

PRAYER

1. Prayer survey.

Discussion

2. Some basic truths.

T.C.N. 86

⇒ expression of relationship.

⇒ not legal.

⇒ is to be a child of God.

3. A starting point.

God or us?

(a) Who God is:

Father – Son – Spirit

John 1:18 : the Word expresses God's love.

: this reveals Father.

(b) Who we are:

image of God Gen 1:26ff; Luke 3:38

created sons, can communicate with God as Father especially by word = prayer.

N.B. heart ⇒ speech Matt 12:34

(c) sin: loss of a heart for God

" God – shaped gap in our lives.

'human – shaped' gap in God's life.

(d) Jesus

God's love with us Matt 1:23

Cross: away from the love of the Father Mark 15:34

Rebirth: God's love in our hearts

i.e. Son's love for the Father

Father's love for S/sons.

Rom 8:16; Gal 4:6 'God (Father) has sent the Spirit of his Son into our heart's, crying (in prayer), "Abba! Father!"'

College Notes: Summary and Comments

1. Defining Prayer
 - ‘communication with God’
 - ‘the language of relationship’
 - ‘in the Spirit to ask the Father for the Son’
 - (Peter Faber)
2. The Call to Prayer
 - ‘pray constantly’ Eph 6:18; 1 Thess 5:17
 - Prayer is commanded. Why?
3. Requirements for true Prayer.
 1. A sense of helplessness.
 2. A dependent faith.
 - doubt not unbelief.
4. The Mystery of Prayer.
 1. ‘Why bother praying?’
 - Matt 6:8
 - Omniscience does not create a relationship.
 2. ‘We can get anything we want.’
 - God is our ‘Servant’.
5. The necessity of Prayer.
 - ‘If the Church will not pray God will not act.’
 1. Prayer is functionally and emotionally necessary for us.
 2. Prayer is the very expression of our lives. ‘It is the life which prays.’ (Andrew Murray)
 3. Prayer gives us perspective.
 4. Through Prayer we obtain forgiveness.
 5. Prayer expresses our communion with God.
 6. Prayer expresses our dependency on God.
 7. Through Prayer we obtain guidance.
 8. Through Prayer we realise (express) our fellowship with others.
 9. Prayer is a form of spiritual nourishment.
 10. Through Prayer we appropriate God’s blessings.
 11. Prayer gains divine favour (pleases God)
 12. Prayer enhances our sense of worth.
 13. Prayer expresses our cooperation with God.

14. Prayer relates to God's will and plan – helps relate us to our future heavenly position.

15. God's promise to answer.

Prayer as Communication.

1. Different Levels of Communication.

1. Level One: Talking to.... Matt 7:7-11
child ———> parent self-oriented

2. Level Two: Talking with... Ps 85:1-7
dialogue
fellowship

3. Level Three: Talking as one
John 15:7; 1 Cor 6:17.

2. All true Prayer Stems from Abiding (John 15:7)

- not a problem or a need is the source.

3. The Nature of Our Communication With God.

- our prayers reveals our:
| nature
| concepts of God
| inner attitudes towards God
| desire for God's Glory

4. The Listening Side of Prayer.

- O.T. prophets priests kings
- New covenant promise. Jer 31:31-34. cf. John 10:27; Rom 8:14.
- rational vs intuitive?

1. Key 1: Tuning to spontaneity.
(‘What will he say to me...’)
Hab 2:1-3; John 10:27; 1 Kings 19.
Internal, inaudible

2. Key 2: Becoming Still
(‘I will stand at my watch etc...’)
2.1 Remove outer distractions.
2.2 Quieten the mind.

3. Key 3: Using vision and dreams
(‘I will look to see...’)
3.1 Differing types of visions.

Not usually sought for.

3.2 How can we develop such visions?

- a. prayer
- b. pictorial thinking

4. Key 4: Journalling: Writing out our dialogue.
(‘Write down the revelation...’)

5. Essential Safeguards

- 5.1 Test against Bible.
- 5.2 Humble, teachable spirit.
- 5.3 Submitted to the body of Christ.
- 5.4 Revelation for authority and responsibility.
- 5.5 Revelation from God leads to wholeness and love.

5. Biblical Meditation.

Andrew Murray: 2 Types of prayer.

family: worship, meditation.

business: petition, intercession

Meditation is God – centred, and as such is primary.

Richard Baxter: real faith is faith of the heart.

