

GRACEBAPTISTCHURCH
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Our Mission Statement

*We are members of God's family,
dedicated to the teachings of Jesus
and committed to seeking God's will.*

In our church we:

- Glorify** God through worship,
- Reach** others through evangelism,
- Assist** our community through service,
- Care** for each other through fellowship,
- Equip** our members through Biblical instruction.



Grace Notes

A Quarterly Publication
From
Grace Baptist Church

April 2011

Jesus often spoke about the need for his followers to draw near to God in prayer. And he not only talked about it, but he modeled it in the way he lived his life. Some people think that because Jesus was God the Son, that somehow he was given special treatment from God the Father in how he had to live his life compared to how you and I have to live our lives. But when you look honestly at the gospels, you realize that's not the case.

Jesus wasn't born with the Bible downloaded into his brain – he had to read it, study it, memorize it just like we do. He had to receive instruction from his parents, be in church, listen to sermons, just like we do. Jesus wasn't given a pass from avoiding suffering. The Bible prophesied that the Messiah would be a 'man of sorrows and familiar with suffering,' (Is.53:3). The Bible makes it clear that in taking on human flesh, Jesus "made himself nothing" (Phil.2:7) of all the power and knowledge that was naturally his as God the Son.

All this to say, Jesus prayed, because he *needed* to pray. It was the source of his intimacy with God the Father, and the source of his power and strength. So when we see Jesus rising from his bed and seeking God in prayer first thing at the beginning of his day, he is modeling something that is vitally important for us to do also. When we see Jesus fasting, he is modeling something that we ought to learn also. When we see Jesus facing a crisis in his life, or having to make a critical decision, and he prepares for that moment with intense, elongated times of prayer, he is pointing to a practice we ought to adopt. When we see Jesus at the end of a busy day or intense stretch of ministry breaking away to be alone with God in prayer, he is again showing us something



From The Pulpit ***What We're Talking About*** ***This Spring***

A few months ago, we began our new *Journey* ministry where we are encouraging participants to develop the habit of daily Bible reading and doctrinal study. As a 'roadmap' for this journey, we have provided a suggested Bible reading plan for Year One. The plan is as follows:

Month One: Luke

Month Two: Proverbs-James

Month Three: Acts

Month Four: Genesis

Month Five: Romans

Month Six: Exodus

Month Seven: Galatians-Ephesians-Philippians-Colossians

Month Eight: 1 Samuel 15-2 Samuel (The Life Of David)

Month Nine: Hebrews

Month Ten: 1 & 2 Kings

Month Eleven: Isaiah

Month Twelve: Revelation

Nightly Readings: Psalms, John

To help reinforce this plan, our sermons have followed this schedule. So this winter we studied four of Paul's great epistles (Galatians through Colossians), followed by a look at the life of King David.

We invite you to join us in the *Journey*. Each of the messages in our series is available online, at www.gracebaptist.net. Just click on the 'Online Teachings' tab, and you can both listen to audio recordings and download sermon notesheets (which double-up as excellent Bible study guides).



On Prayer From E.M. Bounds

"There is not the least doubt that much of our praying fails for lack of persistency. It is without

the fire and strength of perseverance. Persistence is of the essence of true praying. It may not always be called into exercise, but it must be there as the reserve force. Jesus taught that perseverance is the essential element of prayer. Men must be in earnest when they kneel at God's footstool.

Too often we get faint-hearted and quit praying at the point where we ought to begin. We let go at the very point where we should hold on strongest. Our prayers are weak because they are not impassioned by an unflinching and irresistible will.

God loves the importunate pleader, and sends him answers that would never have been granted but for the persistency that refuses to let go until the petition craved for is granted."

Edward McKendree Bounds was a 19th century pastor who spoke and wrote extensively about prayer. His books have become beloved and inspiring classics. His habit was usually to begin each day from 4:00 to 7:00am in prayer.

Don't Be Slow To Fast! ***Jonathan Ayers, Pastoral Intern***

Have you ever tried fasting? I am sure you have been prescribed by your doctor to go without food in order to have lab testing completed for your physical health. Have you ever tried fasting for spiritual health? Did you know – fasting has always been an important practice for God' people? In fact, when you read the Bible, you will find heroes of faith fasted in both the Old and the New Testament:

- Moses fasted: Exodus 24, 34
- Daniel fasted: Daniel 1, 10
- David fasted: Psalm 35
- Esther fasted: Esther 4, 5
- Paul fasted: Acts 9
- Even Jesus fasted! Matt 4



In the last century or so, this classical spiritual discipline has become almost completely abandoned. Fasting may seem unpleasant but it can be very rewarding. Fast helps remind us that it is the Spirit of God which governs our lives and not all the pleasures of the world. Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied" (Matt 5:6).

Are you convinced fasting might be good for you? Do you want to get serious with God? In a season of prayer, I would encourage you to try fasting as a way of humbling yourself before God (Psalm 35:13). If trying to fast an entire day seems to difficult, try to replace one meal with prayer for a few weeks and see how this affects your spiritual health. I look forward to focusing on prayer and fasting with you during this Easter season.

