

## Public Prayer

Eccl 5:2

*Mighty God & Merciful Father. How great and mighty is your throne. You made the heavens above, the earth below and filled the deep with wondrous and fearful creatures. As we consider that vast creation in which we live we are humbled by our smallness and yet you have set your heart upon us and made us the object of your unfailing love. It is staggering to think that you have granted us access to your very throne before which we are assembled this morning. Help us not to take such an awesome privilege lightly. Help us to speak to you as we ought. Help us to praise, petition & intercede in your courts with greater boldness & Power. We acknowledge that being bold before you would be absurd apart from the blood of Jesus that enables us to be here before you spotless and whole. And so Father we praise Him who, along with You and the Holy Spirit, reigns forever & ever Amen!*

Continuing our study of things pertaining to the assembly of the saints, we come now to prayer.

- I. The Model Prayer Luke 11:1-4
  - A. **Notice *Who* is addressed.**
    1. Not the audience (though they are kept in mind)
    2. But God
      - a. Intimacy
      - b. Not Chummy
  - B. **Notice **The Length**** (Economy of words)
    1. Eccl 5:2 *God is in heaven, you are on earth, therefore let your words be few.*
    2. Jesus said, *Do not be like the pagans who think that they will be heard for their many words.*
    3. He also said, *do not for a pretense make a long prayer.*
      - a. Carnal flesh is *very* religious. God is not impressed by *word count*.
      - b. What religious men esteem is not what God esteems
      - c. John Randolph - *The religiously self-righteous are, like a dead mackerel on the beach in the moonlight. They simultaneously shine and stink.*
  - C. **Notice **The Language****
    1. No flashy religious speak.
    2. Nor the modern opposite breezy casual.
- II. How to pray with profound brevity & clarity of expression.
  - A. **Saturate** ourselves in scripture (esp. prayers/psalms)
    1. Acts 4:24-31
    2. Eph 5:15-19
    3. Jude 24-25
  - B. **Forethought** - write it out in advance.
    1. But shouldn't prayer come from the heart?
    2. What makes meditation, forethought, less from the heart?

3. I used to do all my prayers extemporaneously - all sounded a lot alike. But when I began to write them out it opened up many new insights.

III. Another thing we notice about prayers in scripture is their specificity.

- A. **What is the occasion?** Wedding, Funeral, Opening of a worship service, Closing Prayer, L.S., Meal at home, Bedtime.
- B. **Are there other special factors to consider** e.g. Major illnesses, National tragedies, Important decisions.
- C. Who should lead the assembly in prayer.
  1. NT teaches priesthood of believers.
  2. In 1 Tim 2:8 Paul says, *I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer.*
    - a. Any Christian brother may.
    - b. All things are to be done for edification and not all are equally gifted in this area.
    - c. Christian men should not feel compelled to lead the assembly in areas where they are not gifted. We should earnestly desire such gifts and try to develop them, but those who are not apt to lead public prayers are not second class.

Becoming a Christian is an act of prayer. You come to the Father through the Son. Do you want God to take away your guilt? Ask & Receive!