**The Importance of Prayer in Evangelism**

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"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.  Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest," ([Matt. 9:37-38](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Matt.%209.37-38)).

Prayer is essential in the Christian's life.  Without it your witness will be far less effective and you will be far more vulnerable to the enemy.  When you witness, you need the blessing and support of the Lord.  You need to be in fellowship with Him.  Prayer makes this all possible.

When you witness you plant the seeds of the Gospel, but it is God who causes the growth ([1 Cor. 3:6-7](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Cor.%203.6-7)).  In prayer you ask God to give that growth.  In prayer you ask God to convict the unrepentant of their sin and by that awaken in them the need for salvation.  In prayer you, "...let your requests be made known to God," ([Phil. 4:6](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Phil.%204.6)).  Think back to your own conversion.  Were there people praying and requesting your salvation?

Jesus prayed frequently ([Matt. 14:23](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Matt.%2014.23); [26:36](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Matt%2026.36); [Mark 6:46](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Mark%206.46); [Luke 5:16](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Luke%205.16); John 17).  Paul prayed ([Rom. 1:9](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Rom.%201.9); [Eph. 1:16](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Eph.%201.16)).  Stephen prayed ([Acts 7:55-60](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Acts%207.55-60)). You must pray.  God wants you to pray to Him and have fellowship with Him ([John 1:1-4](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/John%201.1-4)).  Why?  One reason is that our battle is not against flesh and blood but against powers and the spiritual forces of darkness ([Eph. 6:12](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Eph.%206.12)).  That is where the real battle is, in the spiritual realm.  You need prayer.  Prayer is one of God's ordained means for you to do spiritual warfare, and sharing the Gospel is definitely spiritual warfare.

Another reason to pray is that you can actually influence God with your prayers.  If you are doubtful then look at [2 Kings 20:1-7](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/2%20Kings%2020.1-7). King Hezekiah was told by the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, that he should set his house in order because he was surely going to die (v. 1).  Hezekiah prayed earnestly (v. 2,3).  The Lord heard his prayers and said, "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will heal you.  On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD.  And I will add fifteen years to your life," (v. 5).

Hezekiah's prayer made a difference.  That is why you, as a Christian, can be an effective witness, because you have influence with God and because you can ask God to save.  Prayer is a vital part of witnessing.

**What should you pray for?**

Pray for more people to witness.  Jesus specifically asked you to pray to the Father and ask Him to send workers into the field ([Matt. 9:37-38](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Matt.%209.37-38)).  What is the field?  It is the world of sinners.  Who are the workers?  They are people like you.  Jesus wants people to find salvation and enjoy eternal fellowship with Him.  He wants you to preach the Gospel.  He has given the command "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations..." ([Matt. 28:19](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Matt.%2028.19)).  Your witness for God may or may not be verbal.  But either way, you need to pray and ask God to give you strength, love, and insight.

Pray for compassion for the lost.  Compassion is a necessary element in witnessing.  It motivates you to speak, to teach, and to pray for others to come into the kingdom of God.  Compassion helps you to cry over the lost and to come to God in humble request for their salvation.  Paul said, "Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation," ([Rom. 10:1](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Rom.%2010.1)).

Pray for the desire to witness.  Pray this regularly and watch the Lord change you and give you a desire to reach out and tell people about Jesus. God will grant your prayers and joy will fill your heart as you fulfill the command of God by witnessing.

Pray for boldness.  Pray for the courage to step out in faith and speak up when needed.  Many Christians are timid because speaking a word for the sake of the Lord can be risky and frightening.  Boldness gives you the courage to risk ridicule and to endure the scorn.  Ask God for it.  "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.  Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord," ([2 Tim. 1:7-8](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/2%20Tim.%201.7-8)).

Pray to the Lord to bind Satan and his angels.  There is a hierarchy of demons seeking to hinder your witness and steal the seeds of the Gospel that you plant.  You cannot fight spirits with reason or flesh and blood, but you can ask the Lord to fight.  With prayer you can assault the camp of the enemy and weaken his false kingdom.  Prayer is a mighty tool, a powerful tool.  You need it if you are going to witness.

Pray for your needs.  Do you have a close walk with God?  Do you need a deeper fellowship with Him?  Do you have sins you need to confess and forsake?  If so, then pray.  Enjoy your privilege of coming to the Creator of the universe who meets your every need.  He loves you.  He wants to hear from you and He wants you to make your needs known to Him.  "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God," ([Phil. 4:6](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Phil.%204.6)).

**Hindrances to prayer**

Prayer is important for many reasons, especially for witnessing.  But prayer can be hindered.  So that your prayers and witnessing might be as affective as possible, a discussion of the hindrances of prayer is necessary.  Do any of the following apply to you?

Sin hinders prayer.  "If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear," ([Psalm 66:18](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Psalm%2066.18)).  We all sin, but do you have unconfessed and unrepented sin in your life?  If so, confess your sin, repent from it as you are commanded in [Acts 17:30](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Acts%2017.30), and continue in witnessing and prayer.

Selfishness hinders prayer.  "You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures" ([James 4:3](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/James%204.3)).  Examine yourself.  Make sure your prayers are not motivated by selfish desires.  If you find that selfishness is a factor then confess it and repent.

Doubt hinders prayer.  "But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind," ([James 1:6](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/James%201.6)).  We all doubt.  We all fail.  But when you doubt be reminded of the man who said to Jesus, "Lord I believe, help my unbelief" ([Mark 9:24](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Mark%209.24)).  He believed and yet doubted and Jesus granted his request.  Remember that God has given a measure of faith to every man ([Rom. 12:3](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Rom.%2012.3)).  Trust God, even when you have doubts.  It does not matter necessarily how much faith you have as much as who your faith is in.  Put what faith you have in Jesus.  Trust Him.  Watch Him be faithful to you.

Pride hinders prayer.  Jesus spoke of the Pharisee and the tax-gatherer who both were praying.  The Pharisee boasted about himself while the tax-gatherer asked for mercy from God.  Jesus said in [Luke 18:14](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Luke%2018.14) regarding the tax-gatherer, "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other."  Jesus shows us that pride is sin and that it hinders prayer ([James 4:6](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/James%204.6)).  Have the same attitude that Jesus had in heaven in His full glory as He had on Earth as a man.  He was humble.  If you are prideful, confess it as sin, repent, and continue in humility.

A poor husband and wife relationship hinders prayer.  This may seem a little out of place here, but it isn't.  A proper relationship with your spouse is very important.  If there are problems because of selfishness, pride, argument, anger, unforgiveness, or any of the other multitudinous obstacles that can develop in marriage, then your prayers will be hindered.  How are you doing with your mate?  Are you witnessing while there is anger between you two?  In [Matt. 5:23-24](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Matt.%205.23-24) Jesus said, "If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering."  Are you reconciled to your wife or husband (for that matter, anyone you know with whom there is strife) before you offer sacrifices of witnessing and prayer to the Lord?  If not, then be reconciled, so your prayers won't be hindered.  [1 Pet. 3:7](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Pet.%203.7) says, "You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that you prayers may not be hindered."

**Prayer is a privilege**

Prayer is a privilege.  It is a powerful tool.  Without it you will be a foolish worker in the fields of the dead.  Pray and ask the Lord of the harvest to raise the dead to life.  Bend your knees in fellowship with your Lord.  Let Him wash you in His presence and fill you with the Holy Spirit.  Prayer is where you meet Him.  Prayer is where you are shaped.  Pray.