

按時禱告

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「我要晚上、早晨、晌午哀聲悲歎；他也必聽我的聲音。」(詩五十五17)

在這詩篇，大衛寫說他會每天禱告三次：晚上，早上和中午。說完這些話，他顯出承諾要作到每天禱告的安排。藉著禱告，他可以向神傾心吐意，並且有信心神會垂聽，身為今日的基督徒，我們有沒有同樣的承諾要像大衛一樣來禱告呢？

我們許多人會覺得在忙碌的生活中，沒有足夠的時間來禱告。我們會在早上匆匆禱告，並且認為已經履行了基督徒的責任，但從始至終，都在想著當天待辦清單上的許多事情。總是有太多的事要做，但卻有很少的時間來完成它們。所以當我們真的找出時間來禱告時，通常是又短又急。

然而，我們從自己的經驗得知，當我們沒有空出時間在禱告中向神說話時，我們的生命就會感覺虛空。我們整天可能充滿了各種的活動，但是當我們回到床上休息的時候，我們自己並沒有感到很滿意。事實上，禱告是喜樂和力量的來源，特別是我們很忙的時候。有參加過學生神學訓練課程的人，就會知道課程的安排是有多麼的緊湊。有一些學生在早上很難睜開眼睛。然而，因為禱告時間特別長，學生會感覺靈性很滿足，在課程結束的時候，感覺重新得力。在三個禮拜每天固定禱告之後，從早晨到睡覺時間，學生們感覺他們好似已觸摸到神。

即使我們許多人已經體驗過空出時間禱告神的祝福，最常見不禱告的藉口仍然是：「我就是沒時間」。為什麼會變成這樣呢？難道禱告不是我們信仰中的一環，要無縫融入生活中的一件事嗎？讓我們來看看聖經裡面的兩個例子，來尋找答案。

但以理

平衡禱告和工作的生活

但以理書第五章的後面，我們看到大利烏推翻了巴比倫伯沙撒王，並且引導瑪代波斯帝國的年代。這次政權的改變，導致了但以理工作環境的整個改變。(但六1-5)雖然這樣，但以理的付出仍然是一樣的：

「因這但以理有美好的靈性，所以顯然超乎其餘的總長和總督，王又想立他治理通國。那時，總長和總督尋找但以理誤國的把柄，為要參他；只是找不著他的錯誤過失，因他忠心辦事，毫無錯誤過失。」(但六3、4)但以理在工作上仍然同樣的忠心，就像他面對從前的主人一樣，並且勝任他的職位。即使他的敵人徹徹底底在檢視他一切的行為，他們找不到錯誤—因為他的工作毫無瑕疵。

大家都知道，但以理一天會三天禱告(但六10)。從他進入巴比倫帝國的時代，在他的一生之中，都是行政主管，管理巴比倫國內的智者，直到後來，他被任命為波斯和瑪代三位總督其中一位，他保持同樣的日常作息—他會一天三次感謝神。問題是，但以理如何找出時間來向神禱告，而同時又能維持工作上高標準的表現呢？

或許有些人認為：「因為但以理有美好的靈性」(但六3)，他可以不花很多時間和精

力，就可以完成職責。畢竟，神和他同在，祝福他有知識和理解力，甚至比他的三個朋友更加優秀。若我們以理性邏輯作推論，那麼但以理可以完成他的責任，同時一天禱告三次，一點也不令人驚奇。而我們無論花多少努力嘗試要作好自己的工作，都沒辦法像但以理，我們總是會有再進步的空間，而且要花很多時間和精力，就因為我們沒有但以理特殊的恩賜，若我們一定要找時間來禱告，我們如何能勝任工作？

事實上，這個推論是有瑕疵的。第一，但以理若只依賴自己的才能，他就不能完全勝任工作。他可能會花時間和精力學習如何把事情做到最好，並且排除錯誤。畢竟但以理是人，即使是耶穌，都必要花時間在聖殿學習和發問。

第二，雖然但以理有知識和智慧的恩賜，這和他要作的工作剛好相符合。神讓他成為總督統管全國，所以祝福他有工作職位上需要的恩賜。而我們可能不是政府管員，但神會祝福我們有足夠所需的恩賜，來完全我們的職責。

