

PRAYER

What is prayer?

It is relationship with God, sometimes spoken and sometimes unspoken.

Prayer has more to do with the needs of people, while worship has more to do with the praise and adoration of God.

What does prayer do for us?

- *Prayer brings us into the very presence of God*
- *Prayer strengthens our faith to claim the promises of God*
- *Prayer will bring Jesus, the One who pleads our cases, to our side when we have sinned*
- *Prayer brings power when we need deliverance*
- *Prayer will keep the love flowing between God and us as we worship Him.*

HAVING A COMMITMENT TO PRAYER

Ephesians.6:18 - we are told to “Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.”

1 Thess. 5:17 - “Pray continually”

How can a person pray at all times? How can he pray always?

Prayer is more than kneeling down. It is more than time spent in meditation or in acts of worship. *It is an attitude or way of life.*

Such an attitude or way of life cannot be accomplished without private and public prayer and worship. *Attitudes and habits* are formed by doing things over and over again. This is true of prayer. You cannot pray “at all times” unless you make a habit of prayer.

Our Prayer life must not be measured in terms of time. ***IT MUST BE MEASURED BY THE QUALITY OF OUR PRAYING.*** Many times our minds are elsewhere when our knees are bent in prayer. *If we learn to pray right, we will be able to walk right all of the time.*

JESUS IS OUR EXAMPLE OF PRAYER.

He spent long hours in prayer. He fasted but to what purpose? To secure answers for His own desires? To secure deliverance for those who were afflicted? NOT AT ALL!

His prayers for the sick were short and simple. Why? Because His whole life was one of ***PRAYER & WORSHIP***

By seeking His Father's will in prayer, He was able to walk constantly according to that will.
HE PRAYED AT ALL TIMES!

- **At the beginning of Christ's ministry we read:** "*And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed*" (Mark 1:35).
- **In the middle of His ministry, after miraculously feeding the five thousand, we read** in Matt. 14:23
"*He went up into a mountain alone to pray*".
- **At the end of His earthly ministry Luke tells us**
"*He went out, as was His habit, to pray*" (Luke 22:39, 40).
- **Even on the Cross we see Jesus praying** (Luke 23:34, 46).
"*Father forgive them for they know not what they do*"
- **As He died, He said,**
"*It is finished*" (John 19:30).
- **Jesus' ministry in heaven today is intercession:**
"*Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*" Heb.7:25 Jesus' continuing ministry in heaven is prayer.

If we want to be like Jesus, we will be developing our spirits into spirits of prayer, and we will follow the Lord in a life of prayer.

How can we pray according to God's will? Jesus teaches us how in Matt 6:9-13.

One of His disciples asked Him "*Lord, teach us to pray*" (Luke 11:1). He said in Matt 6:9
"*This, then, is how you should pray*".

When Jesus was talking about how to pray, He was talking about the ORDER in which we ask for things. ***He was talking about seeking the most important things first.***

Notice the order of asking in the prayer he taught. First, He talked about ***Your name, your kingdom and your will.*** After that, He prayed ***Give us, Forgive us, Bring us, and Keep us.***

Jesus was showing here that when we pray **we must give priority to God's name, God's kingdom, and God's will.** Matt 6:33 - If we are concerned first with God's kingdom and His righteousness, all these other things will be added unto us.

When we learn how to *pray as Jesus taught*, we will *learn to live as Jesus lived*. As long as our wants are more important to us than God's will, we will stumble along, measuring the hours we spend in prayer.

Part of **praying in the will of God** is **listening to His voice**. Heb.3:7 states, "Today if you will hear His voice..." People heard God's voice yesterday, and that was good. It *is also essential that we hear His voice today*. Today the Holy Spirit is speaking a word to the Church.

God is calling His church to pray. But *to many of God's people, prayer is a lost art*.

In Matt.21:12-16 - tremendous truths for a person who desires to learn how to pray.

