

# ***Forty Days of Morning & Evening Prayer***

## ***An Ancient Spiritual Discipline Rediscovered.***

### **Introduction: Prayer is Essential**

Prayer is an essential element in the Christian Life. Throughout scripture prayer is the constant companion of the people of God. Throughout the history of the Christian faith, prayer has been preeminent in the life of the faithful. The following verses point to the frequency and duration of prayer from both the Old and New Testament scriptures. From this we learn that regular and frequent prayer *must* be part of the believer's life. Prayer must be the priority for each of us throughout the day. Prayer for the believer is as essential for our spiritual life as breathing is for our physical life.

Throughout scripture we are reminded of the times, locations and frequency of prayer in the lives of the faithful. The following are indications of the variety of times and occasions of prayer:

Daniel 6:10 *Three times a day* he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.

Psalms 88:13 But I cry to you for help, O LORD;  
*in the morning* my prayer comes before you.

Acts 10: 30 Cornelius answered: "Four days ago I was in my *house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon.*

Psalms 55:17 *Evening, morning and noon* I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice.

Luke 18:1 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable about a persistent widow seeking justice from an unjust judge telling them they should always pray and not give up.

Ephesians 6:18 And *pray in the Spirit on all occasions* with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always *keep on praying* for all the saints.

1 Thessalonians 3:10 *Night and day we pray* most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith.

1 Thessalonians 5:16 Be joyful always; *pray continually*;

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These references are a clear indication that prayer is foundational and essential to the life of faith. And they also reflect the priority of time devoted to prayer in the believer's life. A significant part of human relationships is time devoted to the people or person with whom we have that relationship. For our most intimate human relationships we seek time alone and in private with that special person. Our relationship with God is the most intimate of all relationships. Not only should we set aside time alone for Him and to be with Him we should crave those times. We would schedule those times alone with the Lord if we truly loved God and wanted to be with Him.

This ***Forty Days of Morning and Evening Prayer*** is intended to draw all who participate into a more consistent and meaningful prayer life leading to a deeper relationship with God. This season of prayer is to establish, or re-establish, the discipline of meeting with the Lord at the beginning and end of each day; and being continually aware of His presence throughout the day. It is my hope that each participant gains a deeper relationship with God through a disciplined prayer life. It is my prayer that the participants in this project will be blessed with a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit and will become throughout their lives, people of prayer.

As you begin this journey into a deeper prayer life you will likely meet with spiritual resistance. Our enemy does not want you to have a closer walk with the Lord. He will bring all kinds of distractions and traps to keep you from your time with the Lord. Resist him. Resist him and he will flee from you (James 4:7) because *"...greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world..."* (1 John 4:4). As with starting any personal discipline, be it a new diet or exercise program, learning a new language or learning to play a musical instrument we must go beyond desire to the discipline of practice. Along the way there may be many reasons to stop or give up. But, unlike diets or exercise, which are beneficial for the body or learning a language or a musical instrument, which benefit the quality of life - this journey, this discipline of Morning and Evening Prayer is one that will benefit your Spiritual life. Determine to start and stay the course.

As a believer you have the Holy Spirit indwelling you. Draw on all the strength the Holy Spirit gives you and resist the devil's attempts to draw you away from this precious journey in prayer. Use all the strength that God gives you to set aside your time slot each morning and evening. Guard that time. Let nothing take priority over it.

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Begin each day by reading the devotional for that day. Each week's devotionals have a particular focus. Our purpose is to begin the day with the Lord and spend the entire day – all our waking hours - in His presence and remain aware of His presence throughout the day.

We must remember to not only ask in prayer but to thank, to praise, to give glory, and to listen. When we ask God in prayer – this kind of prayer is called supplication - let us ask more for wisdom and guidance than for things. Let us be like Solomon who, when God said “...*Ask for whatever you want me to give you,*” Solomon asked for wisdom. (2 Chronicles 1:7-10). Let us learn to be more in need of God Himself than in need of anything He might give us.

To guide us through these Forty Days of Prayer we will focus each week on a different focus of prayer:

Week 1 – The Presence of God

Week 2 – Praising God

Week 3 – Thankfulness

Week 4 – Wisdom & Guidance

Week 5 – Confession and Forgiveness

Week 6 - Courage and Strength