

Unity in Prayer

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March 2012

Ever considered the difference in how you pray when you are alone or in a group? Both are important aspects of a healthy prayer life and needful in the especially difficult days in which we now live. Here is some of what our SAM community has learned.

Messiah, please continue to teach us and draw us into You, trusting Your Ruach/Spirit to teach us to pray as well as to number our days. Please cover these words and allow each one to understand whatever it is that You have for them; not from me. I stand in Yeshua's Name against any kind of distortion or condemnation through these concerns. Show us how to let the Ruach pray through us and intercede for us even as our sighs are too deep for words. Please let us grow more conscious of You as we call to you and less focused on ourselves, our ideas; or self-consciousness. Prompt us with Your Words that are spirit and life to breathe into each concern and praise. Abba, we direct our prayer to You alone; the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; through the finished work of our King and Redeemer, Yeshua haMaschiach. Omayne!

- 1. Express praise and adoration for Who He is, not just what He does for us.** A common problem for fallible, self-absorbed human beings, we need to remember Who He is. When we concentrate only on what He has done for us we are not being humbly respectful, and can easily fall into a pattern of “whining” or “demanding.” It will reveal whether we are more interested in benefits we receive or in our love for Him and being “taken up” into His plans.
- 2. Attention directed to our Father/YHWH in Messiah's Name.** “Praying” extensive details and information about a situation that people in a group “should” know, may indicate “praying to the people” rather than to Him. Our Abba already knows all the details! An easy trap to fall into, it is akin to gossip. It is not honoring to address Him but really talk to people. Information can certainly be shared in group conversation but is not always needed to agree in prayer for His will to be done. At the very least, perhaps we can be aware that we are dropping in and out of “prayer focus” as we give information.
- 3. Group/corporate prayer is a unified approach to Him.** This is an especially difficult area to address! Not intended to discourage people from making a personal request or statement of need, yet group prayer is not always the best time to go into deep and extensive details. Those details are best kept for personal prayer life or with an accountability prayer partner. We need His leading and discernment and need to **ask** for that! If extensive personal details arise that one may think people in the whole group need to know, then again, the “trap” of praying to the people, not to Him may arise.

4. Confidence in Messiah rather than emphasis on the problem. How—from where-- do we pray? As a trampled down, defeated person or as an overcomer in the authority of Messiah seated at the right Hand of the Father ABOVE powers, principalities, thrones and dominions? Awareness of our positional authority in Him brings a sense of peace in difficulties. **We need to pray from the facts, not the feelings.**

Another way to say it comes from "Prayers that Avail Much" by Word Ministries, Inc. ***Talk the answer, not the problem.*** It is always wise to incorporate fitting Scripture!

5. Bringing our concerns to our Father: There is not only one "right" way to pray! Fear of public speaking in prayer is common. (*In my Lutheran background, I never learned how to address Him in spontaneous prayer.*) The encouragement of others, learning to listen to His Spirit, and incorporating His Word has helped many overcome that barrier.

Even here, there are boundaries and appropriate or inappropriate behaviors. It is not so much about "how" to pray as it is "to whom" we address our prayer. Perhaps one element of that apprehension about praying in a group is self-consciousness that comes from too much awareness and concern about what others might think, rather than what we are speaking to our Elohim?

6. There is value in BOTH written/liturgical prayer and spontaneous personal prayer. We need to be prayerfully discerning about falling into a habitual prayer forms rather than from the heart. (In Hebrew, this is called one's *Kavannah*.) A common practice in Christian circles has been the repeated use of His *title*, Lord, woven into every request, yet never using His Name; with almost a "magical" sense of entitlement.

For example: It is easy to fall into routine prayer for those who are ill; for the wisdom of the doctors, for strength...and so forth. I have called them "safe, lady prayers" meaning that corporate prayer can fall into such patterns with no depth, strength or joy. No risk or personal exposure or any subject too deep that might be difficult for the group, which is NOT a good thing! It does, however, reflect the level of trust between group members which really can't be forced.

7. Prayer style changes as we mature. Do you feel the difference between a focus on "me," "us," and a wider focus? Children's prayers are usually very close and personal. Growing to an adult, parent and later elder stage should bring a more broad focus. (Sometimes even adults appropriately pray child-like prayers!) Elders also have a wider understanding of how to pray in His will about worldwide situations that concern us all which ideally draws all group participants toward greater depth and intimacy in prayer.

8. Group prayer "flow" is different than individual prayer. Have you noticed and felt it? Each person doing "their own thing" and speaking in turns, is not the same as ***praying together***; listening to one another's intercessions and flowing back and forth in them; building in intensity while all are "on the same page". Sometimes there are jarring notes where it is evident that someone has been thinking more of what they are going to say or bringing up something that has nothing to do with what has just been spoken. This is an indication of whether we are in

"*echad/unity*" with one another and with Him. It becomes evident if people are accustomed to praying together; in the "flow" and direction moving back and forth between them, which can and does include silences.

It is awareness of "flow" that helps one know when to bring an open prayer time to an end. It is true for both individual and corporate prayer that there is a sense when a matter has been "prayed through."

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