



COMMUNITY OF FAITH

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES: THE PATH TO TRANSFORMATION

THE DISCIPLINE OF PRAYER

"It was the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede, the son of Ahasuerus, who became king of the Babylonians. 2 During the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, learned from reading the word of the Lord, as revealed to Jeremiah the prophet, that Jerusalem must lie desolate for seventy years." Daniel 9:1-2

1. Prayer Begins in God's heart

"And this whole land shall be a desolation and a horror, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,' declares the LORD, 'for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation."
Jeremiah 25:11-12

"...When you come into the land which I shall give you, then the land shall have a sabbath to the Lord. Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its crop, but during the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath rest, a sabbath to the Lord; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard." Leviticus 25:2-4

"Then the land will enjoy its sabbaths all the days of the desolation, while you are in your enemies' land; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths. All the days of {its} desolation it will observe the rest which it did not observe on your sabbaths, while you were living on it." Leviticus 26:34-35

"For thus says the Lord, 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place. 'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find {Me,} when you search for Me with all your heart. And I will be found by you,' declares the Lord, 'and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,' declares the Lord, 'and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.'" Jeremiah 29:10-14

"So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and fasting." Daniel 9:3

2. Prayer is God's way of involving us in what he intends to do in his unfolding eternal plan.

"You do not have, because you do not ask," James 4:2

"Truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father." John 14:11,12

"Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it." John 14:13,14

3. God designed the program of prayer as an 'apprenticeship' to prepare us to rule and reign in eternity with Christ.

"For He Himself says, "To he who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne"
Revelation 3:21

"I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Matthew 18:18

"Do you not know that the saints will judge the world...Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life." 1 Corinthians 6:2-3

The kingdom of God comes into being on earth through prayer.

“God never goes over the head of His church to enforce His decisions. He will not take things out of her hands. To do so would sabotage His training program. Only by bearing this overwhelming weight of responsibility can the church be brought to her full stature as co-sovereign of the universe.” (Paul Billheimer)

“God does nothing but in answer to prayer.” (John Wesley)

God makes the decision in heaven.

And then a man or woman is called upon to enforce that decision on earth through prayer and faith.

4. Prayer lines up our hearts with God's purposes.

How to pray:

- **Fix your attention on God, not the circumstances.**

“I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed: “O Lord, you are a great and awesome God! You always fulfill your covenant and keep your promises of unfailing love to those who love you and obey your commands.” Daniel 9:4

- **Ask, based on who God is, not based on what we deserve.**
- **Keep fighting on our knees for as long as it takes.**

“I went on praying and confessing my sin and the sin of my people, pleading with the Lord my God for Jerusalem, his holy mountain.” Daniel 9:20

“As I was praying, Gabriel, whom I had seen in the earlier vision, came swiftly to me at the time of the evening sacrifice. He explained to me, “Daniel, I have come here to give you insight and understanding. 23 The moment you began praying, a command was given. And now I am here to tell you what it was, for you are very precious to God.” Daniel 9:21-23

“In those coming days,” says the Lord, “the people of Israel will return home together with the people of Judah. They will come weeping and seeking the Lord their God.⁵ They will ask the way to Jerusalem will start back home again.” Jeremiah 50:4-5a

“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.” Luke 11:9

**“When we rely upon organization, we get what organization can do;
When we rely upon education, we get what education can do;
When we rely upon eloquence, we get what eloquence can do;
When we rely upon prayer, we get what God can do.” (A. C. Dixon)**