

How to Pray Like David

Psalm 86

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God Works for Those Who Wait for Him

To wait! That means to pause and soberly consider our own inadequacy and the Lord's all-sufficiency, and to seek counsel and help from the Lord, and to hope in Him (Psalm 33:20-22, Isaiah 8:17). Israel is rebuked that "they did not wait for His counsel" (Psalm 106:13). Why? Because in not seeking and waiting for God's help, they robbed God of an occasion to glorify Himself.

For example, in Isaiah 30:15 the Lord says to Israel, "In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength." But Israel refused to wait for the Lord, and said, "No! We will speed upon horses."

Then in verse 18 the folly and evil of this self-initiated frenzy is revealed: "The Lord waits to be gracious to you; therefore He exalts Himself to show mercy to you. For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for Him." The folly of not waiting for God is that we forfeit the blessing of having God work for us. The evil of not waiting for God is that we oppose God's will to exalt Himself in mercy.

God aims to exalt Himself by working for those who wait for Him. Prayer is the essential activity of waiting for God: acknowledging our helplessness and His power, calling upon Him for help, seeking His counsel. So it is evident why prayer is so often commanded by God, since His purpose in the world is to be exalted for His mercy. Prayer is the antidote for the disease of self-confidence that opposes God's goal of getting glory by working for those who wait for Him.

"The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show His might on behalf of those whose heart is whole toward Him" (2 Chronicles 16:9). God is not looking for people to work for Him, so much as he is looking for people who will let Him work for them. The gospel is not a Help Wanted ad. Neither is the call to Christian service. On the contrary, the gospel commands us to give up and hang out a Help Wanted sign (this is the basic meaning of prayer). Then the gospel promises that God will work for us if we do. He will not surrender the glory of being the Giver.

But is there not anything we can give Him that won't belittle him to the status of beneficiary? Yes-our anxieties. It's a command: "Cast all your anxieties on Him" (1 Peter 5: 7) . God will gladly receive anything from us that shows our dependence and His all-sufficiency.

John Piper, *Desiring God*, 170-171.

"God and the praying man take shares ... First, here is your share: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble." Secondly, here is God's share: "I will deliver thee." Again, you take a share-for you shall be delivered. And then again it is the Lord's turn-"Thou shalt glorify Me." Here is a compact, a covenant that God enters into with you who pray to Him, and whom He helps. He says, "You shall have the deliverance, but I must have the glory...." Here is a delightful partnership: we obtain that which we so greatly need, and all that God getteth is the glory which is due unto His name."

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Twelve Sermons on Prayer*, 115, in reference to Psalm 50:15.

"Psalm 86 is a _____, _____ prayer of a suffering believer based on the _____, _____, and _____ of God."

1. Pleas of Prayer (86:1-7)

86:1 _____

86:2 _____

86:3 _____

86:4 _____

86:5 What is God's Steadfast Love (*hesed*)? _____

86:6,7 _____

2. The Praise of Prayer (86:8-10)

86:8 _____

86:9 _____

86:10 _____

3. The Petitions of Prayer (86:11-17)

86:11 _____

86:12 _____

86:13 _____

86:14 _____

86:15 _____

86:16 _____

86:17 _____
