

# PRAY: Part III

11 - Ephesians: Arise & Walk  
Church on the Park | Sunday, 19 August 2018

**Text:** Ephesians 2:19-22, 6:18-20; 1 John 5:14-15; Isaiah 56:6-8

**Theme:** When you are intimate with God you can be militant in prayer.

**Intro:** The last few weeks we've been focusing on prayer. Why? Because the house that God is building is a house of prayer and only by becoming a house of prayer are we fulfilling God's purpose. To teach you how to pray, I've used the word 'PRAY' as an acronym. 'P' stands for purity and 'R' stands for rest. Today, we will focus on the 'A' in 'PRAY'; 'A' stands for ask. But first, we have to proceed very cautiously. We can only properly put asking into practice if we learn the lessons of the first two letters. 'Asking' can be rooted in pride, greed and lust, or 'asking' can be rooted in humility, generosity and holy desire. We want to make sure our asking is rooted in God's love and wisdom.

## 1) Intimacy comes before militancy (1 John 5:14-15).

- In the same way, **communion** comes before **confrontation** and **waiting** comes before **warfare**.
- In my **early days**, I became serious about prayer.
  - However, I made this **mistake**: I put **intercession** before **intimacy**.
    - As a result, I began to **burnout** in prayer. Prayer became **stressful**, instead of **enjoyable**.
      - Yes, there is a work and warfare that is part of prayer. But this **work** and **warfare** is the **overflow of grace**.
        - First, **intimacy** with God, **then warfare** against evil.
        - First, **be** with God—discover him—before **asking** him for things.
  - Here we see that **purity** and **rest** come **before asking**.
  - Since **Anna & I's relationship** was long distance, I came to know her primarily through **letters**. We wrote back and forth.
    - We came to know each others **heart**. And I married Anna because our hearts were the same. We had the same heart for God and his purposes.
  - **Knowing God and His will** is the **foundation** of **prayer**. *But how can you know God's will?*
    - It's the same way you learn any persons will—by **listening**.
    - This is how you should **approach reading God's Word**
      - **Read to hear God's heart and listen to his will.**
        - If you do this the Bible becomes a treasure chest of gems rather than a yoke of laws.
  - *Yet, how can you listen unless you draw near? And how can you draw near unless you are pure?*
  - Listen to **God's heart cry** in **Psalm 81:8-10, 11-16**
  - So before we explore asking in detail, I want to quickly give you four listening pointers. You can apply this God, but also to people. The pointers are four 'C's'
    - 1 - **Come close**
      - You need to draw near to someone to actually hear what they are saying. If you are not close your going to miss words.
    - 2 - **Concentrate**
      - Concentrate by coming to a place of rest in your heart and mind. That means you need pause what you are thinking and what you want to say. You need to receive before you can give.
    - 3 - **Comprehend**
      - Seek not just to hear, but understand. Understanding is the key to listening.
    - 4 - **Clarify**
      - Think of a good waiter or waitress. They clarify and confirm your order before going back to the kitchen. Why? Because they know they may have miss heard.
  - *What does a baby do first?* He or she **breathes in** before ever **breathing out**.

- What I am teaching you is a **principle of life**.
- You need to **put on** the **armor** before you can **put it into action**.
  - Stand in peace before marching forward. “With your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace” (Eph. 6).

