

# ***Towards A Deeper Understanding Of Prayer***

A sermon series by Rev. David Johnson

So far in this series, we've discussed the *What* and the *Who* of Prayer. We have established the basic premise that prayer, by definition, is the intimate communication of a child of God with their loving, heavenly Father. It is the practice of living in the presence of Jesus, inviting Him to interact with you in all of life's activities and challenges. But that being said, we must also acknowledge that prayer is a uniquely Christian exercise. It is not the emotional or therapeutic act of tossing happy thoughts or positive energy into thin air. Prayer requires a personal relationship with, and faith in God through Jesus Christ. It is reaching up to heaven with faith and trust in a God who is not bound by time or space; beyond the limitations of our material box.

**Hebrews 11:6** *And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.*

We now move on to our 3<sup>rd</sup> question of prayer, *When*.

## **C. When should the believer pray?**

As I begin to address the topic of *When Is A Good Time To Pray*, I'd like to first share a little poem by well-known Christian author Helen Steiner Rice. It was this acclaimed inspirational poet that once said:

*"I have no doubts about God or about His love for me. He gave His son; I gave Him my life... He can accomplish miraculous things when we give ourselves to Him completely, without reservations or qualifications."*

This is her poem, ***Daily Prayers Dissolve Your Cares***  
*I meet God in the morning, and go with Him through the day. Then in the stillness of the night, before sleep comes - I pray - that God will just "take over" all the problems I couldn't solve. And in the peacefulness of sleep my cares will all dissolve.*

*So when I open up my eyes to greet another day, I'll find myself renewed in strength and there'll open up a way, to meet what seemed impossible for me to solve alone. And once again I'll be assured I am never "on my own."*

*For if we try to stand alone we're weak and we will fall. For God is always greatest when we're helpless, lost, and small. And no day is unmeetable - if on rising our first thought, is to thank God for the blessings that His loving care has brought.*

*For there can be no failures or hopeless, unsaved sinners, if we enlist the help of God who makes all losers winners.*

*So meet Him in the morning, and go with Him through the day. And thank Him for His guidance each evening when you pray. And if you follow faithfully this daily way to pray, you will never in your lifetime face another "hopeless day."*

When we search the Scriptures and study the heroes of God, their lifestyles and disciplines, one of the most basic habits shared by all was regular communion with God. They seemed to sense their basic need, even craving, for prayer. Since our goal is to grow in our own devotional lives, what better place to start than by examining the prayer times of some of these biblical examples.

## **1. Morning**

### **Elkanah and Hannah**

**1 Samuel 1:19** *Then they arose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD, and returned again to their house...*

### **David**

**Psalms 5:3** *In the morning, O LORD, You will hear my voice; In the morning I will order my prayer to You and eagerly watch.*

### **Jesus**

**Mark 1:35** *In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.*

## **2. Noon**

### **Peter**

**Acts 10:9** *On the next day, as they were on their way and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. (12 noon)*

## **3. Afternoon or Evening**

### **David**

**Psalms 141:2** *May my prayer be counted as incense before You; The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering.*

### **Jesus**

**Matthew 14:23** *After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone.*

### **Paul and Silas**

**Acts 16:25** *But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, ...*

## **4. Multiple times each day**

### **David**

**Psalms 55:16-17** *As for me, I shall call upon God, And the Lord will save me. <sup>17</sup> Evening and morning and at noon, I will complain and murmur, And He will hear my voice.*

### **Daniel**

**Daniel 6:10** *Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house ....; and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God,....*

### **Jesus**

**Luke 5:16** *But Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray.*

## **5. Day and Night**

### **Nehemiah**

**Neh. 1:6** *let Your ear now be attentive and Your eyes open to hear the prayer of Your servant which I am praying before You now, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel Your servants, .....*

### **Jesus**

**Luke 6:12** *It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.*

## **Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy**

**1 Thes. 3:10** as we night and day keep praying most earnestly that we may see your face, and may complete what is lacking in your faith?

## **6. Days and Weeks**

### **Nehemiah**

**Neh. 1:4** When I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

### **Daniel**

**Daniel 10:12-13** Then he said to me, "Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding *this* and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. <sup>13</sup>"But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for *twenty-one days*...

## **7. Always, continually, without ceasing**

### **Solomon**

**Psalm 72:15** ...let them pray for him continually; Let them bless him all day long.

### **Jesus**

**Luke 18:1** Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart,

### **The Apostles and many believers**

**Acts 1:14** These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer...

### **The Body in Jerusalem before Pentecost**

**Acts 2:42** They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

### **Paul instructs it**

**Ephesians 6:18** With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit...

**Colossians 4:2** Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving...

**1 Thes. 5:17** pray without ceasing;

Pray without ceasing. Sounds like a fairly simple instruction doesn't it? Though its application may be a bit difficult. But what it means is that each of us have those divine moments throughout the day to pray. There are an endless supply of things to bring to God, and 86,400 seconds in the day to pray about them. So why not start, as the Bible challenges, right NOW!

## **8. RIGHT NOW!**

**Psalm 32:6** Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to You in a time when You may be found...

And that time is NOW, as the apostle Paul tells us:

**2 Corinthians 6:2** for He says, "At the acceptable time I listened to you, And on the day of salvation I helped you." Behold, now is "the acceptable time," behold, now is "the day of salvation"

Right NOW is the best time to pray...so let's pray.