

Ignited: The Call to Prayer

When Jesus refers to His church, I love how He describes her:

Mar 11:17 NKJV

"Then He taught, saying to them, 'Is it not written, 'MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL NATIONS'? But you have made it a 'DEN OF THIEVES.'"

House (oikos) – Strong's and Thayer's

His dwelling place, His home, His abode, His family, His household.

Prayer is essential for all believers.

Prayer is not for some few select called out watchmen and intercessors. How can his house be a house of prayer, if prayer is relegated to a few? No. His church is to be characterized by prayer. He desires His church to be house of prayer.

Eph 2:19-22 NKJV

"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."

He is building a church that is becoming a house of prayer and He wants you to be part of it. He is calling you. He wants to include you. You make a difference. He can't include you, if you don't stand up, awake, avail yourself.

Lk 22:46

Then He said to them, "Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation."

Sleep – Thayer Definition:

- 1) to fall asleep, drop off to sleep
- 2) to sleep
 - 2a) to sleep normally
 - 2b) euphemistically, to be dead

2c) metaphorically

2c - 1) to yield to sloth and sin

2c - 2) to be indifferent to one's salvation

Rise - Thayer Definition:

1) to cause to rise up, raise up

1a) raise up from laying down

1b) to raise up from the dead

1c) to raise up, cause to be born, to cause to appear, bring forward

2) to rise, stand up

2a) of persons lying down, of persons lying on the ground

2b) of persons seated

2c) of those who leave a place to go elsewhere

2c - 1) of those who prepare themselves for a journey

2d) of the dead

3) at arise, appear, stand forth

3a) of kings prophets, priests, leaders of insurgents

3b) of those about to enter into conversation or dispute with anyone, or to undertake some business, or attempt something against others

3c) to rise up against anyone.

You may be thinking, "where do I even start? I don't feel a call to intercession. I don't have a special ability to pray. I'm not even sure if I am praying right". Maybe you say, "I'm afraid to pray out loud in front of others, and beside which, I even get bored when I pray". Maybe you wonder, "How do I know God is even listening? How do I know I am not wasting my time?"

There are so many questions that people have around prayer. Maybe you can identify with some of these:

- Why do I need to pray?
- What is the purpose behind prayer?
- If God is God, why should I pray? Surely He will do what He wants anyway? And if not, why not?
- Does prayer really make a difference?

- Can prayer change God's mind?
- Is the purpose of prayer to twist God's arm and manipulate Him to do what I want?
- How do I know what He wants me to pray?
- Is prayer just about changing me?
- Is it really necessary?
- What about when people are praying for the same issue at hand, but praying opposing things? What does He do?
- Does God only answer certain types of prayer, or prayers prayed by certain people?
- Is there a heart position we must take in prayer that will cause our prayers to be more readily answered?

These are but a few of the many questions that echo in the hearts of many people. If you have wondered about any of these, you are not alone. Questions, or not, His church is called a house of prayer. You are still called to be part of that, questions or not.

The first place I would like us to look in terms of prayer is Jesus.

A. Jesus our Model

The first place I would like us to look at in terms of gaining understanding regarding our responsibility to pray is Jesus. He is a role model for all of us. Not just a few select "spiritual" people or leaders. We are all to become more Christ-like. We are all to be built together, a dwelling place for Him, prayerful stones as it were.

He prayed. A lot.

1. For guidance and clarity

He prayed to get direction. He prayed when the crowds were seeking Him and wanted His ministry, and He didn't always follow the crowds, but rather got direction from His Father.

Jesus modelled this in His life. We see how He made decisions and was led:

Mar 1:35-39 NKJV

"Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. And Simon and those who were

with Him searched for Him. When they found Him, they said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You." But He said to them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth." And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee and casting out demons."

Many of us are needs led. People led. We are people pleasers. If our ministry is in demand from crowds, we think we have hit it big and follow the crowds. I don't see Jesus always doing this. He often withdrew to pray. From the place of prayer, He lived a life of purpose and perfect obedience.

Luk 6:12-13 NKJV

"Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles:"

The Gospel writers note that before every important event in Jesus' life, he would take time to go off by himself and pray. This time Jesus was preparing to choose his inner circle, the 12 apostles. He prayed all night before making this decision.

2. For strength and consecration to His call

Mat 26:36-46 NKJV

"Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there." And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me." He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done." And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then He came to His disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand." "

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus told His disciples to wake up, to rise up and pray. He was praying, He also wanted them to pray. He wanted them to pray, for their own benefit, so that they could be positioned aright in obedience.

Lk 22:46

Then He said to them, "Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation."

3. He lived a lifestyle of prayer

Mat 17:14-16 NKJV

"And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him.""

Mat 17:18-19 NKJV

"And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?"

Jesus rebukes them for their unbelief and then explains,-

Mat 17:21 NKJV

... "this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

He lived a lifestyle of prayer.

Luk 5:16 NKJV

"So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed."

When the opportunity arises, that is not the time to begin praying. The praying must be already happening, so when the opportunity knocks or the door opens, or the need arises, we are ready.