‘with the heart one believes’ (Rom 10:10)

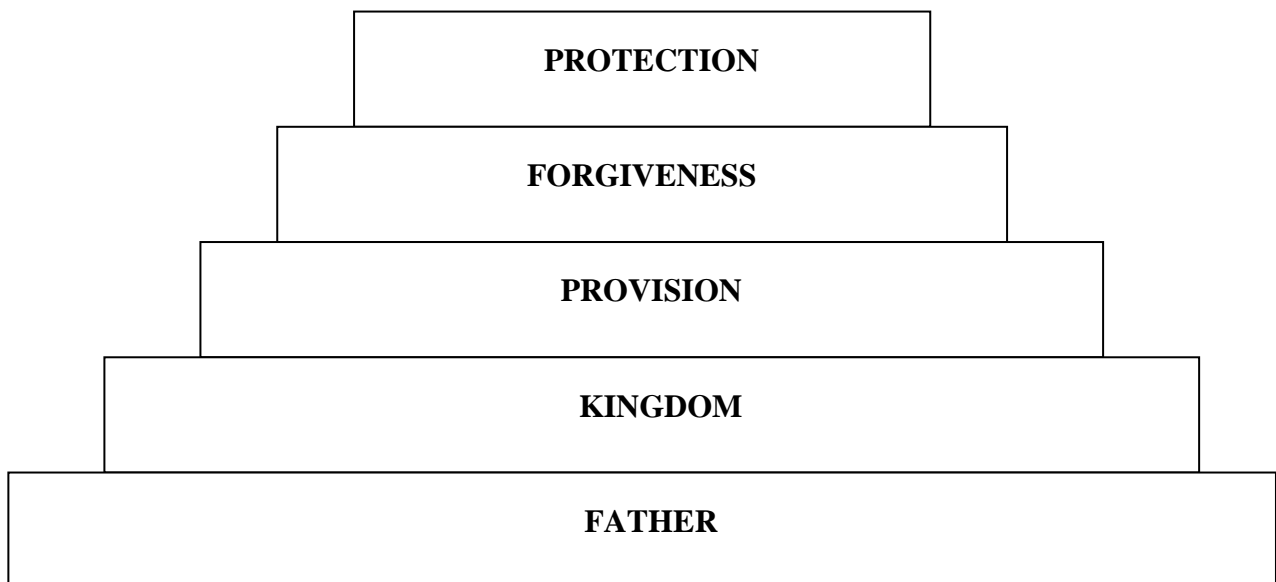
meditation, unlike secular pursuits, ‘is the acting of all the powers of the soul.’

As such, meditation opens the doorway between the head and the heart.

- 5.1 Meditating on the worth of God. (God)
- 5.2 Meditating on the works of God.
- 5.3 Meditating on the Word of God.
- 5.4 Qualities of meditation.
 - 5.4.1 Acceptable to God
 - 5.4.2 Continuous
 - 5.4.3 Unruffled
 - 5.4.4 Disciplined

A Caution: the direction of Spirituality.

- 1. The Word became flesh, not vice-versa.
- 2. Religion goes up, revelation comes down.
Mystics seek to climb a spiritual ladder, grace is given.
- 3. The cross destroys human spiritual effort (Phil 3:2-11).
- 4. Faith is listening/receiving. This is true spirituality. (Brunner)



MATTHEW 6:9

This, then is how you should pray:

**“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
your kingdom come, your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.**

**And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.’**

**for yours is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever. Amen**

The Lord’s Prayer

1. ‘Our’ – equality of relationship.

‘Father’ – family

- ‘Abba!’

Mark 14:36; Gal 4:4-6; Rom 8:14-17.

- authority of sonship N.B. John 20:17

‘In heaven’ - different not distant.

Matt 6:31ff; 7:9ff; Eph 3:14-15.

‘Hallowed be your name’

- ‘name’ = character

- ‘hallowed’: reckoned and revealed as holy.

John 17:11; ‘holy Father’; Isa 6; 1 Peter 1:16 etc.

