

DOES YOUR PRAYER GET PAST THE “CEILING”? Part 1 Matthew 6:5-13

I. Is Prayer Really That Big of a Deal?

How important is prayer to you? Is it a priority, or is it an afterthought? You may acknowledge that prayer is “important”, but is it really a reality in your life

Without prayer you and I would have no real power, no consistent courage, no genuine wisdom, no abiding faith, and no fellowship with the God we profess to believe in. Prayer is not only a commandment of Scripture... It is _____ to the life, health, and peace of the believer (c.f. Matt. 4:4).

When he was the chaplain to congress, Peter Marshall once prayed, “Forgive us for thinking that prayer is a waste of time, and help us to see that without prayer, our work is a waste of time.”

Some thoughts on prayer...

1. Prayer is _____ with God – both listening and sharing.
2. Is your prayer _____, or is it but a “duty”, a ritual, a “box you need to check off”?
3. Is the prayer you’re offering (or perhaps even the prayer you’re hearing) being offered to _____?

II. The Hypocritical Prayer (6:5)

A. Who are the *hypocrites*?

1. Context: Pharisees and Scribes...
2. _____ who don’t come before God to do “business” with Him.

B. What is hypocritical prayer?

1. Prayer that’s from the _____ and not the _____.
2. Prayer that is not concerned with the _____.
3. Prayer that is to be _____ by man.

C. God does not _____ to hypocritical prayer.

III. How Should We Pray? (6:6)

“When you pray...” – the assumption is that believers pray!

Do all of our prayers have to be “private”; is praying in public or “corporate prayer” wrong? _____

What is Jesus saying here? If you cannot worship and talk to God when _____, then your *public* prayers are hypocritical.

IV. Real Prayer Is Not Mindless Recitation Or Babbling (6:7-8)

“When you pray, don’t babble on and on as people of other religions do. They think their prayers are answered only by repeating their words again and again.” (Matthew 6:7 NLT)

- A. Jesus point is that prayers are not to be simply recited – as from a book of prayers, nor are our words to be thoughtlessly repeated as if they were some magic mantra or formula.
- B. There are times, however, when we simply don’t know how to pray, owing to perhaps confusion, stress, or dire circumstances. God speaks to these times (Romans 8:26-27).
- C. Urgent, desperate, or deeply felt but often repeated or persistent prayers shouldn’t necessarily _____ with “vain repetitions” (c.f. Luke 11:5ff; Luke 18:1ff).

If your prayers don’t seem to “get past the ceiling”... _____, and listen to what God has to say. (c.f. Jer. 33:3; James 1:5; John 16:24)