

Address: 160 Paya Lebar Road, Orion@Paya Lebar #04-06, Singapore 409022
Sun Worship Service: 10am, Sun School: 11.45am, Wed Prayer Meeting: 8pm
Website: www.sovereignhopebpc.org
Rev Dr Jack Sin: 91160948 (hp) / jacksin710@gmail.com
Elder Loke Tat Luen: tlloke822@gmail.com

HINDRANCES TO PRAYER

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered

(1 Peter 3:7)



The apostle Peter in chapter 3 enjoins the duties of husbands and wives from verses 1-7. In the seventh verse, he raised a pertinent point concerning how the prayer-life of a Christian husband and wife can be hindered, if they are not living together in mutual respect of one another. The reason is that God holds unity in the family in very high regard, for marriage is to show the glory of Christ and it is a display of the beautiful relationship between Christ and His Church. If the Christian marriage is on the rock, it shames and brings disrepute to the name and church of Christ.

In fact, hindrance to prayer affects not only the husband and wife in a covenant family, but also every Christian. Anything, including anyone, can be a hinderance to prayer. If any management of the family, or lack of management, is injuring the power in prayer, there is an urgent demand for an alteration.

Husband and wife should pray together, as jointly heirs of grace, and any temper which hinders this, is evil.



The text would be most appropriately used to stimulate Christians to diligence in family prayer. The Christian home in which there is no family worship can scarcely expect the divine blessing. If the Lord Jesus does not cover our homes with his wings, our family is like a house without a roof. If we do not seek the Lord's guidance, our household is

a ship without a pilot, and unless guarded by devotion, our family will be a field without a hedge.

The sad conduct of many of the children of professing parents is mainly due to the neglect or the coldness of family worship; and many of God's judgment has fallen upon families because the Lord Jesus is not duly honoured therein.

Jeremiah's word in Jer. 10:25, bears hard upon prayer-less families, he declares, "*Pour out thy fury upon the households that call not upon thy name.*"

Therefore, let us take heed, the neglect of family prayer will bring the wrath of God upon our homes and churches. Children who observe that their parents are practically prayer-less in the home will grow up indifferent to Christianity, and in many cases will be utter 'worldlings,' if not altogether atheists.

Our meditation is on the subject, "Hindrances to prayer," and I shall apply the text to the hindrances that beset the private prayer life of Christians in general. Our prayers may be hindered in three aspects — first, we may be hindered from prayer; secondly, we may be hindered in prayer; and thirdly, how may our prayers be not hindered from ascending to the throne of grace.

1. Christians being hindered from prayer

First, there is such a thing as, "Christians being hindered from prayer," and that may take place by our falling into a general lax, lukewarm condition in reference to the things of God. When a Christian becomes indifferent and careless, one of the first things that will suffer will be his devotion.

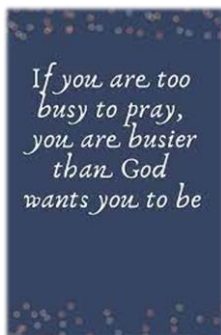
When a sick man is in a decline his lungs suffer and his voice; and so when a Christian is in a spiritual decline the breath of prayer is affected, and the cry of supplication becomes weak. Prayer is the true gauge of spiritual power. To restrain prayer is dangerous, and of deadly inclination. What the Pharisee and the Publican were in prayer was the true criterion of their spiritual state.



To be a
Christian without
prayer is no
more possible
than to be alive
without
breathing.

You may maintain a decent reputation among men, for men examine only the surface, while the Lord's eyes pry into the recesses of the soul. If He sees that you are prayer-less, He has very little regards of your attendance in the church, or your loud professions of conversion.

If you are a man of earnest prayer, and especially if the spirit of prayer be in you, so that in addition to certain period of supplication, your heart habitually



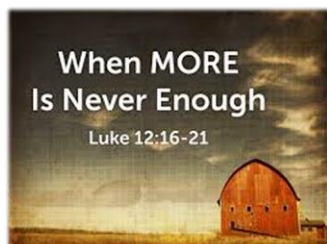
talks with God, things are right with you; but if this be not the case, and your prayers be "hindered," there is something in your spiritual system which needs to be ejected, or somewhat lacking which ought at once to be supplied. Solomon teaches us, "*Keep thine heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life*" (Prov. 4:23), and earnest prayers are among those issues.

Prayers may be hindered, next, by having too much to do. In this technological age, this is a very common occurrence. We have too much business for ourselves. In these days of materialism and commercialism, there is an insatiable appetite for much more and enjoyment

and pleasures are our foremost priorities. Sadly, many Christians have fallen into this deception, and they that might have been of great service to the church of God becomes useless because they must branch out in some new direction in business, which takes up all his spare time.

Instead of feeling that his first care should be, "How can I best glorify God?" his all-absorbing object is to stretch his arms for more temporal things than what they needed; alas, that Christians should be infected with the same fever as the people of the world.