2. ‘Your Kingdom come’

- gospel proclamation Matt 4:17; Luke 11:20; Acts 1:3

- rule of God (cf. realm)

| present but incomplete

| visible Matt 11:4ff; 12:28; Luke 4:16ff

| to be perfected 1 Cor 15:24-25

| unshakeable Heb 12:26ff

| conflict with evil 1 John 3:8

‘Your will be done’

- God-centred
- repeats above
- only submission Mark 14:36
- prayer: ‘the expression of our human willing of the will of God’ (Barth)
- 1 John 5:14

‘On earth as it is in heaven’

- ‘the home of righteousness’ (2 Peter 3:13)
- place of total obedience
- join in agreement with the prayer of the King

3. ‘give us today our daily bread’

- God the absolute giver (Creator/Redeemer/Sanctifier)
1 Cor 4:7 ‘what do you have which you did not receive?’
1 Tim 6:17 ‘given us all things richly for our enjoyment’
- ‘us’ —————> children’s bread Matt 6:25ff
provision for sharing Eph 4:28; 1 Tim 6:13
equalisation 2 Cor 8:13-15
- ‘today’ not tomorrow Matt 6:34
- ‘bread’ material supply Phil 4:10-13
- ‘daily’ Ex 16 sufficient for the time vs greed

4. ‘Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors’

- ‘forgive’ - unconditional, free
- no relation to guilt or natural justice cf. pardon
- release of an obligation (Matt, Luke) involves ‘forgetting’

‘debt’ - failure to pay that which is due (Matt)

Central to the kingdom of God and the will of the Father.

‘as’ - God’s forgiveness is total

Ps 103:12; Isa 1:18; 44:22; Mic 7:19; Jer 31:34

‘we also’ - Matt 6:15; Mark 11:25 no forgiveness for the unforgiving

Matt 18:21-35 the unforgiving servant (forgiven 500,000x his debt)

5. Lead Us Not Into Temptation

“Temptation” (*peirasmos*) = “trial”

1. Trials of Character: God wills these.

Examples:

Genesis 3.

- | not perfect but perfectible (child, innocent)
- | opportunity for moral/spiritual completion
- | NB God’s use of the devil

Genesis 22

- | the sacrifice of a precious, irreplaceable gift
- | Abraham’s deep personal knowledge of God

Job

Job 23:10 ‘I will come forth as gold’ 1 Peter 1:6-7 – to test is to purify

Jesus

Mark 4:1; Heb 5:8-9

No exceptions – depth from pressure – trust out of trials.

2. Trials which are irresistible.

- Examples : Job
: Peter Luke 22:31 -32
: disciples Mark 14:38

Only God can preserve us 1 Cor 10:13

3. Trials of Judgement.

- Examples : incest 1 Cor 5:1-5
: heresy 1 Tim 1:20

Exposure to Satan’s power.

- : selfishness 1 Cor 11:31-32

God’s judgement.

Hebrews 12:6ff. discipline for our good.

4. Trials of the end

Matt 24:20; Mark 13:18; Revelation 3:10

6. Deliver Us From The Evil One

Matt 13:19, 38; Eph 6:16; 2 Thess 3:3; 1 John 2:13,14; 5:18-19.

Totally malicious hater of the image of God.

This power is usually insidious (hidden)

Eph 6:11 ‘wiles’; Rev 12:9; 2 Thess 2:11- deception. cf. 2 Cor 2: 10 - 11

His use of friends – Matt 16:22ff.

His use of family – Mark 3:21; Matt 10:36

His use of sickness – Job; Luke 13:10-16; 2 Cor 12:7-10

N.B. The Lord's Prayer is prayed to "the Lord over evil" (God's devil).

Job 1-2; 1 Sam 16:14; 1 Kings 22:22; 2 Thess 2:7,10; Rev 6:2,4,8; 13:5, 7, 15.

Application:

1. Radical helplessness.
2. God's purpose in trials (look for it)

trial → submit to/depend on God

↓
depth of character

↓
deliverance from the evil one

7. 'For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen'

- an addition
- a doxology NOT a request

Doxology = ascription of glory to God.

(Greek 'doxa' = glory)

'Yours' - exclusively God's

'Power' - El Shaddai

Mark 14:36 'everything is possible for you' cf. Luke 1:37 etc.

power works through love Ps. 62:11-12

'Glory' - manifestation of God's character, excellence, splendour e.g. Isa 6:1-6;
Ps 115:1 'not to us O Lord, but to your name be the glory.'

An Old Testament Doxology:

1 Chronicles 29:10-13

David praised the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly, saying,

“Praise be to you, O Lord,

God of our father Israel,

from everlasting to everlasting.

Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power

and the glory and the majesty and the splendour,

for everything in heaven and earth is yours.

Yours, O Lord is the kingdom;

you are exalted as head over all.

Wealth and honour come from you;

you are the ruler of all things.

In your hands are strength to all.

Now, our God, we give you thanks,

and praise your glorious name.

Doxologies in the New Testament.

