



Jesus gave very specific teaching about prayer and it is in his famous sermon called 'The Sermon on the Mount' recorded in Matthew's gospel chapter 6 v5-14.

The first principle Jesus puts out is in verse 5:

'When you pray you must not be like the hypocrites they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners that they may be seen by others.'

This is the first principle that prayer is to **SPAN** the whole of our lives and not just be a show on demonstration for people that we want to impress but that the whole of our lives should be prayer and worship to Him, should be an offering to Him. That the whole of our lives are to be informed by His Lordship and be an expression of our trust in His authority and wisdom.

Jesus spoke to the woman at the well and revealed to her that there are streams of living waters that He offers, waters that she will never thirst again for. She says "I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers used to worship on this mountain but you say the place is in Jerusalem. Where should we actually pray or worship now?" Jesus says to her 'Woman a time is coming and has now come where the Father is seeking those who will worship him in Spirit and in Truth'.

It is not the outward forms of prayer and worship but it is an inward genuine devotion of the spirit that the Lord is looking for, a yielding of the very core of our being that then results in worship and prayer overflowing in all areas of our lives.

The second principle that Jesus speaks of here is that our prayer is to be **SPECIFIC**. Jesus says in verse 9 'Pray then like this....'

Not only is prayer to SPAN our whole lives but it is to be SPECIFIC in our lives. That there is a time when we pray 'Our Father in Heaven hallowed by your name etc etc'. It is so important that we do have a time and a place for prayer and that can be very regular through the day. I have found that one of the best times for specific prayer is first thing in the morning. I love to pray before emails, before whatsapps, before watching the news, before talking to anybody else, having a time with God and seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and trusting Him for all other things to be added.

Jesus is very specific how he takes us through that prayer, most essentially noting that our approach in prayer is to a Father and with a mind towards his purposes even before we bring our needs or our sins, the things we have fallen short in, the works of our flesh – we come to him essentially in our relationship as a child of God.

The last principle is that it be **SECRET**. Jesus says in verse 6 'When you pray, go into your room, shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret.'

Jesus emphasizes that the Father is in secret and He sees us in secret. 'When you pray close the door and say'.

Jesus is emphasizing here that our corporate prayer and every expression of prayer in public or in agreement with other believers should be upon the authenticity of our personal relationship with him 'in secret'. You may liken this to an iceberg – that our 'seen' prayer should be but the tip of the iceberg where the weight of prayer

is really below the surface and 'secret' – rather than the primary expression of our prayer being in the public domain.

I would love to encourage us to have this authenticity of prayer. That as we grow in prayer, it will be built on these essential design of God for Prayer.

That prayer would SPAN our whole lives, that our whole lives would be offered to God to His lordship and His authority.

That prayer would be SPECIFIC in our lives and we will be known as people of prayer and that that prayer would be essentially outworked in SECRET in our lives, in the secret place.

God bless you as you pray.

Other Recommended Resources

Books

- Praying The Lord's Prayer - Terry Virgo
- Praying With Jesus - Y. Cho
- Prayer : Key to Revival - Y. Cho
- Seeing & Savouring Jesus - John Piper
- When God's People Pray - Jim Cymbala
- EM Bounds Classic Collection on Prayer - EM Bounds, edited by Harold Chadwick.

Electronic Media

- Individual Prayer Developing a Powerful Prayer Life
Terry Virgo
<https://vimeo.com/56850100>
- Praying in the Spirit Eph Terry Virgo
<https://vimeo.com/16279598>
- Corporate Prayer Terry Virgo
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1heXsuBVtAc>