
IHOP Lifestyle 1: Prayer

A. INTRODUCTION

1. I-H-O-P consists of the four acronyms which are the four core values which define WHO WE ARE.
2. More than just referring to International House of Prayer, these four acronyms are WHAT God is looking for in His people (2Chron. 16:9; Isa. 66:1).
3. It is vital for us in the House of Prayer to know and build our community around these CORE VALUES. We are here not just to do a task or fulfill a mission, but it is about BEING the very kind of people that God is looking for. In other words, don't just do I-H-O-P but BE the I-H-O-P people.
4. A powerful prophetic Word was spoken about the Church in 1980s :
"I (God) will change the UNDERSTANDING and the EXPRESSION of Christianity on the earth in one generation."
5. There are two aspects to this prophecy:
 - a. Change of understanding - This speaks of HOW God's people will understand WHO WE ARE and WHAT is our HIGHEST IDENTITY. Our identity is two-fold:
 - i. The Bride of Christ (Rev. 22:17) - The primary identity of the Church is the Bride at the end of the age when Jesus returns. The Church can be described as a family, an army and many other things, but ultimately Jesus is returning for His Bride.
 - ii. The House of Prayer (Isa. 56:7) – The highest identity of the Church is the House of Prayer. This defines the eternal identity of the Church. Prayer is not just what we do, but who we are. Eternally we will be partnering with Jesus in intercession.
 - b. Change of Expression -This speaks of the WAY that the Church will EXPRESS her LIFESTYLE and MINISTRY.
 - i. The specific values that God has defined in the Scriptures - There are 10-15 specific core values that God has defined in the New Testament. But at the end-of-the-age, these are the four core values (I-H-O-P) that God is insisting on and must be the foundational pillars of our lives and ministry.
 - ii. The Church is PRIMARILY value-driven - One common mistake of the Church is that we make our purpose the primary thing. But the Church should firstly be driven by values, not purpose. Vision and purpose are very important, but at most secondary. Values are eternal, but purpose is temporal.

B. I-H-O-P : THE FOUR CORE VALUES

I-H-O-P are the four core values or heart-standards that God desire from us: Intercession, Holiness, Offering and Prophetic/Power. They are not the only values in the New Testament, but they are the most neglected. We want to build our life and ministry with these four core values as the FOUNDATIONAL PILLARS.

1. *INTERCESSION*

- a. Individually, we are called to be a people of prayer (Isa. 56:7).
- b. Corporately, God insists on night and day prayer in the city (Isa. 62:6-7; Luke 18:7-8).

2. *HOLINESS*

- a. God desires in us a radical commitment to holiness. More than having no sin in our lives, we are to be set apart for Him.
- b. We seek to be wholehearted lovers of Jesus, living out the First and the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37-38).
- c. We seek to be True Kingdom people, walking out the Sermon of the Mount lifestyle (Matt. 5-7).

3. *OFFERING*

- a. This is defined by extravagant giving to God in terms of time, service and money.
- b. It is to advance the Kingdom of God through preaching the Gospel and blessing Israel and the poor.
- c. We are not to give out of our surplus, but to practice sacrificial and extravagant giving to God (2 Sam. 24:24).
- d. Our extravagant giving matters to God (Mark 12:44; Luke 21:3-4).
- e. We choose to give extravagantly to the Lord and then we wait for God to respond.

4. *PROPHETIC & POWER*

- a. We are to move in supernatural power of God regarding provision, protection and direction.
- b. Moving in supernatural signs and wonders and speaking the prophetic word boldly should be the norm.
- c. We are to speak boldly as the voice of God because the Church has to be prophetic!

C. PRAYER

1. PRAYER, THE WORD AND MEDITATION

- a. Prayer, the Word and meditation are all vital and significant for both forerunners and the Church at large. We need all three working together.
- b. God calls us a House of Prayer. It is who we are called to be (Isa 56:7). Prayer connects our hearts with God as we relate to Him. As forerunners, prayers are critical as it releases revelation and gives us authority to impact the hearts of people we speak to (Luke 3:1-3).
- c. The Word gives language to our prayer. The more we pray the Word the more we enjoy the Word. The more we verbalize our prayers using the Word the more it will mark our heart and change us.
- d. Meditation is the “vehicle” that causes the Word to impact our heart bringing encounter and transformation. Studying the Bible fills our minds with the truths from the Word, while meditation transfers the Word from our mind to our heart.

2. THREE BLESSINGS OF PRAYER

- a. Prayer causes our spirit / inner man to be energized and vibrant. This is because our hearts are connected to God as we pray. Scripture tells us to pray without ceasing and to pray in the spirit and in tongues.
- b. Prayer releases the blessing, favor and authority of God in our life and ministry.
- c. Prayer changes the world. Peter Wagner said that history is in the hands of intercessors. We need to pray before going out to the field. Mission agencies are now tying up mission work with night and day prayer.

