

I. THE GREAT REVIVALIST JOHN WESLEY KEPT HIS APPOINTMENTS

- A. One evening, John Wesley was enjoying tea with friends when the conversation ran late. He quietly excused himself, explaining, “I have an appointment in the morning.” They assumed it was an important meeting and asked with whom. Wesley replied simply, “With God at five.” He went to bed—because prayer was an appointment he would not miss.
- B. For Wesley, prayer was not a leftover activity or a casual discipline or something squeezed into spare time, it was a scheduled, sacred and mandatory meeting.
 - 1. **Wesley did not fit prayer into his life — he built his life around prayer.**
 - 2. **This is a clear reminder that if we don't schedule prayer something else will take that time.**

II. GROWING IN PRAYER IS ESSENTIAL TO OUR SPIRITUAL HEALTH

- A. A consistent prayer life is essential because only through a lifestyle of prayer can we receive the fullness of what God has for us, and grow into the person He has called us to become.
 - 1. ***Prayer is to the believer what breath is to the body—essential and life-sustaining. Without breath there is no life; without prayer there is no spiritual vitality.***
- B. Prayer was never meant to be duty-based or merely results-oriented. Rather, it is the place of encountering God, where we hear His voice, are strengthened spiritually, where love grows, authenticity is forged, and where we get our marching orders for the day.
 - 1. ***E.M. Bounds taught that powerful prayer flows not from methods but from holy men and women who give God unhurried time, depend on the Spirit, and make prayer the central work of their lives.***

III. JESUS' LESSONS ON PRIVATE AND CORPORATE PRAYER

- 1. **5 “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. -Matthew 6:5-6**

a) *Matthew 6:7-13 Jesus transitions from private prayer to corporate prayer by modeling what to pray when His disciples are together corporately, through what is known as the Lord's prayer.*

B. Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount not only teaches us how to pray privately and corporately, but also expects us to do both.

IV. **ROOTS AND RAIN**

A. Private prayer is the hidden roots of a strong tree; corporate prayer is the rain that falls upon it. The roots grow unseen, drawing life from deep within, while the rain refreshes the whole field. Without roots, the tree cannot stand. Without rain, the field dries up. Private prayer builds depth; corporate prayer releases power through agreement.

B. In my own personal journey, my prayer life was sparked in the corporate place first, and then grew in depth in the private. *I caught prayer in the public place and grew it in the private.*

V. **WHY DOES GOD CALL US TO PRAY PRIVATELY?**

A. He desires the real us and longs to reveal Himself to us personally. He seeks undistracted intimacy and shares things in private that he does not reveal publicly.

B. There are also blessings God has chosen to release only when we ask. In this way, He protects the relationship, drawing us into private connection before He answers.

1. *He will purposefully dry things up in our lives in order to get us to talk to Him more!*

2. *I believe God calls us to private prayer because He takes great pleasure and delight in rewarding us openly!*

C. God is sovereign, yet He delights to fulfill both our personal story and His global redemptive plan through the partnership of praying, obedient people.

1. *"I sought for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, that I should not destroy it -Ezekiel 22:30*

VI. **TEN KEYS TO DEVELOP A STRONG PRAYER LIFE**

1. ASK IN PRAYER TO LEARN HOW TO PRAY

- a) I HAVED PRAYED THIS FOR 20 YEARS.

(1) "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."-Luke 11:1

2. HAVE A RIGHT VIEW OF GOD

- a) Foundational to a strong prayer life is seeing God rightly. If we view Him as a harsh taskmaster, prayer feels like a duty. But when we see Him as a loving Father and Jesus as a Bridegroom who desires our presence, prayer becomes a privilege. The right vision of God fuels joyful, confident and consistent lives of prayer and pursuit of Him.

3. CHOOSE THE BETTER PART

- a) It is as simple as making a choice that you will make prayer a priority in your life no matter the cost!
- b) Mary chose the better part unlike her sister Martha who was too distracted.

(1) 41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."-Luke 10:41-42

4. SCHEDULE A TIME

- a) If you don't set a specific time in the day, other priorities will take over. Treat private prayer like a mandatory appointment.
- b) Start small and stay consistent. A focused 15–30 minutes each day is better than occasional long sessions—consistency builds depth.
- c) If possible, pray in the morning. Giving God the first part of your day aligns your heart before life's demands begin.

(1) O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You-Psalm. 63:1

(2) "And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, He departed and went out to a desolate place, and there He prayed." - Mark 1:35

5. CHOOSE A PLACE

- a) Jesus regularly withdrew from the crowds to pray alone with the Father in secluded places. Find a place where you can meet with God, return to it consistently, and guard it carefully.

(1) I have prayed underneath my stairs in a coat closet for 20 years.

6. HAVE A PRAYER LIST

- a) You will pray more consistently with a list than without one. A written prayer list keeps your time focused, guards against distraction, and provides structure that strengthens consistency.
- b) Prayer lists should involve three areas

(1) Intimacy

- (a) Focuses on giving my love and devotion to God. This type of prayer includes worship, meditation on the Word (pray-reading it), and fellowshiping with the Spirit.

(2) Petitions

- (a) Asking for God's blessing on our personal lives, relationships, ministry, and circumstances.

(3) Intercession

- (a) Praying for people, the church, government leaders, and current situations in the world.
- c) My personal prayer list involves, 1) Worship and prayers for my inner man including times of praying in tongues for my own spiritual growth. 2) My wife 3) My marriage 4) My children 5) My church family 6) My circumstances 7) Intercession for revival, the church, souls, and pressing needs the Holy Spirit highlights to me.

7. **BE CONSISTENT**

- a) Consistency turns prayer from an emergency hotline into a relationship. It helps avoid praying only when we need something.

(1) When trials come, you don't build a prayer life — you lean on the one you already built.

8. **PRAY USING THE BIBLE**

- a) Use the scriptures as your inspiration for your prayer life. Praying the Word turns the Bible into a living conversation with God and anchors our prayer life in His revealed will. *Read slowly, so you can pray the scriptures.*

9. **DO IT WITH OTHERS (CORPORATE PRAYER MEETINGS)**

- a) Praying with others helps us catch prayer before we fully learn it, broadens our prayer language, strengthens our faith, builds confidence and allows us to rejoice together. (Isaiah 56:7)

10. **ADD WEEKLY FASTING TO YOUR PRAYER LIFE**

- a) Fasting fuels prayer by increasing hunger for God, humbling the heart, and sharpening spiritual focus.

VII. **EXPECT PUBLIC POWER FROM YOUR PRIVATE PRAYERS**

A. In **Luke 6:12**, Jesus withdrew to a mountain and spent the night in prayer seeking the Father in private.

B. What followed? In one day He chose His leadership team, power flowed from Him to heal the multitudes, He preached the Sermon on the Mount, and He healed the centurion's servant with a word.

1. ***Private prayer preceded public authority. The pattern is clear. If we want power in public, we must pursue God in private!***

VIII. **10 HINDRANCES TO GROWING IN PRAYER**

1. Wrong views of God
2. Condemnation and Shame (feelings of unworthiness)
3. Lack of bible knowledge and understanding

4. Pride and self sufficiency
5. Distractions including digital noise
6. Sin
7. Unresolved conflicts in marriage
8. Unresolved conflicts with those in the church o
9. Comfort and spiritual laziness (lack of discipline)
10. Unbelief (don't believe that prayer actually changes things)