



PRACTICAL PRAYER







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CHRISTIAN
FOCUS





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INTRODUCTION

‘Why pray at all?’ Behind that basic question there is often the thought, ‘Why does an all-loving and all-knowing God want us to pray anyway? If He knows our needs, and wants to meet them, why does He require us to ask Him to do so?’

We obtain a possible explanation if we consider our relationship to our own parents or children. Parents frequently know what their young children require before they ask. They delight in their children asking them, nevertheless, so that they may have the pleasure of granting their requests. Giving and receiving mark out and enrich meaningful relationships. Sometimes we are in a position to give, at other times we have to be on the receiving end. Love and fellowship grow as dependence is recognised by one person, and care is demonstrated by another.

We are dependent upon God for everything, and God delights to meet our needs. Some He supplies on a daily basis without our ever asking Him. Others He provides as we deliberately lay them before Him. We find the primary answer to the question, ‘Why pray?’ in man’s fundamental relationship as a creature to God the Creator – it is one of dependence. And it is a dependence which reflects an





PRACTICAL PRAYER

essential part of man's unique creation by God – man was created to have fellowship with God.

There are other ways of trying to answer the question, 'Why pray?' There's an unfathomable mystery about our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, becoming man, and taking our human flesh upon Him. The Lord Jesus Christ, in His sinless humanity, shows us what we ought to be like – and what man, in his original state, was like. And here is a significant fact: Jesus prayed. Mark records what was clearly Jesus' daily routine: 'Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed' (Mark 1:35). Gethsemane witnessed the greatest crisis of Jesus' obedience to the Father's will as He contemplated the Cross when it was just a matter of hours away – and He prayed (Luke 22: 41-44). The letter to the Hebrews pinpoints the crucial place prayer occupied in His life: 'During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death' (Heb. 5:7).

Since the Lord Jesus is my example in everything, I too should maintain prayer as one of the basic activities of my daily life.

The Lord Jesus prayed because He knew that it was His Father's will and delight that He should do so. The Bible is full of promises and encouragements to pray. The problem is not in finding the promises, but in grasping all of them and entering into the good of them.

Although I may not be able to answer adequately the question as to why God wants me to pray, it is a general principle of Christian experience that I should be guided by what I do know rather than by what I do not! I do know that my heavenly Father wants me to pray, and that He delights in my prayers. My Saviour, my supreme Example,





INTRODUCTION

encourages me to pray, as do all my heavenly Father's promises. A principal activity of the Holy Spirit – the gift of the Father and the Son to me – is to assist me in prayer.

