

Spiritual How-to's

When You Pray, Behind Closed Doors

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Intro. It is the most common faith practice among American adults, as well as the most complex and multifaceted. 94% of Americans who do this say they do it by **themselves**, with **83%** doing it **silently** and **13%** do it **audibly**. **Motivations** for this practice are as **varied** as the people themselves. In fact, the only thing they all have in **common** is – **they are all so different**. Barna Research 8.15.2017

* What are we talking about, what faith practice? PRAYER

There's a lot that has been said and taught about prayer. We even have another video on "How to Pray", but in this lesson let's take a look from another perspective.

I. **Matthew 6:5-6, says this**, read itESV

When you pray ... Jesus said this 2 times in this short passage. v. 5 & v. 6

A. It is not really a matter of if you pray, who you pray to or how you pray in this passage, the issue is WHEN.

1. It seems to be a given that **you will pray**.
2. Jesus is affirming the Barna statistics that prayer is a common faith practice.
3. Foxhole prayers or not, the vast majority of us will pray. Religious or not.

B. The content of the prayer are not the issue.

1. Emergency, illness, family need
2. Direction or guidance
3. Gratitude or attitude

C. Getting with God is the issue.

D. So with that goal, Jesus told us **we must not be like the hypocrites**. v.4

1. Who pray to be seen and for the show- that is their motivation.
2. Their reward will be from people's recognition

E. He also told us, to "**go into your room and shut the door.**" v. 5

1. **Getting with God is the goal so we have to get alone with Him.**
2. We have to find a spot. We **need a specific place**.
3. And we must **close off the distractions** so we can talk to Him.
4. There are so many distractions in our life and they only multiply and are amplified when we decide to set aside a time and place to pray.

F. Read - The Message v.5

1. **A quiet, secluded place** (room, car, beach, trail, porch, hallway, etc.) Shut the door!
2. **Just be there, be present, be vulnerable**, be real
3. **Talk to Him honestly and watch the focus shift from you to Him.**
4. **Sense His presence and listen for His voice**
5. **Being there matters.**

- a. Hearing about God and what He does is one thing
- b. Being with Him, hearing Him and sensing Him is what matters

G. What happens behind those closed doors is what matters. It will change your outlook.

- 1. Behind the closed doors of prayer, we can open up and vent our most passionate emotions, hurts, feelings, and desires.
- 2. In that secret place of prayer with God, where we are fully known and loved, we pray to our Father, who is in secret.

H. What happens when we do?

- 1. v. 6 – He rewards us.
- 2. How? Well, here's what I've experienced.

II. Behind closed doors He changes us in prayer so we can face life's situations with God's perspective.

- A. How does David face Shimei's daily harassment and abuse without lashing out?
- B. How does Jesus endure torture and death on a cross without vindictiveness?
- C. How does Joseph, rise from betrayed brother to Egypt's Prime Minister?
- D. How does Saul transform from persecutor of The Way to NT Apostle to the Gentiles?
- E. How does Abraham become a friend of God?
- F. How is David declared a man after God's own heart?
- G. Why was Mary trumpeted as one who would be known through generations?



**They each spent time in prayer with the heavenly Father.
They got with God and conversed with Him about every situation.
Behind those closed doors of prayer, they each were changed!**

H. Here's just one sample of David's prayer time. Psalm 109:2-4,8,17-18, 21-22, 24

- 1. This is a prayer of David's where he is praying to invoke God's punishment on his enemies.
- 2. This seems wrong, but in it we see David's raw emotions, wrestling and honest desires.
- 3. In it we see where David found his strength to withstand harassment
- 4. In it David was changed as was his perspective of what was happening to him.
- 5. Because in his prayer time, he got with God and saw his focus shift from him to God.
- 6. When he got with God, he found grace for each and every situation by openly conversing with God about his feelings, pain and wishes.

III. Behind closed doors of prayer, when we get alone with God we experience His changing presence and perspective.

A. In our set aside time and place of prayer, where distractions are closed off, we approach our heavenly father.

- 1. We open up and share what's on our heart
- 2. We listen to His voice and direction

3. We find peace, comfort, and empowerment to go on

4. We receive His direction and purpose

B. Sometimes silently, but mostly audibly we talk to Him

C. Sometimes on a walk, or ride but mostly in our quiet place we talk to Him

D. Sometimes when an emergency comes up but in mostly in any circumstance we talk to Him

E. Sometimes with another but mostly alone we talk to Him

F. Sometimes in a crowd but mostly behind closed doors we talk to Him

IV. In closing, Jesus said, when you pray, don't be like the hypocrites and when you pray go into your room and shut the door.

* You can follow these standards from Jesus in our most common faith practice, can't you?

- Don't be like the hypocrites, Go into your place, Close the door

* Remember, it is what happens behind those closed doors of prayer that matters.

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