

2 Crucial Elements to Disciple Believers Into Effective Prayer

A lot of people in our pews struggle with prayer because they do not have a good theology of prayer. They do not understand how prayer works or how they should engage in it, and many have little expectation that it will work.

People need to be discipled effectively to understand the two primary purposes for prayer:

1. Prayer grows a personal relationship with God.
2. Prayer releases the will of God on earth.

First, people need to understand the importance of prayer in growing their relationship with God. Prayer is the avenue for us to know God personally. When we have a prayer life (no matter if it is a struggling one), we have a point of connection with God. As a result, God is able to conform us to His image. He works in our hearts to shape and mold us. When a believer does not have a prayer life he or she is working on, then God is very inactive in their lives. Those people will not make good parishioners for the kingdom work of a church.

Second, if you want to see your church members active in the kingdom, a church must teach its people the principles of prayer. No one will pray for much outside their own personal needs if they do not understand that their prayers are part of moving the hand of God. Teaching this relationship to church members will lead to kingdom results.

Notice, I did not say prayer dictates the will of God: It releases it. When we pray what is on God's heart, what He puts within our hearts, it happens! And that is how He uses us to

grow the kingdom. I like to use this illustration to help explain it:

Imagine a picture of our hand opening, representing God's will being released. Our prayers are the muscles and tendons in the arm. But God is the brain. What's opening the hand? The brain sends impulses to the arm so the muscles and tendons move in a way that opens the hand. That is the wonderful way God uses us to help grow His kingdom.

An understanding of both principles is crucial to disciple a person into effective prayer. Those two principles work together. As we grow in relationship, we get a greater desire to pray what is on God's heart, rather than what we want. The more Christlike we become, the quicker our hearts seek to pray what will grow the kingdom. {eo}

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