

# PRAYER

## I. THE MEANING OF PRAYER

### A. DEFINITION

Prayer is *A solemn and humble approach to Divinity in word or thought usually involving beseeching, petition, confession, praise, or thanksgiving.* (Webster's Third New International Dictionary)

### B. A TIME OF FELLOWSHIP

Prayer is a specific time of fellowship with God. It involves (1) speaking to God in words and thoughts (Psalm 5:1-3) and (2) listening to God (Acts 13:2).

### C. A CONTINUAL RELATIONSHIP

Prayer is also a continual relationship, as we maintain constant contact with God. Paul said, *Pray without ceasing.* (1 Thess. 5:17)

## II. DIFFERENT KINDS OF PRAYER

There are different kinds of prayer, some of which Paul mentions in 1 Timothy 2:1: *Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men.*

### A. SUPPLICATIONS

Supplications are earnest petitions for needs. (Ephesians 6:18)

### B. PRAYERS

This is the general term for prayer, private or public.(Acts 6:4)

### C. INTERCESSIONS

To intercede is to plead in the interest of others, and to do it boldly. (Exodus 32:9-14) Jesus intercedes with the Father for us. (Hebrews 7:25)

### D. GIVING OF THANKS

Paul said, *In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.* (2 Thessalonians 5:18) This includes unpleasant experiences, for all things are used by God for our growth. (Romans 8:28) We should thank God for hearing and answering our prayers.

### E. PRAISE

Praise is worship, adoration, approval. David said, *I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.* (Ps. 34:1)

## **F. SONG**

Songs are forms of prayer, praise, and worship. David said, *Come before His presence with singing.* (Psalm 100:2)

## **G. PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT**

We pray in the Spirit as we are led by the Holy Spirit. This can take either of two forms:

### **1. IN A KNOWN LANGUAGE**

As we pray in our known language, we allow the Holy Spirit to lead us to pray about certain people or things. (Eph. 6:18; Jude 20)

### **2. IN AN UNKNOWN LANGUAGE**

As believers, we pray and praise in our unknown language of tongues. (1 Cor. 14:15)

## **H. CONFESSION**

Unconfessed sin hinders fellowship with God and prayers. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.* (Psalm 66:18)

God says, *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* (1 John 1:9)

## **III. ATTITUDES IN PRAYER**

It is important to have the right attitude in prayer. An improper attitude can affect the outcome of our prayers.

### **A. FAITH**

Faith is believing in God's promises. God gives faith, and we exercise it when we pray. (Mark 11:24) Without faith prayers aren't answered. (Hebrews 11:6; James 1:58) Faith receives even before results are realized. (Hebrews 11:1)

### **B. HUMILITY**

Pride hinders answered prayer. This is illustrated in the parable of the proud Pharisee and the humble tax collector. (Luke 18:9-14)

### **C. BOLDNESS**

We approach God with confidence, not arrogance. (Hebrews 4:16)

### **D. SUBMISSION**

We must submit to God's will in how He will answer our prayers. He promises to answer only those prayers which are according to His will. (1 John 5:14,15) God's word reveals His will in many areas. In other areas, we should ask Him for His will, knowing He will reveal it.

## **E. JOYFULNESS**

As we talk with our Father, we should be joyful, not depressed. David said, *In your presence is fullness of joy.* (Psalm 16:11)

## **F. PERSISTENCE**

Jesus said, *Men always ought to pray and not lose heart.* (Luke 18:1)  
He then gave the parable of the persistent widow and the unjust judge, to teach that persistence in prayer is valuable. Persistence is necessary when the Spirit leads, or when faith is not yet complete.

## **IV. THE MODEL OF PRAYER**

(Most of the material in Section IV comes from Dudley Hall, *Alone With God*, (Hurst, Texas: Life's Answer, Inc, 1978), pp.5-8)

Jesus set forth a model of prayer in Matthew 6:9-13. It contains the essential elements of prayer.

### **A. OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN**

Open with praise to God.

#### **1. OUR FATHER**

Approach God as Father; we are His children. (John 1:12) Our prayers are addressed to the Father in Jesus' name. (John 16:23)

#### **2. IN HEAVEN**

Reflect on God's position and power. He is in heaven and sees everything. He has all power. (Acts 4:24)

### **B. HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME**

Praise God's name as hallowed, holy, to be honored. Ask that His name be honored in the lives of you and others. For example:

In my heart (*reveal Yourself to me today*);

In my family (*make my family an example of heaven's fellowship*);

In my church (*make my church function as the true body of Christ*);

Expand to include friends, the nation, the world, etc.

