

What You Need to Know About Dedication to Prayer by Katie Warner

The Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church describes prayer as, “The great gate leading into faith”.

If you were dedicated to being a strong spiritual leader and becoming a saint someday, you know that it is your responsibility, privilege and joy to knock on the door and enter through that great gate. And, hopefully, to help lead others through it too!

The effort and the battle to pray is part of what makes us Christians striving to draw closer to Jesus and become more like Him through conversation with Him in prayer.

I found that those who are truly dedicated to prayer in their lives know a few things about the importance of it.

First, it's soul food.

They know that nourishing their spiritual life through prayer is even more important than nourishing their physical wellbeing through food. Since their soul is eternal they know how nourishing it is to feed their soul with prayer.

Second, prayer is about quality time and fostering a relationship.

The strongest prayer warriors I've met know that if they want a deeper relationship with Jesus they have to do what anyone desiring a deeper relationship with someone does - spend time with each other. With God that is done through prayer.

In prayer we reach out to God. Not as some distant being but as our loving Father who is right there with us as we pray. Those dedicated to prayer also know the positive effects of their prayer on every other area of their lives. Resulting in stronger relationships, better health, better performance at work and greater happiness.

Third, they can't live without it.

Blessed Mother Theresa said, "Because I cannot rely on myself, I rely on Him 24 hours a day".

I learned pretty early on in my life that I need God to help me become the person that He desires me to be and to be happy, holy and at peace.

Fourth, Jesus said so!

Jesus commanded us to pray. One of our motivations to be dedicated to prayer should be that Christ commanded us to pray through our scripture and we should desire to obey His word.

"Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation."
Matthew 26:41

"Have no anxiety about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God."
Philippians 4:6

"Continue steadfastly in prayer being watchful in it with thanksgiving."
Colossians 4:2

And finally, "Pray constantly."
1 Thessalonians 5:17

The spirituality of the family hinges on it!

In this fifth point, dedicated "pray-ers" know that their prayer influences the spiritual lives of their entire family.

They know that their prayers with and for their family have tangible effects on each of their family members. And that their example of prayer sets a model for their spouses and children to follow.

Sixth, it doesn't have to be perfect to efficacious.

The catechism says, "Humility is the foundation of prayer".

Only when we humbly acknowledge that, "We do not know how to pray as we ought" (Romans 8:26) are we ready to receive freely the gift of prayer.

When humility is the cornerstone of our prayer lives, we realize that prayer, a gift, doesn't have to be offered perfectly to be valuable. Fumbled words and feeble hearts are accepted graciously by an unconditionally loving God.

Seventh, it requires patience.

If we are serious about being dedicated to prayer, it's important to remind ourselves regularly that we can't become perfectly holy overnight. Nor will our prayer lives always be what or where we want them to be, but to keep praying and trying to continue growing in prayerfulness anyway. That's the key!

Finally, Jesus and Mary are great role models of prayer for us.

In prayer, we respond to God's love with a gift of ourselves. No one has done this more perfectly than Christ who conformed his human will perfectly to the divine will through constant prayer. Our Blessed Mother also modeled for us what it means to give of oneself in prayer. Through her "fiat" she gave God permission to work in and through her in the most magnificent way. God wants us to look at their examples to have that kind of openness in our prayer lives too.

Prayer opens the door to God's outpouring of love in our lives. It glues people to God and binds couples and families together. So, we should want to make it a top priority to pray; individually, as a couple and as a family.

What are your motivations for being dedicated to a strong prayer life?

Write one to three of them down and look at them regularly as a source of encouragement to you to continue in that effort to stay dedicated to prayer.