

Intro: Stefan Duerksen, Lead Pastor PRAY FOR OFFERING

2. Heart of Southland: 500 people - Prayer Summit, Set Free! & Bible in a year

- Pray for us to grow in knowing God through prayer
- Pray for us to grow in bringing our needs, hurts, desires & hearts to Jesus in prayer
- Pray for those trapped in anxiety, depression, addiction, bondage to be set free!
- Pray for those stuck in secret sin to have the courage to share their struggles
- Pray for us to grow in hunger for Scripture
- Pray for our church to stand firm on the truth of Scripture
- PRAY for your personal P&F goals

Intro: “the only BAD prayer is the one you don’t pray!”

I don’t want to caveat this statement too much – because we tend to overcomplicate everything and then shelve it and give up! KEEP ON PRAYING! KEEP ON POURING OUT YOUR HEART TO GOD!

Luke 18:1 (ESV) then Jesus told his disciples a parable, to show them that they should ALWAYS PRAY AND NOT GIVE UP.

Psalms 62:8 (ESV) Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. *Selah*

Isn’t it true though that many of us have PRAYED – poured out our hearts to God – and left feeling that something didn’t work?

Today: the Purpose of Prayer and using Prayer to Partner with God!

Example: Years ago, a young woman shared with me how she was praying about an upcoming surgery and it wasn’t working! She felt alone, overwhelmed, and anxious. She wanted support.

- I asked her if a stranger be helpful? She replied, “NO!”. So, I pressed further and asked, “what about someone you knew, but not well?” she thought for a second and replied, “no, still not helpful.” Then I said, “what about your mom? Or your best friend? Would they be helpful?” and she replied emphatically, “YES!”
- I asked her what the difference was. She replied... when you are going through something difficult... you don’t want just anybody around you. You want someone that you KNOW. Someone that you love and that loves you. Someone that you can let your guard down and not have to worry about pretense.
- She was right! When you KNOW SOMEONE – you draw STRENGTH from them!

The same is TRUE with our FAITH in JESUS – if we do not KNOW HIM – it is difficult to draw strength from him in our times of need!

If we reduce prayer to TYPES – confession, thanksgiving, intercession, prophetic, petition, etc. and miss the PURPOSE of prayer – we miss out!

A. The Primary Purpose of Prayer – to KNOW GOD

Matthew 6:6 (ESV) ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

John 17:3 (ESV) ³ And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

Jesus said to KNOW HIM is ETERNAL LIFE. He also instructed believers to use PRAYER to meet the FATHER

One of the easiest mistakes to make as a believer is to forget our purpose – **to simply know God.**

Without this foundation our prayer life easily becomes imbalanced:

- Fear & anxiety may dominate our prayer times
- Avoid prayer due to guilt, dryness, shame.
- We treat prayer like a Spiritual 911 and only use it when we are in trouble!
- Become legalistic in how we approach prayer and create rules on how much prayer = answers
- We will struggle seeing the answers we want in prayer

ULTIMATELY it will lead to life that is ABSENT of peace & joy that God wants us to enjoy with Him

Matthew 6:7–13 (ESV) ⁷ “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words.

- God’s not looking for us to say the right words in the right order –

Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

- The Father invites us to COMMUNE with him. To KNOW HIM.

Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

- Before we get to PETITION – which is what PRAYER is! We seek to KNOW GOD and declare who he is and align ourselves with his purposes!

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

- Then petition – confession – direction – deliverance! TOOLS! TYPES OF PRAYER – being used in context!

EFFECTIVE PRAYER SEEKS TO KNOW GOD & DRAW NEAR TO HIM AS ITS PRIMARY GOAL!

J.I. Packer said, “show me a person’s prayer life and I will show you how much they KNOW GOD.”

The more someone KNOWS GOD – The more energy they have for PRAYER!

The more someone PRAYS – the more they will KNOW GOD!

Psalm 37:3-5 (ESV) Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act.

