

DO YOU PRAY?

By Keith Greer

As Christians, we truly have many wonderful blessings in Christ. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." {Ephesians 1:3}

What do you consider the greatest of these blessings? Forgiveness of sins? God's Grace? His mercy? Maybe even His longsuffering? Surely, we can all agree that these are indeed marvelous blessings. Yet, there is another which I believe to be just as significant as the ones just mentioned. What is it? **Prayer.**

When Jesus was with His disciples, He taught them many things. On one occasion they had a request for Him: "Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.' " {Luke 11:1}

Who better qualified to teach them than Christ, did Jesus pray? Before choosing the twelve, "Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." {Luke 6:12}

Before raising Lazarus from the dead: "Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, 'Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.'" {John 11:41,42}

Jesus prayed as he prepared for the cross: "He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.'" {Matthew 26:39}

After final instructions to His disciples, including the promise of the Holy Spirit, He prayed for them: "Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: 'Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,... I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word.'" {John 17:1,20}

Jesus also prayed for those who were guilty of taking His life on the cross: "Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do. 'And they divided His garments and cast lots. " {Luke 23:34}

Could it be said that Jesus was a praying man? It seems to me if the Son of God saw the need to pray, that is reason enough that I need to pray!

Sadly, many Christians do not pray on a regular basis. Why? Let me give you a few reasons to consider.

A Lack of Faith. Many would deny this to be true, but it must be the case. If you don't pray it must be because you don't believe that God can answer your prayers. James 1:5- 8.

Too Busy? I've had some brethren tell me that they are "too busy" to pray. Say what?! How could one be "too busy" to communicate with their Father? All I can say is this--if you're too busy to pray--you need to take a long hard look at your schedule! It may be later than you think!

Last Resort? So many brethren use this wonderful avenue of prayer as a "safety valve." "Guess I'll pray, I've tried everything else. Probably won't work anyway." If this is your attitude, save your breath. One should turn to God first-not last! May God help us to fully be thankful and understand what a vital and needed blessing this is in our lives and use it often! ***