

## **WHEN PRAYING NO LONGER APPEALS**

The obstacles to prayer are many. Some claim they don't have time to pray, yet they can easily find time for other things – the newspaper, television, leisure activities, and so on. Christ, you remember, stole time from sleep to pray. Others who live in crowded accommodation claim they have no place to pray. Well, it's always possible to go for a walk with Jesus. What a conversation one can have with the Lord on a long walk. Still others complain they don't know what to pray for. Then make a list – friends and loved ones who need to be converted, those known to you who are sick, the needs of the church you attend, your own needs, and so on.

By far the most common obstacle to prayer, however, is disinclination. People do not pray because they do not feel like it. But we must not assume that prayer is effective only when it arises from an eager and emotional heart. Those who have achieved great power in prayer tell us that floods of feeling come only now and again in their times of intercession. They say we must learn to keep our appointments with God whether we feel like it or not. If we have an appointment to meet someone whom we regard as important do we break it a few moments before the meeting because we feel disinclined? Common courtesy tells us it would not be right. Are we to be less courteous with God?

The great practitioners of prayer assure us God can do more with us when we pray against our inclination than when we pray with it. The willingness to submit to Him deepens our surrender; our resolve to go to God builds steel into our Christian commitment. It is faith, not feeling, that measures the efficacy of prayer.

*O God, I see how fickle I have been in allowing obstacles to override my commitment and dedication. Forgive me for this. I make a fresh commitment now and pray for strength to overcome everything, not least the problem of disinclination. In Jesus' Name. Amen*

## **SCRIPTURES ON WHICH TO REFLECT**

1. **Prayer is more than a suggestion – It is a command.**  
Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. (Luke 18: 1)
2. **It is to be perpetual, not merely occasional.**  
Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always. (Psalm 105: 4)
3. **Asking and receiving give impetus and joy to prayer.**  
Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete. (John 16: 24)

4. **Prayer is to be offered at all times.**  
And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. (Ephesians 6: 18)
5. **It is the first thing we ought to do when in trouble.**  
Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. (James 5: 13)
6. **Prayer is to be offered for all people.**  
I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone ... (1 Timothy 2: 1)
7. **Hope dies when we lose contact with God.**  
Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God. (Psalm 42: 5)
8. **An example to follow.**  
I cry aloud to the Lord; I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy. I pour out my complaint before him; before him I tell my trouble. (Psalm 142: 1 - 2)