

Week of Prayer & Fasting 2022

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, January 16 and 23, 2022

NOTE 1 – The 2021 ABM will take place on Sunday, January 23, 2022, following the Sunday Service (January 30 in case of inclement weather). The Annual Report will be distributed today to the voting membership (see Jo Anne Lane). Please review this packet and bring it with you to the ABM. The Church will provide a simple lunch prior to the ABM. We will also livestream the ABM, allowing for participation from home due to the ongoing pandemic. Please plan on being present, however, if you are able.

NOTE 2 – The children—along with the scheduled Nursery workers—are dismissed at this time. God bless you!

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining us today! Whether you are here in person or watching via the livestream you are most welcome. Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take some notes. We have much to cover in a short space of time.

SETTING THE STAGE

NOTE 1 – The Week of Prayer & Fasting is upon us. This event provides for us the annual opportunity to seek the Lord through the disciplines of prayer and fasting (i.e., both individually and collectively). I cannot overstate the significance of such a week, as only Christ can effectively measure the impact of such a period.

NOTE 2 – Today I want to challenge you to participate in this season of spiritual seeking. As in years past, I want to draw upon a series of quotations from beloved preachers and theologians concerning prayer. I will also touch upon biblical texts that correspond to the points we will present. May God bless our time today!

RE: THE INVESTMENT OF PRAYER

NOTE – Allow me to open with a familiar quotation from years past...

“One of the great uses of Twitter and Facebook will be to prove at the last day that prayerlessness was not from lack of time.” John Piper

KEY – Perhaps we pray so infrequently because we deem it a poor investment of time. However...

“Time spent in prayer is never wasted.” Francois Fenelon

“If your day is hemmed in with prayer, it is less likely to come unraveled.” Cynthia Lewis

Daniel 6:10 (NIV, Emphasis Mine)

10 Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, **just as he had done before.**

KEY 2 – Daniel did NOT begin to pray three times per day simply because of the opposition he now faced. Rather, this was his long-established custom! This is incredible when you consider the post Daniel filled in the kingdom of Babylon. If Daniel made time to pray, how can we not?

Q. What if prayer was the KEY to his efficiency?

“If I fail to spend two hours in prayer each morning, the devil gets the victory through the day. I have so much business I cannot get on without spending three hours daily in prayer.” Martin Luther

POEM – Similarly...

“I got up early one morning and rushed right into the day!
 I had so much to accomplish that I didn’t take time to pray.
 Problems just tumbled about me, and heavier came each task.
 “Why doesn’t God help me?” I wondered, He answered, “You didn’t ask!”
 I tried to come into God’s presence; I used all my keys at the lock.
 God gently and lovingly chided, “Why, child, you didn’t knock!”
 I wanted to see joy and beauty, but the day toiled on, gray and bleak.
 I wondered why God didn’t show me. He answered me, “But you didn’t seek.”
 I woke up early this morning, and paused before entering the day.
 I had so much to accomplish, that I had to take time to pray.”

RE: THE PRIORITY OF PRAYER

“Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?” Corrie Ten Boom

Psalm 55:17

17 Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice.

“Christ went more readily . . . to the cross than we do to the throne of grace.” Thomas Watson

RE: THE SUPREMACY OF PRAYER

“I’d rather be able to pray than be a great preacher; Jesus Christ never taught His disciples how to preach, but only how to pray.” D. L. Moody

Luke 11:1 (Emphasis Mine)

1 One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, **teach us to pray**, just as John taught his disciples.” . . .

Matthew 6:9–13

9 “This, then, is how you should pray:
 ““Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be your name,
 10 your kingdom come,
 your will be done,
 on earth as it is in heaven.
 11 Give us today our daily bread.
 12 And forgive us our debts,
 as we also have forgiven our debtors.
 13 And lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from the evil one.

“Prayer does not fit us for the greater work; prayer is the greater work.” Oswald Chambers

RE: THE FEEBLENESS OF OUR PRAYERS

"Our prayers may be awkward. Our attempts may be feeble. But since the power of prayer is in the one who hears it and not in the one who says it, our prayers do make a difference." Max Lucado

James 5:16

The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

"It was your Lord who put an end to longwindedness, so that you would not pray as if you wanted to teach God by your many words. Piety, not verbosity, is in order when you pray." Augustine

Matthew 6:7–8

7 "And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him."

RE: THE UNCHANGING GOD & PRAYER

"God has not changed; and His ear is just as quick to hear the voice of real prayer, and His hand is just as long and strong to save; as it ever was." R.A. Torrey

Malachi 3:6

"I the LORD do not change."

James 1:17

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

RE: THE POWER OF PRAYER PT. 1

"Prayer is as mighty as God, because He has committed Himself to answer it." Leonard Ravenhill

"God shapes the world by prayer. The more praying there is in the world the better the world will be, the mightier the forces against evil." E. M. Bounds

Matthew 7:7

7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

ILL – Dr. Helen Roseveare, missionary to Zaire, told the following story. "A mother at our mission station died after giving birth to a premature baby. We tried to improvise an incubator to keep the infant alive, but the only hot water bottle we had was beyond repair. So we asked the children to pray for the baby and for her sister. One of the girls responded. 'Dear God, please send a hot water bottle today. Tomorrow will be too late because by then the baby will be dead. And dear Lord, send a doll for the sister so she won't feel so lonely.' That afternoon a large package arrived from England. The children watched eagerly as we opened it. Much to their surprise, under some clothing was a hot water bottle! Immediately the girl who had prayed so earnestly started to dig deeper, exclaiming, 'If God sent that, I'm sure He also sent a doll!' And she was right! The heavenly Father knew in advance of that child's sincere requests, and 5 months earlier He had led a ladies' group to include both of those specific articles."

