

Welcome to the ekklesia fellowship!

Fellowship *with* the Father The Nature of Prayer

September 15, 2005

The Nature of Prayer

*“God, how could you do this to me after
all I have done for you?”*

–Louis XIV

What is the true nature of a prayer that God
hears?

True prayer is not a difficult thing. It is
natural, instinctive, and comes easily.

Luke 18:9-14

The Nature of Prayer

*Jesus is contrasting here two very different
men, praying two very different prayers
from two very different hearts.*

The Pharisee:

- Not concerned with establishing intimate contact with the infinite God.
- But looking and acting good! Showtime.
- “to himself” – he was not praying to God, but to himself.

The Nature of Prayer

The Pharisee:

- It’s not true prayer to approach God while we are impressed with anything coming from us!
 - *“Lord, come help me do this task”*
 - *Lord, I will contribute my ability to exercise leadership, my talents for speaking, and then, Lord, to top it all off, would you give me a little added boost of Spirit-power? Then you and I together will look good!”*

The Nature of Prayer

The Pharisee:

- Looked at himself and those around him – comparing himself to others.
- Was highly impressed with his efforts.
- How often do we “feel” able to connect with God because we are “having a good day”
- After all, what is our true ground for approach to God?
 - *2 Corinthians 3:4-6*

The Nature of Prayer

The Publican:

- Looked at a holy and righteous God and could only say one thing – “I’m a sinner”
- Thus, praying this sincere and humble prayer, everything that God is suddenly became available to him.
- The key to true prayer: Humility!
 - *1 Peter 5:5-10*
 - *James 4:6*
 - *Matthew 5:8*

The Nature of Prayer

The Publican:

- I'm a sinner, have mercy on me! – this is not for emergency use only.
- This should be our normal, everyday basis for living – the fact that we are completely helpless to save ourselves, that there is no righteousness in us, that we are sinners in need of mercy, beggars deserving nothing, without excuse before God.

The Nature of Prayer

The Publican:

- “Merciful” (HILASKOMAI, ἰλασκομαι)
- In this word is hidden the entire Gospel message!
 - More accurately: “be propitiated to me”
 - He is saying, “God, having had your justness satisfied through the death of Your Son, Lord, now show me Your love.”
- And he believed that God would!
 - He went down to his house justified!

The Nature of Prayer

The Publican:

- True Prayer:
 - Is an expression of our helplessness, an awareness of needs that only God can meet.
 - More than asking—in humility, it stands firm on His promises.
 - More than pleading—with humility, it believes He is already at work.
 - More than words uttered—through humility, it's an attitude maintained.

The Nature of Prayer

The Publican:

- True Prayer:
 - Whenever I have a need, big or small, prayer looks like this, “God, be merciful. Lord, meet this need. My hope, my help, my everything is in you for this moment.
 - An expression of complete and hopeless dependence on Him, for that's truly who we are and truly who He is!

The Nature of Prayer

What do your prayers typically look like?

Do you wait until you're “doing good” to talk to the Father, or do you cast yourself at His feet in complete humility in the “good” and “bad” moments?