### **C. YOUR KINGDOM COME**

Pray in intercession for God to establish His kingdom and rule, (a) on earth during the Millennium; (b) in the hearts of people today. For example:

In my heart (*control my thoughts and attitudes*);  
In my life (*control my decisions, actions, and reactions*);  
In my family (*let my family evidence God's kingdom*);  
In my church (*let my church be ruled by Your kingdom principles and love*);  
Expand to include others.

### **D. YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN**

Pray in submission for God to reveal and accomplish His will to the same extent on earth as He does in heaven. For example:

#### **1. What is Your will**

In my heart?  
In my life?  
In my family?  
In my church?  
Expand to include others.

#### **2. How do you want Your will accomplished**

In my heart?  
In my life?  
In my family?  
In my church?  
Expand to include others.

### **E. GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD**

Now petition God to meet daily needs. For example:

My personal needs;  
My family's needs;  
My church's needs;  
Expand to include others' needs.

### **F. AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS**

Sins are moral and spiritual debts to God's righteousness. Daily confess the sins the Holy Spirit reveals, and claim His forgiveness. (1John 1:9)

### **G. AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS**

We will be forgiven by God only if we forgive others (Matthew 6:14, 15). We need to prevent the root of bitterness from springing up and choking our spiritual life. (Hebrews 12:15) Ask God to reveal the people who have hurt you, and forgive them in your heart. Remember, unforgiveness is a sin; we need to confess and forsake it. (Eph. 4:32)

### **H. AND DO NOT LEAD US INTO TEMPTATION**

God doesn't tempt us. (James 1:13) Pray that He not let us get out of His will into areas of stumbling. Pray for God's guidance from temptation to sin and consequent defeat and into victory. (Psalm 37:23) For example:

Me;  
My family;  
My church family;  
My Christian friends;  
Expand to include others.

### **I. BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE**

Pray for God's protection from the devil who, *walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour*. (1 Peter 5:8) For example:

Me;  
My family;  
My church family;  
My Christian friends;  
Expand to include others.

### **J. FOR YOURS IS THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER AND THE GLORY FOREVER. AMEN.**

Close your prayer as you opened it, with praise.

#### **1. YOURS IS THE KINGDOM**

Acknowledge God as King over all. (Psalm 47:2)

#### **2. YOURS IS . . . THE POWER**

Acknowledge God's infinite power. (Daniel 4:34-37)

#### **3. YOURS IS . . . THE GLORY**

Acknowledge God's glory. All praise, honor, and adoration are due Him for who He is and what He does. (Revelation 4:8-11)

#### **4. FOREVER**

Acknowledge God's eternal existence. He is unchanging and faithful, and He can be trusted completely. (Hebrews 13:8)

#### **V. EXAMPLES OF PRAYER**

The Bible contains many instructive, spiritually deepening prayers.

##### **A. OLD TESTAMENT**

Read Abraham's prayer for Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:22-33), Nehemiah's prayer for the Jews (Nehemiah 1:4-11), Hezekiah's prayer for deliverance (2 Kings 19:15-19), and Daniel's prayer for the Jews (Daniel 9:3-19).

##### **B. NEW TESTAMENT**

Read Jesus' prayer for the Church (John 17:1-26), and the disciples' prayer for boldness (Acts 4:23-31). Also read Paul's prayers: (Ephesians 1:15-19; 3:14-19; 6:18-20; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-11; 4:3, 4; 1 Thess. 3:10-13; 5:23; 2 Thess. 1:11-12; 3:15; 2 Timothy 1:3, 4, 18).

#### **VI. BENEFITS OF PRAYER**

There are many benefits of prayer, including the following:

##### **A. PRAYER BRINGS ANSWERS**

Obviously we pray because God answers prayer. (Luke 11:9-13)

##### **B. PRAYER BRINGS PEACE**

As we pray about a matter, we lay the matter on His altar, and receive a peace of mind about it. (Philippians 4:6, 7)

##### **C. PRAYER BRINGS FELLOWSHIP**

As we pray we grow in fellowship with the Lord. We come to know Him and His voice better.

##### **D. PRAYER BRINGS SERVICE**

God desires to work in and through us to accomplish His purposes. Through prayer we receive direction and strength to be His instruments in carrying out His will. (Esther 4:13, 14)



