



Sermon Notes

Theme Prayer
Week 10 Waiting on God

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BIBLE



Reading: Mark 1.35–39

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

AIMS



- ▶ To recognise the way in which Jesus made prayer a big priority in his life.
- ▶ To see how prayer enabled Jesus to be clear about the daily pattern and agenda of his ministry.
- ▶ To explore what we might learn from this, and apply it in our own lives.

STARTER



Introduce the idea of waiting, and the need for waiting times, for example pregnancy, growing up, holidays. Some waiting is frustrating: buses, doctors, job applications etc.

Invite people to share their frustrating experiences. Why is it so hard to wait? Some waiting is to do with 'anticipation' and is essential preparation, for example for holidays; new job; marriage.

Compare this to Jesus' 'waiting on God' as he seeks to ensure that his vision is clear, and the timetable of his ministry is sensitive to the leading of the Spirit. Recall the beginning of Jesus' ministry. It was always Spirit-led. It started with John the Baptist, into the wilderness, then to Nazareth. The 40 days in the wilderness enabled Jesus to 'wait on God' through the experience of fasting and fierce temptation. Luke records that it was the Holy Spirit that was present at Jesus' baptism (3.22) that led him into the wilderness (4.1); and that led him back to Galilee (4.14). Mention how waiting on God in prayer, especially before big changes and events in our lives, can help us to be Spirit-led. Maybe give an example from your own life.

KEY POINTS



1. **Jesus shaped prayer.** In the next three weeks we will explore Jesus' priority for prayer. The Gospels present Jesus' spiritual life as something he mostly did privately, probably leaving his followers daily to commune with his Father in the hills around the lakeside. However it is also clear that it was the powerhouse for his life. Every now and then we

are given glimpses of this and we see the disciples being challenged and reshaped by it. With open minds and hearts we want to try and understand the spiritual life of Jesus more carefully so that our own prayer lives can be reshaped by his example. In Luke 11.1 the disciples say to Jesus 'Lord, teach us how to pray.'

► **Key Question: What can we learn from Jesus about prayer?**

2. **Taking time to pray.** Today we look at a simple story from Mark 1.35–39 of how prayer was vital in Jesus' life and how it enabled him to be focussed in his ministry and his leadership. It's the start of Jesus' ministry. Suddenly the crowds appear. It's all very exhilarating and yet also demanding. Therefore, there is special need for prayer to ensure that he 'stays on track'. Jesus regularly adopted this practice of finding quiet and lonely places. Quote Luke 5.16: 'Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.' Jesus is probably going into the deserted hills around the Sea of Galilee. Think about what he would see, as dawn breaks: the towns and villages from which people have come to him; remembering the stories that they have told him; watching the fishing boats coming in from their night's work; the friends and family of many of his disciples. Jesus took time to pray. Tell the story of John Wesley who often quoted Martin Luther: 'I am so busy now that if I did not spend three hours each day in prayer, I could not get through the day.'

► **Key Question: Why did Jesus give such significant time and importance to prayer?**

3. **Being Spirit-led.** As a result of Jesus' prayer, he has more clarity about his ministry. We read in vs 36 that the disciples went to look for Jesus and found him. They tell him 'everyone is searching for you.' They seem to display impatience and demand. Explore the difference in attitude between the disciples and Jesus. Think about how Jesus' direction comes from prayer and silence whereas the disciples are driven by demand and people. Jesus takes time to pray and as a result is Spirit-led in the way he ministers. Jesus senses it is time to move on to other nearby villages, 'because that is I why I have come' (vs 38). Reflect on how we see Jesus being clear about the overall direction of his ministry, but able to respond to God-given daily responsibilities and opportunities. Jesus is both 'proactive and reactive'.

► **Key Question: How can prayer help us to be like Jesus in both sensing the direction of our church and in responding to daily needs and opportunities?**

APPLY



1. Are there any changes you would like to make in your prayer life, inspired by Jesus?
2. What style of prayer do we need to adopt to enable God to clarify his purpose for our church?
3. Share a story of how prayer has resulted in a real change of plan in either your personal experience or in the direction of a church.
4. Emphasise how both personal and corporate prayer are important.

SHAPED PEOPLE