

Why would Jesus have to pray?

"Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed."

Luke 5:16 (NIV)

Luke is often called the Gospel of prayer. Luke has more examples of Jesus in prayer and more commands by Him for us to pray than any other Gospel. Some heartfelt prayers are recorded only by Luke such as the publican 18:13 and the repentant thief 23:42. Luke alone gives us some especially touching prayers of Jesus such as His prayer that Peter's faith fail not 22:32 and the prayer for His murderers 23:34

We read in the Gospels that Jesus spoke and the dead rose. He addressed the storm on the sea and it was calm. We are told that He knew the thoughts of those around Him, and that He knew about the future. So why would Jesus have to pray? It needs some biblical thinking to get the answer.

We know that we have to pray in emergencies, when we are uncertain how to proceed, for direction on which way to go when there is a fork in the road, for peace of mind in times of trial, and so on. Mere mortals usually recognize times when they need some divine help in life. It has been said that there are no atheists in a foxhole. People who do not normally pray or think of God find it convenient to believe in God when their life is threatened. Various times I have been called to the bed of a dying atheist who suddenly feels the need for a little divine help.

But Jesus had all the resources of Almighty God at His command. Why then did He need to pray? Look with me at a few situations of Jesus in prayer and learn for the enrichment of your own prayer life.

First, Jesus was very comfortable in the presence of the Father. He is recorded in John 8:29 as saying, "The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him." (NIV) Some of us are uncomfortable in God's presence and hesitate praying because we believe our behaviour is not as pleasing to God as it might be.

Again, this passage shows that Jesus was submissive to the will of the Father. His prayers were submissive to what the Father desired of Him. Even in Gethsemane when Jesus faced His greatest test and asked if the cup could pass from Him, He concluded the request with the statement of submission, "Not My will but Yours be done."

Sometimes we are not prepared to pray because we only want what we want. We are not prepared to submit our wills to the will of God.

Another reason Jesus prayed was that He knew that in order for God to do what He has promised, His people need to pray for the promises to be fulfilled. This is the pattern God has set down in Scripture. For example, in Ezekiel 36:22-36 God lists many things He will most certainly do for His people. Then in v. 37 He says, "Once again I will yield to the plea of the house of Israel and do this for them." (NIV) Someone will argue hypothetically and say, "What if the people do not pray?" Do not worry yourself about such nonsense. God said He will do it and He also said His people will

pray to bring it to pass. The people will pray, God will see to it that they do.

Jesus prayed much because He delighted in the Father and the Father in him. "This is my Son whom I love; with him I am well pleased." Matthew 3:17 (NIV) It is difficult to stay away from or not speak to the one you love. Love for the Father caused the Son to be in prayer often and for long times.

I believe that a very strong measure of our love for the Lord is seen in the diligence and vigour of our prayer life. Some of God's people, to be sure, have an especially strong prayer life. But all of us should be involved in regular prayer and not only when things go wrong.

Jesus frequently felt the need to draw aside from the busyness of life and spend time with His heavenly Father in prayer. If Jesus needed to pray, may I gently suggest that you need to as well? Our Father in heaven desires to hear from us regularly and has given us many promises to entice us to pray. He even commands that we pray.

Take the time today to speak to God in prayer and express the joys or sorrows of your heart. Find a promise in Scripture to bring to Him for fulfilment. The Lord waits to be gracious to you. Come to Him now.

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