

Have You Prayed Today?

Have you prayed today? I did not ask you if you have had a devotional or quiet time. I ask this simple question, "Have you lifted up your thoughts and maybe words to God"? Sometimes we think our prayers must be said in a particular place and time and manner. This a commendable practice. We read about Daniel the prophet: Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God (Daniel 6:10). However, we can also pray at various times and ways during our day. Let me share a personal example. Today I was thinking about a Bible passage where the woman with a long-standing *suffering from hemorrhages* reached out and just touched Jesus' robe as he passed by. As a result, I located a hymn that referenced this miracle. Then listening to the hymn and reciting its lyrics, it became a personal prayer to Jesus. So the refrain reads,

*Heal us, Emmanuel, here we are
We long to feel Thy touch
Deep wounded souls to Thee we fly
O Savior hear our cry*

Our faith is feeble we confess
We faintly trust Thy word
But will You pity us the less
Be that far from You, Lord

Because My faith is often feeble,
I confess, and I faintly trust your Word
but do not pity me the less.
Heal me, Emmanuel, Lord Jesus,
here I am before you.
I long to feel your touch.
Deep wounded soul to you:
I fly, O Savior, here my cry.

Prayer, you see, can be a spontaneous response to God. It can take many forms - a praise, a thanks, a confession, a declaration of praise or expression of

love, of doubt, of fear, of longing for his presence or a request. It can be a statement of belief - a declaration of trust.

Prayer is an expression of our relationship to God. It is instructive that Jesus' disciples did not ask him how to do miracles or tell parables. The one thing recorded is found in Luke 11. Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "**Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.**" ² And he said to them, "When you pray, say:

"Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

³ Give us each day our daily bread,

⁴ and forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

And lead us not into temptation."

Their request grew out of their observation of Jesus' own prayer life to **the Father**. At times Jesus would simply look toward heaven and briefly speak to the Father. Here are three examples:

A prayer of thanks:

Matthew 11:25-26

²⁵ At that time Jesus declared, "*I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.*"

Before he raised Lazarus from the dead:

John 11:41-42

⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me."

Upon his last entrance into Jerusalem

John 12:27-28

²⁷ "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your

name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.”

We find in the psalms many brief prayers we can lift personally to God. Psalm 42:1-2,11:

As a deer pants for flowing streams,
so pants my soul for you, O God.
² My soul thirsts for you
for the living God.
When shall I come and appear before you?
Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation and my God.

Psalm 63

You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water.

I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you.

On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night. Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. I cling to you; your right hand upholds me.

Our prayer can be a confession of faith-

I confess that you, Yahweh are the true and living God and my great King.

It is good to often recite as a prayer a confession or affirmations of truth about God. Here is an example,

I bear witness there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. You, Lord Jesus, were crucified dead and buried for

the transgressions of your people and you were raised from the dead the third day and 40 days later ascended to heaven. You are my Lord and Savior and through you I know the Father. I love you. You are worthy of all praise and worship.

Our thoughts and words to God can be offered spontaneously to Him as we remember him. So throughout the day as we are conscious of needs we can call upon him to come to our aid.

Give ear to my words, O Yahweh; hear my prayer; give ear to the words of my mouth.

Give attention to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for to you do I pray.
(Psalm 5:1,2)

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