

Your Strongest Encouragement to Stop and Pray During Your Day

"O You who hears prayer; to You all flesh will come" (Ps. 65:2).

God hears prayers. It's what He does.

God delights in answering the prayers of His children. Scripture is consistent on this.

The disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray." He said to them, 'When you pray, say: 'Our Father ..." (Luke 11:1bff).

Slow down. Do not rush through the "Our Father" (what we call "The Lord's Prayer"). Look how it begins.

You are praying to the Father. He is not just yours, of course, but "our" Father. He has quite the large family.

He is the Father. He birthed us. Created us. Knows us.

God is on your side. He is not impartial and definitely not antagonistic. He wants to do well for you, to bless you in every way. Jesus said, "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32).

The concept of God as your heavenly Father is the personal gift to you and me from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He knew the Father as no one else and revealed Him to us that way. He frequently spoke of the oneness, the relationship He had with the Father before time began (see John 17:5ff.).

A couple of times, the Old Testament refers to God as the father of Israel, but nowhere in the Hebrew Scriptures does

anyone look toward the skies and address God as Father. We learned that from Jesus.

My college chaplain said, "From time to time, someone will say to me, 'I believe in God the Father, but I don't believe in Jesus.'" He said, "I always ask them, Who taught you to call God 'Father'? Because it was Jesus."

I've heard that the Koran (Quran; the Islamic scriptures) has 91 names for God, but not one of them is "Father."

It was Jesus who taught us to call God 'Father.'

You don't need an invitation or an intermediary to go into the presence of your Father. You are His child. He welcomes you. His face lights up when you enter.

And that, as much as anything I know, is the best incentive we have for praying to Him. There are, after all, so many other incentives.

– We have enough needs to keep us on our knees forever. The world needs the prayers and intercessions of God's children, as it seems forever on the brink of another holocaust, another world war, another genocide, another meltdown.

– The way God has answered my prayers (and yours) in the past is a powerful encouragement to pray to Him today. Perhaps this is why Philippians tells us "by prayer and supplication with gratitude, make your requests known to God" (Phil. 4:6b). Thanksgiving requires looking back and seeing what He has done. Those who do not pray are thankless.

– Knowing there is a God in the universe, knowing that He is a personal God who knows us individually and cares for each one and knowing that He has made Himself available to hear prayers and to respond should be all the incentive we would ever need to pray throughout the day, every day.

– My love for the Lord is incentive to talk to Him, to listen

to Him and to serve Him.

– My desire to be more like Jesus, and to prepare for heaven drives me to my knees in prayer.

But the best encouragement of all to stop and pray many times a day is knowing that on the other end of the line is One who knows me and loves me anyway, who cares for every detail of my life from the infinitesimal to infinity, and He welcomes me.

Because it's my heavenly Father on the throne, I may "come with confidence to the throne of grace, that [I] may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

Before raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus prayed, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. I know that You always hear Me" (John 11:41-42).

Prayer, I like to remind people, is need-driven and faith-powered. Faith simply means I believe God; I believe that He is there and that He hears and cares and will answer.

Let us pray, and let us continue to pray until Jesus comes. Then, the faith shall be sight, and we will speak to Him face-to-face. The mind reels at such thoughts, at such a privilege.
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