(a) Endings:

Rom 16:27; Phil 4:20; 2 Tim 4:18; Heb 13:2; 1 Pet 5:11; 2 Pet 3:18; Jude 25.

(b) Spontaneous:

Rom 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; Gal 1:5; Eph 3:20; 2 Tim 1:17; 1 Pet 4:11; 2 Cor 11:3;
Rev 1:6.

(c) Heavenly:

Rev 4:11; 5:13; 7:12; 19:1

Fasting

1. Occurrences

55 references in Bible – mainly in Old Testament.

| at critical times in the history of salvation.

e.g. Moses on Sinai (Ex 24:18) Elijah to Horeb (1 Kings 19:8)
Jesus in wilderness (Matt 4:2) Paul at conversion (Acts 9:9)
Church before apostolic mission (Acts 13)

2. Length

1 day (Isa 58:3-5) usual?

several days (1 Cor 7:5)

40 days (Ex 24:18; 1 Kings 19:8; Matt 4:2)

3. Nature

absolute: food and drink (Ezra 10:6; Acts 9:9)

partial: delicacies (Dan 10:3)

food: (Acts 13:2-3, 14:23 etc)

4. What Fasting is Not.

a. a source of spiritual merit (Matt 6:17-18; Luke 18:11-14)

b. a formula to manipulate God.

c. a legalistic act (1 Tim 4:1ff)

5. Why Fast?

a. focus on God – spiritual priority

b. primacy of spiritual over material existence

‘Man does not live by bread alone’ (Matt 4:4)

c. awareness of our frailty and mortality, awareness of our dependence upon God for life.

compare : illusion of immortality ‘you shall not surely die’

: effect of sickness on our lives.

6. Effects of Fasting

a. humility: ‘I humble my soul with fasting’ (Ps 69:10)

b. earnestness: ‘return to me with all your heart, with fasting...’ (Joel 2:12)

c. God ‘changes his mind’: (Jonah 3:5,10; Joel 2:12-14.)

d. spiritual clarity: ‘..wisdom and understanding’ (Daniel 9:2,3,21,22.)

: Jesus’ choice of apostles (Luke 6:12f)

: sending out of Saul and Barnabas (Acts 13:1-3)

e. spiritual power

7. The Foundation of Christian Fasting
 - a. this is contained in the Incarnation
 - b. the whole act of the Word becoming flesh is an act of deprivation (John 1:14; 2 Cor 8:9)
 - c. in the humiliation of the Son of God the whole Godhead voluntarily goes without the expression of the eternal glory which is their life in heaven
 - d. this is for the purpose of the exaltation of humanity through the suffering of the passion of Christ (Phil 2:5 –11)
 - e. imitation and participation of the life of Christ (1 Cor 4:16; 11:1) and his other - centred purposes must be the chief motivation of Christian fasting

Prayer and Unity

1. The Request of Jesus

- (i) John 17:11,21-23. A unity like that of Father and Son: relational love (John 31:31-34) functional (Son does Father's works etc), perfect free, liberating generous etc.
- (ii) Result – 17:21,23 world is persuaded that Jesus is sent by Father ie. Son, Lord, Christ cf. Ps 133.

2. N.T. Examples of Unity

Acts 1:14; 2:1 – constant devotion to prayer, together.

—————> outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35 – in prayer, all in common ———> the Lord added to the Church

Acts 13:1-3 – prayer, fasting, worship ———> God sends out the apostles.

3. N.T. Appeals for Unity.

1 Cor 1:10; 2 Cor 13:11; Eph 4:3; Phil 1:27, 4:2; Col 2:2; 1 Pet 3:18.

4. The Reason for Unity.

a. 'God is love' (1 John 4:8)

b. This love is relational ie. F

Sp S

c. This image of God is plural ie. Gen 1:26ff – male and female

d. God dwells in us as the temple: 1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:21; 1 Pet 2:4 ff.

The unity of the body is an expression of the Father – Son love in the power of the Spirit i.e. glory.

Therefore: authority, power ———> ministry of the kingdom of God ie signs, healings, conversions etc.

Jesus' unity with the Father is the source of his authority as Son.

Only in our unity together, finding its primary expression in prayer, can we as the body of Christ know what the Son knows about the Father.

'With Augustine I affirm a hermeneutics of love in which the fuller understanding of the text remains hidden until Christians learn to live in unity and love with one another.'

(Donald Bloesch)

SECTION 4

The Bond of Unity

‘God is love’

Basic Questions:

1. What is so important about love?
2. What is the relationship between love and unity?
3. Why did god create human beings?

