

Meditation

Could you imagine having a relationship with a friend where all you did was talk and you never listened to a word your friend had to say...in fact, you never even allowed your friend to talk? That would be more like a one-man show than a relationship. So why do so many Christians rattle off prayers and then say “amen” and walk away, never allowing God a chance to talk? Prayer is not done just to check it off a list of things you think a Christian should do. Prayer is not just mindlessly reciting words. We are in a relationship with God, and a healthy relationship is two-way. Prayer is not us telling God what He is to do, but discovering what God wants to do through us as we join Him in His kingdom plans.

Meditation is the part of your prayer time where you take time to be still and listen for God’s still small voice. This can be done by studying and reflecting upon God’s Word and allowing His Holy Spirit to reveal things to you. This can also be done by clearing your mind, stopping all the self-talk and distractions of the world, and listening for His voice. “You will search for me and you will find me when you search for me with all your heart,” Jeremiah 29:13. As you learn to hear and recognize God’s leading, then your prayers begin to initiate from His heart and mind. That is why 1 John 5:14 tell us, “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us – whatever we ask – we know that we have what we asked of Him.” If we’re going to pray according to His will, then we must know His will in the situation. How do we know what our friends want and need? We spend time with them, listen to them, and then take action based upon that. Our relationship with God works the same way.

I have a wonderful example of the importance of listening for God’s voice. I found myself e-mailing back and forth with a lady in California. One of my writings had ended up on her computer, and she had contacted me. A Christian coworker had been witnessing to her, and she had a lot of questions and doubts.

I had spent a lot of time writing a two-page e-mail in response to her initial contact. I had been in prayer throughout the entire composition; but when I finished, I spent some time in meditation with the Lord, seeking His will and input. I said, “Lord, you know what this lady needs to hear. Is there anything you want me to take out of this e-mail or anything you want me to add to it?” I then concentrated on not thinking about anything – which is quite an effort if you have never tried it – and then very quietly I heard “For God so loved the world.” Being the obedient child that I am, I immediately began to argue with the Lord that surely He couldn’t mean John 3:16! I told him that this lady said she had heard all the standard arguments and it just didn’t work with her. She didn’t want the same old stuff. I said, “Lord, in her mind there could not be a more overused verse than John 3:16. Surely you do not want me to put that in here. I don’t even know where it would fit in the letter.” But the Lord insisted. So, even though I didn’t want to, even though it made no sense in my mind to do so, even though there was really no good place in the letter to put it, I obeyed the Lord and just put it in as the final word.

When I heard back from her, it was a very brief message. She said something to the effect “Of all the verses you could have used, why did you pick John 3:16? You have no idea the history for me with that verse. I am really freaked out right now.” I e-mailed her back and told her that I didn’t pick John 3:16, that the Lord did. “In fact,” I told her, “I argued quite heartily with Him over it, but in the end was obedient to what He asked me to do.” She then told me that after her

coworker began witnessing to her, she began to consistently wake up in the middle of the night; and every time she would turn over and look at her clock, it would say 3:16.

All my effort, all my hard work, all my energy in writing the e-mail, yet the thing that got her attention was what the Lord had to say, for He was the One who knew what she needed to hear. God used a total stranger to her, one who was willing to seek Him in prayer and then listen for His voice, to prove to her that He is alive and active. What if I hadn't asked? What if I hadn't listened? What if I was not acting like I was in a relationship with God, but was just singing and dancing in my one-man show?

I have heard some people set a chair beside them when they pray, and they picture the Lord sitting in it. It helps them in a very real way to get the concept that they are talking with God (two-way), not talking at God (one-way). Whatever works for you is fine, but just remember to take the time to listen!

Copyright 2006 [Arford Ministry](#) - Janea Arford janea@arfordministry.com

