



Global College of Ministry

EMPOWER

The Christian & Prayer (Part One)

Prayer is Essential

(Adapted from a lesson by Linda Poitras)

“Exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men” (1 Timothy 2:1).

INTRODUCTION

We *must* pray. It is impossible to please God without talking to Him. It is as important to know *how* to pray as it is to know that we *must* pray. Prayer is the way we communicate. However, communication is not all about me. Communication is a two-way conversation. It involves both talking and listening. It has my ideas, feelings and needs, and the ideas, feelings and needs of the other person. Without communication, there is no relationship.

WORSHIP

Every time we pray, we are worshipping God. Worship is putting ourselves under the will of God and obeying. Without obedience, there is no worship. One of the easiest ways to worship is to praise. Praise means we tell someone how good they are or what a wonderful thing they have done. It is giving compliments.

Remember to give God compliments for all He is and all He has done for us. What are some good things we can say *about* God? Below are a few suggestions:

- He is worthy.
- He is awesome.
- He is powerful.
- He is loving.
- He is kind.
- He is patient.

What (compliments) can we say about the *good things God does* for us? Here are some ideas:

- He is the captain of our salvation.
- He is our redeemer.
- He is our healer.
- He is our soon coming king.
- He is our deliverer.
- He is our defender.

- 1) Take time to speak these to God as a prayer.
- 2) Each quality or compliment listed should be spoken aloud three times in a row.

- 3) Continue until everything listed has been spoken to God. By this time, you should be really feeling the presence of the Lord.
- 4) Prayer should always begin and end with praise, because praise takes you right into the courts of God (Psalm 100:4).

Prayer is not the only way we worship. Worship is the way we live our lives for God. Everything we do and say should have His will and plan at the foundation. Worship is our lifestyle – giving glory to God daily.

KINGDOM PRAYING

Who do we pray *for*? If we are honest, most prayers are personal. We pray for loved ones, food, all our needs, and about every problem. We are so busy praying for ourselves, we forget a basic principle of prayer – put God’s kingdom first, and He will add all these things to us.

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33).

We must learn to pray for others. Jesus had only one prayer request, and it was about His main purpose on earth – reaching lost souls. It was not about His needs, or the suffering He would endure. He wanted us to help Him pray for workers to reach out to others.

“Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest” (Matthew 9:37-38).

Learn about the needs of others.

- Look around in your village, town, or city, and see what is happening that needs prayer.
 - Do you know anyone who has a neighbor or friend with a need or problem?
 - Those who are alone or have no one to care are especially needy – widows and orphans are in every village or town.

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27).

- Work from there into the region you live in.
 - Are there natural disasters (such as floods, earthquakes, storms, fire, etc.) that have caused trouble?
 - Are there political problems?
 - Are there churches in every village?
- Then, pray for the needs of your nation.
 - Always pray for your leaders.

- Ask God to grant them wisdom and understanding in their decisions.
 - Ask God to give them patience and love for the people they are leading.
- Be sure to pray for needs outside your nation.
- What are some needs of your continent?
 - What are some needs that affect your nation? (This could include famine, disease, financial difficulties, etc.)
 - Who are the people who need Jesus most? Find out the most difficult people groups to reach with the gospel and pray for God to reveal himself to them.

SCRIPTURE PRAYERS

If you ever feel like you do not know how to pray, get your Bible and pray the Scripture. Reading and thinking about the Scriptures is important. But when we speak God's eternal word aloud, something happens in the spirit realm. The spoken Word of God is powerful when mixed with faith. Praying God's Word increases our faith that our prayer will work. Scripture praying is speaking out the will of God for all things because His Word is never wrong and is eternal. The book of Psalms is a great prayer book. Any Scriptures that give blessing and praise to God are also good to use (the book of Job, Proverbs, and many of the Epistles offer the sacrifice of praise).

"O Praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endureth forever. Praise ye the Lord" (Psalm 117:1-2).

"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together; and all the sons of God shouted for joy? (Job 38:4-7).

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:9-10).

Learn to pray using God's Word. It is full of hope and help.

PRAY IN THE SPIRIT

"For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also” (1 Corinthians 14:14-15).

Pray all the time, everywhere. Talk to God every time possible, and listen when He speaks back to you. Give Him a chance to talk through His Word. He has a lot to say when you pray and communicate with Him.

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:27).

Study Questions

1. Describe what worship is and tell what it does. _____

2. Describe “kingdom praying.” Support your answer with Scripture. _____

3. Why is it necessary to pray for others? Support your answer with Scripture. _____

4. What happens when we pray the Scriptures? Support your answer with Scripture. _____

5. What does it mean to “pray in the Spirit?” Support your answer with Scripture. _____

Mechanics of Prayer

(Adapted from *Path to Righteousness* by Linda Poitras)

“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice”
(Psalm 55:17).

