

How to Pray at a Prayer Meeting

Tim Conway | illbehonest.com

As you're coming before the Lord with your needs, how are you going to plead with Him? You know, there's a lot of people that just say, "Lord, bless this." "Lord, bless that." "Lord, bless the other thing." That isn't the way Moses prayed. He starts by saying: Lord, they're Your people. That's powerful with the Lord. You bought us. You redeemed us. We're Yours.

What do you need? I ask you this, wherever you are, do you need a building? Look, buildings aren't just carnal. To have a place for God's people to meet, a place that's visible where people in the neighborhood can see where you are. That doesn't have to be carnal. What do you need? Do you need more boldness? Do you need more money? What do you need? How are you going to make a case? Do you want a church that's feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, bringing the stranger in?

I'll tell you what you don't want to do, you don't want to simply gather in your prayer meetings - brethren, if you gather in your prayer meetings and you know, Brother Joe back there, he wants to tell you about Aunt Matilda's sore knee. Could we pray about that? Could we pray about so-and-so's got cancer? Look, I'm not saying that churches can't pray about that, but when you've got people perishing out in the world and when you've got a world of darkness and when you live in the Northeast where there is so much darkness - this is not the Bible belt. This is where the Gospel is hated especially. Coming into prayer meetings and simply praying about everybody's aches and pains, somebody needs to stand up and say: Stop! We are the people of God. We are people to whom the commission has been given. We are the people who have been told to go feed the hungry. We are the people who Christ said, "Follow Me."

And if you're following Him and you watch the way He walked, how did He walk? He went to the masses and He proclaimed the truth. He went to the masses and He fed them and He healed them. And maybe we don't have the supernatural ability to heal and raise the dead like He did, but you know, we can pray for the miraculous out there, but we can do what we can do. And what we can do is pray. What we can do is clothe people. What we can do is use our money to feed people. And what we can do is use our money to take the Gospel to people who don't have it. We can follow Him in these things. We proclaim it and we mix our proclamation with compassion. That's what He did. He didn't just sit with the disciples forever and always and simply speak to them about systematic theology. They broke loose. He sent them out two by two. In three short years, He was gone. And they went out to the nations. And the churches - the churches were expected to follow suit.

I'll tell you what you don't want to do, you don't want to come into the prayer meetings and just pray: bless this and bless that. You want to come with your arguments. Why should God give you what you want? Why should God give Moses what he wants? Well, he knows: Lord, they're Your people. And that's a powerful argument. And that ought to be an argument for us.

Brethren, think about the different ways that people pray. Just think, if you're involved in the prayer meetings, you get sometimes just careless, lackadaisical approaches. You get people that rush in. They just pray flippantly. They pray what comes off their head. Sometimes

you hear people pray and you're not even certain they have a burden for that. It's like they're in front of the church and they recognize they're praying in front of other people. But they don't really live their lives like they have a burden for that thing that they pray for when they come into the prayer meeting. You wonder do they even pray for that? People are very quick. There's not a whole lot of thought. There's not a whole lot of order and argument in why they should have this. It doesn't sound like there's much of a passion behind it. People with no passion. And then, you know, prayer meeting's over, let's rush out - no expectation! People pray for things and it's not like they're keeping their eyes open. Okay, when's God going to bring this? It's just kind of: pray for this, okay, let's go, let's eat, amen. Let's get outta here. Let's go home and eat. No expectation. Just run off. That's the way a lot of people are.

And then you know this too. Sometimes you're in a prayer meeting and the laundry list approach: Somebody prays for everything they have ever wanted, might want, it's just: bang, bang, bang! One thing after another. Really, no reason's given, offered up. And a lot of times it's just: Bless this, bless that, bless that. Bless the other thing.

Or the excessive use of God's name approach. Have you ever heard the people that they pray and it's like they use God's name more than they ever ask for anything? Or really pray anything? If somebody talked to you and put your name in the sentence as much as some people put the name of God in their prayers, you would think it absolutely ridiculous. God knows what His name is. Now if we need to use that name sometimes to remind ourselves of who He is (incomplete thought). There in Acts 4, it only took one "Sovereign Lord." That's enough. We recognize. And the place shook. We get that kind of thing.

Or we get the unnatural approach. And a lot of times this happens in the reformed movement. You get the guy that stands up. And suddenly an unnatural tone comes out of him. You know Brother Bob. He doesn't talk that way, but when he prays: "Oh God..." It's like what? That just speaks more of hypocrisy than anything else.

Brethren, you know one thing, it was, I heard A.T. Pierson from one of you guys today. Pierson was the guy who preached Spurgeon's funeral. But he got to go to England one time and he got to hear Spurgeon preach before he died. And he also got to hear Mueller pray. You know the thing that struck him about Mueller was his prayers were so childlike. We don't have to put on any posturing in front of the Lord. Like, Lord, we're weak. If we were to recount all of our sins from this week, Lord, we know that it can't be on our merits. But you can present your case like we were talking about last night from Isaiah 58, you can say, Lord, we have tried to feed the hungry and take strangers in. We have sought to do that, Lord. We've sought to send our men out - our men and women. We've tried to take the Gospel to the college campuses. We've tried to be soul winners. We've tried to support foreign missions. Lord, You know we have. And You said in Your Word that if we pour ourselves out for the hungry, we'll cry and You'll say "Here I am." Lord, we need Your help. We don't have the greatest names. We don't have the greatest talent in the church. We don't have the greatest amount of money. Lord, You've bid us to do these things. It just seems impossible for us to ever start a home for homeless women. It seems impossible for us to set up - remember Pastor Hsi? He was ordained by Hudson Taylor, saved in those days. He had a home for drug addicts. God used him mightily. Can you do that? What do we need?

Or these endless "if's." "If it be Your will...?" Now look, I know, we have to be subject to the Lord, but "if's" - constantly "if's." Brethren, we need to ask for some things. Be bold. Come forth and no "if's." God, it is Your will that these folks in these churches reach with the compassion of God and with the truth of God's message in these neighborhoods on Long Island, in New York, across these Eastern states. It's God's will for you to show the compassion of Christ. It's God's will. You don't have to put a bunch of "if's" in there. I know we pray resigned. Listen to Mueller. "In my younger years, I had a good many if's, but those are all gone. I know that the Lord has the means at His command to answer all my prayers if I come believing, asking in the name of Christ."

Or, we get the roundabout approach. You know what that is. Moses might have prayed: Oh Lord, I would like to come into Your presence and to ask You to consider showing certain favor and bless... You remember how it was with Abraham? Oh, that Ishmael might live before You! Right to the point. There's the name. He said it. Lord, this is Your people. No beating around the bush. This is Your people.