24/7 PRAYER RESOURCES

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Anchor Point

REFRESHING YOUR SOUL IN A BUSY WORLD

How many of us here today find ourselves flat out at work?

Do you ever catch yourself thinking:

- 'how am I meant to get it all done?'
- 'how am I meant to fit this all in?'

How many of us feel overwhelmed at times?

- There's too much going on,
- There's not enough time in one day!

Life is busy, and it seems to be getting busier and busier. The urgent often drowns out the important.

The Bible directs all of us to: *'Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people* (Ephesians 6:7 NLT).

We are encouraged to work in a way that would bring honour to God, but left unchecked, this desire to please the Lord can lead to overworking and an unhealthy lifestyle.

I see this playing in out in people's lives as *'more work and less boundaries'*.

And over time this can have adverse effects:

- Over-tired (maybe with headaches, sore eyes...),
- Having less time for family, friends, others, or ourselves,
- Eating convenient but unhealthy meals, or
- Find ourselves with less and less energy.

The danger of being constantly busy is that we can also find ourselves growing more and more spiritually tired; and when we are tired spiritually, human nature has a tendency to drift away from God.

Because of busyness we can sometimes stop; reading the Bible regularly, praying, journaling, worshipping and practising our preferred spiritual discipline.

Busyness is a real tension point for many of us. It wears on our souls. It drains us. It stops us from being our best selves. If we are not careful, we will work so hard to get it all done that we will get undone in the process.

So what do we do when busyness is getting the better of us? How do we slow down long enough to remain connected with God? And how do we get God's help in all of this? Well, in all things we look to Jesus.

1. Jesus modelled two things that will help us overcome busyness

Jesus led a very full life. He had a lot to accomplish.

Think about it. Jesus came to take away the sins of the entire world so all people could have opportunity to be reconciled to God.

He was a son, a brother, a teacher, a healer, a prophet, the Messiah and the hope of the world—he had a lot on his plate!

And yet he managed to get it all done while still remaining close to God and training the twelve disciples to carry on his work.

How?

He didn't get overworked to the point of burnout. He managed to maintain a close relationship with God despite all he had to get done. How did He do that?

After a busy day of teaching, healing, deliverance, and preaching, Mark 1:35 records:

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*Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a **solitary place**, where he **prayed*** (Mark 1:35 NIV).

In the midst of the demands of ministry, healing, preaching, serving, and working hard for God Jesus remain connected with God by refreshing himself with solitude and prayer. Jesus didn't let the busyness of his world crowd out his relationship with God.

In a very busy and demanding world, Jesus took regular time out from all the demands placed on his life to be alone with God and to pray.

Setting regular time aside to **PRAY** and **BE ALONE WITH GOD** is a key to maintaining a healthy spiritual walk in an over busy life.

We all can benefit from practising these same two spiritual disciplines...

PRAYER and **TIME ALONE WITH GOD**

2. Jesus placed value on setting time aside to be with God

As we've just read, Jesus modelled distraction free time with God:

"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place ..."(Mk 1:35 NIV).

He had a place where he could go and rest in God. In Scripture, the 'solitary place' is also translated as *desert* and *wilderness*. It was an unpopulated place, generally free from other people and distractions.

It's no mistake that Jesus was tempted in the wilderness during His forty day fast. It wasn't because He was deserted by God, it was because He was close to Him. There are spiritual forces whose whole intent is to stop us from spending time with God.

That's why it can be hard at times.

Jesus knew of the importance of connecting with God alone, and so He also invited his disciples to do the same:

"Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves" (Mark 6:31-32 NKJV).

We all need times of solitude, times when we get away from distractions and busyness and take time to rest in God's presence. When we get away from emails, Facebook, the web, laptops and even ... hold your breath ... our mobile phones!

A small practical step we can take is to find a regular place where you like to go and connect with God. You don't need to be there for a long time. It might only be 10 minutes, just long enough to enjoy a cup of tea, the point is it's time out from a busy world.

When it came to prayer, Jesus encouraged praying in a distraction free zone.

"Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace" (Matt 6:6 MSG).

Think about what might suit you best. My place is my kitchen table, early in the morning or late at night while the kids are in bed. It's one of my favourite places. It's close to the fireplace, so in winter I often put a few logs on there for ambiance and just enjoy time with God.

When was the last time you had time alone with God? Do you have a spot where you could go where you can be distraction free?

Set yourself a goal of finding a distraction free place this week, where you can spend time with God alone.

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3. Jesus modelled a life that was stilled by the power of prayer

*A life that **was anchored** by the power of prayer.*

I find it fascinating that throughout His entire ministry and life, Jesus never stopped setting time aside for prayer.

- When He needed to make a crucial decision (like choosing 12 disciples), He got time alone to pray:

"One day soon afterward Jesus went up on a mountain to pray and he prayed to God all night" (Luke 6:12 NLT).

- When He was dealing with a confronting situation (the death of John), He got time alone and to be with God:

"As soon as Jesus heard the news, he left in a boat to a remote area to be alone" (Matt 14:13 NLT).

- When He was dealing with stress (the night of his betrayal), He got time alone and prayed:

"Then Jesus went with them to a garden called Gethsemane and told his disciples, "Stay here while I go over there and pray" (Matt 26:36 MSG).

When we get time alone with God, our prayer life will take on new dimensions. We can be more open in private. We can be more transparent with God.

I like to think of solitude and prayer as an anchor for our soul. When we practise these two spiritual disciplines together, they help still our souls in the midst of a busy world and connect with God.

They help us centre our thoughts on God and have a way of holding us long enough in the one spot to enjoy God's presence to get refreshed and recharged. Practised together, they help us swap busyness for stillness.

When you carve timeout to be alone with God this week, let me encourage you to spend that time in prayer, asking God to help slow down your busy world.

Ask God to help carry the anxieties or stressful situations you might be facing.

Pray and ask God to refresh your soul.

Prayer is powerful when it is combined with alone time with God.

Conclusion

Martin Luther, who is recorded to have said, "I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayers."

James 5:16 (NLT) says,

"The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results."

Now, I'm not saying we need to spend three hours in prayer, but the point is ***time is not lost in prayer, it is gained.***

The reality is, when you or I pray, God hears our prayers and helps us.

He has the power to help us de-stress in a busy world, as our Good Shepherd, he will lead us beside still waters.

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Call to Action

So can I encourage you to find your spot, that place where you can be alone with God, and while you are there, pray to Him. God loves His children and delights in helping and blessing us.

Take time this week to meet with God. 10 mins over a cuppa each morning or night will do wonders for your soul.

Things to consider

1. Where is your place of prayer?

Do you have one?

Where could it be?

2. When was the last time you were alone with God?

What was it like?

What did He say to you?

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