Introduction

Many times, people hesitate to pray unless they are in a given place, at the right time, with the perfect situation. They feel they must kneel, fold their hands, close their eyes, and speak aloud for the Lord to hear them. But this is a mistake. God is more interested in our heart or motive, as always. “...for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7b).

“Most men pray for power, the strength to do things. Few people pray for love, the quality to be someone.” – Robert D. Foster

What Counts With God

How does it all fit together (that is what mechanics are) in this prayer business? During His most often quoted “Sermon on the Mount,” Jesus took time to teach His followers how they should go about the process of praying.

The Attitude of Prayer: (Matthew 6:5-8)

- 📖 Not seen of men (done in secret)
- 📖 Not boasting of our closeness to God (we have already gained our reward by the acclaim of men)
- 📖 To be heard by God without much repetition and long speaking. (Jesus states that the heathen believe the more they speak the more chance they have of being heard.)

“Prayer is not a substitute for working, thinking, watching, suffering, or giving: Prayer is a support for all other efforts.” – George Buttrick

- 📖 God knows what we need even before we ask. He just wants us to communicate with Him, but that includes listening to His voice, and not just hearing our own.

The Example of Prayer: (Matthew 6:9-13)

The disciples knew that the followers of John the Baptist said many prayers, fasted often, and were devoted to John. They came to Jesus asking Him to teach them how to pray, and so we have the most famous prayer in the Bible. It is the “Lord’s Prayer” and has been misused by many. Jesus did not mean for His disciples to just memorize and repeat after Him this same

prayer every time they prayed. He was giving them a formula (pattern) to follow about things that should be important and included in all their prayers. The Lord's Prayer contains three petitions concerned with the holiness and will of God and three concerning our personal needs. Let us look at this model prayer in different segments:

- 📖 *"Our Father which art in heaven"* – This acknowledges God as superior to all things and each of us (Matthew 6:9).
- 📖 *"Hallowed by thy name"* – We give worship to Him for blessings – magnify His Holy name (Matthew 6:9).
- 📖 *"Thy kingdom come"* – Consecration to Him, and surrender to God's will in our daily lives (Matthew 6:10).
- 📖 *"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"* – Submit to His will, let God lead and direct our lives, plans, actions, and thoughts. In heaven, nobody argues with God's design and plan. We should not here on earth either (Matthew 6:10).
- 📖 *"Give us this day our daily bread"* – We petition God for our needs. But notice that it is not for all of our needs for the rest of our lives, but for our needs today (Matthew 6:11).
- 📖 *"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors"* – We petition God for mercy, but notice that God's forgiveness is connected with our forgiveness of those who wrong us (Matthew 6:12).
- 📖 *"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"* – We petition God for protection from the devil and all forces of evil (Matthew 6:13).
- 📖 *"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever"* – We praise the Lord for He alone is worthy (Matthew 6:13)!
- 📖 *"Amen"* – We close our prayer with confidence that we have prayed according to His will and plan for us (Matthew 6:13).

"Lord, make me more like Yourself, less like myself." – Lester Case

The Time of Prayer:

Every believer should pray, but when you pray is up to you. However, the Bible does tell us on several different occasions, that we should pray *always, without ceasing, constantly*. No matter what time of day it is – it is time to pray. No matter where you are – that is a place of prayer. No matter what is happening around you – that is a reason for prayer.

- 📖 Always (Luke 18:1; Ephesians 6:18)
- 📖 Without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
- 📖 With importunity (persistence) (Luke 11:5-10)
- 📖 Continuing instant (Romans 12:12)
- 📖 Continually (Colossians 4:2)

What Can Hinder My Prayers?

Is it possible that I can pray and it will not do me any good? Is there anything that can keep my prayers from reaching heaven and the ears of God? Oh, yes. There are a number of things that can block my prayers. I need to know what they are to avoid them.

- 📖 Un-confessed sin (Psalm 66:18)
- 📖 Insincerity (Matthew 6:5)
- 📖 Carnal Motives (James 4:3)
- 📖 Unbelief (James 1:5-6)
- 📖 Satanic Activity (Daniel 10:10-13)
- 📖 Domestic Problems (1 Peter 3:7)
- 📖 Pride (Luke 8:10-14)
- 📖 Robbing God (Malachi 3:8-10)
- 📖 Refusing to Submit to Biblical Teaching (Proverbs 1:24-28; Zechariah 7:11-14)
- 📖 Refusing to Forgive or be Forgiven (Matthew 5:23-24; 6:12-14)
- 📖 Refusing to Help the Needy (Proverbs 21:3; 1John 3:16-17)

As with every other type of mechanics, the “mechanics” of prayer are the tools that make it work if we use them.

