

The Habit and the Spirit of Prayer

by C.H. Spurgeon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of regular prayer and the value of short, brief ejaculations, highlighting the spirit of prayer as the underlying motivation for prayer.

Scripture: Psalm 119:164, Daniel 6:10, Luke 18:1, Romans 12:12, Ephesians 6:18, Philippians 4:6-7, Colossians 4:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, James 5:16, 1 Peter 5:7

Topics: "Spiritual Discipline", "Prayer"

Description

C.H. Spurgeon emphasizes the necessity of establishing set times for prayer in a Christian's life, arguing that regular prayer is essential for maintaining spiritual vitality. He illustrates this with examples from Daniel and David, advocating for punctuality in prayer as one would have for a meeting with a friend. Additionally, Spurgeon highlights the value of brief, spontaneous prayers that can be offered throughout the day, regardless of one's circumstances, allowing for constant communication with God. He encourages believers to cultivate both the habit and the spirit of prayer, suggesting that while structured prayer is important, the ability to pray at any moment is even more valuable. Ultimately, Spurgeon calls for a life filled with both habitual and spontaneous prayers to deepen one's relationship with God.

Transcript

To deal with this matter practically, then, it is the duty and privilege of every Christian to have set times of prayer. I cannot understand a man's keeping up the vitality of godliness unless he regularly retires for prayer, morning and evening at the very least. Daniel prayed three times a day, and David says, "Seven times a day will I praise thee." It is good for your hearts, good for your memory, good for your moral consistency that you should hedge about certain portions of time and say, "These belong to God. I shall do business with God at such-and-such a time, and try to be as punctual to my hours with him as I should be if I made an engagement to meet a friend." When Sir Thomas Abney was Lord Mayor of London the banquet somewhat troubled him, for Sir Thomas always had prayer with his family at a certain time. The difficulty was how to quit the banquet to keep up family devotion; but so important did he consider it that he vacated the chair, saying to a person near that he had a special engagement with a dear friend which he must keep. And he did keep it, and he returned again to his place, none of the company being the wiser, but he himself being all the better for observing his wonted habit of worship.

But now, having urged the importance of such habitual piety, I want to impress on you the value of another sort of prayer; namely, the short, brief, quick, frequent ejaculations of which Nehemiah gives us a

specimen. And I recommend this, because it hinders no engagement and occupies no time. You may be measuring off your calicoes, or weighing your groceries, or you may be casting up an account, and between the items you may say, "Lord, help me." You may breathe a prayer to heaven and say, "Lord, keep me." It will take no time. It is one great advantage to persons who are hard pressed in business that such prayers as these will not, in the slightest degree, incapacitate them from attending to the business they may have in hand. It requires you to go to no particular place. You can stand where you are, ride in a cab, walk along the streets, be the bottom sawyer in a saw pit, or the top one either, and yet pray just as well such prayers as these. No altar, no church, no so-called sacred place is needed, but wherever you are, just a little prayer as that will reach the ear of God, and win a blessing. Such a prayer as that can be offered anywhere, under any circumstances. I do not know in what condition a man could be in which he might not offer some such prayer as that. On the land, or on the sea, in sickness or in health, amidst losses or gains, great reverses or good returns, still might he breathe his soul in short, quick sentences to God. The advantage of such a way of praying is that you can pray often and pray always. If you must prolong your prayer for a quarter of an hour you might possibly be unable to spare the time, but if it only wants the quarter of a minute, why, then, it may come again and again and again and again - a hundred times a day. The habit of prayer is blessed, but the spirit of prayer is better; and the spirit of prayer it is which is the mother of these ejaculations; and therefore do I like them, because she is a plentiful mother. Many times in a day may we speak with the Lord our God.

From a sermon by Charles Haddon Spurgeon entitled "Ejaculatory Prayer," delivered September 9, 1877.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ch-spurgeon/the-habit-and-the-spirit-of-prayer/>

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