

A Life of Prayer.

Week #5: Private Prayer

February 10, 2019

Learning prayer is never easy, because it includes a large helping of biblical truth coupled with deep personal experience. It's one thing to study prayer, but it's entirely another to practice it. Prayer can be clear yet confusing, wonderful yet confounding, hopeful yet discouraging. For some, prayer is all about communion with God, while for others it is about bringing God's Kingdom to earth as in heaven. For some it's deeply personal. For others mostly cosmic. Many treat prayer like rubbing the lamp and demanding God do something about the mess our lives have become. Many others have abandoned prayer, because the desired outcomes have not been realized. Some see prayer as pure mysticism. Others see only pragmatism.

With the hope of cutting through the confusion, we are beginning 2019 by opening the scriptures together to learn more about prayer. Our goal is to build a biblical foundation that will lead to a robust practicing of what Jesus so clearly embraced in his life & ministry.

Study Questions: *Our Private Moments With God.*

1. Choose five words to describe your private prayer life with God. How have they changed over time, and what kind of relationship with God do they describe now compared to before?
2. Pastor Ken spoke about the necessity of finding a private time and private place for prayer.
 - Do you have such a place and time? Where is it and what time of day?
 - Some of us have no such place because of our circumstances ... is this true, or is it a matter of trusting the Master to provide? Will it even, perhaps, mean going to bed earlier so that you might also rise earlier to begin your day while others in your home are not?
 - If our New Life campus had a dedicated prayer room, open 24 hours, with private spaces within it for prayer (and adequate security) would you use it?
3. Ken taught that private prayer requires all our attention - God wants to speak with us without any distractions.
 - When is the last time you consistently met with God without distractions? What was it like? What did you talk about? What did God say to you?
4. If private prayer is to become a habit, what other habits might you have to curb or readjust?
 - How might they interfere with you giving the Master all of your attention?
 - What is the cost of rearranging things to put private prayer at the top of your daily priorities?
5. What might happen to you if you take more time to meet regularly and privately with God?
 - How do you feel your life would change if your private times with Him were more consistent and important to you?
6. Ken summarized by telling us that private prayer takes great discipline and effort - *"nothing in the life of faith is so difficult to maintain. There is no test like solitude with God"* (Samuel Chadwick)
 - Ken also said that reaps maturity & delight. Has this been your experience?
 - Will you make a commitment this week to prepare a time & place for a daily private time with your Father God? Will you also commit to keeping this time and place until Easter of this year - April 21, 2019, after which you will review and evaluate how your private time with God has affected your relationship with Jesus?