1. *Jesus cleansed the temple and caused it to become a house of PURITY (v.12).*
2. *He made the pronouncement it would be called a house of PRAYER (v13.).*
3. *The blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them (v14.).*
Thus, *the house of prayer became the house of POWER.*
4. *When the children in the temple saw the wonderful things He did, they cried, "Hosanna to the son of David"(v.15).* After the temple became the house of power, *it was transformed into the house of PERFECTED PRAISE (v13).*

Because we are *the temple of God today* (1 Cor.3:16) and *part of the Church that is the habitation of God through the Spirit* (Eph 2:20-22), the same progression is to take place in the Church and in the individual believer today. If you will allow prayer to become your primary emphasis, the Holy Spirit will bring His PURITY, His ministry of PRAYER, His POWER, and His PERFECTED PRAISE to your temple.

THE HOLY SPIRIT ASSISTING US TO PRAY.

Praying with the Understanding and without the Understanding

Read 1 Cor.14:14-15.

- a) ***Praying with understanding*** (according to the will of God.)

Examples:

1. For daily bread provision.
2. God's will to be done in our lives, in lives of others, and in church life. 2 Chron 6:19-30, 2 Chron. 7:14
3. Wisdom and understanding. Dan. 9:17-23
4. To be kept from the evil one. Ezra 8:21-23, 31
5. For God to reveal his will.

b) ***Praying without the understanding***

1. Praying in Tongues (When our understanding is limited) 1 Cor. 14:2, 14, 15.
The person is edified, built up (becomes strong in the Spirit). Ephes.3:16.
2. With Groanings. Rom. 8:23,26,27 (cannot be articulated). This is a deeper form of intercession. Groanings in the Spirit. Luke 22:40-46.
Note v 44 - Jesus in intercession. This is the Spirit groaning through us in intercession.

DIRECTION OF PRAYER

- Wait for the Spirit's inspiration and presence of God.
- Meditate on Him and worship Him until direction in prayer comes.
- We need to know how to pray and what to pray. Prov.3:5 -6, Isa.55:8.

If it is not clear as to how and what to pray, we can proceed in one of two directions:-

a) Pray in the Spirit (in tongues).

Rom. 8:26-27, 1 Cor.14:15

The Holy Spirit helps us pray for the right things. We need to yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit and let Him pray for us and through us. ***The Holy Spirit will pray according to the will of God.***

b) Pray generally with what understanding you have until there is a quickening in your spirit. The theme or subject that you are praying about when you sense the quickening of the Spirit, is the area of the burden of the Spirit.

PROPHETIC PRAYING

There is ***a realm of prayer which moves from the natural realm of understanding into the prophetic realm.*** To enter into this realm, we must continually be praying in the Spirit.

Usually this kind of praying starts after you have been praying in the Spirit and become lost in God. You become ***so anointed with the Holy Spirit*** that when you come back into English, you continue in the same anointing and move into a realm ***of inspired or prophetic praying*** - praying in the Will of God, the Mind of God, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

RECOGNISING BURDENS FOR PRAYER

- 1.) By an awareness of pressure in your spirit concerning a specific need or direction.
- 2.) By a troubling of the spirit.

- 3.) By the Holy Spirit awakening you during the night and placing a person, a situation, country or concern in your heart.
- 4.) By causing you to be with a person or in a situation or place and making you aware of need for prayer.

HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH BURDENS OF PRAYER?

- 1) Make yourself available to God prayer.
- 2) if the Holy Spirit awakens you during the night, get up and pray.
- 3) Wait in His presence for direction as to how to pray. Rom:8:27
- 4) God may make known to you what and how to pray by unfolding to you the need and giving that need as a burden in your spirit.
- 5) If no specific direction comes, then apply Rom 8:26 - “ Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”
- 6) Pray and continue praying until the burden or concern lifts.
“This is confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will , he hears us and if we know that He hears us, whatsoever we ask we know that we have the petitions that we desire of Him” 1 John 5:14-15.

GOOD READING TO DEVELOP YOUR PRAYER LIFE

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| “The Best of E.M. Bounds on Prayer” | Baker Book House |
| “Too Bust Not To Pray” | Bill Hybels |
| “Awaken The Dawn” | Ernest B. Gentile |