3. WHAT IS PRAYER?

- a. It is simply talking to God. Prayer is agreeing with what is on His heart.
- b. Three things about Prayer:
 - i. It is a GREAT PRIVILEGE because God wants a conversation with us. God wants us to talk to Him, and He wants to talk to us. It is amazing that God pleads with us to pray instead of us pleading with Him to listen!
 - ii. It is a POWERFUL MIRACLE because God will release the revelation of His heart, His resources and His power based on us talking to Him. This is unbelievable in its simplicity!
 - iii. It is a FIERCE STRUGGLE because all the powers of darkness want to shut it down and prevent us from praying as our enemies know the

potential and power of prayers! We have already won half the battle when we show up for prayer meetings.

4. WHY DOES GOD WANT US TO PRAY?

- a. God wants us to be connected with His heart (Isa. 30:18-19).
- b. God wants a deep partnership with us! God will withhold His blessing for us when we do not pray because He wants to starve us out of prayerlessness.
- c. The Foundational Principle of God's Kingdom is that we need to ASK GOD (James 4:2; Luke 11:9-10) for both the increase of good things and the decrease of bad things. Prayer is not earning God's favor, but it is the positioning of our heart to receive what He desires to give us, as we are connected to His heart in intimacy (John 15:7). Most of God's promises are not guaranteed. We have to ask and pray. (Dan. 9:1-3, 1 Tim. 1:18)
- d. The main reason for Prayer is not to prove His power by withholding blessings or to show who the "boss" is. But it is the expression of His jealousy for intimacy with us. He already knows all our needs before we ask. (Matt. 6:8)
- e. It is vital for us to ask, to verbalize it or to say it (Luke 11:9; Phil. 4:6). Don't just think in frustration but ask. Verbalizing our prayer causes interaction and connection with God.

5. THREE PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES IN CULTIVATING A CONSISTENT PRAYER LIFE

- a. These three practical principles enhance and strengthen our prayer life and are absolutely necessary for most people.
 - i. Set a Schedule for our prayer time - We will never do it if we only pray when we feel "led". Scheduling is not legalism but DISCIPLINE. The progression of any Christian lifestyle is Desire, Discipline, and Delight. Delight only comes after years of doing it diligently and intentionally. We have to start being consistent and develop a habit or a routine.
 - ii. Develop a Personal Prayer List - It gives us a FOCUS in our prayer time. It doesn't mean we cannot deviate from the list. It gives us a direction / focus to pray. The goal is not to finish the list or get through the whole list systematically, but it is to help us to stay focused.
 - iii. Having a Correct View of God - It is very important to know who God is and how God views us, which is vital in having an enjoyable prayer life. If we have a wrong view of God, it is unlikely that we will enjoy prayer. We can have a schedule and a focused prayer life, but we will not stay long in prayer if our view of God is incorrect.

- b. Summary of the three practical steps:
 - i. A schedule establishes WHEN we pray
 - ii. A prayer list gives us the focus so that we know WHAT to pray
 - iii. A correct view of God causes us to WANT to pray

6. TIPS ON DEVELOPING PRAYER FOCUS

- a. Three general themes that we pray:
 - i. Revelation of God - This increases our intimacy with God, as we know more of God and know more of His heart (Eph. 1:17; Jer. 9:23-24).
 - ii. Fruits of the Spirit - This helps us grow in character and become the person of One Thing (Ps. 27:4). We need to grow the fruits of the beatitudes, holiness, obedience, etc.
 - iii. Blessing and Power - We can ask for and receive blessing in our personal walk and ministry in provision, anointing, protection, favor, direction.
- b. Three general focuses
 - i. Intimacy - Through devotional prayer, we talk to God and meditate on the Word.
 - ii. Petition - We can ask for God's blessing for our personal life regarding our circumstances, our ministry and our family.
 - iii. Intercession - We pray for God's intervention for others by standing in the gap, e.g. we can pray for our friends, the nation, the church or certain strategic issues.

D. TWO FOUNDATIONAL VIEWS OF GOD

1. He is a Father of tenderness - He our Abba (Rom. 8:15) who loves us deeply (John 17:23). He is tender towards us and He delights in us (Zeph. 3:17). gives us confidence to run to Him (Eph. 3:12).
2. He is our Bridegroom who has passionate desire for us - The End-Time prayer movement will be established on our Bridal Identity (Rev. 22:17). Knowing Jesus as our Bridegroom simply means we pray out of a position of intimacy. We are not just tasked to do something but it is a partnership out of love. Prayer is enjoyable when it is out of an intimate encounter with a Person.

E. NIGHT & DAY PRAYER

1. From Isa. 62:4-7, we can see that God first establishes us in Bridal Identity before calling us to Night & Day Prayer. The key in sustaining night & day prayer is having intimacy with God (Isa. 62:4-5).
2. This is the mystery and majesty of Prayer.
 - a. It's so SIMPLE. It is talking to God, telling Him what He tells us to tell Him. Any weak human being can do it.
 - b. It's so POWERFUL. Power from God is released through prayer.
3. WHY CORPORATE PRAYER?
 - a. God's essential way in releasing His government on earth with power and authority is through corporate prayer meetings.
 - b. God's hand moves when His people agree with Him here on earth. (Matt. 18:18-20; Luke 18:7-8) When there are more people agreeing with Him, there is more power released.
 - c. Jesus governs the entire created order through intercession (Heb. 7:25). He governs in partnership with His people in intercession.
 - d. The governmental centre of God's Kingdom is the Prayer Room in heaven (Rev. 4, 5). Similarly, the House of Prayer is the governmental centre of God on earth (Matt. 6:10).
4. WHY NIGHT & DAY PRAYER?