“Let’s not just study about it, read up on it, or discuss it; let us pray!”

(Linda Poitras)

Study Questions

1. According to Matthew 6:5-8, what are four (4) points to remember and practice about prayer.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

2. Using the following excerpts from the pattern of prayer given by Jesus to His followers in Matthew 6:9-13, what does each phrase mean?

1) “Our Father which art in heaven” _____

2) “Thy kingdom come” _____

3) “Hallowed be thy name” _____

4) "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" _____

5) "Give us this day our daily bread" _____

6) "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever" _____

7) "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" _____

8) "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" _____

9) "Amen" _____

3. Give five (5) times (with Scripture reference) that the Bible tells us we should pray.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

4. List eleven (11) things (with Scripture reference) that can block personal prayer.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____
- 10) _____
- 11) _____

Additional Notes

History's Greatest Prayer Meeting

“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren” (Acts 1:14).

“And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen” (Luke 24:52, 53).

In the first two chapters of Acts, the disciples are in the “Prayer Room” waiting for the promise. When we enter our “Prayer Place” we are going there to wait for an answer. “For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us” (2 Corinthians 1:20). Also read Matthew 7:7-8.

Did you ever notice how Jesus prayed (Matthew 14:23)? We see about seventeen instances of Jesus praying in the Gospels. Jesus generally made a distance between Himself and His every day distractions. It is important to have a designated Prayer Place where we can talk to God. Jesus called this our prayer closet (Matthew 6:5-7).

Many times we call an all night prayer meeting, but this was more than a one night stand. They continued in prayer for ten days. Most would have a difficult time in having ten days set aside for prayer. Some find it hard to pray for ten minutes or one hour.

We say, “I am too busy to pray.” As one individual said, “If you are too busy to pray, then you are simply too busy.”

The agenda for the Prayer Meeting was set by the Lord. He said, “And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49).

As we come to the Lord in prayer we should also have an agenda or a prayer list of what we are praying for. Fill out a list of things to do in your prayer room. Plan your schedule for the day in your prayer room. List down everything that is going to happen during the day and go down the list one by one and submit it to God and His will.

As they continued in the “Prayer Place” they prayed and worshipped. There is an unbeatable formula for drawing close to God. It is: Praise and Worship + Prayer and Supplication = Drawing Near to God.

Jesus said the Church was called the “House of Prayer.” It is fitting that His Church started in the midst of a prayer meeting.

When the disciples had come into the Upper Room to pray they had no idea how long they would have to stay there praying. The only hint Jesus had given them was that they “shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Acts 1:5).

They prayed and stayed until the promise came. This is persistent prayer: praying until you have received, without any doubt in your mind, an answer from God. Sometimes He assures you He has answered your prayer and sometimes He lets you know the answer is on the way. He usually has three answers to prayer requests, “Yes, No, or Wait.”

I wonder if God would have responded to their prayers if they had stopped praying? Would He have poured out His Spirit?

They continued in one accord. Any reason for disunity had been put aside.

Praying together is called “corporate prayer” and is more effective, at times, than solitary/private prayer.

Of course, when we pray alone God hears. However, there is something about two agreeing together that is powerful. “If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 18:19). This demonstrates that there is power in corporate prayer, especially when the people agree together on what they are praying. This is sometimes called, “The Principle of Agreement.” In one part of the church world the people say “Let’s touch and agree!”

Why is corporate, united praying so powerful? The secret is told in Matthew 18:20, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” If two are better than one, one hundred and twenty must have been something else!

Synergy Power

One of the advantages of corporate, unified prayer is called “Synergy” by the World Network of Prayer. This means, “whenever there is cooperation, the result of the efforts expended will be greater than the sum of what each can do separately. As many a surprised farmer has discovered, one horse can pull six tons of weight, but two harnessed together can pull not twelve, but thirty-two tons! The Old Testament equation is one can chase a thousand, but two can put ten thousand to flight! If two agree on earth - all heaven is behind them!”

In prayer we get the attention of God and He begins to reveal Himself by getting the attention of man.

A man named Hopkins has said, “Our prayer and God’s mercy are like two buckets in a well; while one ascends the other descends.”

In the Book of Acts

They prayed...

- In a group (Acts 2:42).
- In private (Acts 10:9).

They prayed for...

- Outpouring of the Power (Acts 1:13-15; Acts 2:1).
- Specifically for people (Acts 9:40).
- Situations (Acts 13:2).
- Effectiveness of the church (Acts 14:23).
- For rulers and leadership (Acts 28:8).

With the importance of prayer evident, it is surprising to note that the prayer meeting is one of the least attended meetings in the churches' weekly program. Mary the Mother of Jesus Christ was last seen in the Scripture; at a prayer meeting (Acts 1:14). The explosion that rocked the world and set the church off at Pentecost was an answer to prayer at History's Greatest Prayer Meeting.

