

It's Time To Pray

“A Christian's commitment to prayer must be sufficient for the time in which he lives.”

I Chronicles 12:32 tells us that *“. . . the children of Issachar . . . were men that had understanding of the times. to know what Israel ought to do. . .”*

The man, Christ Jesus, was our great example of keeping in step with the demands of the day.

- From his birth in Bethlehem, to his death at Calvary, he was in sync with God's purpose.
- "And it came to pass when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." (Luke 9:51).
- At each juncture in his life, he was ready to make the necessary adjustments.
- In his human aspect, he grew as the times demanded.
- As he faced his ultimate purpose for being born - that being the Cross - his focus, resolve, commitment and earnestness rose to the occasion.

Just prior to his betrayal, he prayed at Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives.

- This, however, was not his first time to pray there.
- Luke 22:39 says, "He came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives." The word "wont" means as he was accustomed to, his usual practice.
- But yet this particular prayer time took on a new dimension.
- Jesus, being aware of what was immediately ahead, "being in agony . . . prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." (Luke 22:44).
- His prayers had always been deep, sincere, and effective, yet now his earnestness and focus rose to new heights.
- The Times Demanded It!

Jesus was desirous that his disciples would also sense the urgency of the times. He warned them that *"All ye shall be offended because of me this night."* **(Matthew 26:31).**

- They objected to this professing that they were ready to die with him if necessary.
- After all, they had already followed him for over three years.
- Hadn't they proved to him their loyalty and devotion?
- What more did he want?
- Yet Jesus, being cognizant of what was ahead, persisted.
- When he found them sleeping rather than praying he said.

"What could ye not watch with me one hour?"

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing. but the flesh is weak." (Matthew 22:40-41).

Jesus was saying, in essence, "I know you want to continue to follow me and that you don't think you need this - but you really do!

- Yesterday's commitment was fine for yesterday's demands.
- But tomorrow's pressures will be so much greater.
- You have no idea what you are going to face shortly.
- To prepare for it,
- we need to pray as never before."
- Yet they still could not grasp the urgency of that hour.
- They slept on.
- Consequently, a little while later, "all the disciples forsook him, and fled." (Matthew 26:56).
- Our commitment must match the demands of our times! Otherwise we risk not being up to the task.
- God forbid!

Today, the modern church finds itself in the midst of the "perilous times" of which Paul spoke in **11 Timothy 3:1.**

Later in the same chapter (*verses 12 and 13*), he said, *"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."*

- "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." As the times get "worse and worse", our prayer lives must get "better and better".

Yesterday's commitment to prayer may have sufficed for the time –

- but tomorrow's pressures and demands will require so much more.

The last few verses of the twelfth chapter of Hebrews warn us, in effect, that "everything that can be shaken will be shaken" in the days ahead.

- The question is asked in *Revelation 6:17*, "Who shall be able to stand?"
- That is a good question –
- one that we need to seriously ponder as we face the near future.

One answer is given in *Luke 21:34-36*:

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unanares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

It's time to pray!

Perhaps you have followed the Lord for many years and would take offense at the suggestion that you need to "dig in" a little deeper.

- But please realize that tomorrow will not be like yesterday
 - As things get worse, our focus and commitment must get better.
"What, could ye not watch with me one hour?"
 - Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation:
 - the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

- We may not think we need it, but the Lord, knowing what is ahead, assures us that we do.

"Knowing the time.... it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." (Romans 13:11).

"It is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you." (Hosea 10:12).

Yes, It's Time To Pray!