



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC Principles of Effective Prayer (Part 1)

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THEME Effective Prayer

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MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

In the first of this 3-part series on effective prayer, SP Daniel Foo brings us back to the basics with the foundation principles of an effective prayer that “avails much”. James 5:16 is the key verse that undergirds this series on prayer. It says, *“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”*

The Bible tells us to pray without ceasing (1 Thess 5:17) and SP encourages us to always keep our family members and cell group members in our covering and prayers.

PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE PRAYER

I. Effective prayer is always praying the will of the Father

We must be confident that anything asked according to the will of God, will be answered (1 John 5:14-15). The will of the Father is in the Word (John 15: 6-7, John 15:7), which is always consistent with His character (Jeremiah 9:24). God wants us to know our identity and purpose in life. We must therefore be cognizant of His promises that are found in His word, and pray, confident that He will answer it.

II. Effective prayer is always based on righteousness

Righteousness is having right-standing with God (Romans 5:1-2) It is also right-believing and right-doing (Matthew 7:24-25). We have been justified by faith before God, receiving grace and mercy to come before Him. With this unmerited justification that we have received from God, righteousness must always be guided by the right beliefs with actions that are in line with what God has spoken. We must stay grounded and be guided by the right beliefs so that we will do the right things.

III. Effective prayer is always by faith

Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2) – we trust in Him and focus on Him to complete our prayers. At the same time, we must have faith in Him, regardless of whether we are the “pray-er” (Acts 3:6), the “pray-ee” (Mark 5:25-30) or the intermediary (Luke 7:7-10)

IV. We must know and understand the character of God

Knowing the character of God is key to effective prayer. God will not and cannot do anything that will violate His character. He is a loving God who is also just and righteous (Jer 9:23-24). Justice and righteousness is the very foundation of His throne (Psa 89:14). Whatever that God has said in His word, He will honour it. He is no man that He should lie (Num 23:19), and He promises us that His Word will not return void (Isa 55:11). If our prayers petition God for something that is in contrast to His character, why should He answer them?

V. We must know and understand the works of the evil one

Satan is constantly on the prowl to steal, kill and destroy. He is a deceiver and accuser (Rev 12:9-10), a condemner (Rom 8:33-34). But as sons and daughters of the God Most High, Satan is not able to touch us or harm us *unless* we give him the opportunity to do so. Hence we must stay vigilant to not give him a foothold (e.g. in the form of reminders of our past, failures, thoughts), and gird up the loins of our minds.

VI. We must know the work that was done at Calvary

Before Calvary, the evil one brings condemnation, charges and accusations against us before God – as he did with Job (Job 1:6) and Joshua the high priest (Zec 3:1). However, after Calvary, Satan has been thrown out of the highest heavens to operate on earth from the secondary heavens; in the atmospheric realms of earth. The evil one now brings condemnation, charges and accusations directly against NT saints, for whom (after Calvary and Pentecost) now have the indwelling Holy Spirit. It is only with the Holy Spirit that we can *resist* the evil one, and tear down accumulated lies and deceptions called strongholds in our lives.

VII. How do you overcome the evil one's accusations?

First, we must know and understand that the evil one can never harm us or touch us (1 John 5:18). But he can block our prayers from being answered by bringing legal grounds against us. Because God is righteous, He cannot extend His grace to us when we give a foothold to the evil one (Ephesians 4:27), which happens when we grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). Thus, to overcome, we must know the finished work of Christ on the Cross (Romans 8:12) and resist the temptations that he brings to us.

Consequently, we must:

1. Repent and confess our sins to receive forgiveness (1 John 1:9)
2. Be cleansed; Have the legal grounds against us covered by the Blood (2 Cor 7:1)
3. Submit to God
4. Resist the evil one
5. Commit our lives totally and live in utter dependency on Him

Conclusion

God has a hope, a promise and future for us – His Will *will* be done through the effective prayers of righteous men. SP Dan Foo encourages us to cultivate a heart of repentance, to always rely and depend on God, to and not lose heart to always pray (Luke 18:1).

QUESTIONS

How would you describe your existing prayer life? If possible, share the reasons behind your reflection.

There are times where unanswered prayers *could be* because of certain blockages or footholds in our lives. Ask the Lord to reveal any specific areas in which this may be true and share with the cell for A&C, P&C.

SP Dan Foo encourages us to pray for our a. family members and b. one another in the cell group. Share with your cell group a prayer request that they can commit to praying together with you.