

# God Does Not Expect Payment for His Love

My heart is troubled when I hear and perceive the notion of guilt, duty, pressure and even payment in regards to prayer.

Prayer is not a tax required by a governing God who expects payment for His love. Yet many view prayer more as a task on their to-do list in a busy life, rather than the joy of communion with God.

As a church leader, I'm sure you know believers who struggle with the notion of prayer as well. (Leaders too!) Part of our responsibility is to teach and model a different path.

The government of any modern country requires a tax from its citizens in payment for services rendered. If the tax is not paid a punishment will be served. The citizens hope for an improved life by what they receive from their payments. This is not such a strange metaphor, for too many Christians see prayer as a tax they pay God for good things and a good life.

Prayer is the primary avenue by which we can say yes to an incredible invitation from God to engage in a genuine relationship with Him. There are many incredible gifts that come as a result of a relationship with God through prayer, but let's look at three.

Here are three gifts from God through prayer:

**1. Peace.** In the physical realm, the act of slowing down enough to be quiet and pray adds calm and peace to our lives. In the spiritual realm, God brings a peace that defies human understanding.

**2. Power.** There is much in life beyond our abilities. God grants the power of the Holy Spirit to help us handle and

achieve what we cannot do on our own.

**3. Presence.** There are many friends in my life with whom I deeply and simply enjoy their presence. A cup of tea, a good conversation, nothing else is needed. God is really good at that! As much as I love my friends there is no one who serves up a better cup!

Taxes are charged according to the amount you make and what you receive. Different people pay different amounts of taxes and would argue the value of what they receive in return.

God is ready and willing to give extravagantly of his love, peace and joy at no cost, and the most meager of prayers brings even greater closeness. A quiet whisper in a troubled moment can bring a flood of blessing from our Heavenly Father.

It's not how much time we spend in prayer, it's about an authentic daily relationship. God would rather hear from His "kids" for a few minutes a day rather than for an hour once a week. I do think as we mature, we want to spend more time in prayer, even a lot of time, but unlike taxes, there is no schedule to perform against. It is a mind-blowing freedom based on grace.

Lord, teach us how to pray!

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