Learning To Wait Upon the Lord
Psalm 27:14

Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord. (Psalm 27:14 NIV)

PRAYER

Dear Lord,

Many times in Your Holy word You teach us to WAIT ON YOU. Father, I confess to You this is an area I have struggled with many times during my life, and perhaps my brothers and sisters here tonight can say the same.

Father, may we be receptive to what You desire to teach us tonight in regards to this matter of WAITING ON YOU!

In Jesus’ Name,
AMEN

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Introduction

It has been said “patience is a virtue.” To the Christian however, patience is more than a virtue. Galatians 5:22 tells us patience is one of the nine fruit of the Holy Spirit.
Patience involves waiting and quite honestly, waiting is something many of us are not very good at.

......When you go through the Drive-thru at McDonalds you don’t tell the girl who takes your order, “Hey no hurry on that order......take all the time you need.”

......When you go fishing, you don’t say to your fishing buddy, “Boy, I sure hope the fish don’t start biting soon, I sure would like to sit out here and bake in this hot sun for awhile.”

......... When you’re sitting in Church, you don’t lean over to the person seated next to you and say, “I sure hope the preacher preaches another thirty minutes, I would hate to get to the restaurant before everybody else.”

John Ortberg says, “As Americans we live in the most affluent society on earth and waiting patiently is not one of our strengths. We are a “horn-honking, microwaving, Fed-exing, Fast Food eating, Express-lane shopping kind of people. We don’t handle delays, postponements or cancellations very well. We are “get what we want when we want it society.”

As Christians, the hurry up pace of our American society makes “waiting on the Lord” quite a challenge.

But do you realize FAITH and WAITING ON THE LORD go hand in hand. In fact WAITING ON THE LORD is a mark of strong faith!
NOAH had to wait through 120 years of boat building and no doubt a lot of ridicule from the people of his day before he ever saw the first drop of rain.

ABRAHAM was 75 years old when God revealed to him that he was going to become a father. But Abraham had to wait another 24 years before God fulfilled that promise.

THE ISRAELITES had to wait 430 years in Egypt before God sent them a deliverer. Again they had to wait 40 days and 40 nights for Moses to come down from Mt. Sinai. And because of disobedience and lack of faith the Israelites had to wait in the wilderness for forty years before they were able to enter into the Promised Land.

JESUS had to wait 30 years before He began His short three year long ministry.

And for over 2,000 years Christians in generation after generation have been waiting on the return of Jesus Christ.

FAITH and WAITING ON THE LORD go hand in hand!

Forty three times in the Old Testament alone, GOD issued the command to WAIT ON HIM.

The fact GOD issued this command forty three times tells us GOD knows you and me very well.

…..He knows we are NOT very patient! He knows we have a tendency to get ahead of HIM

…..He knows how prone we are to HURRY UP AND MAKE DECISIONS that get us into trouble.
And so FORTY THREE TIMES God says, “Wait on Me” “Wait on Me!”…..”Wait on Me!”

But here’s the MILLION DOLLAR question:

_How Does One Wait On The Lord?

Let’s consider FOUR KEY ELEMENTS involved in “Waiting On The Lord.”

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First of all………………

Waiting on the Lord means…………

I. _I Must Wait PATIENTLY_

David writes in Psalm 37:7 _“Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him.”_

Again David writes in Psalm 40:1 _I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined to me and heard my cry._

1. Does it ever seem as though GOD is working painfully slow in your life?

**ILLUSTRATION:** Several years ago Linda and were planning to trade in our _FORD WINDSTAR VAN_ on a newer vehicle with less mileage.

We hired a man to come to our house and do a CUSTOM DETAIL job on our Windstar Van with the hope it might increase our trade-in value.
The man arrived with his cleaning equipment about 10:30 or 11:00 one morning. About 2:00 o’clock that afternoon I talked to Linda on the phone and asked her if the Detail Man was done with our van? She said, “No, he is working very slowly.” At 4:00 o’clock in the afternoon I got home and the Detail Man was still working on our van.

I couldn’t resist the temptation to watch the Detail Man from our bedroom window.

He would clean a spot……then he would step back and take a long, hard look at it. Then he would clean it some more. Then he would step back and take a look at it. And he did this over and over and over again as he went over every square inch of that van in minute detail.

It wasn’t until about 6:00 o’clock that evening the Detail Man finally finished up. But you know what? The wait was worth it! When he got through with his work our van looked like it had just come off a dealer’s showroom floor.

And the next day, when Linda and I took the van to trade it in, the Detail Man’s work brought us even greater rewards when the dealer gave us far more on our trade-in than Linda and I ever thought we would get.

2. God is a God of details! And just like that “Detail Man” God often seems to work very slow.

……He doesn’t answer our prayers as fast as we might like.

……He doesn’t open the doors of opportunity soon enough.

……He doesn’t bring us out of our trial fast enough.

……He doesn’t provide a certain need quickly enough.
3. True faith waits! True faith doesn’t rush God or try to hurry God along!

   True faith recognizes God’s ways are not our ways and God’s timetable isn’t the same as our timetable.

