

The Need for Prayer and Fasting

As we read and study through the New Testament of the Bible we will find that the christian life should be one filled with prayer. Throughout the Scriptures we find not only prayer, but also fasting and praying.

A christian life is one of dedication to Jesus, and to prayer. Prayer to seek the will of God in your life, prayer to seek how to best fulfill that will, prayer for others, prayer to find solutions from God to your problems, prayer to worship Him, prayer to praise Him. **Prayer is not a short quick word as many seem to think.** It is a time set aside for speaking and listening to the Lord Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. This time must not be short! Short prayers are worthless. Your mind is still filled with the thoughts of the day. It takes time, on your part, to slowly clear away the rubble of the day from your consciousness, to speak clearly to Jesus, and to hear back from Him.

12 And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. Luke 6:12

If Jesus, the Son of God, the perfect One who walked through this evil earth, needed to spend that kind of time before His Father; then how much more do we need to do the same!

35 And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed. Mark 1:35

It was a regular part of Jesus' life to spend time in prayer--much time! He would go out and look for a quiet place alone. There He would pray and spend time with His Father. Such quality time is necessary for each and every christian. There needs to be a prayer closet set aside. A prayer place where you, and you alone, can spend time together with the Lord.

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. Matthew 6:6

Quality time before the Lord is true prayer. It is not enough to spend short periods in prayer and expect that with this you can walk as a christian in the power that we see in the churches of the Bible, especially in the Book of Acts.

In the early days of the church such long times of prayer were normal. It kept them very close to the Lord. Then there is the time spend in prayer with other brethren. This is also very important.

14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. Acts 1:14

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When you are close to Jesus because of your prayer time, even the worst of circumstances will not trouble you. You will rely on Jesus throughout these tough times.

23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:

24 Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. Acts 16:23-25

This is not how most people would react to such a situation. No matter how bad it looked, Paul and Silas knew how to pray and praise. They did not become depressed when thrown into the prison, but rather rose up in praises to God. The temptation for most would be depression. But Jesus had said this:

40 And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. Luke 22:40

Prayer keeps up from temptation! It is time that we spent much time before the Lord to strengthen ourselves so that when we face persecution and temptation we will be strong for the Lord Jesus Christ. Isn't it time that we learned to walk according to this commitment of Jesus?

How did they become so committed to Him? How did they become so spiritually strong?

18 And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

19 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?

20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, he shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place: and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out **but by prayer and fasting.**
Matthew 17:18-21

4 But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

5 In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, **in fastings;**

6 By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned. II Corinthians 6:4-6

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Throughout the Scriptures we find not only prayer, but also fasting and prayer. It is through the fasting part that true faith is reached. Christians who do not fast are weak--spiritually weak!

To spend time in prayer without food for a period of time is very much found throughout the New Testament of the Bible. This period of time can be long or short, with limited minimal food (partial fast), or just with water and no food; but whatever the situation it must be with prayer. We never find fasting without prayer in the Bible. Indeed, fasting without prayer is starvation! But fasting with prayer is spiritual strength!

The end of it all is this: without time before the Lord in prayer we will be the most spiritually weak christians around; tossed and turned with every different doctrine that comes along, falling into temptation constantly, always in trouble, and not finding a solution to strength with the Lord. But with prayer, and especially fasting and prayer, we will find strength of the Lord to walk according to His ways.

15 See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men,

16 **Rejoice evermore.**

17 **Pray without ceasing.**

18 **In every thing give thanks:** for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

19 **Quench not the Spirit.**

20 **Despise not prophesyings.**

21 **Prove all things;** hold fast that which is good.

22 **Abstain from all appearance of evil.**

23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. I Thessalonians 5:15-23

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