**Cross and Crown Christian Outreach**

[**www.crossandcrownchristianministry.org**](http://www.crossandcrownchristianministry.org)

7th November 2020

**Be Effective In Prayer\_1**

**For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. -** Matt. 6:14

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 of the biblical book of Matthew contains the account of Matthew, a disciple of Jesus Christ, of what his considered the very first word ministration of Jesus Christ. That session which had teachings included, laid the foundation of what the people were to expect from the Ministry of Jesus Christ. Policies with regards to major areas of human activities were stated, ranging from being the light of the world to reacting to acts of murder, adultery, taking of oaths and revenge. Love for enemies and the need to give to the needy was also addressed in this major teaching session.

Today’s scripture is focused on the aspect of the teaching that had to do with prayer. Jesus Christ found this act of man worthy of mention very early in his ministry. That is not surprising because the act prayer remains the major communication route between the Almighty God and man. Successful Christian life is not about praying but about praying effectively. It is not about how long one spends in praying but how effective the time spent in prayer is. Prayer, being a solemn request must reach the one to whom the request is directed as anything short of this will render the act of prayer a failed exercise.

Jesus Christ, in order to ensure that the request of his followers reach the throne of grace, gave guidelines that will make such sessions very effective and they are as follows:

1. They are to avoid being hypocritical during prayers – Matt. 6:5-6. A hypocrite is someone who pretends to have virtues, moral or religious beliefs, principles, etc., that he or she does not actually possess. When someone pretends in prayers, the intention is to deceive men but the question that needs to be answered by such is; who is the target of the prayer? Most times, this misplaced line of thought is what constitutes the obstacle to prayer because the mind is no longer focused on the Almighty God, who is the supposed target of the request, but on how such a person is being viewed by men. Jesus Christ says such a person will be rewarded by men but will not have a granted request by the Almighty God. He who intends to be effective in prayer does not focus on how he/she is being perceived by men but only by the Almighty God. In that case, such will not bother to be hypocritical as he/she will know that there is nothing hidden from Him, since he is able to read through the deepest of anyone’s intentions and so will not bother trying to pretend to be who he/she is not. Avoid being hypocritical! Just come to Him the way you are and ignore how you are being perceived by people. He will accept you and make you better than how you came.
2. Do not babble – Matt. 6:7-8. Jesus says babbling is for pagans because they feel that is the only way they can be heard. Is that also how you feel? That you will not be heard unless you babble? Then you are likely not aware that you are being seen as a pagan. To babble is to talk rapidly and continuously in a foolish or an incomprehensible manner. Of course that is bound to happen if all that one is doing is pronouncing words that lack sufficient understanding of the Will of God for that situation. Such a person ends up talking instead of speaking. That will be the case if the person is a pagan because one who is a Christian indeed will be aware that all the father desires is for the request to be mentioned in prayer, not because He does not know it but because it shows the clarity of your desires – Matt. 7:7. The pagan who wants to operate outside the Will of God spends a long time engaging in a verbal war, hoping that he/she can change the plan of God. The Christian spends less time in prayer because he/she is willing to operate in the Will of God and all he/she asks for in prayer is to seek the best position to be in, for the Will of God to manifest best – 1Jn. 5:14. Do not be an unbeliever in prayer as that will make you want to either force issues with God or unwilling to wait for His time of manifestation for the request.
3. Hallow the Lord in your prayer sessions – Matt. 6:9. That the name of God should be hallowed is not and will never be in contention. In this instance, reference is not to the personality of God but His name. Two attributes give God the personality that He is known for, and these are His name and His Words. Although He rates His Words higher than His name, he still desires that His name be revered. The Bible states that the Almighty God will not spare anyone who associates His name with vanity – Ex. 20:7. To mention the name of the Lord in vain is to associate Him with something that is valueless or will yield no positive result. The truth remains that the Almighty God will never grant a request that will bring His name into disrepute. Attempting to request for such in prayer will be a failed exercise from the beginning. Avoid associating the name of God with vain desires and you can be sure that your request will be on the path to being granted.
4. Working towards the establishment of His kingdom amongst men – Matt. 6:10. Until Satan truncated the plan, the intention of God was to replicate the peace and conditions in heaven, on earth. He has not given up on this intention which is one of the reasons why Jesus Christ came to the world (Lk. 2:12-14) which is to establish God’s kingdom amongst men – Lk. 17:20. To establish His kingdom will mean for the entire earth to have Him as the Lord, which is really who He is. Whoever is a Christian must be a co-worker with Him in achieving this vision, which cannot be achieved without the active participation of men. There is no doubt that anyone who is operating with this goal in mind will have his/her request expressly granted, especially if the request will further enhance the realisation of His desires. The prayer request of Hannah remained unanswered, even after several years of visits to Shiloh, but what a wonderful coincidence, that it got granted, only when the desire of Hannah for a male child that will be dedicated to the Lord, aligned with the desire of God for a replacement for Eli as the High Priest – 1Sam. 1:11. Aligning your prayer requests with the desires of the Almighty God remains a sure way of receiving answers to such requests.

It is obvious that Jesus Christ was not talking about facts to just recite, but was teaching on facts to keep in mind and put to practice when attempting to communicate with God in Prayer. The other facts will be considered in the second part of this devotion. May God answer all our requests in Jesus name. Amen.