God connects works of justice to Night & Day prayer (Luke 18:7-8).

 - a. Works of justice is most effective in the context of night & day prayer (Luke 18:7-8)
 - i. We need to know that there is a significant dimension of demonic forces behind every injustice. Spiritual forces are at work and thus human ability and effort are not enough. If we cry out night and day, surely God will answer and justice will come.
 - ii. It's not either prayer or works. We need to do both together! Therefore the House of Prayer is also a Missions Base.
 - b. Doing works of justice is hard work.
 - i. We become weary and burnt out if we are not connected to Jesus at the heart level. E.g. Martha (Luke 10:39-40)
 - ii. Jesus is the greatest social reformer and He is full of compassion, full of love. Our heart is re-energized when we are connected to Him in prayer!

F. EIGHT BENEFITS OF PRAYER

1. Intercession causes us to internalize God's Word
 - a. Each time as we speak God's Word, it marks our heart, mind and spirit because His Word is spirit and life (John 6:63). That's why we pray the Scriptures!
 - b. We should verbalize God's Word and speak, declare and proclaim. Rom. 10:9 tells us to confess with our mouth.
 - c. E.g. Song. 7:10: "I am my beloved's and his desire is toward me." We respond: "Yes! This is true! You like me!"
2. Intercession unites our hearts
 - a. It unites our hearts with the people and places that we pray for.
 - b. It unites the hearts of those who come together to pray.
3. Intercession is a practical expression of love for people because prayer is labor and hard work (2 Cor. 1:11; Phil. 1:19).
4. Intercession renews our hope and faith in God as
 - a. We wait for the release of His promise (Ps. 27:14; Isa. 40:31).
 - b. We wait for God in the place of prayer.
5. Intercession causes multiplied blessings to return back to the life of the intercessor. (Luke 6:38).
6. Intercession humbles us before God – it causes us to be dependent upon God.
7. Intercession positions our heart to hear from God, resulting in intimacy with God.
8. Intercession changes the spiritual atmosphere of the church, cities, nations and our generation.

G. HOW TO CONNECT WITH GOD THROUGH PRAY-READING THE WORD

1. The Word of God is the spirit and life to our soul (John 6:63). We should not just study the Bible cognitively. (John 5:39-40) The purpose of the Word is to create a conversation with God. We should study the Bible and pray the Bible.
 2. There are 2 broad categories of truth in the Bible:
 - a. Truth that exhorts us to believe
E.g. He will take care of us (Ps. 23:1; Matt. 6:33)
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- b. Truth that exhorts us to obey
E.g. He who loves Me, obey My commandments (John 14:21)
- 3. Devotional Reading of the Word
 - a. Engage your heart with God while reading the Word. When certain truths strike your heart, talk to God about it.
 - b. E.g. John 15:9: “*As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.*” We respond: “Thank You, Jesus, for Your great love for me. Increase my understanding of Your love.” (Eph. 3:16-19)
 - c. E.g. Ps. 19:14 - We respond: “Lord, help me with my speech. Give me grace to bridle my tongue and speak words of grace.”

H. HOW DO WE ENGAGE DURING APOSTOLIC INTERCESSORY WORSHIP SESSIONS?

- 1. Apostolic prayers are recorded prayers of Jesus (the chief Apostle) and the apostles in the New Testament.
- 2. Apostolic prayers focus on releasing God’s grace instead of hindering or removing negative realities like sin or demons. There is a positive focus on the impartation of good instead of a negative focus on removing the realities of sin.
- 3. Here are some ways we can engage our heart with the Lord in our time of apostolic intercessory worship session:
 - a. Engage your heart with God - Make a conscious effort to focus on the Person of God, the One who sits on the throne.
 - b. Talk to God - Talk to God, then pause and listen.
 - c. Open up the Bible - Choose a verse to focus.
 - d. During the worship - We can sing to God during worship and we can stand or pace in the room. Do not be passive.
 - e. Listen to the prayers and antiphonal singing - We can agree aloud with the prayers and antiphonal singing. Sing along with the chorus line, once established. We can actively participate by praying aloud or praying in tongues.

I. HOW DO WE ENGAGE DURING DEVOTIONAL WORSHIP SESSION?

1. Devotional Worship is when we have a worship leader on one instrument leading a session alone, ministering to the Lord, before the audience of One.
2. Sometimes there may be periods of intercession.
3. Here are some ways we can engage our heart with the Lord in our time of devotional worship session:
 - a. Engage your heart with God - Focus on the Person, the One who sits on the throne.
 - b. Open up the Bible - Set a focus (e.g. Ps. 27:4) and ask God to reveal Himself. Don't just listen to the song.
 - c. Allow the song or Antiphonal singing to "facilitate" our meditation - Turn to the verse and verbalize it to internalize. Talk to God or pray in tongues.