

Article: “Too Much to Do.”

Why pray? Because our loved ones suffer illness and disease and sorts of trials and tribulations. Yes, of course, there are doctors, technicians, specialists, injections, and immunisations. But even if Christ uses them, it is still the healing that He brings. In Mark 1, Jesus is moved by the needs of those who suffer. He heals the mother-in-law of Peter without being asked. And no matter what you think of your mother-in-law, it is still a demonstration of His care for those who suffer. He heals those who crowd into the walled compound that surrounded Peter’s house in Capernaum. Every request for healing is an urgent prayer. He hears and brings the blessing of crosses to us as He sees fit. But He does not heal everyone! He slips away from Capernaum in the cold, grey hours before morning, leaving behind the eager crowd. There was something more important for Him to do at that moment. He needed to pray. Why pray? Because our loved ones are suffering.

Why pray? Because it’s a good way to get away from people who are demanding your time. Want a foolproof way to get some time by yourself? When someone demands your time that you don’t want to deal with, just tell them that you are praying right now, and I guarantee they will leave you alone. (Seriously!) Mark tells us: “*And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, He departed and went out to a desolate place, and there He prayed. And Simon and those who were with Him searched for Him, and they found Him and said to Him, ‘Everyone is looking for You’*” (Mark 1:35-37) He replied, “Well yes, and they are expecting from Me all the wrong things. I am not a wonderworking medicine man; I am God’s Son. I must be about My mission to preach life to the world.” And so Jesus used prayer as a way to get away from people making demands that had little to do with His mission from His Father. Why pray? To gain a time of peace to talk to your heavenly Father.

Jesus, in preparation for His life’s mission, dedicated time to prayer. “Jesus said to them, “*Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.*”³⁹ *And He went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons*” (Mark 1:38-39).

A close pastor friend of mine shared the curiosity of the members in his first parish, questioning why he spent so much time secluded in his church office. When he told them he was spending his time praying for them, they looked at him with some greater puzzlement, and after a couple of moments, they asked, “Wouldn’t you like us to install a TV in your office?” He realised that they thought watching TV was more important and more useful than praying. Martin Luther said that when he knew he had too much to do, he would pray longer before he began his labour. He said that when he prayed too long, he would inevitably accomplish far more than he would have otherwise.

Why pray? You have too much to do, not to.

Of course, you have a mission, too. You are a parent, a teacher, a child, a friend, a wife. Your mission in life is tied to your God-given calling, your vocation. You will be more useful in your labour if you stop doing it to pray. Less work is more when you labour with prayer. This is what organisational gurus call: “working smarter.” Why pray? Because Christ Jesus has given you a mission. Why pray? Because Christ Jesus prays, and we should imitate Him.