



## Build A Prayer Closet

*"But you, when you pray, enter into your closet, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father which is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret shall reward you openly." – Matthew 6:6*

Often the problem with nervousness of praying in public is a lack of practice in private. If you are little with God, you will be little for God. Jesus taught his disciples a principle that he exemplified in daily practice. The closet is often misunderstood. In Victorian England during the time of kings and castles the king had an inner room where he would meet alone with friends. That inner room was known as a "closet." Literally it means a pantry. In Israel the closet was a secluded storage room where you could go to be away from the hustle and bustle of home life. It was a place where no one would hear you, see you, or interrupt you. The point Jesus was making was not that we replicate the "closet" but that we would have a regular daily place of retreat where we would pray to our Heavenly Father. It is there in the secret of His Presence that we grow strong in faith and intimacy with God. Peter exemplified this pattern in Acts where he is found on a housetop praying. His closet on this occasion was a secluded beach house he borrowed from a friend. Jesus often would go into a deserted place early in the morning before anyone else was up. He also made it a regular practice to seek God in the solitude of the Mount of Olives.

I have a friend who says his house is so busy with people the only time alone with God he can find is in his pickup truck on the way to work. There he finds himself alone with God and prays out loud, silently, worshipping with CDs or cassettes, and pouring out his heart to God in secret. He says it is often the most private and blessed meeting with the Savior and frequently he arrives at work and has to spend some time drying his tearful eyes before facing his coworkers. I don't suppose Jesus had pickup trucks in mind when he directed his disciples to pray alone, but if that works for you then get into your truck and seek the Lord!

A prayer closet is not just a euphemism.

*"A euphemism is an expression intended by the speaker to be less offensive, disturbing, or troubling to the listener than the word or phrase it replaces. When a phrase is used as a euphemism, it often becomes a metaphor whose literal meaning is dropped.*

*Euphemisms are often used to hide unpleasant or disturbing ideas, even when the literal term for them is not necessarily offensive."*

Jesus never meant the closet to be taken figuratively. It is literal. Take it as such. He means a real room somewhere, a private corner in the house, a rooftop, a closet, a bedroom, a study, a basement, anywhere but not nowhere! Sure, we can pray anywhere, anytime, and need no special place, but the Master was giving instructions for avoiding the banal use of prayer like the Pharisees. Private prayer in secret is important. It requires a time, a place, a closed door, secret intimacy, and faithfulness to do it again and again.

## **A Prayer Room At Home**

A prayer closet is a prayer room. It is your prayer closet; your prayer room. Therefore create it and decorate it to your needs. Let it be expressive of how you pray.

### Here are some ideas:

- Room size: 4 x 6 or larger, the size of a small bathroom
- Chair comfortable for reading
- Small table or desk
- Lamp good light for reading
- Fresh air circulating, small fan
- Carpet or rug for laying prostrate

- Portable CD player with earphones
- Bible
- Notebook
- Pen and Pencil
- Prayer Guide

- Prayer reminder bulletin board
- Church family names, faces
- Missionary prayer cards
- Friends and family photos you pray for
- World Map