



PART 1: Where & When Do Matter

WALKING with God is a WONDERFUL PLACE to be.

→ *What does 'walking with God' look like for you? What should it look like? Do you think God is interested in the minutiae of your life? What is He interested in?*

→ *If you could have your wildest dreams come true, what would your walk with the Lord be like?*

Sneaky suspicion: When it comes to the state of their prayer lives, most Christians live under a constant & uncomfortable burden of GUILT, PRESSURE and INADEQUACY.

→ *"Guilt says, 'I don't enough.' Pressure says, 'I should more.' Inadequacy says, 'I can't, anyway.' Guilt comes from below. Pressure comes from without. Inadequacy we stir up quite effectively all by ourselves." Which of that trio do you suffer from? How do they play out in your mind? What are the solutions to each?*

EXPERIENCE TEACHES

a) It seems difficult to measure up to 'PROFESSIONAL PRAY-ERS.'

b) Your prayer life will most likely have PEAKS & TROUGHS.

c) ORGANISATION has some value.

→ *How confident are you when praying with others? Do you ever feel 'in their shadow?' What could you do about that?*

→ *Has your prayer life had peaks and troughs? Can you tell us about either: what did it feel like and what did you do about it?*

→ *How do you 'organise' your prayer life? What have you tried in the past that's worked?*

→ *How do you balance 'planned' and 'spontaneous?' What are the dangers of too much of one and not enough of the other?*

THE BENCHMARK (James 5:16) → It is possible to have a VIBRANT, FULFILLING & EFFECTIVE prayer life.

→ *What would a vibrant, fulfilling & effective prayer life look like? Is it a realistic target? How might you get a little closer to it?*

THE SETUP (Matthew 6:5-9)

⁵*"When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. ⁶But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.*

⁷*"When you pray, don't babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. ⁸Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! ⁹Pray like this:*

A. WHEN YOU PRAY (v6)

* The assumption is that there will be times you SET ASIDE SPECIFICALLY to pray.

* God values PLANNED prayer, but also wants SPONTANEOUS prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17, Ephesians 6:18).

→ *When do you pray? Do you have 'set aside' times? How has that changed in different seasons of your life?*

→ *What does it mean to 'pray without ceasing?'*

→ *Smith Wigglesworth said something on the lines of, "I seldom pray 30 minutes at a time, but I seldom go 30 minutes without praying." Discuss!*

B. GO AWAY BY YOURSELF (v6)

* Where's your PRAYER CLOSET?

* Message: *Here's what I want you to do: Find a QUIET, SECLUDED place ... Just be there as simply & honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to SENSE HIS GRACE.*

→ *Where is your prayer closet? Your special place? What sorts of place work well for you and what definitely doesn't?*

→ *What does it mean to 'sense His grace' when you pray? How do you get to that place?*

C. SHUT THE DOOR BEHIND YOU (v6)

* PROTECT your prayer time VIGOROUSLY.

→ *How good are you at this? What are your distractions? How might you deal with them? How does your mobile phone help or hinder your times of prayer?*

D. PRAY LIKE THIS ... (v7)

* The next words, in Matthew 6:9 are 'OUR FATHER.'

* The priority of prayer is not ELOQUENCE or ETIQUETTE but RELATIONSHIP.

* Open your HEART to God and He will OPEN HIS TO YOU in return (James 4:8).

→ *"The priority of prayer is NOT eloquence or etiquette, but relationship." Discuss!*

