

Prayer 5

A s promised please find below some snippets
based on J.C. Ryle's exhortations on prayer.

Reverence and humility

We should remember the great privilege we have in conversing with God in prayer. We should not come charging into his presence without regard for his majesty and presence: remembering that, although we are loved, we are but grasshoppers in his sight. [cf. Isaiah 40:22] Neither should we be quick with words or unnecessarily long-winded. Remember this is a conversation not a monologue. We must not make promises we shall never keep. [cf. Ecclesiastes 5:1 - 7]

Spirituality

Seek the help of the Holy Spirit in prayer. Avoid unnecessary formality. Speaking to God should be as natural as speaking to a loved one or true friend. As much as possible avoid making prayers repetitive. There will be certain things that we pray for that will be constant but make sure all our prayers are full of feeling and sincerity. Make prayers your own not simply quotations from the prayers of other people.

Regularity

Having regular times for prayer is vital. These times should be established in the routine of the day, not squeezed in to whatever time is left over in a day. Prayer should be as regular in life as eating and sleeping, working and leisure. Such times will be different for each person, and there will be appropriate occasions when the timing of such events will differ from the norm, but being careless with prayer times will be as detrimental to spiritual health as being careless with eating and sleeping is to physical health.

Perseverance

Once you get into the habit of praying don't give up the habit! It is reckoned that if a person does the same thing for 28 days then it becomes a habit. So stick with prayer in the early stages so that it becomes such a vital part of you that when the going gets tough you would no more stop praying than you would stop breathing. [cf. Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:7]
Remember also that throughout the day it is possible to fire off short 'arrow' prayers to God for specific situations, wherever you may be, and whatever you are doing. BUT please don't close your eyes if you are driving!! [cf. Nehemiah 2:4]

Earnestness

Pray as if you mean it! Be fervent in prayer: ask in such a way that it is clear that you are interested in what it is you are bringing before God. [cf. James 5:16b) - 18] We are called to fervency in prayer not listlessness. [cf. Genesis 32:26; Daniel 9:19; Hebrews 5:7]
In contrast tame and lukewarm prayers might get the response from God, "You don't seem to want what you are asking for."

Faith

Always believe that your prayers are heard, and believe that they will be answered. [cf. Mark 11:24] Ryle wrote, 'Faith is to prayer what the feather is to an arrow: without it prayer will not hit the mark.' We should pray on the basis of God's promises. Psalm 119 is a great example of asking according to God's word. Be ready for God's amazing interventions in matters about which you have prayed. [cf. Acts 12:1 - 19]

May God bless and inspire us as we seek
to bring before him more spirit-led, effective prayer.

Yours in Christ,
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