



A Journey in Prayer - Study Guide for the Teaching Series

Week 1 – Sunday 19th April 2020

In Don Carson's book, *A Call to Spiritual Reformation*, he asks the question, 'What is the most urgent need in the western church today?'

He says, that you could make a case for: issues of personal immorality; lack of integrity in personal and corporate ethics; overcoming the gods of materialism and consumerism; the need for urgent evangelism and church planting; or the need for bible study and literacy. However, he argues that, whilst each of these things are important, they are symptomatic of a deeper need in the church - the need to know God better in our prayer life.

1. What do you think?

Please read **Ephesians 1.15-19**

2. What's Paul's number one prayer priority for his Christian friends?
3. How does this compare with your prayer priorities?

Please read **Matthew 6.5-6 and Psalm 63.1-8**

If we put the emphasis for our relationship with God on our activity for God – then when we go into the quiet place, alone with God it can feel quite an unsettling place, even a barren place. This indicates that work is needed in our relationship with God.

4. How does this speak to you?

I identified 2 broad types of Christian prayer that are regularly discussed and taught. Firstly, communion-focused prayer (with emphasis on the experiential encounter with God's presence). Secondly, kingdom-focused prayer (with emphasis on engaging in conversation with God about his will being done on earth, as it is in heaven).

5. Which type do you feel more drawn to/ comfortable with, and why?
6. Why do we need both, like David in the Psalms?

Many conversations are relatively superficial – little more than an exchange of information without much self-disclosure. Some conversations go deeper – and we sense that both parties are revealing and sharing not just information, but their very selves. This conversation becomes a significant encounter. Tim Keller, in his book *Prayer*, says, 'It's a struggle to grow in prayerfulness. There is nothing more important, or harder, or richer or more life-altering. There is nothing so important as prayer.'

7. What do you think? And how do you feel about this teaching series on Prayer?