

5 Fundamentals to Upgrade the Power in Your Prayers

Intercessors for America, a national prayer ministry established through the ministry of Bible teacher Derek Prince, will soon celebrate our 50th anniversary. As a board member from almost its inception, I've had the distinct privilege of learning lessons from phenomenal intercessors.

Yonggi Cho, once pastor of the world's largest church in Seoul, Korea, had laid his hands upon me during the Brownsville Revival to receive an impartation.

He famously said, "Much prayer—much power. Little prayer—little power. No prayer—no power."

In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus told his sleeping disciples, "Could you not keep watch with Me one hour?" He then told them "Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:40-41).

All of us desire to develop a consistent prayer life. But when all is said and done, there is usually more said than done.

In the Gospels we never find the followers of Jesus asking Him, "Teach us to preach." We do find the disciples entreating the Master, "Teach us to pray" (). They knew the connection between a strong prayer life and a fruitful one.

From my journey with Jesus let me offer five essentials to make you fruitful in your communion with God.

Practices for a Powerful Prayer Life

1. Establish the right priorities. Years ago, a Christian confessed to me that he found it much easier and enjoyable to

study the Bible than to pray. I could relate.

Charles Hummel in his classic work, "Tyranny of the Urgent," sobers us with misplaced priorities regarding prayer. He believes one of the worst sins is prayerlessness. We usually think of murder, adultery or theft among the worst but the root of all sin is self-sufficiency—independence from God. When we fail to wait prayerfully for God's guidance and strength we really are saying with our actions, if not our lives, that we don't need Him, we can do it all alone. The opposite of such independence is when we acknowledge our need of God's instruction and supply as we "seek first the Kingdom of God" each day.

Dedication to prayer is not merely trying to find time to commune with Him. It's making time intentionally and consistently.

2. Remind yourself of the benefits of prayer and consequences of neglect. Psalm 103:1 exhorts us to "forget not all His benefits." A consistent prayer life does the following:

- Enables us to experience the presence of God more regularly.
- Bring delight to the heart of Father God.
- Affords opportunity to receive His daily instruction and enablement.
- Opens dialogue with God wherein we can "Cast all your care upon Him" (1Pet. 5:7).
- Provides opportunity for spiritual cleansing and to "break up the fallow ground" of my heart to stay perceptive to His promptings.
- Releases me into spiritual warfare to break the power of the enemy in my life.

- Cultivates greater discernment regarding issues.

3. Find a “prayer closet.” Jesus set the example when he went to a “lonely place” to pray. He also told us, “When you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret” (Matt. 6:6).

This simple act enables us to block out distractions and noise pollution all around us today. We should expect resistance from the enemy when we endeavor to commune with our Creator. Satan will contest us every step of the way! Whether it be a basement, attic, office before others arrive, a walking path or a literal “closet” as some of my friends utilize, the most important thing is to discover such a haven, turn off the iPhone and enjoy the solitude and serenity of an “Emmaus” experience with Him (Lk. 24:13-24).

4. Retire and rise early enough for a quality time alone with God. “It is in vain for you to rise up early, to stay up He gives sleep to His beloved” (Psalm 127:2). This may seem elementary but it’s amazing how many Christians regularly stay up late on computers, channel surfing or fellowshiping with late night comics yet are perplexed as to why they can’t arise early enough for prayer!

Granted, some of us are more an “owl” than a “fowl” in staying productive late into the night, but be careful of long-standing bad habits of simply “puttering around” late into the evening that undercuts your quality time with Him.

Getting up early to spend time with the Lord is not specified in Scripture but it certainly is implied.

- “Oh Lord, in the morning You will hear my voice; in the morning I will direct my prayer to You, and I will watch expectantly” (Psalm 5:3).
- “They rose up in the morning early and worshiped before

the Lord" (1Sam.1:19).

- "In the morning, rising up a great while before sunrise, Jesus went out and departed to a solitary place. And there He prayed" (Mk.1:35).

5. Establish order for your prayer life to avoid wandering thoughts. As Peter and John went up to the temple at "the hour of prayer" (Acts 3:1), it helps to develop habit patterns that enhance effectiveness. Approach the adventure of engaging in prayer as a grace-motivated "get to" not a legalistic "have to."

- First, it is Scriptural to come before God's Presence with thanksgiving. Psalm 100:4 exhorts us to begin not with petitions but with thanksgiving. I usually begin my time of prayer by expressing gratitude for all the specific things that God has done for and through me during the past 24–48 hours. It's so important to cultivate this attitude of gratitude and contentment in a culture of grumbling and complaining.
- Second, a time of thanksgiving should naturally lead into praise and worship. "We thank God for what He's done. We praise Him for Who He is. Then we worship Him in the 'beauty of holiness'" (Derek Prince).
- After a time of "hallowing His Name" as Jesus taught in "The Lord's Prayer," it's good to ask God to "search our hearts" to confess any sin; pray for our governing authorities (1Tim 1:1–3); intercede for our spouse, children, family members etc.; lift up loved ones who are lost to be saved; pray for our church's leaders, ministries, missionaries and the sick. Finally, wait on the Lord and pray for other specific needs that the Spirit of God will impress upon our hearts—job, schooling, healing, guidance, finances and beyond.

Here's the Deal: Amidst the darkness escalating today, God is calling us to a fresh commitment to intercessory prayer. Knowing the priority of prayer, let's respond with passion to honor Him. {eo}

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