

The Sin of Not Praying: An Exposition of 1 Samuel 12
Desert Light Christian, January 19-26, 2020

[23] Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you, and I will instruct you in the good and the right way.

1 Samuel 12 records the prophet's retirement ceremony before all of Israel. His speech wasn't really a goodbye, but he declared that he would change from being their political leader to being their prayer supporter and teacher. Spiritual leadership never stops. In the early church, the apostles did the same thing. They quit their administration duties of serving food for prayer and teaching. *[2] "And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. [3] Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. [4] But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:2-4 ESV).* As Christ's church, we're called to serve physical and emotional needs of our community, stand for righteousness in the political arena, and be efficiently organized. But spiritual ministry is the highest priority above serving people's physical and emotional needs, transforming politics, and organization.



In fact, Samuel made it clear that to not pray for God's people would be his greatest sin against them. We must make the sin of not praying far, far, from us. **Each of us has many things to put right in our lives, sins to repent of, but first and foremost, do not sin by lack of prayer for others.**

1. Do not sin by lack of prayer: Samuel was a great leader but considered prayer his priority. He had 7 marks of an effective spiritual leader.

7 Qualities of an Effective Spiritual Leader

#1- Samuel challenged Israel to find any flaws in his integrity with them (1-5) *[5] "And he said to them, "The LORD is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand." And they said, "He is witness."*

#2- He called them to remember God at work among them their past (6-12). *[7] "Now therefore stand still that I may plead with you before the LORD concerning all the righteous deeds of the LORD that he performed for you and for your fathers."*

#3- He pointed to their future, a mark of great leadership (13-15). *[14] "If you will... [15] But if you will not..."*

#4- God was with Him. He backed Samuel up by sending thunder and rain in the driest time of year (16-18). *[18] "So Samuel called upon the LORD, and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day..."*

#5- The people responded. They recognized their faults and turned to God. *[19] "And all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for ourselves a king."*

#6- God showed grace. [22] *“For the LORD will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you a people for himself.”*

#7- Samuel owned his responsibility for spiritual leadership; that his great failure would be to not pray (19-25). [23] *“Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you, and I will instruct you in the good and the right way.”* He committed himself to teach, but made clear that not praying for God’s people is a great sin. It’s one we must repent from.

2. Do not sin by lack of prayer, Pray as Jesus taught in Matthew 6:9-13.



However, there *is* a way to pray most effectively. Without a doubt, no one knows the Father as long as, as deep as, and as well as Jesus and He told us how to talk to Him. We’d do well to follow it. It is the Lord’s Prayer, found in Matthew 6:9-13 and it reveals to us the things that God wants to hear from us. As we follow the familiar KJV it shows us what to pray about and what God responds to.

Our Father,

God is family first; Papa who loves many brothers (Romans 8:29). None of us is an island that can claim an only child relationship to the Lord.

*who art in heaven,
swallowed be thy Name.*

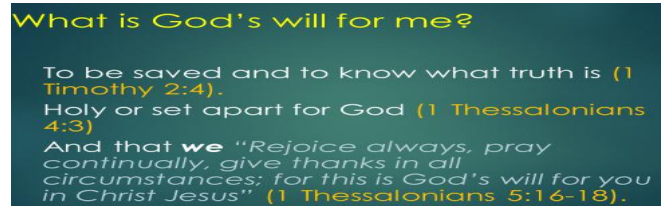
This relationship isn’t earthly, but spiritual. It requires faith.

God has a name, His alone, but as His children we bear it. Do we come to Him as holy children of the Father’s holy name?

*Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.*

Are we obsessed with our own purposes or His will; earth or heaven? Jesus, said, “Not my will by yours be done” (Luke 22:42). Does prayer include surrender to His will? Do we even know His will? Is it like grasping the wind or can I discover it?

3 NT Verses That State the Will of God



3 New Testament verses clearly state it:

#1- If one is not saved, God’s will is for them to be saved and to know what truth is (1 Timothy 2:4).

#2- If one is a follower of Jesus it is for becoming set apart or holy for God (1 Thessalonians 4:3)

#3- And that *we “Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus”* (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). We should be praying for: people

to be saved, our walk with Him to be holy, joyful things, our prayer life, and thank you should pepper it all!

Give us this day our daily bread.

Give us this day our daily bread: We need to take our needs to Him.

*And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those
who trespass against us.*

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us:

To acknowledge our sins and receive forgiveness requires forgiving which means that when we resent, to Him we vent.

And lead us not into temptation,

And lead us not into temptation: He wants us to talk to Him about our weakness, and beg His help to stay away from it.

But deliver us from evil.

But deliver us from evil: Literally, “the evil one.” The devil attacks us. We need God to help us or we will lose. But because He wants us to ask for deliverance, He will give it. Those who ask Him for spiritual deliverance will receive it.

3. Do not sin by lack of prayer: develop prayer habits.

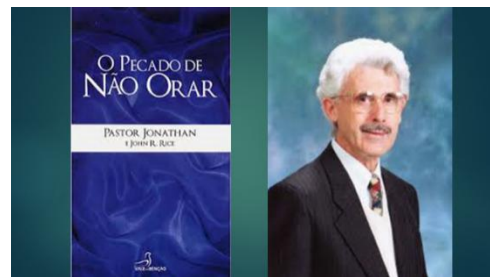
#1- Priority of prayer ***“First of all...”*** (1 Timothy 2:1-5).

#2- Consistency of prayer: ***“Pray without ceasing...”*** (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

#3- Prayer of and with faith: ***“Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours”*** (Mark 11:24), ***“And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up”*** (James 5:15).

#4- Confident prayer under grace: ***“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”*** (Hebrews 4:16 ESV).

Notice that we’re not only invited, but commanded to come to God’s throne, boldly. Often we hesitate to approach God because we are so flawed, thinking we’re really not invited. However, Hebrews 4:16 calls it a throne of grace, not works. God demands that we take His grace so seriously that we come to His holy, royal, majestic, and eternal throne with no inhibitions!



Jonatan Dos Santos is one of the respected leaders in Brazil and in his 80’s, he travels the nation and stays in a region, bringing first pastors and then churches together to pray. He wrote a book, *The Sin of NOT to Pray* (Portuguese: *O Pecado de nao Orar*). He said, *“To not pray is a horrible sin. It is to disregard the lost soul and person of Christ. It the apostasy of a child of God. To not*

*pray is another form of expressing unbelief. I do not doubt that to not pray is worse than murder, adultery, and blasphemy... This is the evil of churches; and their ministers: lack of true prayer... Direct and defined prayer will certainly get a response from God. Sadly, many believers don’t understand or experience this type of prayer... The disciples asked Jesus, “**Lord teach us to pray.**” They didn’t say, “Teach us HOW to pray.” They simply said, “**Lord, teach us TO pray.**” MY prayer is that the people of God abandon their sin of not praying, and simply begin to practice praying.*