

Praying, With Your Eyes ‘Wide-open’

“Men ought always to pray.”

– Luke 18:1 –

No, this is not a rebuttal against praying with your eyes closed! Many of us have been accustomed to pray with our heads bowed, eyes closed, and our hands folded, and perhaps taught this as the only acceptable mode of prayer.

I remember once driving someone to a funeral service. As I was driving my passenger friend suggested that we pray before our arrival, at which point, he asked me to pray! I learned significant lessons about prayer that day. First, it is always recommended that you keep your eyes open if praying while driving! Second, although praying with our eyes closed is a helpful way to avoid distractions, it isn't mandated in Scripture. Additionally, we tend to limit our praying to a certain posture, but Scripture tells of people praying while standing, sitting, kneeling, looking upward, bowing down, and lifting up their hands.

Some would limit praying to certain times of day, such as morning or evening. But in the Bible people prayed at all times; morning, evening, three times a day, before meals, after meals, at bedtime, at midnight, day and night, in their youth, in their old age, when troubled, and when joyful.

Similarly, Scripture places no limits on the place or the circumstances of prayer. It tells of people praying in a cave, in a closet, in a garden, on a mountainside, by a river, by the sea, in the street, in the Temple, in bed, at home, in battle, on a housetop, in a prison, in the wilderness, and on a cross. I remember a reluctant prophet that prayed in a fish!

Hopefully the point is clear: there is no specific correct mode or kind of prayer, and prayer is not limited by your location or circumstances. Yes, we can pray while driving, cleaning, cooking, mowing, taking a walk; and what a great way to use your time twice! Remember, when Jesus prayed in John 17 He said, “Father, I will...” The word “will” in that verse is best translated as ‘forcible, resolute, willful desire’; the strongest Greek usage for the word desire in all Scripture. Prayer is desire; a wholehearted expression of the heart, soul, mind will and the affections. By this understanding, we CAN “pray without ceasing”, on any subject, under any circumstances, and at any time of day or night.

– Article submitted by Chuck Wetzel, 05.06.20