

Strengthen the Stakes

Last week we began to look at the last phrase in Isaiah 54:2 - "*strengthen the stakes*" as a challenge to grow in our personal devotional life. If we are to grow bigger - we have to grow deeper.

While I chose to make the focus of that message '*Being Responsive*' - I did take some time to reflect on three key actions that lie at the heart of any personal life of devotion. Namely, Prayer, Worship and the reading of God's Word.

Today I would like to develop one of those subjects a bit further and then do some really practical stuff together as a Church. So lets first establish some basic points about Prayer.

1. *The Laws of Prayer*

- **Importance** - Prayer is important because it connects us with God and it exercises us spiritually
- **Persistence** - Prayer requires determination, pray until you get an answer
- **Resistance** - Prayer will be opposed, effective praying is a form of spiritual warfare
- **Assistance** - The Holy Spirit will help us with our Praying

2. *Private & Corporate Prayer*

Prayer can happen anywhere. Prayer can take place privately - you praying alone; and prayer can take place Corporately - you praying together with a group of other Christians.

3. *Types of Prayer*

One of the things that we teach our New Believers in their foundations programme is 'the Prayer Hand' - this uses the fingers of the hand to present a pattern of praying using different types of prayer.

- 1st - Confession
- 2nd - Praise
- 3rd - Thanksgiving
- 4th - Intercession
- 5th - Requests

4. *Praying in the Spirit*

Now one type of prayer that we did not mention in the list above which is really important and useful to the believer is '*Praying in the Spirit*'.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 14:15 "*I will pray with my understanding and I will pray with my spirit.*" In this context praying in the spirit is praying in tongues.

In verse 18 Paul actually says that he prays in Tongues more than everyone else in the Corinthian Church – praying in Tongues was a significant and regular part of his daily devotional life.

4. *So what is Tongues?*

The term Tongues is itself antiquated – it really means 'languages'; probably an even better way to refer to it is as a 'Prayer Language'.

Tongues is one of the Gifts of the Spirit – 1 Corinthians 12:10

Tongues is the ability to pray, sing in a language unknown to the speaker

Tongues is also the Gift that is most likely to be the initial evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit – Acts 2:4

Tongues is particularly useful as part of personal Prayer life – 1 Corinthians 14:2

5. *How should we use Tongues?*

For personal Edification – 1 Corinthians 14:4; Jude 20 ... a great way to pray

For Revelation – 1 Corinthians 14:6 ... as I pray Revelation, Prophecy comes

For Praise – 1 Corinthians 14:15 ... singing in the Spirit

Using the Gift of Tongues in your Private and Corporate prayer life is a great way to go Deeper with God and strengthen the 'stake' of Prayer in our lives!