第三，最重要的是我們相信，能不能禱告，能禱告多久時間，是取決於我們有多少時間，若有時間就禱告，若沒有時間，就不禱告。而但以理正好相反，他日常禱告的安排，是排在工作計劃之前。相反地，若我們讓自己的時間被工作限制住，而不是以禱告為主，那我們就不會有足夠的時間來禱告。

為什麼你很忙？

我們要好好留心耶穌對馬大所說的話，耶穌回答說：馬大！馬大！你為許多的事思慮煩擾，但是不可少的只有一件；馬利亞已經選擇那上好的福分，是不能奪去的。(路十41-42)就像馬大一樣，我們的問題就是想在生活中完成許多事情。馬大想要好好的招待耶穌。你不能因為這樣就怪她，因為她正在招待那些要聽耶穌說話的客人。很不幸的是，這件事讓她擔心和忙亂。

我們生活中也想要做好多事，想要事業和家庭生活都能完美，想要有時間可以休閒。對我們而言，禱告的時間或許是最不重要的。問題是，神給我們每一個人同樣固定的時間，我們害怕犧牲時間，因為時間就是生命。拿出來禱告的時間，也是我們拿來從事其他活動的時間。

耶穌回答說：「馬大！馬大！你為許多的事思慮煩擾，但是不可少的只有一件」(路十41-42a)。這是檢視我們信仰的重要方法—我們心中可能有很多憂慮，但這些只會讓我們分心，忽略了更重要的事情，例如就像是傾聽耶穌的教導。

在但以理的例子裡，他認識到必要的一件事就是禱告。或許他剛到王宮的時候，一天禱告三次是比較容易的，因為職務沒有那麼重要。但他繼續升遷，被任命為管理全國智者的主管，後來成為全國的總督，還能繼續這樣的禱告生活，這就真的值得稱讚。他不僅需要管理自己的時間，還必須管理許多其他人的工作。這就是為什麼，聖經說，但以理有美好的靈性。

即使當但以理因為向神禱告，因而面臨危機的時候，他也持續一天三次禱告(但六10)。這表明他對禱告的生活有多麼的用心。我們可能永遠不必在保護我們的生命和向神祈禱之間作出選擇，但我們經常犧牲禱告時間來解決其他不太重要的事情。我們告訴自己，以後會有時間禱告。但是在完成一件工作之後，總會有其它事等著我們。這就是為什麼，我們應該效法但以理，讓禱告成為生活中最優

先的事項。

耶穌

禱告和聖工

希伯來書五章7節記載，當耶穌在世的時候，他是一個愛禱告的人。「基督在肉體的時候，既大聲哀哭，流淚禱告，懇求那能救他免死的主，就因他的虔誠蒙了應允。」這段經節並沒有強調耶穌獻出時間，睡眠，或他的生命在十字架上。而強調他的禱告和祈求，並且聚焦在耶穌的態度。

再深入一點來看看路加福音，它告訴我們耶穌在作任何事之前，都會先禱告。他在洗禮的時候禱告，在選出門徒之前禱告。(路三21；路六12)，他在變貌山上禱告，在各各他山被捕之前禱告。(路九28；22：39-46)，這些都是他生命中重要的時刻，但他並沒有只在這些重要時刻的時候，才禱告。「耶穌卻退到曠野去禱告。」(路五16)或譯「耶穌自己時常退到曠野去禱告。」

我們看見耶穌作了越多聖工，他越努力禱告，即使他的時間有限。馬可福音一章中，他在安息日進入猶太人會堂傳道，在那裡他醫治一個被魔鬼附身的人。之後，他去了彼得的家，醫治了彼得岳母。當日落安息日將近的時候，城市許多人把要求醫治的病人帶來。若我們經過了一整天的努力工作，會想要有一夜好眠，並且躺下來直到隔天早上是很正常的，但是耶穌會怎麼作呢？

次日早晨，天未亮的時候，耶穌起來，到曠野地方去，在那裡禱告(可一35)。耶穌在天亮之前就醒來了，這樣他才可以禱告。他作了越多聖工，就越多禱告。然而我們通常是正好相反，我們用了更多的時間在聖工上，我們反而就很少時間用在禱告。我們覺得，行動就是在工作上表現，不是表現在禱告上；我們應該要在聖工上積極主動；禱告只是消極的方式，不能讓事情有所成就。這是另一種對禱告本質的誤解。