- Delight yourself in God – KNOW HIM
- **Then** He will grant you the desire of your heart PETITION

Augustine, “Love God and do whatever you please: for the soul trained in love to God will do nothing to offend the One who is Beloved”

The Primary PURPOSE of prayer & fasting – to KNOW GOD - From here we have work to do!

B. Prayer is Partnership

I often hear people getting stuck in the rut of DOING THINGS FOR GOD – I think this is where the “works” conversation always happens!

Or, we pray without thought of what God may want to do in a particular situation!

John 15:7–8 (ESV) If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

- IF you remain WITH ME – and MY WORDS (WILL) remains IN YOU – ASK – whatever you wish (as you are aligned with Me) and it will be done for you! P A R T N E R S H I P !!

Prayer is the primary way we PARTNER WITH GOD TO SEE HIS WILL ACCOMPLISHED ON THE EARTH. (Lord’s prayer) our ACTIONS follow

1 Thessalonians 5:16–21 (ESV) Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good.

P. Ray “Prayer isn’t everything, but everything proceeds from prayer”

PLAY VIDEO OUR PROBLEM: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/Mz2WfBFdOAU> **TIME: 24sec-37sec**

- **This is actual footage of Christians who try and follow Jesus without a prayer life!**

John 12:26 (ESV) If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

- **Where HE IS – that is where we are supposed to be! Not running off on our own!**
- **PRAYER IS KEY – to keeping us aligned with and present with JESUS!**

Galatians 5:25–26 (ESV) If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

- **KEEP IN STEP – partnership!**

Now – this is NOT equal partnership – NO! it’s BETTER THAN THAT!

Matthew 11:28–30 (ESV) Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Rather than DOING things FOR GOD – our aim is to YOKE ourselves to Jesus and DO THINGS WITH HIM

Matthew 9:36–38 (ESV) ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; ³⁸ therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

- Jesus instructs his disciples to PRAY – THEN – Sends THEM to GO! (ch 10)
- PRAY – PARTNER – ACT

Through PRAYER we seek to KNOW GOD and partner with him to bring Glory to God on the earth!

- Partner in intercession! - Rom 8 The Holy Spirit & Jesus intercede for us!
- Partner in relationship with God!
- Partner in seeing His will done on the earth! Not our own!
- Partner in redeeming culture & people!
- Partner in loving the least of these!
- Partner with God through "each one, reach one"
- We partner with God through suffering ! (MORE ON THIS IN TWO WEEKS)
- We partner with Gods' GRACE by confessing our sin & receiving forgiveness! RESTORED RELATIONSHIP!

C. Partnering with God through Prayer & Fasting

1. Praise – worship God for who He is and what He has already done!
2. Ask – bring your request to God: needs, hurts, struggles, desires, etc.
3. Listen – what does Jesus want to say to you about your request?
 - *We listen for His voice in Scripture & Prayer*
 - Sometimes God changes our request
 - Sometimes He gives us a promise
 - Sometimes He gives instruction to do something
4. Obey – We take ACTION to Partner with God – turning from sin, steps of obedience, persistent prayer!
 - Each one, reach one – pray – then go and be the hands and feet of Jesus WITH JESUS!
5. Pray & Fast – Persistently! “Keep on asking... keep on seeking... keep on knocking... “
 - **Matthew 7:7–8 (ESV)** “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

LAST SONG: Lord, I need you

AFTER SERVICE PRAYER – PRAYER ROOM – 9AM and 11AM

MARANATHA!! Come soon Lord!

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SC CHURCH WIDE PRAYER REQUESTS 2024

Cruise ship → → → → → Battleship

1. **Life on Mission:** Churchwide commitment to "Each One, Reach One"
2. **Heart of Southland:** 500 people - Prayer Summit, Set Free! & Bible in a year
3. **Next Gen:** ❤️ Passion for Jesus, memorization & find identity in Christ
4. **Church Renewal:** Double funding, mentors & CRI Churches in Canada
5. **Persecuted Church & Israel:** Salvation, hope & perseverance - MARANATHA!