

**Scripture Reference:** Mark 1:35-39

**Date:** March 23, 2014

**Title:** "Orison"

**Focus:** Prayer - Communication with God — What the Church is  
Series 8 of 10

## **There are varying opinions regarding prayer:**

Prayer as formula (there are prescribed ways to pray, right vs. wrong)

Prayer as Magic (prayer as the means to affect an outcome)

Prayer as Universal - (every prayer, however and by whomever, is valid)

Prayer as a path to enlightenment (eastern religions)

The perspectives on prayer are derived from humanity's attempts to explain prayer.

Jesus practiced prayer. It was a regular and ongoing part of His life. What can we learn from Him?

## **Jesus' Practice of Prayer**

## He Rose Early to Pray

Jesus did not rise early to pray because this time of day is sacred or more sacred than any other. He did it because He placed the priority of time with God at the top of His list.

Exodus 20:3; “*You shall have no other gods before Me.*”

In practice, Jesus put God before all else.

Before His day began,

*Before* the disciples started asking question (v. 36-37),

*Before* He encountered the crowds,

*Before* He preached in the nearby towns (v. 38),

*Before* He got busy and events pulled at Him,

*Before* anyone or anything else, Jesus *anchored* His day in prayer to God.

Beginning the day with prayer places God in the position of influence. This time allows God to shape you before people and events do.

Because He would be entering the synagogues, preaching and casing out demons, Jesus rose early to pray. There is a connection between prayer and empowerment for the challenges of the day.

## Jesus Prayed Alone

This is not to say Jesus did not pray in groups or while others were around. He did.

However, Jesus intentionally placed Himself where God would have His full attention. This is what He called the “inner room” (Matt. 6:5-6).

Aloneness is essential because prayer is about connecting with God. Remember when Jesus taught His disciples the pray, how He started, “Our Father, Who is in Heaven” (Matt. 6:9).

Prayer that is not God centered, where the disciple and The Father connect, is futile, vain, and empty.

All the benefits people note about prayer emanate from coming into communion with God.

Matt. 6:6; *“But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.”*

Prayer is not about letting others know your need or of your faithfulness to pray. Neither is prayer about letting God know your need.

Prayer is not an attempt to entice God by your actions to perform as you desire.

Simply, prayer is communion with God (prayer). In prayer the disciple comes to understand God, lean into Him when understanding fails, or is changed to embrace the will of God.

Prayer is about a state of communion with God.

*John 11:41-42; “Jesus raised His eyes, and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me.”*

**Closing:**

1. The Apostles understood that prayer is the real work of being a follower of Jesus (Acts 6:4).
2. We tend to see prayer as an appendix to personal effort or one's last hope.
3. Jesus, by His own practice, reveals the importance and place of prayer in a relationship with God.

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