

Have You Lost Your Mind?

Philippians 2:5, Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus...

Prayerful

Jesus was humble, forgiving, compassionate, obedient, and holy. He was full of grace, and focused on the Father's promises rather than the allures of the world. Why? He had an intimate relationship with the Father, even when He left heaven and came to this earth. We can and should develop a similar relationship with our heavenly Father, and we can do it in the same way Christ did—through prayer.

As we read the accounts of Jesus' life, we see several things about how He prayed. How often was Jesus engaged in prayer? Read Luke 5:16. Some newer translations omit the word "often" from this passage, but the idea that Jesus prayed frequently is supported throughout the Scriptures. Would it not be a good idea for us today to also pray frequently and persistently? Jesus taught us to be persistent (Luke 18:1). Paul also emphasized the importance of a consistent and persistent prayer life. Read Colossians 4:2 and 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

Another thing we can notice about Jesus' prayer life is that He often prayed alone. Read Matthew 14:23 and Mark 1:35. What are some of the advantages of praying alone? Read Matthew 6:5-6. What is Jesus teaching about prayer in this passage? Is it sinful to pray in public, or is it the attitude with which one prays that can be sinful?

Jesus' prayers were not only done in private, though. Read Luke 9:28. What are some of the benefits of praying with others? We have several examples of first century followers praying with each other. Read Acts 1:13-14; 2:42; 4:23-31; 16:25. It is good and godly to pray with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

It is important to see that the Lord's prayers were not selfish in nature, but that He often prayed for other people. Read Mt.

19:13-15 and Jn. 17:9, 15, 20-21. Who did Jesus pray for? Who should we pray for today? Read Mt. 5:44 and 1 Tim. 2:1-4.

What other requests should we make on the behalf of others? Read Ephesians 1:15-18; 3:14-19; Philippians 1:9-11; Philemon 1:6. Paul prayed for their spiritual wisdom, understanding, and growth, and for evangelistic efforts. There is nothing more important than one's spiritual well-being!

Is it wrong to pray for physical well-being, as we often do? Read James 5:13-15. We see in this passage that James encourages prayers for physical health and spiritual health.

Jesus also prayed before important decisions—and those prayers were often very long. Read Luke 6:12-13. How long did He pray? Do we spend that much time in prayer before we make a major life decision? Should we? How often do we fret over our decisions without talking to God? Read Philippians 4:6-7 and James 1:5. We need to talk to God more regularly, and more honestly. We need to approach Him in prayer before we make big decisions, asking for peace and wisdom.

Does this mean that every prayer will be answered precisely the way we want? Read Matthew 26:39, 42. What was the Lord's prayer? Read 1 John 5:14-15. How do we know God's will? If we don't spend time studying His Word, it is very difficult to pray according to His will.

Let us notice some additional attitudes that we must have as we approach the Father's throne.

- Read Luke 18:9-14. Why was the tax collector exalted? Read James 4:10. Humility is an attribute we must possess as we pray to the Father.
- Read 1 John 3:21-23. How we treat each other affects our relationship with the Almighty. Read Matt. 5:21-24.
- Read Philippians 4:6. What do we have to be thankful for? Do we count our blessings and realize that God has given us far more than any of us deserve?
- Read Hebrews 4:16. Yes, we must be humble and meek, but at the same time confident that God will provide the mercy and grace we need. What is the danger of doubt? Read James 1:6.