

Enough! | Pray and Pass It On | Discussion Guide - *Colossians 4:2-6, 16*

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Prayer was a glaring distinctive of the first century Christians. If prayer held the same priority among Christians today, would we have similar results?

Colossians 4:2-6 (NLT) Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart. 3 Pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to speak about his mysterious plan concerning Christ. That is why I am here in chains. 4 Pray that I will proclaim this message as clearly as I should. 5 Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.

How to Transform Your Prayer Life.

Practice Private Prayer

Jesus taught us to pray in isolation. He knew from experience and taught by example the power of private prayer.

Matthew 6:6 NLT But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

So, how does private prayer work? After all, a person can only ask God for so much. Sooner or later even Americans run out of things for which to ask.

First, Prayer is so much more than asking for needs and desires. Prayer is the conversational part of our relationship to God. Second, God gave us a mind and an imagination. He then provided a Bible filled with incredible images, stories, miracles, and promises in order to spark thoughts and ideas within them. So, prayer is so much larger than a series of mere requests. Prayer is an internal life with God. It is an ongoing, non-stop conversation about the circumstances we face, the difficulties in the world, and anything else our hearts stagger upon.

Hebrews 4:16 (NLT) So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.

Private prayer is also how we learn to enter into God's presence. If the stories we read of the impact of God's presence upon the nation of Israel in Exodus and Leviticus are an indicator, then the presence of God is life changing. Private prayers that move into God's presence may be reflective. They may be worship filled, acknowledging and realizing God's character, love, goodness, and mercy. They may also be gratitude. They could also be completely wordless.

Romans 8:26 (NLT) But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words.

Anything could happen in prayer. But nothing will happen in prayer until we commit serious time towards prayer.

Join Others in Prayer

Acts 4:24 (NLT) ...all the believers lifted their voices together in prayer to God

Many believers struggle praying with other people. It takes encouragement and maybe a little time to get past our insecurities when it comes to praying with someone else. But, be encouraged, it may be hard to accept, but prayer is a powerful way to deepen a relationship. Prayer often helps married couples come closer together. When we witness our spouse's dreams, concerns and struggles poured out in honest prayer before God, we come to know them much more deeply.

Also, we are sometimes asked to pray for other people. When given such an honor, "just do it!" Prayer is an honor, to be asked for prayer is an incredible privilege. So, take a leap of faith. Don't just say, "Sure." Instead, go directly to God for them and with them.

Pray for Opportunities

Jesus' schedule was filled with *Divine Appointments*. Remember Jesus' encounter with the woman of Sychar, Samaria. The Bible tells us it was no accident.

John 4:4 (NLT) He had to go through Samaria on the way.

Jesus knew God was showing up for a woman in Sychar, and he wasn't missing it. It seems that Jesus lived his life from divine appointment to divine appointment. We should pray for them too. *Consider the possibilities of a life in which God sets the agenda each day?*

The truth is that our lives are filled with them, but we often miss all but the most obvious ones. But, don't worry, the cure for divine awareness is simple. More Prayer. The more we pray about these wonderful opportunities, the more easily we will notice them. And, the same practice of prayer also provides the best answer when such an opportunity presents itself.

Prayer will change your life. Prayer will change the world around you and give hope. When prayer becomes a priority, your faith will become vibrant.

Talk About It...

- What are your first impressions regarding today's topic?
- How would you rate your prayer life today? Scale 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)? Why?
- Read **Colossians 4:2-6**. What does it mean to be devoted to prayer? Find and share some Biblical examples of people who were devoted to prayer?
- Discuss **Matthew 6:6**. What is a prayer "closet"? Or, what does it mean to "shut the door"?
- Discuss the invitation of **Hebrews 4:16**. What does it mean? How could we answer it?
- Discuss **Romans 8:26**. Share a time that you prayed without words. What is it like for the Holy Spirit to "pray for us".
- Have you ever experienced a Divine Appointment? If yes, please share.
- What are some practical ways you could improve your prayer life?
- Is there anything you feel you should do in response to this study?