

Don't Forget the Food

My 9-year-old grandson, Jack, seems to have a heart for prayer. I have noticed that recently when he was eating at Grammy and Grampy's and we asked him if he would pray our before-meal prayer. He gladly agreed and then took off praying.

He thanked God for family, blessings he had experienced at school—like finding a best friend—, for his stuff, etc. Then he “came against” Covid and prayed for its removal. But he forgot to thank God for the food! No biggie! But I chuckled at this omission the multiple times he prayed.

This problem—forgetting the primary reason for the prayer—is not unprecedented on the pages of Scripture.

Jeremiah, when Babylon was at the gates of Jerusalem, about to overrun it, goes to prayer (Jeremiah 32:17-25). The first 75% of the prayer he just praises God for who He is, and then lists some miraculous things God did in the past for Israel. Then it is almost like he remembers, “oh yeah, I'm supposed to be praying about the pending attack,” and he offers a short statement about Babylon.

Paul, in Philippians 4:4-8 seems to emphasize that rejoicing, offering thanks, thinking about positive things is more important than our requests if we want peace in our lives.

Even Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6) where He taught about prayer, ended the entire teaching by telling us not to worry about everyday stuff like food, clothes, and so on. Rather, we should “seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (v 33).

A Better Focus

Most of us spend the bulk of our prayer times putting our needs and the needs of others before the Father. While there is nothing wrong with praying about needs, we might benefit more if we focused on God, rather than on the need when we prayed.

First, Increase the amount of time you spend praising God for who He is. Jesus taught His disciples to begin with recognizing who God is. Their passionate prayer in Acts 4 when they were threatened with their lives, started by recognizing who God was. This enabled them to have more of a “bring it on” attitude rather than a “get us out of this” attitude in their prayer. The result: the place was shaken; they were filled with the Holy Spirit; and they proclaimed the word of God boldly (Acts 4:31).

Second, before giving a list of needs, spend real time thanking God for what He has done for you in the past! This will be a powerful source of faith for you! As you remember God’s faithfulness in your life, the issues you want to see Him fix, become less important to list.

And if we forget to pray for the food like my grandson Jack? No problem. Those things work themselves out when we simply seek His Kingdom and righteousness!

–Jonathan Graf is the publisher of *Prayer Connect* magazine and the author of 5 books on prayer including *The Power of Personal Prayer* and *Praying Like Paul*.