

## A DISCOURSE TOUCHING PRAYER

### 1 Corinthians 14:15 (NASB)

<sup>15</sup> What is *the outcome* then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also.

### 1 Corinthians 14:15 (AMP)

<sup>15</sup> Then what am I to do? I will pray with my spirit [by the Holy Spirit that is within me], but I will also pray [intelligently] with my mind *and* understanding; I will sing with my spirit [by the Holy Spirit that is within me], but I will sing [intelligently] with my mind *and* understanding also.

**PRAYER** is an **ORDINANCE** of **God**, and that to be used both in public and private; yes, such an ordinance as brings those that have the spirit of supplication into great familiarity with God; and is also so prevalent in action, that it receives of God, both for the person that prays, and for them that are prayed for, great things. It is the opener of the heart of God, and a means by which the soul, though empty, is filled. By prayer the Christian can open his heart to God, as to a friend, and obtain fresh testimony of God's friendship to him.

I might spend many words in distinguishing between public and private prayer; as also between that in the heart, and that with the vocal voice. Something also might be spoken to distinguish between the gifts and graces of prayer; but ignoring this method at this moment, my business shall be at this time only to show you the very heart of prayer, without which, all your lifting up, both of hands, and eyes, and voices, will be to no purpose at all. "**I will pray with the Spirit.**"

The method that I shall go on in at this time shall be, **FIRST**. To show you what true prayer is. **SECOND**. To show you what it is to pray with the Spirit. **THIRD**. What it is to pray with the Spirit and understanding also. And so, **FOURTHLY**. To make some short use and application of what shall be spoken.

## WHAT PRAYER IS

**FIRST**, *What [true] prayer is*. Prayer is a sincere, sensible, affectionate pouring out of the heart or soul to God, through Christ, in the strength and assistance of the Holy Spirit, for such things as God hath promised, or according to the Word, for the good of the church, with submission, in faith, to the will of God.

In this description are these seven things. *First*, It is a sincere; *Second*, A sensible; *Third*, An affectionate, pouring out of the soul to God, through Christ; *Fourth*, By the strength or assistance of the Spirit; *Fifth*, For such things as God hath promised, or, according to his word; *Sixth*, For the good of the church; *Seventh*, With submission in faith to the will of God.

**First. For the first of these, it is a SINCERE pouring out of the soul to God.**

Sincerity is such a grace as runs through all the graces of God in us, and through all the actions of a Christian, and has the way in them too, or else their actions are not anything regarded of God, and so of and in prayer, of which particularly David speaks, when he mentions prayer. **“I cried unto him,”** the Lord **“with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear”** my prayer ([Psalm 66:17-18](#)). Part of the exercise of prayer is sincerity, without which God looks not upon it as prayer in a good sense ([Psalm 16:1-4](#)).

Then **“.....You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart”** ([Jeremiah 29:12-13](#)). The want of this made the Lord reject their prayers in [Hosea 7:14](#), where he said, **“And they do not cry to Me from their heart,”** that is, in sincerity, **“when they wail on their beds.”** But for a pretense, for a show in hypocrisy, to be seen of men, and applauded for the same, they prayed. Sincerity was that which Christ commended in Nathaniel, when he was under the fig tree. **“Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.”** Probably this good man was pouring out of his soul to God in prayer under the fig tree, and that in a sincere and unfeigned spirit before the Lord. The prayer that has this in it as one of the principal ingredients, is the prayer that God looks at. Thus, **“The prayer of the upright is His delight”** ([Proverbs 15:8](#)).

And why must sincerity be one of the essentials of prayer which is accepted of God, but because sincerity carries the soul in all simplicity to open its heart to God, and to tell him the case plainly, without equivocation; to condemn itself plainly, without dissembling; to cry to God heartily, without complimenting. **“I have surely heard Ephraim grieving, 'You have chastised me, and I was chastised, Like an untrained calf.....”** ([Jeremiah 31:18](#)). Sincerity is the same in a corner alone, as it is before the face of the world. It knows not how to wear two faces, one for an appearance before men, and another for a short snatch in a corner; but it must have God, and be with him in the duty of prayer. It is not lip service that it does what it wants, for it is the heart that God looks at, and that which sincerity looks at, and that which prayer comes from, if it be that prayer which is accompanied with sincerity.