

The Nature of Prayer

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: Luke 18:9-14.

B. We must either pray or faint.

II. We need to discover what true prayer is instead of just praying more.

A. True prayer is the only channel to the heart of God.

B. There is a form of prayer that is not prayer.

1. The Pharisee was praying to himself and not to God.

a. We often demonstrate false humility in our prayers.

b. We pray out of a sense of our own virtue and fail to pray.

2. The Pharisee expected God to act because he felt that God owed him something.

a. There are rewards for believers but not on earth.

b. The rewards the believer receives has to do with the strengthening of the inner life.

C. Real prayer is first an awareness of our helpless need.

1. The penitent sinner does not ask for mercy based upon his penitence, reform or words.

2. The penitent sinner came to be this way by seeing nothing but God in his prayer because of his sin.

3. We are always to recognize our inadequacy before God.

D. Authentic prayer is an acknowledgement of divine power.

Application questions:

1. Contrast the difference between the Pharisee and the tax collector in this passage. What stands out to you?

2. Does God take into account how a person prays? Explain.

3. How would you respond to someone asking for advice on prayer?
