The Lack Of Prayer

By Andrew Murray

"Ye have not, because ye ask not" (Jas. 4:2).

"And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor" (Isa. 59:16).

"There is none that calleth upon Thy name, that stirreth himself to take hold of Thee" (Isa. 64:7).

It is widely felt among God's people that prayer has not the place it ought to have in our ministerial and Christian life. There is the heavy pressure of duties and the force of habit. Can we neglect our duties to give time to prayer? Friend, is not the call of God for our time and attention of more importance than that of man? If God is waiting to meet us and to give us blessing and power from heaven for His work, it is a shortsighted policy to put other work in the place which God and waiting on Him should have.

The shortcoming of giving adequate time to prayer is one of which many are willing to make confession. But the difficulties in the way of deliverance are such as to make a return to a true and full prayer life seem almost impossible. Blessed be God! *"The things that are impossible with men are possible with God"* (Luke 18:27). *"God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work"* (2 Cor. 9:8). Do let us believe that God's call to much prayer need not be a burden and cause of continual self-condemnation. He means it to be a joy. He can make it an inspiration, giving us strength for all our work, and bringing down His power to work through us in our fellow men.

Let us not fear to admit to the full the sin that shames us, and then to face it in the name of our Mighty Redeemer. The light that shows us our sin and condemns us for it, will show us the way out of it, into the life of liberty that is well-pleasing to God. If we allow this one matter, unfaithfulness in prayer, to convict us of the lack in our Christian life which lies at the root of it, God will use the discovery to bring us not only the power to pray that we long for, but the joy of a new and healthy life, of which prayer is the spontaneous expression.

What is now the way by which our sense of the lack of prayer can be made the means of blessing, the entrance on a path in which the evil may be conquered? How can our fellowship with the Father, in continual prayer and intercession, become what it ought to be, if we and the world around us are to be blessed?

As it appears to me, we must begin by going back to God's Word to study what the place is God means prayer to have in the life of His child and His Church. We need a fresh insight of what prayer is according to the will of God and of what our prayers can be, through the grace of God. This will free us from those feeble defective views, in regard to the absolute necessity of

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continual prayer, which lie at the root of our failure. As we get an insight into the reasonableness and rightness of this divine appointment, and come under the full conviction of how wonderfully it fits in with God's love and our own happiness, we shall be freed from the false impression of its being an arbitrary demand. We shall with our whole heart and soul consent to it and rejoice in it, as the one only possible way for the blessing of heaven to come to earth.

All thought of task and burden, of self-effort and strain, will pass away in the blessed faith that as simple as breathing is in the healthy natural life, will praying be in the Christian life that is led and filled by the Spirit of God.

As we occupy ourselves with and accept this teaching of God's Word of prayer, we shall be led to see how our failure in the prayer life was owing to failure in the Spirit life. Prayer is one of the most heavenly and spiritual of the functions of the Spirit life. How could we try or expect to fulfill it so as to please God, except as our soul is in perfect health, and our life truly possessed and moved by God's Spirit? The insight into the place God means prayer to take, and which it only can take in a full Christian life, will show us that we have not been living the true, the abundant life. Any thought of praying more and praying effectually will be vain, except as we are brought into a closer relation to our blessed Lord Jesus.

Christ is our life. Christ lives in us in such reality that His life of prayer on earth, and of intercession in heaven, is breathed into us in just such measure as our surrender and our faith allow and accept it. Jesus Christ is the healer of all diseases, the conqueror of all enemies, and the deliverer from all sin. If our failure teaches us to turn afresh to Him and find in Him the grace He gives to pray as we ought, this humiliation may become our greatest blessing.

Let us all unite in praying to God that He would visit our souls and fit us for that work of intercession which is at this moment the greatest need of the Church and the world. It is only by intercession that that power can be brought down from Heaven which will enable the Church to conquer the world. Let us stir up the slumbering gift that is lying unused, and seek to gather and train and band together as many as we can, to be God's remembrancers, and to give Him no rest till He makes His Church a joy in the earth. Nothing but intense believing prayer can meet the intense spirit of worldliness, of which complaint is everywhere made.

– From *The Ministry of Intercession* by Andrew Murray.

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