

# Pray, Pray, Pray

Prayer is one of four fundamental pillars undergirding the life of the church. They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer, Acts 2:42. Perhaps the pillar most in danger of crumbling is the pillar of prayer. Tempted to give up and get out, Timothy was instructed by Paul to "first of all ... pray", 1 Timothy 2:1:8.

Prayer together with the study of the Bible, Christian fellowship, and the Lord's Supper Scripture are so crucial, so central, to the life of a local church that they determine and shape everything else we do as a Christian. Prayer is our saviour from the busyness of spirit.

Prayer is a vigorous activity. Because prayer is a demanding activity if we give ourselves to it conscientiously and unpretentiously, it is easy to slight this central task of the church and Christian life. It is all too easy to become more preoccupied with our image, our standing, and what people can measure. Yet, if we do not "first of all pray" we will be pseudo Christians. We will be fakes.

The Psalms are our "toolbox of prayer". The Psalms are the Christian's resource in prayer. The Psalms force us to be humble and honest in our praying. There is no pretence here. Instead, we have the first draft of the script. From harrowing experiences to the triumphal hallelujahs, the Psalms give us a facility and fluency in prayer. Do you ever feel that your prayers are superficial? The Psalms show us how to engage in meaningful conversation with God.

Prayer is a vital part of our arsenal (2 Corinthians 10:2-6). These words of Scripture become an anchor, giving stability (Psalm 1:1-6). In His hour of crisis, abandoned and betrayed, feeling deserted by God, what does the Lord Jesus do? He takes up the words of Psalm 22 and begins to pray, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me". In the garden of Gethsemane Jesus echoes thoughts from Psalm 40.

We too will find our deepest concerns and longings being echoed in the words of the Psalmist. We may be the proverbial Humpty Dumpty that has just fallen off the wall (Psalm 25:16-18) or we want direction (Psalm 25:4-5). Perhaps our desire is to escape (Psalm 55:6-8), or we long for the good old days (Psalm 77:5-6, 3-4). Life may be overwhelming us (Psalm 94:16-19), we are devastated (Psalm 56:8-9), growing old (Psalm 92:12-14; 71:17-18). As we read, reflect, and perhaps use these words in prayer, we will find that as our hearts resonate with the thoughts and experiences expressed, that our Saviour, the Lord Jesus, makes Himself known to us (Luke 24:25-27). Christian, do not neglect these resources, do not give up on the practice of prayer. "First of all ... pray."