## 2) A - Ask (2 Kings 13:14-19)

- The **third part** of prayer is **asking**.
  - Here’s what God spoke to me, *“When you purify yourself and come into my rest, then you access my blessings and grace. Ask now, and you shall receive. You will receive wisdom and revelation. You will receive peace. You will receive answers.”*
- Here’s the other thing about asking: it needs to be **persistent**. The emphasis in Greek is “ask **until** you receive.”
- In 2 Kings 13:14-19 we see **Elisha’s dying words and prophecy**. It’s a graphic picture of prayer.
- I have observed that all the **blessing and expansion** in our church and Bible School came through **prayer**. When we took prayer seriously God caused us to grow. (When we slacked in prayer we got beat up.)
  - I’m not talking about merely the pastor taking prayer seriously. I’m talking about when the congregation takes prayer seriously.
- When ever there is an issue that is not in agreement with heaven when **target it in prayer**. We see it as an **enemy**—not a person—but the **work of darkness**. We **target and fire** at it in prayer **until** the enemy is defeated.
  - In **war**, you **never just fire one missile**. It takes **repeated fire** to bring down the enemy.
  - **Prayer is like the arrows, spears, missiles and canons of the church**. We **keep firing** at something until we blast it out of the waters.
- Like the **Joash**, the king of Israel, we need to let our **Elisha (Jesus) lay his hands on our hands**.
  - In other words, **Jesus needs to teach us to pray**. He needs to **guide us** and **lead us**—our **prayer** must be **moved** by his **Word and Spirit**—and then we will have victory.
- Next, we need to be **relentless and persistent in striking the ground** until we complete defeat God’s enemies.
  - That was Joash’s issue: he only struck the ground **three times**.
    - Elisha said that if he would have just struck the ground **five or six times**, he would have utterly destroyed their enemies.
- This kind of prayer is **not the polite and polished kind of prayer**. This is **warfare**; this is violent. (But not against people.) If you are too polite and polished you will never see the full victory.
- Notice the word **strike**. We need these prayer strikes. The word in Hebrew, *naka*, means **smite, strike, hit, beat, slay, kill**.
- And most of all, we need to keep in mind that **Jesus was struck constantly, over and over, for our salvation**. The striking of Christ on the cross is what is the **grounds of our victory**.

## 3) Jesus was struck so that the evil one would be struck down (Rom. 8:31-34).

- The Lord was struck to bring **heaven** down to **earth**.
  - And where **God’s Kingdom** is the **enemy’s dominion** must **flee**.
- The **cross** of Jesus is the **grounds** on which we ask and receive.
  - It’s because of **Christ’s work**.
- “...how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?”—this is the confidence we have in asking God.

**Conclusion:** Out of the overflow of intimacy with God you can ask with confidence. And in your asking you can be persistence because you are confident of God’s will. The cross reveals to us the extent the Father wants to answer our prayers.

## Afterthoughts for Next Message:

- Now think about **the Lord's prayer**. The **first part focuses on purity and rest**.
  - How? **First**, the **holiness**, the **purity of his name**. God does not want his name corrupted or tainted. He wants it honored and valued. So we see prayer begins with the fear of the Lord—that's its foundation.
  - **Second**, prayer focuses on **rest**—it's about **the Father's Kingdom and will** being done on earth. It's not about our works and will, but about his work and will. It's about what he wants. And this is the central concept of rest in Scripture—not self-comfort, but coming to an end of ourselves so that God's desires are done.
    - Entering into **God's rest** means **entering into his presence, desires and will**.
- *Again, how can we pray, truly pray, unless we know his will, unless we listen? How can you truly pray unless he is Lord and not yourself?*
- So **prayer begins with surrender, finding your rest and refuge in Jesus**.
- Jesus **drove out the marketplace**—the sacrifices, buying and selling—because to obey is better than sacrifice. It's HIS house.

In what way do we yield? Do we yield to the circumstance? No. Do we yield to the situation? No. Do we yield to sin? God forbid. Do we yield to sickness and the doctors report? No. No. No. We don't live in denial of these things, but rather we yield to God alone and bring everything to him.

We yield to God and God alone. Nothing else and no one else is our Lord.

There's also a sense in which we yield to one another. But only in the light of yielding to the Lord.

- Think about a **belt**. Dad's used to **whack** these kids with belts to **discipline** them.
  - Here's the thing, if you don't put on the **belt of truth** everyday, you'll come to **preaching** and think the pastor is whacking you. He's not, he's trying to give you a belt of truth to wear.
  - Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6).