

**A Call to Pray**  
**Part 2**  
**"Private Prayer"**

**Matthew 6:5-6 "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."** (NIV)

**We're focused on PRAYER in the New Year of 2019.**

**Last time we started our new series, "A Call to Pray" with a very basic, foundational message called, "God Answers Prayer."**

**Life goes better with prayer.**

**Prayer makes your load lighter, your heart brighter, and your life happier!**

**Prayer shortens the distance between you and God's best!**

**Christians pray like humans breathe....if you're truly saved, you will pray.**

**Prayer changes things.**

**If you follow the footprints leading up to every great move of God, they are footprints of prayer.**

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**Now, I want us to take a look today at what our Lord Jesus said about prayer, because no one in the Bible encouraged prayer more than He did...**

**And NO ONE prayed like Jesus prayed!**

**I want you to notice first from our text that:**

**I. Jesus expects His own to be in prayer...**

**He didn't say "IF" you pray, He said "WHEN."**

**He expects His children to pray, and gave us all kinds of incentives to do it...Here are a few examples:**

**OVERFLOWING JOY: "You haven't tried this before, but begin now. Ask, using my name, and you will receive, and your cup of joy will overflow" (John 16:24 LB).**

**STRENGTH IN TEMPTATION: “Keep alert and pray. Otherwise temptation will overpower you” (Matt. 26:41 LB).**

**OUR NEEDS MET: In the Sermon on the Mount He said, “Ask, seek, and knock” in prayer...**

**In ASKING, your needs are met.**

**In SEEKING, your questions are answered.**

**In KNOCKING, the doors of opportunity are opened.**

**And these are just a few incentives!**

**Jesus says, “pray, pray, and pray some more!”**

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**Next, the Lord forbids...**

## **II. Prayer for show**

**“When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites who pretend piety by praying publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. Truly, that is all the reward they will ever get” (Matt 6:5 LB).**

**In Jesus' day it was the custom of the Jews to pray standing, with outstretched, uplifted hands in the synagogues...**

**And they did the same on street corners and heavily trafficked areas...all with one eye open, glancing around to see who was watching.**

**Jesus says, "Don't do this!"**

**Those who pray to be seen by men will have their reward then and there—they impress men but not God.**

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**The Lord calls us to be SINCERE in our praying, so He said:**

### **III. Pray to your Father privately**

**Now, He's not slamming corporate prayer, But He *IS* encouraging here the development of a *PRIVATE PRAYER LIFE*.**

**He says, "But you, (My true followers) when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*;"**

**So first, Jesus says...**

#### **A.) Pray alone**

**Go into a room where you can't be bothered, shut the door, and approach God between you and Him alone.**

**Jesus called this place of private prayer "the secret place."**

**The SECRET PLACE is where we escape from all distractions—people, sights, sounds...shutting out all electronics—iPhones, iPads, telephones, radio, television, anything that might interfere from conversing with God in a solitary place.**

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**ILLUS: A very popular Christian movie about this very thing is called The War Room.**

**In The War Room, a woman named Elizabeth is experiencing a troubled marriage.**

**During this time she goes to work for an elderly woman named Miss Clara, who happens to be a lifelong, fervent prayer.**

**Sensing the stress on Elizabeth, she suggests that she fight for her marriage in a prayer closet she calls "The War Room."**

**She tells Elizabeth, "In order to stand up and fight the enemy, you need to get on your knees and pray."**

**Elizabeth creates her own secret place (war room) at home and starts praying daily.**

**The movie shows how eventually things begin to turn and the marriage is saved!**

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**And by the way, Tomorrow, January 21, our ladies ministry is starting a brand new 6 week prayer series along with a study booklet based on The War Room.**

**Ladies, don't miss it! It starts at 7:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall...**

**And It will also be offered on Thursday morning at 10 a.m. upstairs in room 210.**

**QUESTION church: Do you have a War Room, a Secret Place where you get alone to pray to the Father?**

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**How important is a Secret Place to our prayer life?**

**The Bible reveals that all of the great men and women of Scripture spent regular times alone with God.**

**—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob built altars in every new place they journeyed to and there prayed alone to God.**

**—Moses went up into the mountain to spend long periods of time alone with God, and came back down with his face shining with God's glory.**

**—Jesus broke away from the crowds regularly to go up into a mountain or a solitary wilderness place to meet with His Heavenly Father.....He prayed privately in the Garden of Gethsemane for strength before the crucifixion.**

**—Paul the Apostle, immediately after his salvation, went to Arabia where he spent 3 years alone with God.**

**—And amongst well-known Christians in Christian history we have Susannah Wesley, the mother of the famous John Wesley, the founder of Methodism...**

**Susannah bore 19 children and lost 9 of them to death...**

**Susannah's husband often left her for long periods of time, and went to debtor's prison for his financial mismanagement.**

**She lived under constant pressure and stress to feed and clothe her household, and was frequently sick.**

**As you can imagine, with 10 children running around, Suzannah struggled to find a secret place to get away with the Lord...but she managed in a very unique way!**

**One day she advised her children that when they saw her with her apron over her head, that meant she was in prayer and couldn't be disturbed.**

**It became known as "Suzannah's prayer apron."**

**Daily she would throw the apron over her head in their tiny home, shutting herself in with God as best she could, and prayed!**

**And her prayers were not in vain...**

**Of those 10 children, two of them grew up to lead millions to Christ—John Wesley the preacher, and Charles Wesley the hymn writer!**

**Jesus says to us all: "But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*;"**

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**And then another incentive from Jesus—He attached a promise to His command:**



**“...and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”**

**FOLKS: The God of the Bible is a REWARDING God...He REWARDS His people when they respond to Him with obedience and faith.**

**9 times in the Sermon on the Mount alone, Jesus talks about REWARDS from God’s hand!**

**He promises that:**

**—Those persecuted for Christ will be rewarded.**

**—Those who give, pray, and fast with the right motives will be rewarded.**

**—Those who practice love toward enemies will be rewarded.**

**The Bible says:**

**“You can never please God without faith...Anyone who wants to come to God must believe that there IS a God and that he REWARDS those who sincerely look for him” (Heb. 11:6 LB).**

**So true faith always believes two things—God is, and God rewards faith and obedience!**

**We would never pray without both those convictions—God IS there, and He REWARDS the prayer of faith!**

**—God rewarded Abraham with a CHILD in his old age.**

**—He rewarded Moses with Israel's deliverance from EGYPT.**

**—He rewarded Joseph by placing him 2ND TO PHARAOH over all Egypt.**

**—He rewarded David with the throne of Israel after 10 years of persecution.**

**So we enter the SECRET PLACE with the confidence that God will REWARD us with answers—we will see the hand of God at work in our lives.**

**Bottom line: Prayer is never futile, useless, or a waste of time!**

**LET'S PRAY**