Study Questions

1. What is the "Principle of Agreement"? _____

2. What is "Synergy"? Explain. _____

3. Why is corporate, united prayer powerful? _____

4. What is the formula for drawing closer to God? _____

5. What is persistent prayer? _____

God Listens to the Demands of the Desperate

“Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him” (Acts 12:5).

The believers in the New Testament handled desperate situations and persecutions with strong, unceasing prayer. In Acts 12:5, it looked as if Peter was in an impossible situation. James had been killed and Peter was put into the hands of sixteen prison guards. However, our God majors in working through impossible situations in the lives of His people. “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God” (Luke 18:27). The missing link between our questions and God’s answers is persistent prayer. “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16). As the people persistently prayed over Peter’s situation their prayer was soon answered (Acts 12:6-7).

Jesus proclaimed, “My house shall be called a house of prayer” (Matthew 21:13). When the church was established in Acts they continued daily in prayer. It has been said, “The right decisions repeatedly done will eventually achieve compound success.” This is true in the area of prayer because as we continue to ask, seek, and knock the answer comes to us. “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matthew 7:7).

Corporate, Group Prayer in Acts

- Acts 1:14
- Acts 2:42
- Acts 4:24-31
- Acts 12:5, 12
- Acts 13:2

An old story is told of a turtle and a rabbit. The rabbit was fast on his legs but the old turtle could not run and was slow. All he could do was crawl. However, the turtle could persevere, was disciplined, and determined. Both were put into a race. When the race began the rabbit leaped from the starting place, and zoomed past his competitor. He left the turtle far behind and decided to stop and rest for a while. He would continue to run and rest for a while. The turtle kept crawling along until he passed the rabbit sleeping near the finish line and eventually won the race. When we pray persistently we can expect God to help us reach the finish line with His answer. Persistent, daily prayer is more beneficial than those who choose to pray when they have an urgent need.

In the early Church, prayer was so important that the Apostles decided to leave waiting on tables. They said,

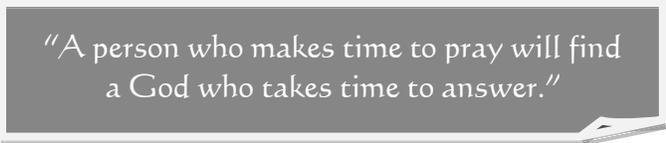
“We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word” (Acts 6:4).

“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force” (Matthew 11:12). It is interesting that the *NIV* translation says, “was forcefully advancing and forceful men lay hold of it.” Men and women are pressing their way into the kingdom of heaven (Luke 16:16).

Rev. J. P. Hughes, an International Bible Instructor cited four reasons why the desperate get their prayers answered.

1. The desperate do not care what others say. The lady with the issue of blood (Matthew 9:20) and Blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46), were desperate and it did not matter to them who knew it.
2. The desperate do not care what they are going to do has never been done before. We are creatures of habit but people who are desperate will try anything, even though it has not been done that way before. One man said, “What is popular is not always right, and what is right is not always popular.” Esther did not let the fact that she had not been called before the King stop her from interceding for her people (Esther 4:14; 16; 5:1-3).
3. The desperate don’t care how impossible the request is to be fulfilled. They pray and believe anyway! One time a man prayed, the world stopped, and the sun stood still (Joshua 10:12-13).
4. The desperate do not care if they must endure physical pain or hardship to get what they want. Can you picture the lady with the issue of blood struggling to get through the crowd? What about Jacob wrestling with the angel for a blessing (Genesis 32:24-28)?

A missionary named Dan Crawford was returning to his village mission in Africa after furlough. Deep in the jungle he came across a flooded river that made it impossible to pass over. No boats were available to cross; and it was dangerous to swim. They decided to camp there and prayed the Lord would show them a way to get across. During the night a huge tree fell into the water and in the morning he saw his prayer had been answered. The tree was their bridge to the other side. Your prayers serve as the bridge between your questions (needs) and God’s answers.



“A person who makes time to pray will find a God who takes time to answer.”

The words of a hymn seem appropriate for this lesson:

“Got any rivers that seem to be uncrossable? Got any mountains you cannot tunnel through? God specializes in things that are impossible. And He will do what no other friend can do.”

“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice” (Psalm 55:17).

Study Questions

1. Who was the first Apostle to be killed because of the Gospel? _____

2. Give one Scripture that shows that God majors in working out the impossible. _____

3. Jesus said that the church was to be called what? _____

4. How do you know that the Apostles believed that prayer was very important? _____

5. What does Matthew 11:12 mean? _____

6. What are four reasons why the prayers of the desperate get answered?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

7. Can you find more Biblical examples for each one (besides those already given)? _____

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The Christian & Prayer – Part 1

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