



LIFE NEWS



BY GORDON LANPHER
CHILDREN'S PASTOR

We are six weeks into the new year. How are things going? Are you keeping up with your New Year's resolutions or this year's goals? If you are like me, things have gotten off track, maybe a little or a lot, depending on what is going on in life right now. Life has this tendency to get more and more complicated. We add activities and commitments without thinking about the consequences. Sure, I can help with the bake sale, and certainly, I can be an assistant coach on the soccer team. And on and on, we add commitments, usually without subtracting anything. I think we do this with our spiritual lives as well. I enjoy a wide variety of spiritual practices and reminders to help me focus on God. There are many ways to make space for Him in our lives. Yet, it is so easy to overlook basic prayer.

Yes, there are all kinds of prayers. Formal written ones, grace for supper, the LORD's prayer, and the list can go on and on. There are hundreds upon hundreds of books and thousands upon thousands of pages written on prayer. In fact, if I glance at my bookshelf, I can count at least six books without looking hard. Prayer is something we know about and almost always feel guilty that we haven't prayed enough or in the right way.

Let's get back to basics, friend; prayer is simply talking and listening to God. It is a two-way conversation. Prayer like this is simple. It's like coming home again. No matter how long you have been gone, you can pull up a comfortable chair and speak to your best friend. You know what it is like to spend time with a person where there is no pressure; perhaps it's a

spouse or life-long friend. You can sit and chat without any pressure of what they might think about you. You know that they have your best interests in mind. They love you unconditionally. In fact, there are times you can just sit with your best friend here on earth and not even talk; being in their presence is enough for you.

As a Christian, Jesus can be your best friend. In His presence, there is no pressure to perform or say the right words. There is no pressure having to know everything or having done everything right. God is there to love you unconditionally. He is not looking to condemn you, but He's inviting you into His forgiveness. All you must do is repent and accept it. He wants to speak to you and listen to you. His desire is for a tender relationship with you. He wants to spend time with you. It is a desire of a friend wanting to spend time with a friend.

Let's get back to basics. This week find time to spend with your best friend - Jesus. It doesn't have to be a certain amount of time. This week, come and just be with Him (take a walk or pour a cup of coffee) and talk to Him as you would a friend. There is no agenda, just time to catch up since the last time you spoke to Him.

*'I NO LONGER CALL YOU SERVANTS.
BECAUSE A SERVANT DOES NOT KNOW HIS MASTER'S BUSINESS.
INSTEAD, I HAVE CALLED YOU FRIENDS.
FOR EVERYTHING THAT I LEARNED FROM MY FATHER
I HAVE MADE KNOWN TO YOU.'*
JOHN 15:15