**KEYS TO EFFECTIVE PRAYING**

 **LESSON SCRIPTURE FOR TOPIC… JAMES 5:*3Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.14Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:15And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.16Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*
INTRO…..
 Our prayer life is just as important as our obedient life in serving God. We need to focus upon our use of prayer and see if we can improve it. Improving our prayer life will certainly make our whole life more meaningful. In this study we want to see some things that we can do to improve our prayer life.

 HOW MUCH TIME SHOULD WE SPEND IN PRAYER
 The average Christian spends a very limited amount of time in prayer.
 This is because most Christians often reserve prayer for emergency use only.
 So, the question here is how much time would you estimate you spent in prayer yesterday or maybe even How much time last week?
 I believe More Daniels are needed in the prayer arena, especially in today’s lifestyle!**

 **(Dan. 6:10).*10Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.*

 BEING SPECIFIC IN OUR PRAYERS
 Prayers are often far too general, too vague.
 In a collective prayer, perhaps keeping it general is alright.
 More praying should be done for specific people, specific needs, etc., or what’s appropriate for the congregation.
 Perhaps if we made a list of those we need to pray for we could be specific.
 Prayer should be fitted to the occasion and need.
 Praying for rain is more appropriate in drought areas, than others.

 ENHANCING OUR FAITH IN TIME OF PRAYER
 James said that weak faith and futile prayers are connected.**

**(James 1:6). *6But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.*
 Beloved, Doubts and uncertainties hinder prayers.
 The source for a greater faith is God's Word , look no further!!**

**(Romans 10:17).*17So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

 PRAYING ACCORDING TO GOD’S WILL
 James also tells us that a covetous spirit hinders our prayers !!**

**JAMES (4:2). *2Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.* Selfish hearts do not gain the ear of God.
 A loving and giving God is seeking to bless those with generous spirits.
 Remember a prayer must be according to God’s will, not your own.

 APPLYING FERVENCY TO OUR PRAYERS
 Another important ingredient is enthusiasm or fervency, so it says in the book of James….**

**James (5:16). *16Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

 Prayers coming only from the lips, and not from the hearts, are hollow and empty.
 The Pharisees of Jesus' day prayed such prayers time and time again!!

A RIGHTEOUS LIFE / A RIGHTEOUS PRAYER LIFE
 The more righteous we become, the more prayer accomplishes**

**(James 5:16; *16Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.***

**1 Peter 3:12). *12For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*
 Elijah's success in prayer was directly related to his righteousness in life.
 The rebellious spirit and the unrepented sins will always hinder our prayers**

**(Proverbs 1:28; *28Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:***

**Isaiah 59:2).*2But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.*
 HINDERANCES TO OUR PRAYERS
 Peter tells us that relationships between husbands and wives either help or hinder prayers**

**(1 Peter 3:7). *7Likewise, 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.* When relationships break down between marriage partners, our relationship with God is affected.
 Other relationships can break down and cause our prayers to be affected.

 HUMBLENESS IN OUR PRAYERS**

 **The first beatitude named by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount was on humility**

**(Matthew 5:3*). 3Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
 The proud heart is rejected by God**

**(James 4:6*). 6But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.* The Pharisee's prayer was rejected because of pride**

**(Luke 18).*10Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.11The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.12I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.13And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.14I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.***

 **FORGIVING OTHERS Jesus gave us two examples…..
 Jesus declared that we cannot expect forgiveness from God if we refuse to forgive our fellowman (Matthew 6:12). *12And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.* This is just one of numerous biblical warnings that God's treatment of us is connected with our treatment of others.

 PERSISTENCE IN A SUCCESFULL PRAYER
 Jesus taught two parables regarding the importance of persistence in prayer**

**(Luke, chapters 11 *5And 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;6For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?7And 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.8I 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.9And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.10For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.***

**and**

**Luke 18). *And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;2Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:3And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.4And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;5Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.6And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.7And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?8I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.***

 **In each instance, perseverance was a key ingredient to successful prayer.

 ACTION APPLIED TO OUR PRAYER LIFE
 Pray as though everything depends upon God.
 Then work as though everything depends upon you.
 Somewhere, I read about a farmer with this sign on his farm: "Pray for a good harvest , but keep on plowing."
 Pray for the best, but keep a contingency plan available.

 Conclusion
 Prayer is our lifeline to the Creator.
 Prayer is how we thank God for blessings.
 Prayer is how we can ask God to take care of others and even ourselves.
 To pray effectively, we must want to pray better.
 Examine yourself, and see if there is not a way you can improve your prayer life.**