

A Time To Pray

1/12/97

Reading: [Ecclesiastes 3:1-8](#)

Prayer

Introduction:

- A. Precious Lord, Take My Hand--Thomas Dorsey
 - 1. Preacher father, Musical Mother & Uncle--WWI Jazz, 150 blues
 - 2. 1921 reevaluation of life
 - 3. 1932 Gospel meeting, wife died giving birth, baby died next nite
 - 4. "God you aren't worth a dime to me right now."
- B. That would be a hard time to pray, but a time to pray.
 - 1. Jesus prayed often in his life and at every opportunity and occasion
 - 2. Let's look at some of those times tonight.

#1 It is a time to pray when Committing our lives

- A. Jesus' Baptism--Luke 3:21-22
 - Luke 3:21-22 Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form, as a dove, and a voice came from heaven, "Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased." (RSV)
- B. Prayer and Baptism
 - 1. Not an odd combination.
 - 2. Isn't baptism itself a prayer? 1 Peter 3:21--Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, (RSV)

#2 It is a time to pray when Making Decisions

- A. Jesus making decisions.
 - 1. Bright, motivated, responsible?
 - 2. No. Rough, uneducated, impulsive men
 - 3. Zealots, tax collectors, and fishermen.--Why?
 - 4. Luke 6:12-13 In these days he went out to the mountain to pray; and all night he continued in prayer to God. 13 And when it was day, he called his disciples, and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles; (RSV)
- B. Wouldn't be a good time for us to pray?
 - 1. "It's not like God writes notes in the clouds" (But in the clouds...)
 - 2. The disciples in choosing another for Judas--prayed and cast lots.
 - 3. Our decisions then may be based on conventional wisdom and deep feelings or may be contrary to both.

#3 It is a time to pray when we grow in Christ

- A. The Transfiguration Luke 9:28-31
 - 1. 2 times God announces from heaven that Jesus is His Son!
 - 2. It is exciting to discover that both times, Jesus was praying.
- B. Prayer is the same for us.
 - 1. When we pray like Jesus, pray with Jesus, we are accepted as he
 - 2. Could it be we are also transformed?
 - a. Psalm 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. (RSV)
 - b. Do our thoughts change our behavior or does our behavior change our thoughts?
 - c. Both. When we pray and we focus our minds on pleasing God, there is no doubt that it affects our minds and lives.

4 It is a time to pray when Remembering

- A. Luke 22:19--the Lord's supper
 - 1. A prayerful time of remembering his love, sacrifice . . .
 - 2. A prayerful time of remembering who we are.
- B. A turning point
 - 1. Betrayal--not just Judas, but all the disciples.
 - 2. But also a reminder that we can come back as Peter did and strengthen others. Luke 22:31-32

5 It is a time to pray when Struggling

- A. In Gethsemane Jesus struggled with the flesh.
 - 1. Jesus made it look easy in the wilderness with 3 temptations
 - 2. Here, it is another story, sweat as blood
 - Luke 22:44 And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. (NIV)
- B. Is there a time when you struggle?
 - 1. What greater time to pray than then?
 - 2. What greater need to pray than then?
 - 3. Do you struggle with what God's will is in your life?
 - 4. Do you struggle with your own impatience, lack of self control, sometime even your desire to do God's will?
 - 5. You are not alone (as Jesus in Gethsemane) we can pray together.