

## Taking the Time to Pray

Have you ever noticed how intentional Jesus was about his personal devotional habits and time spent with the Father? Scattered all throughout the gospels are references to specific instances of prayer and to his regular devotional habits. Consider several examples: in Mark 1:35 we read that “...rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.” The preceding and following verses describe how busy Jesus’ ministry was, but verse 35 teaches us that he still made the time to go find a place where he could be alone and pray.

A few chapters later in Mark we come across another instance when he withdrew to pray. Mark 6:30-32 describes how busy Jesus and his apostles were; they were so occupied with their ministry that they did not even have time to eat. Jesus called his apostles away to a desolate place to rest by themselves, but even there, the crowds found them. Jesus was graciously fed the crowd of over 5000 men (vss. 33-44) but after the crowd was dismissed and his disciples were headed to their boat, Jesus withdrew, and “...went up on the mountain to pray” (Mark 6:46). We

We know that these were not isolated instances of prayer because of what Luke wrote in Luke 5:16. There we read that “...he would withdraw to desolate places and pray.” So we know that it was more than a time or two that Jesus withdrew to pray. Jesus made a habit of withdrawing from the busy schedule of his life and the pressures of his public ministry so that he could be alone with his Father and pray. Even

though Jesus was himself God in the flesh, he still went to great lengths to prioritize time alone in which to pray to the Father and fast (Matt. 4:1-11). Undoubtedly, this habit of maintaining intense personal devotional times strengthened him to perfectly fulfill his earthly ministry and do the Father’s will.

If Jesus needed an intense personal devotional life, how much more do we need the same? If we are going to do our Father’s will and each fulfill the ministry that God gives us, then we—like Jesus—will need to be intentional about protecting time to be with the Father. If we are not careful our schedules will become our master and will push spiritual matters to the fringe of our lives. Busyness may be one of the greatest enemies to our growth in godliness and our pursuit of spiritual maturity. Of course, it is good to be busy with godly things, but if we are too busy to pray then we are too busy. Let’s be like Jesus by habitually taking the time to pray.