第一，禱告就是一種行動，一定總要排在我們為神作工之前。在禱告之前就工作，代表了你自己只專心在工作。在開始工作之前禱告，代表了你認為這是神的工作，他會帶領成全。

主耶和華賜我受教者的舌頭，使我知道怎樣用言語扶助疲乏的人。主每早晨提醒，提醒我的耳朵，使我能聽，像受教者一樣。(賽五十4)這是一則有關耶穌的預言。這個經節說到，神在每天早晨喚醒他，當他學習的時候，也會喚醒他的耳朵。當耶穌每天早上天亮之前起身禱告，這就是他內心所擁有的心志—他要喚醒耳朵來聽神的話。這就是為什麼他可以宣稱：「因為我常做他所喜悅的事」(約八29)。因為花時間禱告，與神溝通，耶穌才可以實行神的旨意，這就是為什麼我們應在為神工作之前，先來禱告。

第二，雖然看起來在禱告上花時間，就像把一些時間，從我們工作時間中抽離出來，但反過來才是事實—神常常透過禱告加添我們時間。我們認為禱告是浪費時間，但卻是因為透過禱告，神讓我們有智慧可以有效率地作我們所要作的事。而且透過禱告，我們可以在生活上，重新排列重要且需要先作的事。我們一定要有信心，無論我們獻給神什麼，包含我們的時間，可以確定的是並不會沒有回報。

第三，我們時常認為，聖工比禱告更優先，而事實上是，禱告的優先順序應該放在聖工之前。耶穌的服事精神就是一種犧牲：他沒有休息的地方，時常沒有好好睡覺(路九58)；他沒有吃飯就出去工作，為的就是可以傳福音(約四34)。但是當他要在還未完成的工作和禱告時間上作選擇的時候，禱告仍然比聖工更優先。

但耶穌的名聲越發傳揚出去。有極多的人聚集來聽道，也指望醫治他們的病。耶穌卻退到曠野去禱告。(路五15、16)他既辭別了他們，就往山上去禱告。(可六46)這二節經節記載了，群眾如何就近他，想要被他醫治。耶穌有很多工作要作。但是相對於繼續工作，他卻退到曠野去禱告。

今日，我們經常說到要常常聯繫，我們也讓自己隨時可被聯絡。如果我們的朋友或同事與我們聯絡，我們將都立即回覆。但是當耶穌在世的時候，他並不隨時可被聯絡，很多時候他會解散群眾，使自己可以獨自一人禱告。讓我們向耶穌學習，有紀律和決心暫時放下我們的工作，花時間在禱告中跟神好好聯繫。

結論

從但以理和耶穌的例子中，我們學到不能忽略禱告，不論在工作中或是在聖工上有多忙。我們應該要把禱告排在每天行程的最前面，我們應該要認識到，在我們為主做任何工作之前，一定要先禱告，這樣這項工作才能為神所帶領。最後，在未完成的工作和禱告的時間之間，禱告一定要先排在工作之前。

上文由小頁子同靈翻譯(經微修)，之前曾刊於北區辦事處，現置放他處。

嗎哪 77期

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原文如下

Evening and morning and at noon
I will pray, and cry aloud,
And He shall hear my voice. (Ps 55:17)

In this psalm, David wrote that he will pray three times a day: in the evening, in the morning, and at noon. With these words, he expressed his commitment to this daily prayer schedule by which he could pour out his heart, confident that God would hear him. As Christians today, do we have the same commitment to prayer that David had?

Many of us feel that we do not have enough time in our busy lives to pray. We will say a quick prayer in the morning, believing that we have done our Christian duty, all the while thinking about the many tasks on our to-do list for that day. There is always too much to do, and too little time to do it. So when we do find the time to pray, it is often a short, hurried one.