"If every Christian fasted, the results could shake our society like a windstorm bending a sapling." ~ Elmer Towns

Grace's Bulletin Board

DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY JOURNEY

www.grace-baptist.net
click on Pastor Barry's Blog

Rite Of Passage Weekend

May 13-15
Training and Encouragement
For the Whole Family
Celebrating The Journey Into Adulthood

Easter Schedule

Week of Prayer begins April 17th
Maundy Thursday Communion Service April 21st at 7:00pm
Easter Sunrise Service April 24th at 7:30am
Easter Breakfast 9:00am
Easter Resurrection Service at 10:30am

Easter Egg Hunt!

Saturday, April 16th
10am-noon
Page Park



Sunday's sChOOL resumes

April 3rd-May 22nd
With Easter Sunday off
9:15-10:15am
Christian training for all ages.

At A Glance At Grace



New Births

Bill & Sara Dillon welcomed their grandson, Henry William, born November 15th

Dave & Kathy Wedge welcomed their granddaughter, Finleigh Wedge

Scott & Karen Monsam welcomed their daughter, Alice Marie, born January 20th

Jon & Amanda Hull welcomed their son Luke Paul Hull, born March 10th

Called home to Jesus

Helen Trillo in July

Joanne (Uzwack) Casey in December

Matthew Walton in January

Milton Carlson in February



Praises

For those who participated in the Testimony Slam during our Thanksgiving Eve service

For Grace participants in Bristol's Children's Reverse Parade

For the Generosity Projects carried out through Grace

For the Noncon4mers participation in the 30 Hour Famine

For the men who attended the Iron Sharpens Iron conference in March

For Grace's Constitution team—giving our foundational documents a good scrubbing down

For our "Journey" ministry

God Comes Near Devotion by: Heather Adams

"What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him?" ~ Deuteronomy 4:7

As believers in Jesus Christ, we have a unique promise given to us. Other gods require some sort of worship from their followers - flowers, food or even money. But only one deity lowers Himself to our level in return.

It has always been God's desire to be in relationship with us. He met with Adam in the cool of the day, spoke with Abraham under a canopy of stars. He still wants to meet with us today. We are called His people, His lambs, His **children**, and in those names lies the heart of our Lord.

Prayer offers us a chance to experience this deep kind of connection with our Heavenly Father. It says in scripture "where two or more are gathered" He is there. And the same truth applies to our individual quiet times. He delights in hearing our praises and cries, questions and confessions, and welcomes us right where we are.

There are moments when we can sense God's presence and readily believe in this promise. There are other, more challenging times, when we don't hear Him at all, and wonder if He is even listening to us. The truth is reassuring, and we need to remind ourselves of it often: we have an open invitation to meet with our Lord - He's already been waiting for us to join Him!

Action Point: Imagine God being right next to you as you pray. Be aware of how this makes you feel - comforted, nervous, or any other reactions. Remember, He loves you completely - that is why He comes close.

Heather Adams leads Grace's Prayer Ministry



Is Your Life Prayer-Conditioned? by Pastor Barry

Many Christians struggle with prayer because they fail to take note of the conditions for effective praying which the Bible teaches. Jesus in Luke 18:1 points to two such conditions: we should learn to always pray and secondly, not give up.

The first condition is a reference to 'prayer without ceasing' (1 Thess.5:17). Not that we should be on our knees 24/7. God understands that we have lives to live. To 'always pray' has more to do with what a 17th-century monk named Brother Lawrence called 'practicing the presence of God.' Jesus said he would 'be with us always to the end of the age'—so to practice God's presence is to begin living as though Jesus meant what he said. Which means, we can talk to God throughout the day. Learning how to talk to God when we're up to our necks "in life", can be a very healing and powerful thing. A recent study concluded that prayer helps people control their anger. The researcher said, "I looked at the act of praying, or speaking to God, as the same as a legitimate social interaction." I'm sure God appreciated that endorsement. Hopefully though it's something which every true follower of Christ is experiencing.

"Could you not keep watch with me for one hour?" (Jesus, in Matthew 26:40)

Then we must also be prepared to 'not give up', which points to a second condition of effective prayer. Sometimes we need to learn how to pray in an intense, focused, sacrificial, even lengthy way, especially when we're in need of guidance or wisdom or spiritual power. "Could you not keep watch with me one hour?" Jesus asked his disciples, as he prayed on the night of his betrayal and arrest. Sometimes you can find oil in the ground by sticking a fork in the ground. But sometimes you have to sink the shaft far deeper. Same with prayer. Sometimes a five minute intercession can do wonders to bring peace to a troubled heart, or set a godly tone for a meeting. Sometimes an hour is needed. Or two or three. Sometimes we have to tack fasting on to our praying. Or be willing to sacrifice a night of sleep.

Giving more thought to the Biblical conditions of effective prayer can go a long way in helping us experience prayer not as a drudgery but a pleasure.