



Proper Manner In Prayers

"And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are..." (Matthew 6:5).

VCM-SOTM23

11 April 2018

"And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. 7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. 8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him" (Matthew 6:5-8).

Have you noticed how Jesus started this teaching with the word "When...", rather than "if" implying that prayer is not optional but mandatory for all. Prayer is often likened to the physical breath that we take. As a human being cannot survive without breathing, in the same way, a Christian cannot survive spiritually without prayers. A prayer-less Christian is a powerless Christian. A song writer once captured the privilege and essence of prayers, when he penned:

- 1 What a friend we have in Jesus
All our sins and griefs to bear
And what a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer
- 2 Oh, what peace we often forfeit
Oh, what needless pain we bear
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer
- 3 Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged
Take it to the Lord in prayer
- 4 Can we find a friend so faithful
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness
Take it to the Lord in prayer

"Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him" (Matthew 6:8).

In this teaching Jesus corrected the errors of hypocrisy in prayers, often characterised by:

- 1) Loving to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Their main objective was to attract attention to themselves and earn the praise and adoration of others.
- 2) Using vain repetitions and much speaking - an over emphasise on lengthy prayers, with the wrong concept that it is much speaking that makes prayers to be answered.

These corrections were not just applicable to the people Jesus spoke to during this ministration, but to everyone that is still carried away by such errors.

Which one is more important - gaining the reputation of others for attracting public attention and lengthy prayers, or getting God's answers to the prayers? To get heaven's attention and answers to prayers, Jesus admonished:

- 1) But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly (vs 6).
- 2) Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him (vs 8).

God already knows our needs, problems and desires before we go to Him in prayers. He wants our attention to be entirely focused on him when we pray; and He wants us to go straight to the point rather than beat about the bush for the mere reason of lengthening the duration of the prayers beyond what is necessary. Obedience brings blessings that will be manifest to all.

Prayer is more about relationships than rituals. It is more about motive than methods. It is more about manner than mechanics.