

# prayer



# Why Pray?

The secret to your success in life is your connection with God.

Through prayer we connect with God and we access His power. Prayer is your spirit breathing; it activates your spiritual nature.

There are all kinds of prayer:

- When we're desperate
- When we're thankful
- When we have a dream
- When we're believing with friends for the same cause
- When we want to get close to God
- When we have a difficult decision to make
- When we want to invoke God to heal or help someone
- When we need guidance

Yet for most of us, prayer is the weakest area of our spiritual life and where we need the most instruction and motivation.

Not one of the great people in the Bible lived without prayer. Noah, Abraham, Job, Jacob, Samuel, David, Daniel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, John the Baptist, Jesus and Paul. All of these heroes were soaked in prayer and the Word of God.

There is no other way to live in power. There is no light, no life, no fellowship, no guidance and no strength until we pray.

The less we pray, the weaker we are. More can be accomplished by the untalented in one minute of praying, than in the lifetime of the super talented, prayer-less person disconnected from God.

# Creating a Lifestyle of Prayer

*“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed.” - MARK 1:35*

Prayer is most effective when it isn't a thing we do every now and then, but when it's a lifestyle we cultivate. To understand how to have a lifestyle of prayer, we can look at the example Jesus gave during His life on earth.

## Have a certain time

Jesus got up early in the morning to spend time with His Heavenly Father. Make a daily appointment with God – whether it's first thing in the morning, at lunch, or in the evening – and faithfully keep it.

## Have a certain place

Jesus had a specific place He went to, to pray. As He travelled, we see Him seeking out mountain tops and gardens where He could be alone with the Father. Having a designated place to pray helps us remove distractions and frees us to worship and pray out loud.

## Have a certain plan

When Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, He gave them a prayer outline. We call it “The Lord's Prayer.” As we pray every day, our plans for our prayer time can vary to include worship music, Bible reading, and quiet time to listen to God. It doesn't always have to look the same, it just helps when we have a plan for connecting regularly with God.

# How Do I Pray?

*(The Lord's Prayer)*

The disciples did not ask Jesus to teach them to preach, to teach, to be leaders, to be managers, to administrate, facilitate or strategise a vision. They recognised the secret to Jesus' life: **PRAYER**. They asked Him to teach them how to pray. This is a great starting point, recognising that we really don't know how to pray effectively. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, this is what He gave them.

In this manner, therefore, pray:  
Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be Your name.  
Your kingdom come.  
Your will be done  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
As we forgive our debtors.  
And do not lead us into temptation,  
But deliver us from the evil one.  
For Yours is the kingdom and the  
power and the glory forever.  
Amen.

MATTHEW 6:9-13

# Our Father

God is your Father. You can talk to Him as your Father. This is a major difference between the old and new testament. Before Jesus, He was only known as GOD, but Jesus refers to Him as Father more than anything else. The way humans could communicate with God had become more intimate.

*'And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, "Abba, Father."'* - GALATIANS 4:6 (NLT)

As such, you will carry the heart of your father within you. It is easy for a child to understand the will of their father, because their father is in them. The desire of a child is to please their father.

Being born again we inherit the spiritual genetics of God. We have been re-generated.

The first five references are to the Father. He is at the centre of prayer, not us or anyone or anything else. Let's remove ourselves from the centre of our universe.

But He is not just your Father, He is OUR Father. We don't pray the Lord's prayer in isolation from others.

*'Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.'*

- MATTHEW 18:19

To say, 'Our' there is agreement and unity.

*'These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.'* - ACTS 1:14

'Our', means that even when I'm praying alone, I'm not praying with only me in mind. My prayer is for us, my family and my community.

People in disagreement or with unresolved breaches in relationships will be hindered in their answers to prayer.

I'm praying for the best result for us, not me. I'm praying for the fulfilment of our vision, not mine.

# In heaven

Praying in the Spirit is the key to effective prayer. In the Old Testament, drawing near to God was by physically moving through the layers of the tabernacle or temple. But in Christ we have access to 'Heavenly places' and can move in the Spirit because God now lives in us.

Jesus directs our attention not just to where we are going, but also to our God who wants to have a relationship with all of us.

## Hallowed be your name

This is praising God. Never underestimate the power of praise! Come before God with thanksgiving, praise and worship.

The name and the reputation of God should be revered, honoured and blessed.

This name, Emmanuel, which the Bible gives us to accompany Jesus' entrance into the world, means 'God with us'.

When we receive Christ into our lives, we have entered a world where God is with us. This means He is both for us and with us.

*'If God is for us, who can ever be against us? Since God did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't God, who gave us Christ, also give us everything else?'*

- ROMANS 8:31-32

## Your will be done

*'In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will...'* - EPHESIANS 1:11

The purpose of God has travelled down through the centuries unchanged. Whoever is wanting to pick up the great purpose of God, can do and find themselves involved in making history for the Kingdom of God. God arranges for one person to pass it on to the next; for one generation to pass it on to the next.

