

CORE VALUES

Why What We Believe Defines Who We Are

Prayer is the Primary Work of God's People

Philippians 4: 6-7

Introduction: In this second study in our series on C&MA Core Values we will consider the topic of prayer. According to our values statement, prayer is the primary work of God's people. Yet, for many Christians in the West (perhaps most) prayer is a little understood and often less practiced mystery which is unsatisfying and ineffective. Why would we say it is our primary (most important and first order of) work?

I. Why is Prayer so Important?

- A. Late in Jesus' ministry the disciples, after long observation of Jesus' prayer life and effective ministry, said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray." (Luke 11:1) It is the only thing we are aware of that they ever asked Him to teach them.
- B. God has committed to His people the privilege, the stewardship, and the authority of His work on this earth.
- C. Note the absence of the word "power." We have no power ("Without Me you can do nothing."), He has all the power, but we have authority to release His power through prayer.

II. Prayer is Primarily About Listening

- A. Did you note what clear guidance God gave to both men in the video introduction?
- B. Prayer is often dissatisfying and unattractive because our experience is to give God advice about what we want and then walk away as if the job is done.
- C. Prayer is more like a captain who comes to his commanding officer to give a report of what is happening in his sector and then waits for orders relative to the mission and his particular needs.

III. Why Pray if God is Going to do What He Wants Anyway?

- A. The first flaw in this question may be the presumption that what God wants is anything less than perfect or appropriate.
- B. The second flaw is the assumption that God will still act even if no one prays; this is not true—all through the Bible the teaching prevails that God acts in response to prayer.
- C. What about His sovereignty and providence? Isn't everything predestined anyway no matter what I do? Are there some things God cannot do (or will not do)?

Consider the idea of a child's playroom or fenced-in yard with respect to God's sovereignty and human freedom of the will.

- 1) God gives limited freedom regarding personal choice within defined boundaries—the working of the Holy Spirit through prayer has a powerful influence.
- 2) God will not force His will on the heart of man (e.g.: save a person against their own will) "We do not yet see all things subjected to Him" (Heb. 2:8)
- 3) God is good—He will never do anything that causes sin, nor will He "cheat" for you. (And, He has very little interest in the outcome of a sports contest.)

Conc: Prayer is the primary and most important work of the people of God. Through prayer God changes lives and builds the Kingdom. Through prayer the Gospel is shared and advanced. Through prayer the Holy Spirit is free to work in the lives of people. By coming to know the will of God and asking for that will to be done on earth we become the agents of God's mighty power to accomplish His eternal purposes. He has made us partners with Him in His eternal plan.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.


Philippians 4: 6-7
(NASB)

Alliance Bible Church Core Values

- *Celebrating the Lordship of Jesus Christ through corporate worship in two languages.*
- *Boldly proclaiming the fullness of His Gospel: Jesus Christ as Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King.*
- *Building up one another in love through small group community, prayer, and discipleship.*
- *Serving our community through meaningful acts of loving service.*
- *Obeying the call of the Great Commission through sacrificial support of missions of every kind.*


CORE VALUE I—FINDING THE LOST

- 1.) How did the story of E. D. Whiteside or the testimony of Fred Hartley change the way you think about prayer?
- 2.) How important do you think prayer is in the everyday life of most believers?
- 3.) What might change in your life if there was a dramatic improvement in your communication with God?
- 4.) What are some concrete steps that we could take this week to improve our communication with God?
- 5.) What are the things that most often keep you from making time for prayer?
- 6.) Read Luke 11: 1-13. According to the pattern of prayer that Jesus gave the disciples (we call it the Lord’s prayer), what should we be praying about? How balanced is your prayer life in the areas that Jesus mentions?
- 7.) What do you think is the main idea of the story that Jesus tells in verses three through eight?
- 8.) Think about the promise that Jesus makes in verses nine and ten. What is the difference between “asking,” “seeking,” and “knocking”? How could these verses change the way that you pray?



The C&MA Vision

The Christian and Missionary Alliance will be a movement of Great Commission Christians who are glorifying God by building Christ’s Church worldwide.



The C&MA Mission

Our mission is to know Jesus Christ; exalt Him as Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King; and complete His Great Commission.

- ❖ Evangelizing and discipling persons throughout the United States, and
- ❖ Incorporating them into Christ-centered, community-focused congregations,
- ❖ Mobilizing them for active involvement in a missionary effort designed to plant Great Commission churches among unreached and responsive peoples worldwide.

NOTES

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