

LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT PRAYER

1. **The only real mistake we can make in prayer is in not praying.** If we pray earnestly, almost anything we do is better than not praying. After all, no father rejects the child's plea because he / she did not use the right words or form. He welcomes his child into his arms.
2. **No matter how much you pray, you will never be completely satisfied with your prayer life.** You will always feel the goal is out there beyond you somewhere. We must work against perfectionism, that mental disease that convinces us because we are not doing something perfectly, that we should stop it altogether. No matter how ineffective you think your prayers are, believe that they matter to God and keep on praying.
3. **The Holy Spirit helps us in our prayer.** Romans 8:26 assures us "He helps us in our weakness because we do not know how to pray." The Greek word translated "helps" is a compound Greek verb "synantilambanomai." The "syn" means "together, with us." The "anti" means "opposite to, in front of." The "lambanomai" is a form of the verb "to lift." Together they tell us the Holy Spirit gets on the other end of our task, opposite to us, and together with us lifts the burden. He does not do this in our place, but works with us.
4. **Keep on praying.** Persistence in prayer is taught so many times in Scripture. One such prayer comes from Blind Bartimaeus in Luke 18. Let nothing stop you from praying. Not your own inadequacy (of which there is much), your own needs (which can be overwhelming), not your fears (which never tire of assaulting you), and most definitely not other people (discouragement is all around us). Just keep at it.
5. **Our emotions and feelings are irrelevant to effective praying.** We need to rescue our prayer life from bondage to our emotions. You know, "I don't feel like my prayers go beyond the ceiling." Or "I don't feel like praying today." When you turn to the Father in prayer, how you feel has nothing to do with anything. Pray anyway.
6. **Heaven places the same value on our prayers that we do.** If it matters to us, it matters to our Heavenly Father. The widow's mite did not mean much to anyone else in the Temple that day, but because it mattered a great deal to her, it was precious to the Father. This principle holds true for our prayers, our offerings, and anything else we give to the Lord: when it arrives in Heaven it carries the same value there we placed on it here.
7. **Throw away your clock.** Jesus said it is the heathen who thinks he / she will be heard for his much speaking. The goal in our prayer time is to be real, to touch Heaven, and not to log so much time. Think how insulted your sweetheart would be if you brought along a clock on your next visit, and you kept looking at it to see how much time had gone by so you could feel good about the investment you were making in the relationship. How much time you spend in prayer has little to do with anything.

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8. **There is a mystery involved whenever we come into the presence of God.** We are kneeling before the Almighty Sovereign God, Lord of the universe. Be quiet. Be still. Get alone with Him. Humble yourself. Wait on Him. Respect Him as having sense and quit insulting Him with your pet memorized phrases. Tell Him the truth, what you've been up to and what you're thinking now. Tell Him what blesses you about Him, and what areas of your life you need particular help with.
9. **Always keep paper and pen handy when you are praying.** When you come into the Father's presence in prayer. He will frequently call your attention to something He wants you to know or do. He may tell you someone to see, something to do, someone to call, something to forgive, a verse to look up, a text to remember, a debt to pay, or a neighbor to help. Write it down. Then, go back to your prayer. Expect to receive from Him every time you turn to Him in prayer.