

Living Grace-Fully: Prayer
January 15, 2017
Lynn Haven UMC

Introduction

*Lord, open our hearts to hear your Word,
Open our minds to receive your Truth,
Open our lives to experience your Presence,
Open our hearts and set them on fire with the power of your Holy Spirit.
This we ask in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.*

³²That evening after sunset, many sick and demon-possessed people were brought to Jesus. ³³The whole town gathered at the door to watch. ³⁴So Jesus healed many people who were sick with various diseases, and he cast out many demons. But because the demons knew who he was, he did not allow them to speak, ³⁵Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray. ³⁶Later Simon and the others went out to find him. ³⁷When they found him, they said, “Everyone is looking for you.” ³⁸But Jesus replied, “We must go on to other towns as well, and I will preach to them, too. That is why I came.” ³⁹So he traveled throughout the region of Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and casting out demons. (Mark 1:32-39 NLT)

Digging Deeper

Prayer enables us to live grace-fully by...

Giving us POWER. (vv. 32-34)

- Do you have a certain time of day or spot in your house dedicated to prayer? In the movie “War Room” the main character starts off spending 10 minutes each day alone in her closet to pray (which she says feels like an eternity at first). As she developed the habit of daily prayer, she noticed the time flew by in there and 10 minutes wasn’t nearly enough! She also discovered that as she fervently prayed for the people and things in her life, the more power she had over how she reacted to them when difficult situations came to pass. How much time do you spend in prayer each day? When you neglect your prayer life, do you find yourself more prone to allowing discontent to burrow into your heart?

Helping us set our PRIORITIES. (vv. 36-37)

- Do you establish your priority list based on what others want from you or what God wants? Read Proverbs 3:6 NLT. In all things, including creating your daily “to do” list, try putting, “seek God’s will for this day” as number 1. You might find, through prayer, you will discover the discernment that can help you allocate your time as God sees fit.

Causing us to remember our PURPOSE. (vv. 38-39)

- Have you ever wondered, “Why did God put me here on this earth? What is my purpose?” You are not alone. It’s a question asked by pretty much everyone who has ever existed. Through the

power of diligent prayer, we have the perfect “phone a friend” person to help us find that answer. How do you think establishing prayer as a priority can help you discover your purpose?

- We all have jobs to do that pay the bills and hopefully fulfill us in some way. Read Colossians 3:17 NLT. We are to do everything for His honor and glory. Everything. Most people spend a minimum of 40 hours a week in a (most likely) secular environment. In what ways do you think discovering your true purpose in Christ could seep into that part of your life so that your job might become another place for you to “do business for God”?

Conclusion

2 Chronicles 7:14-15 tells us that if we humble ourselves and seek Him through prayer, God will hear us, forgive us and heal us. If we desire to live a life filled with God’s abundant grace, we must first seek Him above all else. A thriving prayer life is the only way we will ever build a deep, meaningful relationship with God that will open our hearts to the truth of what He desires for our lives. Then, when we know what He wants us to do, we are left with the final (sometimes most arduous) task of actually doing it. Stop and reflect for a moment on this today, “Am I in the Jesus business?”