

Should Prayer Really Be the Last Resort?

1) Have you ever been in a situation that seemed hopeless such as the doctor says, “there’s nothing more we can do”; your boss says, “we have to let you go”; or your spouse says “I’m leaving”; or any number of serious life-changing issues? By the time you’ve gotten to this point with this problem you’ve likely exhausted every obvious avenue of human recourse. What do people usually say at this point? I guess all we can do is pray.

2) What should we do even before we get to this crisis level? Pray! In fact, we should pray long before we get to this point.

3) Matthew 7: 7-11 NKJV ⁷“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks, receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? ¹¹If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

3a) Who should ask (pray)?

3b) Who receives when they ask? What does that say about God’s willingness to give? If we really believed what God is saying here, how would that effect our prayer life?

4) What was Jesus’ example of prayer?

4a) Mark 1:35 ³⁵ Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.

4b) Luke 6: 12-13 ¹² 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. ¹³ And when it was day, He called His disciples to *Himself*; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles:

5) Did Jesus’ disciples value prayer?

5a) Acts 2: 42 And they (the disciples) devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

6) Here is an example of how the disciples prayed:

Acts 4: 23-31 NKJV

²³ And (*Peter and John*) being let go (*from the very people who crucified Jesus*), they went to their own *companions* and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. ²⁴ So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You *are* God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, ²⁵ who by the mouth of Your servant David have said:

'Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things?

²⁶ The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the Lord and against His Christ.' ²⁷ "For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together ²⁸ to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. ²⁹ Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, ³⁰ by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus."

³¹ And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

6a) What did the disciples of Jesus pray for?

6b) Is there power in praying as a community?

6c) Do you see a model here for corporate prayer?

- a. They raised their voice to God
- b. In one accord
- c. Praised God
- d. Prayed scripture
- e. Acknowledged God's power and authority over the issues they faced and that He was already at work
- f. Asked for boldness to speak His word
- g. For healing and signs and wonders be done in the name of Jesus

7) James 4: 2-3 KJV: Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. ³ Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

7a) What could be a couple of reasons why we are lacking in an area of our lives?

8) Philippians 4: 6-7 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 understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

8a) Is it really possible to never be anxious?

8b) What is the key to knowing peace that is beyond all human understanding? Prayer-- asking God in prayer with thanksgiving and expecting Him to answer is the key.

9) Psalm 91: 14-16

“Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him:

I will set him on high, because he has known My name.

¹⁵ He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him;

I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him.

¹⁶ With long life I will satisfy him, And show him My salvation.”