4. And if I truly want to receive God’s greatest blessings……
   …..if I truly want my faith to grow and mature……I must learn to WAIT PATIENTLY for the LORD!

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Secondly, waiting patiently for the Lord means………

II. I Must Wait PRODUCTIVELY

1. Jesus teaches us the importance of WAITING PRODUCTIVELY in His “Parable of the Talents” in Matthew 25:14-30.

   Remember in that Parable Jesus told about a Master who was going away on a long journey.

   Before he left the Master entrusted His property to His servants. To one servant He gave 5 talents……
   ……..to another servant He gave 2 talents…….and to a third servant He gave 1 talent.

   While the Master was away the servant who had received 5 talents put the money to work and doubled it to 10 talents while he WAITED on the Master to return.

   The servant who received 2 talents also put the money to work and doubled it to four talents while he WAITED on the Master to return.
But the servant who received 1 talent went off and dug a hole and hid his Master’s talent. In other words, he did NOTHING while he WAITED on his Master to return.

Well as you probably remember in that Parable when the Master returned He was very pleased that the first two servants had been very PRODUCTIVE while they waited on His return.

But the Master was very angry with the servant who wasn’t productive while he was gone.

2. While you are WAITING ON THE LORD to answer your prayer...........STAY PRODUCTIVE!

While you are WAITING ON THE LORD to open a new door of opportunity for a job......STAY PRODUCTIVE at the one your at now.

While you are WAITING ON THE LORD to bring you out of a TRIAL you are in......STAY PRODUCTIVE, don’t let discouragement and depression get the best of you.

3. KEEP WORKING......KEEP PRAYING......KEEP ASKING......KEEP SEEKING......KEEP KNOCKING .......KEEP TRUSTING!

Waiting on the Lord means I must wait patiently! And I must wait productively!

Waiting on the Lord also means...........
III. I Must Wait PURPOSEFULLY

1. One of the best examples of what it means to WAIT PURPOSEFULLY is found in the first chapter of the Book of Acts.

As He was preparing to leave His disciples and return to His Heavenly Father, listen to what Jesus instructed His disciples to do.

4 On one occasion, while He was eating with them, He gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but WAIT for the gift My Father promised, which you have heard Me speak about.

5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

2. Get the picture here. Jesus was commanding His disciples NOT to leave Jerusalem, but to remain together in the Upper Room.

Now that WAITING might have been very difficult had it not been for one thing: They understood there was a PURPOSE in their waiting and that purpose was God was going to pour His Holy Spirit out upon them in a few days.

3. Do you know GOD has a special purpose behind every DELAY, every POSTPONEMENT and every PAUSE He brings into your life and mine?

You see, GOD’S purpose in these delays, postponements and pauses is not to frustrate us or to discourage us, but rather to DIRECT OUR STEPS and move us in the direction He wants us to go!
4. BY FAITH you and I must believe and trust that UNOPENED DOORS are just as much a part of God’s plan and purpose as OPENED DOORS.

BY FAITH you and I must believe UNANSWERED PRAYERS are just as much a part of God’s plan and purpose as ANSWERED PRAYERS.

5. We learn that valuable lesson when we learn to WAIT PURPOSEFULLY!

Waiting On the Lord means……..

I Must Wait Patiently
I Must Wait Productively
I Must Wait Purposefully

And finally……..

Waiting on the Lord means……..

IV. I Must Wait PRAYERFULLY

1. We read in the Gospels on the night Jesus prayed in Gethsemane He took Peter, James and John with Him and when He reached a certain place in the Garden, Jesus had them WAIT while He went off to pray.

You remember Jesus asked Peter, James and John to do two things while they WAITED on Him.

First, He asked them to WATCH.
And secondly, He asked them to PRAY.
2. But instead of doing as Jesus commanded, the three disciples dozed off to sleep.

What happened to Peter, James and John in Gethsemane serves as a warning to all of us.

Those times when we are WAITING ON THE LORD can be and often are the times when we are most vulnerable to an attack from Satan.

3. In times of WAITING ON THE LORD Satan tries to convince us that if GOD hasn’t answered our prayers by now He isn’t going to answer.

And quite often what we do is we STOP PRAYING and act independently of GOD and we wind up making a foolish or unwise decision we later regret.

4. This is why we must intensify our PRAYER EFFORTS in those times we are WAITING ON THE LORD.

CONCLUSION

The great New England preacher, Philip Brooks was noted for his poise and quiet demeanor. At times, however, Brooks suffered moments of frustration and irritability.

One day a friend saw him feverishly pacing the floor like a caged lion. “’What’s the trouble?”’ the friend asked.

Philip Brooks said, “The trouble is that I’m in a hurry and God isn’t.”

Haven’t we all felt the same way many times. We’re in a hurry, but God isn’t.
What is it you are WAITING ON THE LORD to do in your life?

Are you WAITING on the LORD to answer a certain prayer you have been praying a long time?

Are you WAITING on the LORD to open a door of opportunity for you to change jobs or change careers?

Are you WAITING on the LORD to bring you through a certain trial you have been dealing with for some time?

WAIT PATIENTLY
WAIT PRODUCTIVELY
WAIT PURPOSEFULLY
WAIT PRAYERFULLY

*Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord!*