

The Prattmont Church of Christ is just what the name suggests, a church that belongs to Christ. We are not a denomination; we are simply a group of Christians trying very hard to practice the teachings of our Head, Jesus Christ. The New Testament offers a complete pattern for what each local church should be like—its organization, its worship, its work, etc. We are committed to following that pattern. We cordially invite you to attend our services. We would also welcome any comments or questions about this bulletin.

TIMES OF SERVICES:

Sunday
 Bible Classes.....9 A.M.
 Worship 10:00 A.M.
 Worship/Bible Study..5 P.M.

Wednesday:
 Bible Study..... 7:00 P.M.



Weekly Bulletin
 July 16, 2023

What is the Cost of Prayer?

by Dave Brown

Have you ever thought about what your prayer costs you? You might say “nothing,” and that would be very close. But it does require us to turn from our daily pursuits and to center our hearts and minds on spiritual things so that we can communicate our petitions to God. Even though small, it does “cost” a part of our lives.

In not being willing to give up the time it takes to pray, Christians forfeit unfathomable blessings. Jesus said: “Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive *them*, and you will have *them*” (Mark 11:24). Of course, this verse does not give us the right to become God. Many forsake prayer if they cannot have such immediate gratification. Jesus’ words, however, assure that we will receive our righteous requests; for example, to help us fight the sin and temptations of this world (1 Corinthians 10:13).

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We also forfeit the right to expect God to respond to our prayers when our lives are stained by sin. “The effective, fervent prayer of a **righteous man** avails much” (James 5:16), and conversely, it has always been understood that “God does not hear sinners” (John 9:31; 1 Peter 3:12). We should not view righteous living as a cost; it is a gift of blessings and happiness once it becomes a way of life (Matthew 5:1-12). Those who fail to see this cannot expect to have their prayers heard by God.

The Bible has given some specific examples of sins that cause our prayers to be in vain: (1) refusing to forgive—Mark 11:25-26, (2) husbands not giving due honor to their wives—1 Peter 3:7, and (3) making long self-serving prayers to be seen of men—Matthew 23:14. But any sin can separate us from God, and thus nullify our prayers (Isaiah 59:2).

Now let us consider some of the things that we give up by ineffectual prayer:

1. Changing the course of major international events, as was the case of Elijah (James 5:16-18). Never, ever marginalize the infinite power of God. Are there not things in the world that we know should be changed for the betterment of all mankind?
2. The release from our anxiety and the acceptance of God’s peace—“the peace that passes all understanding” (Philippians 4:6-7). Do you really want to continue in your anxiety (Matthew 6:25-34)?
3. Deliverance from persecution (Philippians 1:19; Acts 12:5), even to the point of death (2 Corinthians 1:9-11). Paul gave

thanks to those who prayed for him. Do we not know of people, and entire groups of Christians in some nations, who need our prayers?

4. The salvation of others (Romans 10:1). Can we say that we have obeyed God’s law to love our neighbors when we fail to pray for their salvation? This would certainly be extended even to our enemies (Matthew 5:44).
5. The forgiveness of our sins (1 John 1:9). For those who have been born again (John 3:5) and baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3), forgiveness from our sins must be sought through repentance and prayer (Matthew 6:12).

Let us give thought not to the cost of prayer, but to the tremendous benefits that we are giving up by not dedicating ourselves to righteous living and prayer as we should. This is a tremendous incentive to our being godly and righteous, for without faithfulness our prayers will not be heard.

Consider all that you lose both now and in the world to come when you spend your life in sin, not the least of which is giving up the power of prayer here and now in this life.

Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.

1 John 3:21-22