

RT Kendall: How the Holy Spirit Wants to Lead Your Prayers

Prayers can no more be divorced from worship than life can be divorced from breathing. If we follow His impulse, the Holy Spirit will always lead us to pray. When we allow Him to work freely, He will always bring the church to extensive praying. Conversely, when the Spirit is absent, we will find excuses not to pray. We may say, "It's just not convenient now..." When the Spirit is absent, our excuses always seem right, but in the presence of the Spirit our excuses fade away.

All prayer comes from the Spirit—be it disciplined prayer or spontaneous prayer.

We pray spontaneously, both privately and with other Christians, when we are suddenly aware of a great need in the world or the church. There are two examples of this in Acts. In chapter 12 we are told that Herod had just killed James, the brother of John, and had thrown Peter in prison. The church was wondering just what would happen next, and we read in verse 5: "So Peter was kept in prison. But the church prayed to God without ceasing for him." This spontaneous prayer caused by a burden for Peter.

The other example is in the passage in Acts 4. Peter and John had been called before the Sanhedrin and had been commanded "not speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus" (v. 18). And when they reported this to the church, a burden came on the people so that "When they heard this, they lifted their voices in unity to God and prayed ... 'Now, Lord, look on their threats'" (verses 24, 29).

God often uses something external to bring the church to her knees. We ought to see it as the kindness of God when He

allows trouble to drive us to prayer. In our individual lives, family tension, financial worries or illness will do it. With the church it can be threats—"look on their threats..."—or fear of the future. The early church did not know what they would do without Peter.

We also pray spontaneously when there is an overwhelming inner pressure from the Spirit resulting in a vivid awareness of the Spirit's presence. When this happens within the church, people come from everywhere to be there. You've heard of the moral majority and the silent majority. Here, I'm talking about the sudden majority.

What are the characteristics of this kind of spontaneous impulse to pray? There are four: time becomes unimportant; there is a caring for others (for example, in Acts 2:44 we are told that the believers had "had all things in common"); there is clear guidance; and there is unity (Acts 2:46 in the KJV says there was "singleness of heart").

The result of all this is—worship. We need to understand that worship is not just singing hymns or even consciously adoring God. Some people think worship is limited to the moments when one is saying, "God, I worship You." But this is a wrong idea. Worship is any activity that is carried out under the impulse of the Spirit of God, and we are also worshipping God when we are praying for others or witnessing to others.

There is also what I call the disciplined impulse, the trained impulse to pray. Disciplined prayer arises from two things: first, a good general knowledge of God's Word, and second, a strong desire to please Him. In other words, I am talking here about praying as an act of sheer obedience whether we feel like it or not. And it is the mature Christian who follows this way. If you think the spontaneous impulse is the only kind that matters, you show yourself to be a superficial Christian. If you only respond to God when you are carried along by feeling, then you are an immature Christian.

Paul said to Timothy, “Be ready in season and out of season” (2 Tim. 4:2b). There are times when the spontaneous impulse is at work: this corresponds to being “in season.” There also times when we feel nothing: this is being “out of season.” It is what members of a church do when they are “out of season” that testifies to their maturity. And it is this that testifies to their maturity. And it is this that demonstrates their commitment to God and each other.

✖ Adapted from **Worshipping God** by R. T. Kendall, copyright 2017, published by Charisma House. We are called to worship God by the way we live and in all we do. In this book the author shows you exactly what’s involved in true worship. To order your copy, click on this link.

Pray Power for the Week of May 6, 2018

This week, continue praying for worldwide revival; ask God for more laborers and intercessors toward that end. Declare relevant Scriptures for the expansion of His kingdom and His glory. Pray for those in authority over us as you pray for the peace of Jerusalem and our allies. Thank Him for His mercy toward us and pray for opportunities to be a blessing and carry His presence in a dark world. Read: 2 Timothy 4:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:17.