

PRAYER REQUIRES PRECIOUS TIME AND A PRECIOUS PLACE



“He was praying in a certain place,” (Lk.11:1)

I remember my dad telling me that his retirement was the busiest time of his life! We are very busy people. But no matter how busy, we always manage to make time for our priorities. Therefore, if we want to distinguish ourselves from some who says prayers and become a person of prayer, we must carve out a special time and place to be at prayer with Jesus. I literally make an appointment with Jesus every day. It is a special time and in a special place where I know I will not be disturbed and can focus my complete attention on Him, (dealing with distractions is another story we can discuss later). My time and place is usually around 5:0am in the rectory chapel. It is a time and place where I am free from the phone and the doorbell. Given the early hour, I have to confess that I bring coffee with me (but no coffee an hour before Mass for the fast). Of course, I always offer the cup to Our Lord but he always lets me drink it for him!

It is important to set a time and a place where you can tell your whole *being* that “this is prayer!” Some people have a special place in their home; an area with a chair, a candle, bible and devotional books, crucifix or holy pictures and icons. These help create a sense of “sacred space” with sacred things that calls the mind to sacred thinking. I know someone with five children who keeps his bible and prayer devotions in the bathroom because it is the only quiet place in the house! Indeed, there are *sacred extremes*!

I see many people come to the Church or the Adoration Chapel early in the morning or at times through out the day. I am impressed by the number of people who drop their children off at school or the day care and “drop in” on Jesus in the church. I am still more impressed by the parents whom I see come into Church or early Mass with their children, and then drop them off at school—what an impression to leave on a child!

I might add here that the Church is open at least an hour before every Mass and of course, the Adoration Chapel at Ste Marie at 133 Wayne St. is open 24/7.

Some may say, “I pray all day.” Some say, “I pray while I am doing my house work and yard work.” Others say, “I pray in the car.” Still others say, “I pray while I walk or jog.” All these are wonderful ways of making our entire day include the presence of Jesus. However, we must ask ourselves, “Would any of our special relationships survive if we only communicated “on the fly?”

Some may say that what I am describing is for monks and nuns. While the vocation of nuns and monks call for a life that is intensely devoted to God, every Christian is called to make a special time and space for devotion to a personal relationship with Jesus. It is the difference between someone who says prayers and one who is a person of prayer. It is the difference between an observer of Christianity and a Christian. It is the difference between giving Jesus a friendly wave and sitting with him for coffee and deep conversation.

While there have been thousands of books written on the subject of prayer there are some basic principles will spark your prayer life. Much of my material will be rooted in a wonderful book that is no longer published, Appointment With God, Fr. Michael Scanlan, T.O.R (Franciscan University Press). It is one of the best books I have seen for outlining and forming a life of prayer. If you can find a copy via the internet it will make a great resource for your spiritual life of prayer.

....Fr. Moe