaiah 59,

- 1 Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened,
That it cannot save;
Nor His ear heavy,
That it cannot hear.
- 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God;
And your sins have hidden His face from you,

So that He will not hear.
(Isa 59.1, 2)

1. If you have gone astray from your heavenly Father,
2. He does not hear or rather answer your prayers.
 - a) If you need prayer,
 - b) Let us go to the Father for you.