Yet, we know from our own experience that when we do not devote time to speak to God in prayer, our life feels empty. Our day may be fully packed with activities, but when we retire to bed we do not feel satisfied. In fact, prayer is a source of joy and strength, especially when we are at our busiest. Those who have attended students' theological training courses will know how arduous and packed the course schedules can be. Some students can hardly open their eyes in the morning. And yet, because prayers are significantly longer, the students are spiritually satisfied and rejuvenated at the end of the course. After three weeks of regular daily prayers, from early morning to bedtime, the students feel as though they have touched God.

Even though many of us have experienced the blessings of devoting time to pray, the most common excuse for not praying remains: "I simply don't have time." Why is this so? Is prayer not one aspect of our faith that we need to seamlessly integrate into our lives? Let us look at two examples in the Bible to find the answers.

DANIEL

Balancing Prayer and Work Life

At the end of Daniel chapter 5, we read how Darius overthrew the Babylonian king Belshazzar and ushered in the era of the Medo-Persian Empire. This regime change resulted in a complete transformation of Daniel's working environment (Dan 6:1–5). Despite this, Daniel's output remained consistent:

Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm. So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him. (Dan 6:3–4)

Daniel worked just as faithfully as he had under his old masters, and excelled in his duties. Even though his enemies scrutinized his actions, they could find no fault—his work was impeccable.

It is well known that Daniel prayed three times a day (Dan 6:10). From the time he entered the Babylonian court, throughout his days as chief administrator over the wise men in Babylon, and continuing after he was appointed as one of the three governors of Persia and Medes, he kept the same routine—he gave thanks to God three times a day. The question is: How did Daniel find the time to pray whilst maintaining such a high standard in his work?

Some may argue that since Daniel had an excellent spirit (Dan 6:3), he could discharge his duties perfectly without expending much time or effort. After all, God was with him and had blessed him with knowledge and understanding, even more so than his three friends. If we take this to its logical conclusion, then it is no surprise that Daniel was able to fulfill his responsibilities and pray three times a day. Unlike Daniel, no matter how much we try to produce impeccable work, there will always be room for improvement, which requires time and energy. Since we do not have Daniel's extraordinary gifts, how can we hope to excel in our work if we must also find time to pray?

In fact, this reasoning is flawed. First, Daniel could not have produced impeccable work based on talent alone. He would have spent time and effort to learn how best to do things and to iron out errors. Daniel was human after all; even Jesus had to spend time in the temple to learn and ask questions.

Second, although Daniel was gifted with knowledge and wisdom, this corresponded with the work he had to do. God had placed him as governor over the kingdom, and so blessed him with the gifts he would need for this position. For us, we may not be a government official, but God will bless us with the gifts we need to fulfill our duties.

Third, and most important, we believe that whether we can pray, and for how long, is dictated by how much time we have. If we have time, then we will pray; if we have no time, then we will not pray. But for Daniel, it was the opposite: his prayer routines took precedence over his work schedule. His prayers took precedence. Conversely, if we allow our time to be defined by our work and not by our prayers, then we will never have enough time to pray.

Why Are You Busy?

We would do well to heed the words of Jesus to Martha:

And Jesus answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part.” (Lk 10:41–42a)

Like Martha, our problem is that we want to achieve many things in life. Martha wanted to be a good host. You cannot fault her for that, because she was receiving guests to listen to the words of Jesus. Unfortunately, this caused her to become worried and flustered.

In our lives, we want many things as well. We want our work life and family life to be perfect, and we want to have time for leisure. Time for prayer is probably the least important to us. The thing is that God has given every one of us a fixed amount of time. But we fear sacrificing this time because, to us, time is life. Time devoted to prayer is time we could have used for other activities.

Jesus told Martha, “[Y]ou are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed” (Lk 10:42a). This is an important way to look at our faith—we may worry over many things, but such worries only distract us from more important matters, such as listening to Jesus’ teachings.

In Daniel’s case, he recognized that the one necessary thing was prayer. It was perhaps easier for him to pray three times a day when he had just arrived in the palace, holding an insignificant position. But to continue this routine when he was appointed chief over all the wise men, and later, a governor over the kingdom, was indeed commendable. Not only would he have had to manage his own time, he also had to manage the work of many others. This is why the Bible says that Daniel had an excellent spirit.

