

A Life of Prayer.

Week #4: How does God speak - Part 2

January 27, 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: *God's preferred ways of speaking - part 2.*

1. What has been your experience with the Holy Spirit?
2. Pastor Ken summarized his message with four short statements. Let's spend some time on each of them:
 - a. *I don't direct the Spirit ... the Spirit directs me.* (The Spirit's Authority)
 - This may seem obvious at first glance, but is it not true that we often find ourselves directing God's Spirit towards our wishes?
 - Read Matthew 7:7-12 & Luke 11:9-13. How do these words of Jesus support being directed by the Holy Spirit? What is it to live under the Spirit's authority?
 - b. *I seek the Spirit in genuine friendship, with no hidden agenda.* (The Spirit's Intimacy)
 - Read John 16:12-15. What kind of friend is the Holy Spirit - if you were going to describe Him to someone who has not yet met Him, what would you say?
 - Read Romans 8:26-28. When have you simply had no idea of how to pray, and experienced complete reliance upon the Spirit taking your situation to the Father?
 - c. *I trust the Spirit's supernatural wisdom & power everyday for every circumstance.* (The Spirit's Intervention)
 - Read Acts 16:9-12 & 16-34. Does the Spirit's intervention not seem a bit confusing in this situation ... what can we learn from Paul's life regarding how the Spirit operates?
 - How can we practice care & respect for the Holy Spirit's authority in the events of our lives?
 - d. *I never leave a relationship unattended.* (The Spirit's Unity)
 - Read Philippians 5:15-26. How has God transformed your lifestyle from reaping the results of your sinful nature, to producing the fruit of the Holy Spirit? Which mark of the old life has been most noticeably absent in your new life in Christ?
 - How is the unity of our New Life congregation these days? What are the marks of our unity, and the struggles we have maintaining our unity?
3. Spend time this week focusing on *praying in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion - staying alert and being persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.* (Ephesians 6:18).