RE: THE POWER OF PRAYER PT. 2

“The angel fetched Peter out of prison, but it was prayer fetched the angel.” Thomas Watson

Acts 12:1–11 (Emphasis Mine)

1 It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. 2 He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. 3 When he saw that this met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. 4 After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover.

5 So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

6 The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. 7 Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. “Quick, get up!” he said, and the chains fell off Peter’s wrists.

8 Then the angel said to him, “Put on your clothes and sandals.” And Peter did so. “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me,” the angel told him. 9 Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. 10 They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

11 Then Peter came to himself and said, “Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod’s clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen.”

ONCE AGAIN...

“The angel fetched Peter out of prison, but it was prayer fetched the angel.” Thomas Watson

“I had rather stand against the cannons of the wicked than against the prayers of the righteous.” Thomas Lye

RE: THE PLACE OF FAITH IN PRAYER

“If you believe in prayer at all, expect God to hear you. If you do not expect, you will not have. God will not hear you unless you believe He will hear you; but if you believe He will, He will be as good as your faith.” C. H. Spurgeon

Hebrews 11:6

6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

1 John 5:14–15

14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

RE: THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER UNTO REVIVAL

“History is silent about revivals that did not begin with prayer.” Edwin Orr

“To get nations back on their feet, we must first get down on our knees.” Billy Graham

“. . . revival must begin with a great revival of prayer. It is in the closet, with the door shut, that the sound of abundance of rain will first be heard. An increase of secret prayer with ministers will be the sure harbinger of blessing.” Andrew Murray

2 Chronicles 7:14

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

RE: THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER UNTO PERSONAL RENEWAL

“Prayer is surrender—surrender to the will of God and cooperation with that will. If I throw out a boathook from the boat and catch hold of the shore and pull, do I pull the shore to me, or do I pull myself to the shore? Prayer is not pulling God to my will, but the aligning of my will to the will of God.” E. Stanley Jones

Romans 8:29a (Emphasis Mine)

29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be **conformed** to the image of his Son . . .

“It is strange that, while praying, we seldom ask for change of character, but always a change in circumstance.”

RE: THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER IN ADVERSITY

“The Christian life is not a constant high. I have my moments of deep discouragement. I have to go to God in prayer with tears in my eyes, and say, 'O God . . . help me.'” Billy Graham

Psalms 42:3–5

3 My tears have been my food
day and night,
while people say to me all day long,
“Where is your God?”
4 These things I remember
as I pour out my soul:
how I used to go to the house of God
under the protection of the Mighty One
with shouts of joy and praise
among the festive throng.

RE: PRAYER AS A DIALOGUE V. MONOLOGUE

“Prayer is not a monologue, but a dialogue. God’s voice in response to mine is its most essential part.” Andrew Murray

“Prayer at its highest is a two-way conversation and for me the most important part is listening to God's replies.” Frank C. Laubach

Jeremiah 33:3

3 “Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.”

1 Kings 19:11–12 (re: Elijah)

11 The Lord said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.” Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. 12 After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.

RE: THE PLACE OF PRAYER

“Prayer is not learned in a classroom but in the closet.” E. M. Bounds

“O, let the place of secret prayer become to me the most beloved spot on earth.” Andrew Murray

Matthew 6:5–6

5 “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

RE: THE EFFECT OF PRAYER UPON LOVE FOR YOUR PEERS

“Nothing tends more to cement the hearts of Christians than praying together. Never do they love one another so well as when they witness the outpouring of each other's hearts in prayer.” Charles Finney

Acts 2:42–47 (Emphasis Mine)

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to **prayer**. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

RE: THE EFFECT OF PRAYER UPON LOVE FOR YOUR ENEMIES

"You cannot pray for someone and hate them at the same time." Billy Graham

Matthew 5:43–48 (Emphasis Mine)

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I tell you, love your enemies and **pray for those** who persecute you, 45 that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? 47 And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

RE: PRAYER & THE WORD

"To pray well is the better half of study." Martin Luther

"Study your prayers, a great part of my time is spent getting in tune for prayer." Robert M. McCheyne

2 Timothy 3:16–17

16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

CONCLUSION PT. 1

NOTE – As we move into this week, let these sentiments propel us to prayer! Let us pray with great faith, confidence, boldness, humility, consideration and beyond! These statements reflect the smallest percentage of quotes and/or biblical texts on the topic! However, may they work to set the stage for the days to come as we seek God as the people of God in and for the New Year! God bless you all!

CONCLUSION PT. 2

NOTE 1 – Those who wish to give online may do so at www.NewLifeBarre.org. Those who wish to give in person can utilize the offering boxes located throughout the church facility. Thank you for your faithfulness in supporting this local work of Christ.

NOTE 2 – Ministry schedule...

Prayer – Sunday at 8:45am

Sunday School – Sunday at 9:15am

CYC – Tuesday from 3–4pm and 4–5pm

Weekly Study – Thursday at 6:30–7:30pm

Women's Ministry – 2nd Tuesday at 6:30pm

Men's Breakfast – 2nd Saturday at 9am

Potluck – Final Sunday of the Month