

1. This week we are joining with over thirteen thousand other AG churches to come together and seek the Lord in prayer.
2. I don't take that lightly because I believe in the power of prayer.
3. I believe prayer is a discipline we should practice every single day.
4. In fact, the bible tells us to pray without ceasing. To me that means we should be in a continual state of prayer all day long.
5. Prayer is one of the keys and most vital aspects of our walk with the Lord. It is going to be nearly impossible to grow spiritually, and to mature in our faith, without the discipline of prayer being a continual part of our lives.
6. That being said, allow me to be transparent for a moment.
7. As much as I believe in the importance of and the power of prayer, I have found over the years that **prayer is not one of the most exciting subjects to preach about.**
8. I have preached and taught countless times about prayer. I have mentioned prayer in countless messages over the years.
9. More than likely, if you have known the Lord for any length of time you have heard countless messages and teachings about the subject of prayer.
10. And because of that, I think prayer may be something that it is a little but difficult to get excited about.
11. Another reason why I believe that the subject of prayer doesn't make us run and shout and dance, is because at the mention of prayer, the enemy loves to lay a guilt trip on us for not praying enough.
12. All of us at times, even me, may feel like we are lacking in living out the importance of prayer.
13. And yet, as I have thought and prayed about this message today, I was convinced the Lord was leading me to preach a message about prayer.
14. The Lord gave me a passage of scripture and a story that on the surface seem to be about prayer.
15. But the more I studied and the more I allowed the Holy Spirit to speak to me, the more I became convinced that today's message is about a whole lot more than prayer.

16. For sure, we will find out in just a moment that prayer is a part of today's subject. But I believed prayer is just the tip of the iceberg.
17. Today's message for sure is not a guilt trip about the subject of prayer. Today's message is something else entirely.
18. This morning, I want to share with you something that quite honestly, I had never seen before until I began studying this passage.
19. The setting is in the Old Testament. The children of Israel have been set free from their captivity in Egypt and are now in a transition period from slavery and bondage to freedom and blessing.
20. But it was not an easy transition. Not for the people, and especially not for their leader Moses.
21. For Moses, it was a heavy, hard, never ending, exhausting, daily grind that tested his patience on numerous occasions.
22. Anybody besides me feel like that is a pretty good description of trying to live for the Lord in 2024.
23. So, what we will see in this passage in Exodus chapter 33, is Moses' way of dealing with the daily pressure. And that was to run to God, not away from God.
24. But it was more than just running to God. It was more than just going to the Lord in prayer. Moses had discovered a wonderful gift that the Lord was more than willing to give him as often as he wanted it.
25. And today I want to offer that gift to you.

TEXT: **Exodus 33:7-11** Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the "tent of meeting." Anyone inquiring of the LORD would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp. **8** And whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood at the entrances to their tents, watching Moses until he entered the tent. **9** As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the LORD spoke with Moses. **10** Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshiped, each at the entrance to their tent. **11** The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent.

TITLE: **Where is Your Meeting Place?**

INTRO:

1. Did Moses pray when he went out to this tent? I am positive he did.
2. But what is interesting is that Moses did not name the tent, the tent of prayer. He named it the tent of meeting.
3. Now. I don't know what the word **meeting** means to you. I have lots of meetings every single week. In fact, meetings are such a part of my life that a plan most of my days around those meetings.
4. For you, a meeting might mean something different. When some people think of a meeting they might think of a meeting with their boss. To them a meeting might mean getting in trouble.
5. Others might think of a meeting as this hours long thing that is boring because one person is doing all the talking and everyone else is trying to listen, and not fall asleep at the same time.
6. For me, a meeting is something very different. For me, a meeting is always about an opportunity to build relationships.
7. I'm not going to say always, but the vast majority of the time, before we talk about what the meeting is actually about, I want to catch up with that person.
8. To see what's going on in their life.
9. How is your family? How was Christmas?
10. I believe I have told every single staff member I have ever hired this statement.
11. Just because I am your boss, doesn't mean you give up the right to have a pastor.
12. I care about you, and I want to know about you personally. I want a relationship with you.
13. May I remind you that in its most basic terms, being saved, **being a follower of Jesus is about relationship with Jesus.**
14. Jesus wants to be in close, intimate, relaxed and comfortable relationship with you.
15. And for me, maybe not for anyone else, but for me, the way we typically view prayer can be somewhat counter productive to the idea of building relationship with Jesus.
16. Let's find out for just a moment if I am out of my mind or not.
17. Anyone besides me ever had difficulty concentrating and staying focused during prayer?

18. Anyone besides me ever had a situation and you literally didn't know what or how to pray?
19. Anybody besides me ever go to the Lord in prayer, but you knew there are some things in your life that are not what they should be, and you find it hard to be relaxed and comfortable with God, or to be real with God?
20. Anybody besides me ever felt like your prayers were just bouncing off the ceiling and not getting anywhere?
21. Anybody besides me ever been in a place of such emotional brokenness, that you questioned whether or not God even cared about you, or could hear you?
22. Anybody besides me ever felt like that prayer was extremely one sided, and it is difficult to hear the holy Spirit speak.
23. I'm not going to pretend that Moses never experienced any of those conditions when he went to the tent of meeting, but the description of what would happen when he went there seems a whole lot more powerful and miraculous to me than what we would traditionally consider prayer time to be.
24. When Moses went to the tent of meeting, he met with God. He didn't just pray to God, he met with God. And according to what I see in this passage, some pretty amazing things happened as a result.
25. The gift I believe the Lord wants to give each and every one of us is more than just a prayer time. **God wants to meet with us every single time we come to him in prayer.**
26. God wants us to be brought into his presence, similar to how a person would be brought into the Oval Office, or the throne room of a king.
27. Not every day, ordinary. But extraordinary. Special.
28. So, let's take a few minutes to identify what was so special about the tent of meeting.

