
Kickstarting your prayer life

Central Church Ipswich

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Introduction

Allowing what the Bible actually says to reshape our prayers

How do we make sure prayer is at the heart of our lives and the life of the church of Jesus Christ? How do we avoid relegating prayer for mission to the faithful few? How do we make sure that our prayers match up with what God has actually promised to do? The key is making sure that our prayers (both individually and together) match what God has actually told us to do (and to expect) in the Bible.

Diagnosis

A. Prayer in the local church

- How important is prayer in your church?
- How is that reflected in its weekly programme?
- What do we pray for when we gather on Sundays?
- What do we pray for in small groups?

B. Prayer and the Individual

- How often do you pray?
- What do you pray for yourself?
- What do you pray for other people?
- How do you decide what (and whom) to pray for?

Feedback and initial conclusions

Recalibration

Prayer in the Bible

Jesus and Prayer

The birth of Jesus

Jesus' teaching on prayer (Matt. 6:5-15; 7:7-11; 18:15-18; 21:18-22; Mark 9:28-29; Luke 11:5-13; John 14:8-14; 15:16; 16:23-27; 17:9, 11-13, 17-18, 20-23; Luke 18:1-8 cf 18:9-14)

Jesus' practice (see e.g, Luke 3:21-22; 4:42; 5:15-16; 6:12-13; 9:18, 28-29; 10:1; see also John 11:41-44; Matt 9:36-38; 11:25-26, and pre-eminently Matt 26:36-46 and parallels; 27:46,50; Luke 23:33-34, 46).

Where did Jesus learn to pray like this?

Jesus' Followers and Prayer

Prayer in Acts (Jerusalem - 1:12-14, 24-26; 2:42; 4:24-30; 6:1-4; 7:59-60; Judea & Samaria – 8:14-24; 9:11; 10:1-5,9; 12:5,12; 13:1-3; 14:23; 16:25-26; The ends of the earth – 20:26-38; 21:5-6; 28:8)

Praying with Paul (e.g. Romans 8:15, 26; 15:30-33, 2 Cor 1:11; Eph 6:18-20; Col 4:2-4; 2 Thess 3:1-2)

Praying with the Apostles (e.g. Hebrews 4:16? 5:7; 1 Peter 3:7, 12; 4:7; 3 John 1-4)

Prayer in the local church - what do we pray for?

'Cure'

1. Patterns

Church – what should the basic pattern be for our prayers in the local church?

Individual - when and how should we pray?

2. Investment

Church – we put a vast amount of time and energy into writing (or finding) study material – how can we match that when it comes to prayer?

Individual - how do we decide what to pray for and organize our prayers? What can we do as individuals to make sure that our prayers are effectively 'targetted'?

3. Practice

Church – what changes do we need to make so that the life of our local church reflects a biblical pattern?

On Sundays

Between Sundays

In specific ministries

Individual – what changes do we need to make so that our lives display our confidence in the God who answers when we cry to him?

My response

How has this evening changed my thinking?

How am I going to change my practice?