4. He prayed for the church

We see Jesus praying in John 17. He prayed for His disciples, He prayed for all those who would yet come to know Him through their words. That's us too. Jesus prayed for us, His church.

What are some of the things He prayed for in this prayer?

- **Unity**

Joh 17:11 NKJV

"Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are."

- **Joy**

Joh 17:13 NKJV

"But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves."

- **Protection**

Joh 17:15 NKJV

"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one."

- **Sanctification by Truth**

Joh 17:17 NKJV

"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth."

- **Behold His Glory**

Joh 17:24 NKJV

"Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. "

- **Love**

Joh 17:26 NKJV

"And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them." "

5. He taught His disciples to pray

Mat 6:9-13 NKJV

"In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. And do not lead

us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

"Your Kingdom come, Your will be done" among other things. Which begs the question, what happens if we don't pray?

6. He encouraged His disciples that prayer gets results

Mat 21:22 NKJV

"And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive." "

Joh 15:7 NKJV

"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you."

Jesus modelled prayer and a lifestyle of prayer. He instructed us to pray. He encouraged us that it is productive.

B. The book of Acts

Act 1:13-14 NKJV

"And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers."

After Christ was taken up into heaven, the disciples immediately returned to Jerusalem and had a prayer meeting. Jesus had said they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days, so they waited and prayed. When you face a difficult task, an important decision, or a baffling dilemma, don't rush into the work and just hope it comes out the way it should. Instead, make your first step prayer for the Holy Spirit's power and guidance. (LASB)

Act 2:42-43 NKJV

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles."

Act 12:5 NKJV

"Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church."

C. Letters to the Churches

We see in the epistles prayer requested by leaders, we see leaders praying for churches, we see encouragement to continue earnestly in prayer, to pray without ceasing. We see prayer for wisdom, for boldness, for strengthening, for the love of God to be shed abroad in hearts, for doors to open and so forth. Let's look at some of these scriptures. These are examples for us to bear I mind as we design our own prayer strategy and build a prayer altar in our lives.

1. Instructions and Exhortations to the Church regarding prayer:

1 Th 5:16-18 NKJV

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

Col 4:2 NKJV

"Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;"

Rom 12:10-13 NKJV

"Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honour giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality."

Php 4:6-7 NKJV

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

Eph 6:17-18 NKJV

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints..."

1 Pe 4:7 NKJV

"But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers."

1 Ti 2:1-2 NKJV

"Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence."

Jud 1:20-21 NKJV

"But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

Jam 5:13-14 NKJV

"Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord."

Jam 5:16 NKJV

"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."

Rom 8:26-28 NKJV

"Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."

2. Requests to the church for Prayer**Eph 6:19 NKJV**

"and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel,"

Col 4:3-4 NKJV

"meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak."

1 Th 5:25 NKJV

"Brethren, pray for us."

2 Th 3:1-2 NKJV

"Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith."

Rom 15:30 NKJV

"Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me,"

3. Prayer for the Church**1 Th 1:2 NKJV**

"We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers,"

2 Ti 1:3 NKJV

"I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day,"

Php 1:9-11 NKJV

"And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."

Col 1:9-12 NKJV

"For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light."

2 Th 1:11-12 NIV

"With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith. We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."

3 Jn 1:2 NKJV

"Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers."

Col 1:3 NKJV

"We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,"

Eph 1:15-21 NKJV

"Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come."

Eph 3:14-19 NKJV

"For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

Php 1:3-4 NKJV

"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy,"

All of these instructions were given by men who had a burden for a church or the church. The church was the area they were called to. They carried responsibility in these areas and prayed for the areas they were given responsibility over. We too are called to pray for the church and church leaders. We are also called to pray for other areas in life that God has given us responsibility in.

We will look at that next week.

Conclusion

We have seen how Jesus' lifestyle was one of prayer, that He taught His disciples to pray, and we looked at how He prayed for His church. We looked at the book of Acts and the amount of prayer that was offered up by all men and women. We have looked at the Epistles in the New Testament, how the leaders requested prayer, how they prayed for the church and how their instructions to us as believers regarding prayer. Prayer is not for some select few perceived spiritual people in the church. It is not to be left to the women. It is not for the church leaders only. All of us are being called by God to our next level of prayer. To rise and pray. I want to encourage you this coming week, to make some changes in your prayer life. Starting with seeing yourself as part of the "House of Prayer" that Jesus calls His church. I would like you to begin this week by praying for your church, praying for your leaders. You can use the scriptures I covered when Jesus or the writers of the epistles prayed for the church. Or when the leaders requested prayer.

Next week I will be looking at how you can identify the areas God wants to use in prayer for. We will also be touching on some practical tips in terms of building a prayer alter or lifestyle of prayer in your life and in your home.

During the course of the week, we have zoom prayer meetings on a daily basis, except for Saturday. I would like to encourage you to join some of these. When we pray with other people, we learn other ways to pray, we are encouraged and strengthened in our prayer life, and we get to pray in agreement with others. Agreement is a powerful weapon in the spirit realm.

If you would like the details for these meetings, pop me an email on tjnyamuda@gmail.com with your name and cell number, and I will send you the details.