The rich man in the parable had no time for prayer, for he was busy in planning new barns wherein to store his goods, but he had to find time for dying when the Lord said, "*This night shall thy soul be required of thee*" (Luke 12:20). Beware, therefore, of "*the desires of the flesh*" (Eph. 2:3), the "*canker*" of riches, the greed insatiable which drives men into the snare of the devil; for if it leads you to no other harm, it will do you mischief enough if thereby your prayers are hindered.



There can be no doubt, on the other hand, prayer is hindered by having too little to do. People who have nothing to do generally do it with a great deal of fuss. They exposed themselves to the temptations set up by Satan. As the saying goes, an/the idle mind/hands is the devil's workshop. If Christians had less to do they would pray less, but holy industry is the nurse of devotion. So then, we ought to be watchful as we are prone to either having too much to do, or having too little to do. We need to pray for wisdom to strike a balance.

Then, there are Christians who are hindered from their prayers, by a lack of order/discipline. They are always in a flurry, one duty tripping up the heels of another. They have no daily schedule or routine, or no plan as to how they should spend their God-given time each day. It is a good spiritual exercise to keep a diary of how you pray each week, and see how much, or rather how little time you spend with God out of the twenty-four hours granted to you.

Much time goes at the table, how much at the mercy-seat? Many hours are spent with people, how many with your Maker? You allow yourself space for recreation/leisure, what do you set apart for those exercises which in very truth refreshes the soul? "A place for everything, and everything in its place," is a good rule for family, students and business people, and it will be equally useful in spirituals; other duties should be done, but prayer must not be left undone, it must have its



own place and sufficient of it. Care must be taken that our “prayers be not hindered,” so that we omit or abridge them.

2. Christians being hindered in prayer

Here, the same points as mentioned earlier — that some Christians are hindered while in their prayers by being lax and lukewarm — a great hindrance; others being hindered by having too much or too little to do, and another group by being in that hurried condition of heart, which results from a lack of order.

We are aware, are we not, that some Christians are hindered in prayer by selecting an unsuitable time and place. If you are employed by others, you must not present to God those hours which belong to your employer; you will be honouring the Lord better by diligence in your vocation; this principle applies to students too. There are times that are demanded of you by the necessities of the family and your lawful calling; these are already the Lord's in another way, let them be used for their own purpose.

Give to God and prayer those suitable times in which you can reasonably expect to be alone. Of course, you can pray at your work, in silent prayer in your heart and mind, and you ought to be in the spirit of supplication all day long, but I am alluding now to times specially devoted to supplication, and so choose a time and a place where you can be free from interruption.



The Lord Jesus taught His disciples to pray saying, “Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly” (Matt. 6:6). Therefore, select the most appropriate time and place, that your prayers be not hindered.

The other hindrance most common to many Christians are worldly cares, it is frequent and most mischievous hindrances to prayer. A Christian man should be the most careful man in the world, and yet without carefulness. Do you understand that paradox? Christians should be careful not to sin, but as for other matters, he should cast his care on “him who careth for him” (1 Pet. 5:7).

To take everything from God's hands, and to trust everything in God's hands, is a blessed way of living, and very helpful to prayer. What did Jesus say of the ravens and the lilies? Your heavenly Father feeds and clothes them, and will he not clothe you? (Matt. 6:28-30). “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.”

Faith gives peace, and peace leaves the soul clear for prayer; but when care comes in, it confuses the mind, and puts the heart away from praying. A heart



clogged with care is like a man trying to swim with heavy clothes on him, he must get them off if he hopes to swim to shore.

Brethren, let us tear ourselves away from our excessive worldly engagements, for they have such a mass of care upon us that we scarcely keep our heads above water. Let us plead for more grace and less worry! More power in

praying and less hoarding! More intercession and less speculating! As it is, prayers are sadly hindered.

Furthermore, prayer can be hindered in three other ways: if we dishonour God, the Father to whom we pray, or God, the Son through whom we pray, or God, the Holy Ghost by whom we pray. This can take place by the Christian's inconsistency of life: if the children of God are not obedient to the Father's will they must not wonder if they find it hard to pray. You cannot pour out your heart



acceptably unless you believe in your heavenly Father. If you have hard thoughts of God; if you have a cold heart towards him, and a lack of reverence for his name; your lack of love, faith, and reverence will strangle your prayers.

So, if we be wrong with Jesus through whom we pray, if we are in any measure self-righteous, if we delight in self and forget our Saviour, if we fancy that we can do without the Lord Jesus, if, therefore, we pray like complacent Pharisees, our prayers will be hindered. If we are not like the Saviour; if we do not make him our example; if we have none of his loving spirit; above all, if we crucify him afresh and put him to an open shame, and if we are ungrateful for the blessings we have already received, our prayers will be hindered.



