**THE POWER OF PRAYING WITH A PURE HEART**

**Matthew 6:5-8**

* **Prayer is when we as children of God talk to our Heavenly Father and listen for His voice in response to our prayers, our actions, or to guide us in His divine direction.**

**THE EXPECTATION OF THE LORD IS NOT “IF” WE PRAY, BUT “WHEN” WE PRAY**

* *“Whenever you pray…”* (Matthew 6:5a)
* **A lack of trusting God as the Source of all we are will lead us to looking everywhere else for solutions that only the Lord can provide.**
* **A prayerless Christian is a powerless Christian.**
* *“Rejoice always, 17 pray constantly, 18 give thanks in everything; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”* (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)
* ***How much time do you spend in uninterrupted prayer each day?***

**WHEN WE PRAY IT SHOULD BE DONE A HEART FOCUSED ON GOD ALONE AND NOT TO BE “SEEN” BY OTHERS**

* *““Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward.”* (Matthew 6:5)
* **God knows the motives of our heart and He responds accordingly.**
* *“O Lord, you have searched me and known me! 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.* *3 You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. 4 Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.” (Psalm 139:1-4)*
* **In Matthew 6, Jesus teaches us that when our motives are selfish and self-serving we have already received our reward. BUT, when our motives are pure, done out of a heart of obedience to glorify God, then God rewards us!**
* **Whatever we do, whether giving, serving, or praying, we should be doing so for an audience of One, and that One is our Heavenly Father.**

**CORPORATE PRAYER IS ESSENTIAL, BUT IT SHOULD NOT REPLACE PRIVATE PRAYER**

* **God has always intended for prayer to be the primary way we show our dependence on Him.**
* *“But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”* (Matthew 6:6)
* **The person we are behind closed doors in private reveals who we truly are.**
* **“The hypocrite prays for the approval of a human audience. The true disciple prays for the approval of a heavenly audience.” – Dr. Danny Akin**
* **Our Heavenly Father desires to hear from us in one-on-one conversation, which should motivate us to commit to private prayer.**

**WHEN WE PRAY WE SHOULD BE SPECIFIC**

* *“When you pray, don’t babble like the Gentiles, since they imagine they’ll be heard for their many words. 8 Don’t be like them, because your Father knows the things you need before you ask him.” (Matthew 6:7-8)*
* **Slowing down and being intentional with our prayers will benefit more than trying to “sound good” by using many words.**
* **Whatever you must neglect throughout your day due to busyness, you cannot afford to neglect your time in prayer.**
* *“The Lord is near all who call out to him, all who call out to him with integrity.”* (Psalm 145:18)
* *“I call on you, God, because you will answer me.”* (Psalm 17:6)
* **Prayer is the most powerful resource that we, as Christians, have at our disposal when we pray with the right motives.**

**Connect Group Discussion**

**Ice Breaker:** Were you an attention seeker as a child? Explain your answer.

**Understanding:**

* What do we learn about God/Jesus in Matthew 6:5-8?
* Why is it important to notice that Jesus used the phrase “when you pray”?
* What does it mean to have an audience of One?
* Is Jesus discouraging public/corporate prayer in Matthew 6:5-8? Why or why not?

**Digging Deeper:**

* How does knowing that our prayer time is not only expected by the Lord, but is critical to our truly knowing Him impact you?
* What are some improper motives for praying? How can you overcome selfish motives for praying?
* What are some hindrances to taking adequate time for prayer? How can you overcome those hindrances?
* What are some things you need to do to strengthen your private prayer life?
* What is your biggest takeaway from this sermon and study?

**Loving Outward:**

* Who do you need to share the gospel with this week?
* Who do you need to follow-up with regarding the gospel?
* Who are you bringing to church next Sunday?

If you are not in a Connect Group and would like to get connected to grow in your relationship with God and others, contact the office at 225-272-3740, and we can help find a group that fits your schedule. (See back)

**CONNECT GROUP SCHEDULE**

**Connect Groups –**

* **G1 Student Ministry (Grades 6-12) –** Sundays 9am-10:15am upstairs.
* **Sundays @ 9am** (Ladies Only – Led by Marcia Cox) Renew Church Classroom
* **Sundays @ 9am** (Co-ed led by Joey & Sabrina Welch) Renew Church Classroom
* TBD - (College Group Led by Pastor Checkerz)
* **Mondays @ 6:30pm** (Co-ed Led by Randy Vinson) Hybrid format meets at the church and Zoom.
* **Mondays @ 7pm** (Co-ed Led by Terry Parker) Meets via Zoom
* **Tuesdays @ 6:30pm** (Co-ed Led by Pastor Checkerz) Meets via Zoom and Every 3rd Sunday of the month - meet for a Potluck style meal at the church.
* **Thursdays @ 6:30pm** (Co-ed led by Carmen Goree) Zoom
* **Thursdays @ 6:30pm** (Co-ed Young Adults Led by Josh Kern) Meets at Josh’s home.

**\*\*Some Connect Groups are currently meeting via Zoom meetings. Please contact us to get a link for the group you would like to join and we will get you connected.\*\***

**www.renewchurchonline.org**

**Church Offices: 225-272-3740**