

Sovereign Grace Church

“Why We Pray” outline

January 7, 2018

HC 116

Prayer is a mainstay of what it means to be a Christian and to live a Christian life. Yet Christians often struggle with this idea of communicating with God. After all, we cannot see God. Consequently it's a bit difficult to get a sense of His really being there to hear our prayers. Of course, when we get to a serious crisis or the proverbial “end of our rope” prayer seems to come more naturally. After all, what's left?!

In thinking about these things have you ever considered that you have never seen me either? And I've never seen you? When you see my body, you do not see me. A wiser person than I has said that we occupy our bodies....but we are not in our bodies. You can dice and carve my body up into electrons, protons and whatever other sub-atomic particulars there may be and you will NEVER find me! But this does not prevent us from communicating, does it.

The first lesson to learn about prayer is that it is talking to another Person. If the interaction is not of a personal nature it is not prayer. The Scriptures give much information about and examples of prayer. It seems clear that the closer your walk with God, the more natural prayer will be. We will begin the last section of the Heidelberg Catechism today as it takes up the subject of prayer.

1. What Is Prayer?

Prayer is simply conversing with God.

Psm. 17:6; 27: 8-9; 25: 1; I Thess. 7: 17-18

2. Why should Christians pray?

- **because it is hard to be thankful without saying so**
Psm 50: 14-15; Phil. 4: 6
- **because grace and the Holy Spirit only come with the Asking**
Matt. 7: 7; Deut. 4:29; Eph. 2: 8-9; Phil. 2: 12-13
- **because God commands us to pray**
Lk 18: 1

- because prayer is a natural part of Discipleship
Mk 1: 35

- because we Love God
Jn 14: 21, 23

3. Potential Problems with prayer.

- Genuine vs. Perfunctory Prayer
- Formula/Written Prayers
- Teaching kids to pray
- Can unbeliever's pray?
- Calvinistic prayers

II Chron. 7: 14

Questions for Discussion and Reflection

1. Reflect on the quote from Calvin in the bulletin. Do you think this might be an example of secondary and primary causes? Which would be the secondary cause? Which is the primary? Are secondary causes necessary for primary causes to occur? What if the primary cause normally limits, in this case Himself, to the advent of secondary causes?
2. Do you pray? Is it important to pray? How often do you pray? How often did Jesus pray? Was Jesus busier than you are? Is there a difference between being busy and being hurried? Why is “hurry” an enemy of prayer and faithful living?
3. Is our church doing enough to encourage faithful praying? Why will people go out of there way to attend fellowship meetings and Bible studies but find it much harder to attend prayer meetings? Could there be something amiss about the meetings themselves? Do prayer meetings often degenerate into gossip meetings? How might this be possible? How can it be prevented!?