

CONNECTIONS



“God does not see you as a dirty, old sinner dog, but as His child whom He loves and for whom He as a hope-filled future. Celebrate prayer because prayer makes a way for God’s positive future for you to come to pass!”

CELEBRATE PRAYER

How is your prayer life? Do you anticipate daily prayer with excitement, or do you do it as simply part of your routine and habit? Do you know without a doubt that God hears you? Do you say the same thing about your prayers that the Apostle John said?

1 John 5:14-15

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

Prayer shouldn't be drudgery or something we do out of religious compulsion. **When we pray, we meet with the Creator of the Universe face to face. How amazing is that?** Prayer is two-way communication with your Abba, Father God. He does nothing on the earth except in response to the prayers of His children.

When we pray according to God's Word and His will, we open the door for God to have His way in our lives, the lives of those for whom we pray, and in the life of our nation. What a wonderful privilege we have as those who pray! Partner, I encourage you not merely to facilitate daily prayer in your life, but to celebrate it!

Jeremiah 29:11 divulges God's expectations for you, me, and all of His children. It reads, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." The word *peace* in *Jeremiah 29:11* is *shalom* in Hebrew. It means *wholeness, safety, wellness, happiness, favor, friendship, and prosperity*.

God does not see you as a dirty old sinner dog, but as His child whom He loves and for whom He has a hope-filled future. Celebrate prayer because prayer makes a way for God's positive future for you to come to pass!

Partner, if you are facing financial challenges, you don't have to beg God to meet your needs. God responds to faith, not weeping, wailing, and complaining. However, there are times when you will need to remain persistent in your faith and prayer; Jesus addressed this issue in the Gospel of Luke, just after He taught His disciples to pray.

Luke 11:5-13

And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Do these verses imply that God is slow to hear and respond? No! The lesson Jesus was teaching in *Luke chapter 11* was that even an imperfect, tired, grumpy man will give to his friend who continues asking for help. How much more should we expect to receive from the Father whatever we ask of Him? After all, God is not imperfect like that man; He's perfect. God is never weary or tired, and although God can be angered by sin, He is never grumpy towards those who are His own.

The word *importunity* in *Luke 11:8* means shameless. In other words, the person in need who knocked on his friend's door wasn't ashamed to ask for what he needed until he got it. He wasn't afraid to wake his buddy up at midnight. He wasn't timid or shy, as some Christians seem to be when they approach God. The man in Jesus' example was bold to ask for what he needed, and we should be too.

I know that my granddaughters understand this concept because they employ it on me! When they see me, they are not timid, afraid, or shy about asking me for money! They know I have it, and they know that I want to bless them! When my granddaughters ask for money, I don't give them pocket change, or a one or a five; I give

them a bigger denomination bill! If I am that generous towards my grandchildren, imagine how generous God is towards you! **Jesus' illustration enforced the principle of God's generosity. God is much more extravagant towards us than we could ever be towards anyone! Celebrate God's generosity!**

If you want to strengthen your faith, celebrate every prayer victory—including those that are recorded in Scripture. Let's consider just a few of the answered prayers in Scripture and celebrate them today!

Genesis 20:17

So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maid-servants; and they bare children.

Abraham prayed to God to heal Abimelech, a pagan king, and God healed him! This is the first mention of healing in the Bible. **God has always been the Healer, and He always will be the Healer. If you need healing, celebrate today!**

Numbers 11:2

And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched.

God sent fire that consumed people around the edges of the camp. It would have spread and consumed more had Moses not asked God to relent in His judgment. What did they do wrong? They grumbled and complained; they weren't thankful for what God had done and didn't trust God to take care of them moving forward. If you know someone who has walked away from God, pray for them. Ask God to send laborers across their path and celebrate knowing that God's mercy will reach them!

1 Samuel 1:27

For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him.

Hannah desperately wanted a child. She prayed so fervently that Eli, the priest, assumed she was drunk. However, Hannah didn't let his comments stop her. She told him that she had not consumed any alcohol, but she was pouring out her soul before the Lord because she wanted a child. (*See 1 Samuel 1:15.*) Then the priest told her that God heard and would answer. She celebrated the answer before she had it. She went her way and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad. (*See 1 Samuel 1:18.*) Within a year, she had her son, Samuel.

2 Kings 6:17

And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

Elisha prayed that his servant's eyes would be opened to see the protection they had in the spiritual realm. Elisha's prayer was much like the one Paul prayed for the church in Ephesus—that the eyes of their understanding would be open so they could see what God has done for them in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 1:16-20

Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory

of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.

Elisha's servant's eyes were opened. He saw the angels that surrounded them, and they won the battle. Partner, pray the Ephesians prayer and celebrate that God is opening your eyes and the eyes of other believers to understand more fully all He's done for us in the spirit!

Jonah prayed so that God would give him a second chance, and God answered: *"Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly, And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice" (Jonah 2:1-2).* The giant fish spit Jonah out, and Jonah moved forward doing what God told him to do. Partner, if you've messed up and missed God, it's not too late! Pray and get back to what God has called you to do.

Celebrate prayer! The Holy Spirit can tell you what to pray for before it happens. For example, Jesus prayed that Peter would be restored before he even fell: *"But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32).*

Jesus' prayers are always answered! Peter denied the Lord; he wanted to quit "the ministry," and go back to fishing, but Jesus restored him. Peter bounced back from his fall. He became a leader and preached the powerful first sermon on the Day of Pentecost that brought three thousand souls into the kingdom of God! Now that is something to celebrate! Later in Peter's ministry, he prayed for Tabitha, and she was raised from the dead. *"But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up" (Acts 9:40).*

James 5:16 tells us that, *"the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."* Celebrate the power and the effectiveness of prayer!

Partner, what an honor and responsibility we have to cooperate with God in seeing His will come to pass. Your prayers bring about God's hope and future for you, your family, your church, and your nation! Celebrate prayer! Pastor Deborah and I love you very much. Thank you for your support of *Keith Butler Ministries*.

In the Master's Service and Love,



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