

Articles and Sermons :: Prayer: An Invitation to Every Believer by K.P. Yohannan**Prayer: An Invitation to Every Believer by K.P. Yohannan - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2014/6/20 17:39**

Prayer is not a new product to be marketed. Today we have prayer towers, prayer cloths, dial-a-prayer, live prayer lines, books, prayer letters, tapes, maps, diaries, prayer clocks, beads, charms and trinkets galore-but less prayer than ever. There are endless seminars, workshops, retreats and courses on prayer. But the question must always be asked, where is the living God in the midst of these products and events? It is not mere instruction and seminars that we need. Instead we need men and women who will get on their knees and pray. Those who will do this, depending totally on the living God, are the ones God will use to shake this generation.

In his book "Why Revival Tarries", Leonard Ravenhill cries out for reality in this critical area: "No man is greater than his prayer life. The pastor who is not praying is playing; the people who are not praying are straying. The pulpit can be a show window to display one's talents; the prayer closet allows no showing off. "Poverty-stricken as the Church is today in many things, she is most stricken here, in the place of prayer. We have many organizers, but few agonizers; many players and payer, few prayers; many singers, few clingers; lots of pastors, few wrestlers; many fears, few tears; much fashion, little passion; many interferers, few intercessors; many writers, but few fighters. Failing here, we fail everywhere. "We...mistake action for unction, commotion for creation, and rattles for revivals."

Too often, we equate learning about prayer with the real thing. For others, the promotion of prayer has eliminated prayer itself. What passes for prayer in these cases is more often the mindless activism that mistakes motion for life. Prayer is not a management technique. The Christian calendar is crowded with so-called prayer meetings, twenty-four-hour prayer chains, marches, vigils, nights-of-prayer, half-nights of prayer and a host of other prayer movements covertly designed to promote secondary causes. Some of these are real. Others are merely used as a promotion technique by religious movements, sects and organizations. Real prayer is spiritual warfare. It requires us to wrestle with the world, the flesh and the devil - overcoming in the power of the Holy Spirit rather than in our own flesh and mind.

Therefore, the first requirement in prayer is that we come close to God. The more we sit at His feet and look into His eyes, the more our prayers will reflect His mind. Thus, the more we become like Him, the more reality there will be in our prayer lives. We must start to love the people and things He loves, and hate what He hates. As we go deeper into the heart of Jesus, we will pray according to His will because we will know His will. How can we cross this vital bridge to reality? How can we have a meaningful prayer life?

First, prayer must become priority one. Prayer always comes first in God's timetable. We must reverse the process of modern thinking in order to discover spiritual reality. In the natural, we begin with our needs and desires the problems to be solved. We then set goals and plan backwards from them. Rather than waiting on God for direction, we rely on ourselves for solutions. We trust our beauty, finances, intellect, strength and talent. Science and technology have taught us to experiment, study and research solutions. Those who have bought into this lie believe if they are given enough time and money, they can solve any problem in their personal lives or in their ministries. Since they really don't believe they need God, prayer plays no part in most of their planning. When it does, it tends to be at the end rather than the beginning of their efforts! How different this is from the approach of a spiritual man or woman. The godly person first sets goals on his or her knees rather than at the drawing board. The servant whom God chooses to use is the one who has learned that if there appears to be any human explanation for our success, it is probably bogus. This Christian knows that you tend to pray better without computers, degrees, education, money, good looks, management skills or talent. When we are freed from dependence on a human plan, program leader or other resources then we are able to trust God rather than ourselves. Until we learn to lay aside our reliance on every human resource; and learn to make waiting on God the number one priority in life, we are still in the kindergarten of prayer.

Second, we must invest time in prayer. Of course, taken by itself, long hours spent in prayer are not a sign of closeness to God. It is more important that we come into His presence, like childless Hannah did, with desperate abandonment and submission to His will. She was speechless before God, and yet the Lord gave her the miracle of conception in answer to her silent pleadings. However, our time diaries too often betray our callous indifference to God. The simple fact is that no one can get to know God without spending time with Him. If we love the Lord as we say we do, how can we spend so little time in His presence?

We struggle to make quality time for friends and family. Millions of us plan our lives around favorite TV shows, sporting events and vacations. Yet why is it so hard to make an appointment with God, to spend an hour or two each day in prayer? How many of us can say we spend as much time in prayer as we do in eating meals and socializing around food? Our lives are so overbooked with frantic activity that we have scheduled Him right out of our days. Is it any wonder our Christianity is so ineffective, weak and powerless? There is only one way to see a change. We have to make prayer a priority and set aside time for it every day.

An Invitation to Every Believer

Christ is calling every believer to come apart and enjoy spiritual intimacy with Him through various aspects of prayer: adoration, confession, intercession, listening, thanksgiving, petition, praise, singing and waiting on Him. This is not an invitation open only to a few daring saints, but an access into the presence of God offered to all New Testament believers. And it is all of grace through faith. God wants to have this intimacy with us more than we will ever know. We as individuals can make prayer a part of our daily life-style IF WE ARE WILLING TO BREAK FROM OUR CULTURE and live for God.

In early 1976, when the Lord began to break my heart over the lostness of the world, one of the first things we did as a family was to call a few of our friends and start a prayer meeting in our home. That Tuesday night meeting still continues without fail after all these years. We spend the first part of the evening in worship and praise with brief testimonies and thanksgivings. We don't spend the time chatting but hear reports from different countries of the world, individuals, tribes and unreached people groups. We read prayer letters and requests from all over the United States and Canada, as well as overseas. Frequently we will pause to break into small groups or pairs to pray over each request. In this way, we have seen hundreds and hundreds of specific answers to prayer. If there is not a missions prayer band in your church or neighborhood, why not start one? If one already exists, why not go and add your faith and warmth to that group.

God Delights in the Prayers of His People

Second Chronicles 16:9 reveals the heart of God in this matter: "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him..." He wants to bless us. He's looking for those with a heart totally after Him.

The world is looking for beautiful, self-confident people to lead and entertain it. But God is looking for humble, Christ-dependent people who will love the world as He does.

For those who are willing to confess their utter dependence on God in prayer, life enters the realm of the supernatural. And this power is available to families, churches and organizations where individuals are willing to start living a prayerful life. Hebrews chapter 11 and countless other passages reveal to us throughout history that there have always been a handful of people who will reach out and touch God in faith through prayer. As we join them on our knees, we will see the power of God operate in our lives as they did. We will receive the vision and guidance we need to move supernaturally with God and accomplish His will.

Today, there are races, nations and peoples still without Christ. There are families breaking up all around us and individuals caught in sin. There are prisoners who need to be freed, hungry who need to be fed and sick who need to be healed. There are churches and neighborhoods and individuals in your own community which need a touch from God. The Lord is looking for individuals who are emptied of self-sufficiency to accept prayerfully the challenge of reaching those lost billions with salvation. through prayer you can intervene in these needy lives and situations bring the power of God into the lives of the lost and lonely. Won't you, through times of personal and corporate prayer, join in the cosmic struggle to win them to Christ?