

RECAPTURING PRAYER

We must be aware that it is possible to pray and never connect with the spirit of God. A vast majority of the time we engage in a form of prayer that is nothing more than lists of I wants. As a result we are restricting the vast blessings we can experience in prayer. We must remind ourselves that the primary purpose of prayer is to first of all encounter His presence, second of all hear His counsel, and thirdly become His voice. Understanding this reality and experiencing it is the foundation to a life of fruitfulness in prayer.

HOW DID WE GET OFF TRACK?

The early church disciples understood the reality and power of what true prayer was. Prayer to them was more than a morning duty and devotion, it was the cornerstone from which their lives became strong and prosperous. Unfortunately this momentum was gradually lost after A.D. 300 when the church came under the rule of Constantine. What was introduced was a blend of Christian faith, paganism and values of the Roman Empire which all flowed together to produce a stronghold of religious teachings and philosophies. A vast majority of these religious concepts have shaped the Christian world-view today. People went to a building in order to meet with God. In fact as a “layman” in the fourth century, church became a place from which you could no longer approach God directly. The priest did so on your behalf. As a result believers lost the understanding of their right to be able to encounter the living presence of God for themselves.

RECAPTURING HIS ABIDING PRESENCE

In order for each believer to walk into the depths of an abundant prayer life we must understand this significant key, HE LIVES IN US Selah! This truth was what empowered the early church. They lived as the church 24/7. Likewise God is drawing us back to an understanding of this in our own lives. Living from the inside out is the key to living in His presence 24/7. One of the major pitfalls in the life of church today is trying to call down God from above, seeking God somewhere in the out there. Jesus said, “nor will they say, see here or see there for indeed, the kingdom of God is within you” Lk

17:21. Look no further child of God; you are the house of God!

JUMPING THE WALL OF OBLIGATION AND DUTY

A vast majority of us are bound by an obligation and duty mentality in relation to prayer. This mode of approaching prayer has robbed many from experiencing the joy we should encounter when praying. The obligated saint feels he is required to fulfill his duty by daily going through the motion of what we call devotions. We have become more devoted to our daily readings than really encountering the Lord's abiding presence. Many are trained in Bible schools to be committed to a daily devotional book as a means to being inspired for the day. This has done nothing but to subtly draw us away from hearing and experiencing His intimate counsel to us personally.

One of the major areas we need to develop when pursuing a proper prayer life is to hunger and anticipate the voice of the Lord. In doing this we are making room for the Lord to fill us with "His living word". His word is a perfect mirror of His nature, character and personality that shines forth to expel dark areas hidden within our character.

SHUT UP AND LISTEN!

Before we can effectively become a voice for the Lord we must first learn to abide in this first dimension of prayer.

Most of us at some stage have had the boring misfortune to meet someone who talks more than they listen. The conversation is one sided and never allows for healthy interaction. The same scenario is true when it comes to prayer in the body of Christ, people forever speaking and not listening. Not only is this rude, but it also prevents a strong relationship from being formed with the Lord. I'm sure the Lord gets bored with a lot of the religious ways we go about praying.

Let me share with you three kinds of silence that are necessary in order to become an active listener. Firstly when entering into His abiding presence we must silence our words, secondly we must silence our desires or ambitions which often are stooped in our carnal desires and thirdly we must silence our active minds and set our thoughts towards Him.

Developing a heart that is ready to listen is the key to cultivating a

healthy relationship with the Lord. Prayer is more about listening than it is speaking. One of the most exciting things in relation to developing an ear to hear is learning to discern the voice of the Lord. The more time we spend eagerly listening for his voice the easier it becomes to identify His voice. Intimately interacting with the Lord should become a normal part of our prayer life. By not speaking, selfishly desiring and not reasoning we are positioning our entire being to hear the counsel of the Lord.

BREAKTHROUGH PRAYER

After we have learnt to abide in His presence and hear His wisdom and counsel we then can effectively move into a different dimension of prayer where we become His voice over environments that are hostile towards the kingdom. This type of prayer is breakthrough prayer. Breakthrough prayer is not begging and pleading. It originates from an understanding of the finished work of God. It is prayer that orders the spiritual environment that relates to our lives. In order to enter this dimension of prayer we must learn to first capture His abiding presence and allow the Lords mind and counsel to permeate our entire being. From this position originates true governmental praying. Breakthrough prayer repositions environments, situations and people's lives into the finished work of God. We decree what God has pre-ordained from eternity (Micah 7:11) It is the commanding of circumstances in accordance with His purpose.

Peter Christensen