

Scripture Reference: Matthew 6:5-13

Date: April 28, 2013

Title: "Pray in this Way"

Focus: Proper praying.

Intro:

1. This Thursday is the National Day of Prayer. At noon, in front of the Apache Junction City Council Chambers there will be the opportunity to gather with other believers to pray for our local officials. Similarly, at 6:00 pm there will be a prayer meeting at FB Apache Junction to pray for our nation and leaders.

2. In establishing this day, congress recognized the need for people "*to turn to God in prayer and meditation.*" I thought by way of preparation, it necessary to take a look at prayer.

Body:

"*When you pray....*"

Jesus assumed people pray, and they do.

For Israel, it was a natural part of their community with God.

In America today people pray. A Barna survey showed 84% of people prayed in the past week. This number has held steady since they began tracking in 1993.

The vast majority said they'd pray whether God answered their prayer or not.

Such surveys include professed Christians and non-Christians.

Prayer can be found in one form or another around the world.

While not all prayers are effectual, it is apparent humanity is hardwired to reach out beyond him or herself.

Because People Pray, and Need to Pray Correctly, Jesus Taught on Prayer

Prayer is not defined by pattern. (v. 5 & 7)

For some, bodily position, phrases, repetition, infliction, etc. are crucial to prayer - Jesus says they aren't.

We appreciate prayers that resonate with us, that are appealing to our hearing. "Oh, he or she prays so beautifully!"

But, God places no value on prayer uttered based on the values of humanity.

God looks for prayers prayed "in secret" (v. 6)

This is not a command to pray privately. Jesus spoke favorably about a one who prayed publicly (Luke 18:13). He Himself prayed publicly (John 17).

He is emphasizing that the prayer God values takes regard of *nothing* but Him - just you and Him.

God seeks prayer that originates from the inner person to Him.

God values prayers of dependence (v. 8)

When a person comes to God, do they already know what God needs to do, so they tell Him? Or, is it acknowledged that "*God knows what you need before you ask Him,*" therefore we come seeking?

Because we tend to pray "*with wrong motives*" (James 4:3) Jesus provides a pattern:

Pray *relationally* - "*Our Father*" (v. 9) - The conduit of prayer is one of relationship.

Pray *directionally* (v. 9) - Prayer avails nothing apart from God who is prayed to.

Pray for *His* glory and will, not your own. (v. 10)

Pray *embracing* your dependence on Him (v. 11)

Pray for *forgiveness* (v. 12) - Sin is the great obstacle to relationship.

Pray for *direction* (v. 13) - Because we are dependent upon Him and do not know what to ask for.

Closing:

1. People pray. However, not all prayer is proper.
2. Prayer has meaning because of whom it is attached to. It is effectual, not because people pray, but because it is God who is prayed to.
3. James tells us prayer makes a difference when engaged correctly (James 5:16). Let us do so.