

PRE-PRAYER

A HEART AFTER GOD

JANUARY 31 • Craig Rees, Lead Pastor

THE HEAVENLY CHALLENGE

BIG IDEA

Since God has prepared a place of prayer, we choose to go there.

KEY SCRIPTURE

Colossians 4:2-4	Mark 14:37-38	Luke 12:37;	Acts 8:13	1 Corinthians 16:13
Mark 1:35	Luke 4:42	Acts 1:14	Acts 10:17	Ephesians 6:18
Mark 3:9	Luke 5:16	Acts 2:42,46	Acts 20:3	1 Thessalonians 5:6, 9-10
Mark 13:37	Luke 6:12	Acts 6:3-4	Romans 12:12	1 Peter 5:7-9

1. Colossians 4:2-4 highlights give practices that belong to prayer:

- a. CONSISTENCY,
- b. WATCHFULNESS
- c. THANKFULNESS,
- d. INTENTIONALITY, and
- e. CLARITY

Which of these do you find it easiest to incorporate into your prayer life? Which the hardest?

2. Using the example of agriculture, and the example of Jesus (Luke 5:16), Pastor Craig shared how consistency does not have to mean rigidity and that rigidity is often the enemy of intimacy. Looking at the development of your prayer life, how have different seasons of life had an impact—be it negatively or positively—on your practice of prayer?
3. In the book, Letters to Malcolm, CS Lewis wrote, “The body ought to pray as well as the soul. Body and soul are both better for it.” What is your preferred posture for prayer?
4. In your own words, describe why watchfulness and prayer belong together? How could your answer influence your prayer life from here on out?
5. A Christian is to live as a ‘night watchmen.’ How can we remain alert to the dangers of life in the world and seduction from within the church, without becoming so hyper-vigilant that fail to enjoy the gift of life itself? How do you stay alert to danger without destroying your passion for life?
6. Reading 1 Peter 5:6-11, how do you make sure that your vigilance leads to sobriety (calm and focused) rather than to a conspiracy mindset that produces anxiety? What Scriptural truths help you to remain calm and focused under trial?
7. From the Scriptures we know that the blessings of vigilance and sobriety are peace, calm, and assurance, to name but three. Examining your life over the last year, what are the things that have fueled anxiety and fear? Confess these to someone you trust. Pray together for the Lord to bring lasting peace.
8. When it comes to prayer, there are so many things that cause us to stumble, but these things matter less to God than a heart and mind that passionately yearn for Him. Look at the following prayer, attributed to both Thomas Brooks and Bishop Joseph Hall.

It is not the arithmetic of our prayers—how many they be; nor the rhetoric of our prayers — how eloquent they be; nor their geometry—how long they be; nor their music—how sweet their voice may be; nor their logic — how argumentative they be; nor yet their method—how orderly they be; nor even their divinity—how good their doctrine may be, which God cares for: but it is the fervency of spirit which availeth much.

Which of these approaches to prayer best defines you? Remember, the ‘fervency of the spirit’ likely expresses itself in one of the above approaches, if not another. We can be ‘fervent in the spirit’ and eloquent, for example. Which of these does not define you?