Likewise with the Holy Spirit. There is never a prayer that God accepts but the Spirit first writes it in our hearts. True prayer is not so much our intercession as the Spirit of God making intercession in our behalf. Now, if we grieve the Spirit, he will not help us to pray; and if we attempt to pray for something that is contrary to the Spirit's holy, gracious, loving nature, we cannot expect him to enable us to pray in contradiction to the mind of God.

Take care that you vex not the Spirit of God in any way, especially by shutting your ears to his gentle warnings, his loving calls, his earnest pleadings, his tender monitions/warnings for if you be deaf to the divine Comforter, he will be speechless to you. He will not help you to pray if you will not yield to him in submission.

3. Christians being not hindered in prayers

The final lesson is, "Christians being not hindered in prayer." In other words, how may our prayers be not hindered from ascending to God. How do we prevent hinderances to our prayers? When the children of God find that their prayers do not succeed, they should search, and they would soon discover a reason why their prayers are hindered.

First, there must be holy living in a believer if his prayers are greatly to succeed with God. Listen: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). Note that point of a righteous man. Jesus says in John 15:7: "*If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*" There is an 'if' there. If you do not do Christ's will, he will not do your will; obedience should have for its reward in prayer. For it is written, "*The desire of the righteous shall be granted*" (Prov. 10:24), but not the desire of the wicked.

Therefore, first wash in the fountain of atoning grace, and have your heart cleansed by the Holy Spirit, or else you cannot succeed in prayer. It is impossible for God to patronise a guilty professor of the Christian faith by giving him success in prayer. The blind man whom Jesus healed most truly said, "*If any man doeth his will, him he heareth*" (John 9:31).



In addition to obedience there must be faith. "*He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him*" (Heb. 11:6). "*Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed: let not that man expect that he shall receive anything of the Lord*" (James. 1:6). Faith obtains promises, unbelief goes empty-

handed. Without faith it is impossible to please God in prayer or in anything else; it is the very backbone, sinew, and muscle of intercession.

Furthermore, for prayers to reach God, there must be fervour and importunity. There must be eagerness, intensity, the pouring out of the heart before God. You must only have this resolve in your heart — *“the will of the Lord be done”* (Acts 21:14) — and you will succeed.

There must be, next, a desire for God's glory. We must earnestly desire what we ask, because we believe it will glorify God to give it to us. If we are wholly living unto God, our prayers will run side by side with his purposes, and none of them will fall to the ground. *“Delight thyself also in the Lord and he will give thee the desires of thine heart”* (Psa. 37:4).

Conclusion

May the Lord grant us grace as Christians to walk with God in the power of his Spirit, resting alone on Jesus, and may He make each one of us mighty in prayer. A man, whom God has taught to pray mightily, is one with God's mind, and is God's hand moving among the sons of men; when he acts, God acts in him. He must, however, be careful and watchful, for the Lord is a jealous God, and most jealous where he loves most. God grant you, brethren, to walk humbly with God, and to live near to him, “that your prayers be not hindered.” Amen.

Pr Mok Chee Cheong
New Life BPC, London
UK





29 May 2022
Sunday Evangelism at
Macpherson Estate.

And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

Praise God for opening many doors.
 May the Lord be merciful and work in these hearts.



Come and join our
Sunday School
Classes!



Memory Verse

- 1 Jn 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

Announcements

1. Welcome to our Sunday Worship Service! For our visitors, do leave us your contact numbers in our guest book before you leave.
2. Pastor speaks this morning on “***Of Holiness & Worldliness***” (1 Jn 2:15-21), continuing the quarterly series on “***Biblical Paradoxes of Life Expounded***”.
3. Pastor speaks next Sunday on “***Of Perplexity & Peace***” (2 Cor 4:8-18).
4. Sunday School classes continues after worship service:
 - WCF Shorter Catechism Class – Pastor Jack
 - Studies in Deuteronomy – Dn Kwong Leen
5. Chinese Fellowship meets on Sunday night at 7pm via Zoom with both local and overseas brethren. Included in the programme is a study on Church History in China on alternate Sundays. Join us for a time of profitable learning.
6. Do send your prayer items to Pastor and join us for Church Prayer Meeting on Wed at 8pm via Zoom. The prayer list is available in church.
7. **Church Camp Briefing will be held next Sunday on 12 Jun 2022 at 11.45am. All campers are encouraged to attend.**
8. Monthly Neighbourhood Bible Class will next meet on **Fri 1 Jul 2022, 7.30pm in church** on the study of 2 Samuel. Come and join us!
9. Those who wish to bring a new friend to the worship service, kindly inform the safety officer Dn Yue Kay or Pastor at least a day in advance.
10. Do kindly observe the safety measures of the church and assist with the weekly cleaning of the premises.
11. Love gifts, Offering and Tithes to the Lord can be given in the following ways:
 - **Cheque** payable to **Sovereign Hope Bible Presbyterian Church** and mail to church address. (Kindly write the full name of the church as indicated.)
 - **Fund transfer** to Church **UOB** Account **392-308-825-1**
 - **PayNow** to Church UEN: **T19SS0116FSOV**