The tent of meeting was for everyone.

1. Anyone and everyone had access to the tent of meeting.
2. **Exodus 33:7** Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the "tent of meeting." **Anyone inquiring of the LORD would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp.**

3. So, the first thing we see is that anyone could go out to the tent of meeting, but not everyone did.
4. In fact, the only written evidence we have of anyone going to the tent of meeting was Moses and Joshua here in this passage.
5. We'll look at this closer in just a moment, but it would almost appear that everyone else stayed at a distance from the tent of meeting. Except Moses, and one other man. Joshua.
6. Exodus 33:11 The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent.
7. I missed this for the longest time and I don't want you to miss it.
8. Most bible scholars agree that at the time this was written, Joshua was not actually a young man. He was younger than Moses, but not what we would consider young. He was probably in his early to mid-fifties, but all aides were described as being young.
9. And the bible describes him as an aide. Not the right-hand man of Moses. Not someone with a high rank and a high position and a big title. Joshua was Moses' aide. His gopher if you will. Joshua simply ran and did whatever Moses told him to do.
10. But Joshua didn't miss the opportunity to have a meeting with God on a regular basis.
11. Joshua went in the tent when Moses went in, and verse eleven says that when Moses would go back to the camp, Joshua would stay out at the tent spending time with God.
12. While everyone else kept their distance, Joshua came close, and he met with God.
13. And it is a reminder to us that meeting with God. Being intimate and close to and comfortable with God is not just reserved for the super-spiritual, it is for anyone who wants it.
14. That means meeting with God is for all of us. It is for you. No matter how insignificant the enemy tries to make you feel, when God sees you, he sees his child that is worthy, and entitled to, come into the presence of the king, and meet with him.
15. I want to encourage you, stop praying to God and start meeting with God. I believe it will change your time together.

16. Ask Him. Lord God, I want to meet with you.

Moses' meetings with God produced the miraculous.

1. Exodus 33:9-10 As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the LORD spoke with Moses. 10 Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshiped, each at the entrance to their tent.
2. Just as a reminder, as the children of Israel traveled for the 40 years they were in the wilderness, they were guided by a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night.
3. This pillar of cloud and fire represented the visible presence of God.
4. For 40 years, these pillars of cloud and fire were out front, and the nation just needed to follow them every time they moved.
5. But don't miss this. When Moses would go out to the tent of meeting, the pillar of cloud would move and position itself at the entrance of the tent of meeting the whole time Moses was inside.
6. Every single other time the cloud and fire moved, the people followed it. But when Moses went into the tent of meeting, the cloud followed Moses. The very presence of God followed him and went with him.
7. So awesome and powerful was this display that verse 10 says that every single time Moses would go to the tent of meeting and the pillar of cloud rested at the entrance, that the entire nation would stand at the entrance of their tents and worship and praise the Lord.
8. And again, it is a reminder of how different meeting with God is to just praying to God.
9. When all we do is pray to God, he can seem distant and not very involved, but when we ask Him and we seek to meet with God, the very presence of God seeks us to bless us and encourage us have relationship with us.
10. Nearly every bible commentary says that the reason why the cloud rested at the tent of meeting was to serve as a miraculous sign that meeting with God was supernatural. Not boring.
11. God wants more than for us to pray to him, he wants us to supernaturally experience Him. To meet with Him, and for him to meet with us.

12. Finally this morning...

Moses' meetings with God were intimate.

1. Exodus 33:11 And so the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend.
2. We need to clarify what the phrase face to face means and doesn't mean.
3. The translation we have here is face to face, but a better translation would be mouth to mouth.
4. The reason why face to face is not the best interpretation is because just a few verses down in Exodus 33:20, God told Moses that he couldn't see his face because no man could see his face and live.
5. So, the better understanding is **mouth to mouth**.
6. It is similar to when we are talking to someone on the phone. When we are on the phone with someone, we are not face to face with them, but we are mouth to mouth with them.
7. They speak, we understand. We speak, they understand. Mouth to mouth.
8. Again, this mouth-to-mouth communication between Moses and God serves as a reminder that communication with God is not meant to be distant and one sided, where we speak, and God gives us the silent treatment.
9. I don't have time to go deeply here, but just know that God wants to speak to you. According to the bible, you were created to hear him speak.
10. In describing his relationship with those who belong to Him, Jesus makes the statement in **John 10:27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.**
11. What's the difference between praying to God and meeting with God mouth to mouth? Intimate communication. Close relationship. To know God and to be known by God.
12. Freely, familiarly, plainly, warmly, openly, without reserve or dread or fear.
13. That's how God wants to meet with you.

Conclusion:

1. Sometimes I have to be reminded to not settle for anything but God's best.
2. And God's best is when we daily meet with him. Communicate with him. Are loved by him. Are accepted by Him.
3. This last part I can't take credit for. I was telling someone about this message and here is what they said.
4. The proof that meeting with God rather than just praying to God, is available to every single person is on the Day of Pentecost.
5. When Moses went to the tent of meeting, the pillar of cloud or fire followed Him while everyone else watched. But on the day of Pentecost, this happened.
6. Acts 2:1-4 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit..
7. In 2024 there is fire for everybody. Relationship for everybody. Life for everybody. Power for everybody. And hope for everybody.
8. And the beginning place to receiving all these wonderful gifts is when we refuse to settle for anything less than meeting with God.
9. So. Where is your meeting place?
10. If you don't have one you can get one.