

Praying with Jesus & Paul
Jesus' Prayer Life

Your Prayer Life

How might your prayers be different when others are present versus when you're alone?

How much time do you spend praying alone *and* with no distraction?

When crisis hits, is your first response to pray or do you first react to the crisis?

Jesus' Prayer Life

Read the following verses and note the prayer habits of Jesus.

Mk 1:35, "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed."

Lk 5:16, "But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed."

Lk 6:12, "Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God."

Mt. 14:23, "After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone."

Why do you suppose Jesus avoided human interaction when praying?

How does solitude contribute to your prayer life? Solitude is . . .

Liberating: it frees you from all distraction so your prayers are focused

Engaging: it forces you to withdraw from the frenetic activity of life and confront yourself and God

Renewing: it allows you to confess the sin within and emerge forgiven

Notice when Jesus prayed . . .

During His inauguration into ministry. Lk 3:21, "When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened."

Before He made an important decision. Lk. 6:12-13, "Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them."

When God's sovereign plan is about to be revealed. Jn. 17:1, "After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: 'Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.'" [Note: God's absolute sovereignty does not hinder prayer but actually provides an incentive to pray.]

When others are listening, (Recall Jesus' instructions on prayer in Mt. 6:5). Jn. 11:41-43, "Then Jesus looked up and said, 'Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.' When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!'"

During His greatest need. Mt. 26:36-44; Heb. 5:7

- Knowing His life was about to end He turned to prayer. His last moments of freedom were spent in prayer, alone with the Father.
- His deep anguish drove Him to prayer, not despair or anger (Heb. 5:7: Note "this cup" v. 39 cannot merely be death itself or the torture of the cross, but the weight of the world's sin upon Him. See 2 Cor. 5:21. Also see Is. 51:17 for "cup" associated with God's wrath).
- He prayed in total submission to the Father (v. 39, "face to the ground" "not as I will").
- Jesus entreats His followers to pray for victory of spirit over the flesh. Such amazing focus that despite His agonizing distress Jesus thinks of others! Prayer is often the best weapon to defeat the evil one who uses the flesh as his battleground (Eph. 6:18).
- He prayed repeatedly (v. 44; also Lk. 18:1).

Now That You Know These Things...

If you see the value of solitude, what will you change to build this into your prayer habit?

When you get really angry, do you immediately turn to prayer?

Is an attitude of total submission built into your every prayers? Really?

In sum, Jesus prayed privately, earnestly, repeatedly, submissively, carefully, and confidently. Do you craft your prayers carefully when praying publicly as Jesus did?