## Your kingdom come

The first five declarations of the Lord's Prayer are to do with fulfilling God's dreams, not ours. This is us saying, 'Rule my life, Lord'.

The Bible is the story of a clash of Kingdoms. There are only two Kingdoms. Light and Dark. God and the Devil. Our Kingdom or His. You can tell the Kingdom of God is here because people are filled with the Holy Spirit.

There is a difference between being in a Christian organisation and being a follower of Christ. A disciple of Christ is a person living in the Kingdom of God. A Church member is someone living in a Christian organisation. Our pursuit is to see everyone in church. But not just as church members, rather as members of a Kingdom, people with a hunger to be disciples of Christ.

The ruler of this Kingdom is Jesus. The boundaries of this Kingdom are attitudes. In forgiveness, I'm in the Kingdom. I'm under the dominion of the King. I'm receiving the benefits of the Kingdom. But when I cross the border into revenge and hatred, I've stepped over those boundaries of the Kingdom of God, and therefore am missing out on all the protections and blessings of living in that place.

## Give us this day our daily bread

After dealing with the first five points of the Lord's prayer, which are to do with God, Jesus now leads us into dealing with our own lives. The first point is to ask for what we need.

Asking for your needs to be met is part of a daily prayer.

James says, *'You have not because you ask not'*.

God has promised a thousand times that He will provide for you - *'And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus'* - **PHILIPPIANS 4:19**

God will supply every need you have.

It is the nature of God to provide for you;

*'There is no want to those who fear Him. The young lions lack and suffer hunger; but those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good thing.'* - **PSALM 34:9-10**

*'He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?'* - **ROMANS 8:32**

## Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us

This is a very important point in this prayer, because Jesus comes back to it after he concludes teaching on prayer.

Sin and guilt are like caustic chemicals that eat away at our hearts, our relationships and our nerves, weakening and endangering all our hopes for a better life. We can't buy God off with good works; the only remedy is genuine repentance.

One of the most challenging things to ever do in life, is to come into the light and become open to God about our lives. Unless we do this, we have no chance of ever receiving His forgiveness or healing.

Confessing sin to God is the recognition of what is right and what is wrong and acknowledging our wrongs.

This often doesn't happen until our conscience is awakened by the Holy Spirit. Then we realize how far away from God we have been. We can feel we are doing all right, until suddenly something that we had neatly tucked away from the view of everyone else, is brought into the light and we are forced to admit to our sin. Being willing to listen to the Holy Spirit each day and change behaviour that upsets God is part of a healthy prayer life.

In this instance Jesus is referring to the unforgiving heart, as being the sin that we need to be forgiven of. If we want forgiveness for ourselves, we cannot withhold it from others. This needs to be a regular, daily experience.

Forgiveness is linked with healing many times throughout Scripture. What healing is to the body, forgiveness is to the soul.

Forgive people before they apologise.

Every day, choose to forgive everybody everything they've ever done against you.

## Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

*'Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.'* - JAMES 1:12

Every Christian is tempted, so it is not a strange thing that we are challenged in this way. The temptations of the believer are many and various. They will come from all different angles.

Jesus Himself was tempted in every area but He never sinned.

*'For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathise with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.'*

- HEBREWS 4:15

Gold is put into the furnace to purify it. The purpose of temptation is to make us stronger, not weaker.

Temptation is not the revealing of weakness in us, but a strengthening of the grace of God in our lives.

It develops the nature of Christ within us when we choose not to give in to temptation.

## For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

The Message translation says it like this:

*'You're in charge! You can do anything you want! You're ablaze in beauty! Yes. Yes. Yes.'*

This is a prayer of faith.

The conclusion of this prayer is a faith conclusion. It is not based on fantasy. It is definite and declaring. It is total commitment to what we are believing for and we commit ourselves to see it happen.

## You rule

– Therefore You, God are able to employ Your sovereignty to bring the fulfillment of my prayer.

When Abraham questioned whether or not Sarah could actually have a child in her old age, God's reply was, *'Is anything too hard for the Lord?'*

## You have all the ultimate power

– Therefore there is no power that will be able to prevent You or stand against You when You arise on my behalf to answer this prayer.

## Yours is the glory

– I give You the glory for answering this prayer even though I cannot see it yet.

## Amen

– Declares *'So be it'*.

'Amen' is to say yes to God. It is to move from prayer to action.



**My voice  
You shall hear  
in the morning,  
O Lord;  
In the morning  
I will direct it to You,  
And I will look up.**

PSALM 5:3



*Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be Your name.  
Your kingdom come.  
Your will be done  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
As we forgive our debtors.  
And do not lead us into temptation,  
But deliver us from the evil one.  
For Yours is the kingdom and  
the power and the glory forever.  
Amen.*

