



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

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Jump Start # 1890

Luke 18:1 "Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart."

I've been thinking about prayer lately. I have a lesson that I am to preach about prayer coming up soon in Texas. So, thoughts about prayer have been swirling around in my head. Pray at all times is what this passage says. One of the apostles wrote, "Pray without ceasing."

At it's core, prayer is talking to God. It's a one way conversation with God. God speaks today through His word. Understanding prayer means to understand who you are talking to. That will invite reverence, honor, praise and thanksgiving into this conversation with God. He is God. He's not my buddy. He's not the same as I am. I may tease and joke with a friend, I need to remember who it is that I am praying to.

Prayer is something that all of us can do. Not everyone can lead singing. Not everyone understands music or can carry a tune. But we all can pray. Not everyone can stand before an audience and preach. But everyone can pray. Children can pray as well as senior citizens. The handicapped can pray as well as those who are not handicapped. The blind, the deaf, the invalid, they all can pray. We all can pray.

Prayer is something that you can do anywhere. You can't always open up a Bible and read. Some places that won't work. Don't try that while driving. You can't read your Bible during an MRI test. I've been to some prisons where visitors were not allowed to bring in Bibles. Prayer still got in. You can pray in a crowd or by yourself. You can pray and no one knows that you are praying.

Prayer doesn't have to be long. At the end of Nehemiah, the prayer is, "Remember me, O my God, for good." The prayer that Jesus taught the disciples is short. Some call it the 'Lord's prayer.' More accurately, it would be 'The Model Prayer.' Prayer doesn't have to use big words. Some prayers may be nothing more than, "Help me." Or, it might be, "Forgive me." Or, even, "Thank You."

Prayer always fits. There are some occasions that it's best not to speak, but you can pray. Sometimes when you don't know what to do for someone, the best thing is to say, "Can I pray for you?" If you are scared, it's great to pray. If you are worried, pray. If you are unsure what to do, pray. If things are going well, pray. If things are not going well, pray. Pray when alone. Pray in a crowd. Pray before you eat. Pray before you sleep.

(OVER)

The more we pray the less we would open the door to temptation. We pray publicly in church and privately at home. We can pray at work. We can pray at school. The administration may not allow public prayers in school, but you can still pray. There is an old saying, "As long as there are tests in school, there will always be prayers."

Prayer invites Heaven into your world and your life. Prayer opens up the best help possible. When all hope seems lost, God can do things. Prayer makes you realize that you are never alone. The One that loves you the most and wants the best for you, can help you.

Prayer should not be viewed as rubbing the magic lantern and waiting for a genie to pop out to grant our every wish. Prayer is talking to the Almighty God. It is not so much getting what I want, but doing what He wills. Prayer helps us to keep ourselves in line with God and on the right perspective about things. We tend to lean to the selfish side of things. We get our feelings hurt. We feel left out. We get thinking too much about ourselves. Prayer reminds us of God. It reminds us of that He has a plan for us and it is His glory that we must be after.

The more one prays and the more one reads the Bible, the closer they become to God and the greater their faith grows. Some only pray when there are problems. How would you like to hear from your grown kids only when they need something or there is a problem that they want you to fix. That would get old after a while. We'd feel like they are using us. How do you think God feels? Do you do the same to Him? Like that old spare tire in your trunk, you only use it when you have a flat. Other wise, you never think about it. Prayer shouldn't be like that. It should be a regular part of our lives. How long do you think a husband and wife can go without talking to each other before things start feeling strained? How about you and God?

It is interesting to look at Paul's prison prayers. These are found in Ephesians, Colossians and Thessalonians. His prayers are not for his freedom. His prayers are spiritually based. He wanted the brethren to know the Lord. He wanted them to grow in faith. His prayers excelled in spiritual depth.

I have found among Christians that most of us do not like how we pray. We admit that we don't pray enough. We know that we don't pray very long. Some will say that they tend to say the same things over and over. To put it frankly, most of us believe our prayer life stinks! We know that we can and ought to do better. And then the beloved preacher gives a whole lesson on prayer! The guilt mounts.

Take that little line from our verse today, "at all times they ought to pray." This was said to keep the disciples from being discouraged. Instead of being blue, pray. Instead of being down, pray. At all times. Pray now. Pray as you read. Pray before you speak. Thank the Lord for today, it is a gift. Ask the Lord to help you be a light for Him today. Pray for safety as you drive. Pray for courage as you encounter tough meetings today. Pray for those that you know are struggling. Look around the office or the plant. Pray for those who are not Christians. Pray for your family today. Pray that your heart will be more thankful today.

Pray has a way of pulling us out of the ditch of life. It lifts our spirits and it helps us spiritually. Pray often. Pray without ceasing. Pray at all times.

That old hymn, 'Did you think to pray,' sums up where we so often are. No, I forgot. No, I didn't. Think to pray. Think about God. Think.

Now, one more thing remains. PRAY. Say a prayer to the Lord.

I hope this helps!

Roger Shouse