Even when Daniel's life was on the line for praying to God, he continued to pray constantly three times a day (Dan 6:10). This shows just how committed he was to a life of prayer. In our case, we may never have to choose between preserving our lives and praying to God but we regularly sacrifice prayer time for other, less pressing, reasons. We tell ourselves that we will have time to pray later. But after one task is complete, there will always be other tasks waiting for us. This is why we should look to Daniel and allow prayer to be the priority of our days.

JESUS

Prayer and Divine Work

Hebrews 5:7 notes that when Jesus was in the flesh, He was a prayerful Man. He "offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear." This verse does not emphasize Jesus' offering of His time, His sleep, or His life upon the cross. Rather, the focus is on His prayers and supplications, and the attitude with which He offered them.

A closer look at the Gospel of Luke reveals that Jesus would not do anything without praying first. He prayed during His baptism, and before He chose His disciples (Lk 3:21; 6:12). He prayed at the transfiguration on the mount and at Gethsemane before His arrest (Lk 9:28; 22:39–46). These were significant moments in His life, but He did not only pray during times such as these.

So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed. (Lk 5:16)

We see that the more divine work Jesus did, the more He prayed, even though He had less time. In Mark 1, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath to preach, and there He healed a demon-possessed man. Afterwards, He went to Peter's house and healed Peter's mother-in-law. When the Sabbath drew to a close at sunset, many in the city brought the sick to be healed. If we were to have such a long day of hard work, it would be normal for us to want a good night's sleep and to lie in the next morning. But what about Jesus?

Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. (Mk 1:35)

Jesus awoke before dawn so that He could pray. The more divine work He did, the more He prayed. However, it is often the opposite for us—the more time we devote to church work, the less time we put into prayer. We feel that action is in the work, not in prayer; we should be active in our work; prayer is passive and cannot get the work done. This is another fundamental misunderstanding of prayer.

Firstly, prayer is an action, and must always be the prelude to any work we do for God. To work before praying means that you are focused on doing the work yourself. To pray before starting the work means you acknowledge that it is God's work, which He will guide to completion.

“The Lord God has given Me
The tongue of the learned,
That I should know how to speak
A word in season to him who is weary.
He awakens Me morning by morning,
He awakens My ear
To hear as the learned.” (Isa 50:4)

This is a prophecy about Jesus. It says that God awakens Him morning by morning, and awakens His ear to hear as the learned. When Jesus rose up to pray before daybreak every morning, this is the heart He had—He would awaken His ear to listen to God. This is why He was able to proclaim, “I always do those things that please Him” (Jn 8:29). By spending time in prayer, communing with God, Jesus was able to carry out God’s will. This is why we should always pray before we work for God.

Secondly, although it seems that time spent in prayer is time taken away from our work, the opposite is true—God often adds to our time through prayers. We think that time is wasted in prayer, but it is through prayer God gives us wisdom to be effective in what we do. And through prayer, we are able to prioritize what is important to do in life. We must have the faith that whatever we offer to God, including our time, will surely not return empty.

Thirdly, we often think that work takes precedence over prayer, when in fact, it is prayer that takes precedence over work. Jesus’ servitude was one of sacrifice: He had no resting place, and often went without sleep (Lk 9:58); He would go without food in order to preach the gospel (Jn 4:34). But when He had to choose between unfinished work and time in prayer, prayers took precedence over work.

However, the report went around concerning Him all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed. (Lk 5:15–16)

And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray. (Mk 6:46)

These two verses record how the crowds came to hear Him and to be healed by Him. Jesus had much work to do. But instead of continuing in His work, He withdrew to a solitary place to pray!

Today, we often talk about being constantly connected, making ourselves available at all times. If our friends or colleagues contact us, we are expected to reply immediately. But when Jesus was in the flesh, He was not always available. There were occasions when He would dismiss the multitudes so He could spend time alone in prayer. Let us learn from Jesus, to have the discipline and resolve to temporarily set aside our work and spend time to connect with God in prayer.

CONCLUSION

From the examples of Daniel and Jesus, we learn that we cannot neglect prayer, no

matter how busy we are in our careers and in church work. We should let prayer be the priority of our daily schedules. We ought to recognize that we must first pray before we do any work for God, so that the work can be guided by Him. And finally, between unfinished work and time for prayer, prayer must take precedence over work.