

# Prayer

## A Special Study



### A Study On Various Aspects Of Prayer

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# **Prayer - A Special Study**

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# Prayer

## The Purpose Of Prayer

### INTRODUCTION

1. In August 2005, **Newsweek** and **Beliefnet** asked 1,004 Americans what they believe and how they practice their faith
2. One of the questions was this: **What do you think is the most important purpose of prayer?**
3. Here are their responses...
  - a. To seek God's guidance (**27%**)
  - b. To thank God (**23%**)
  - c. To be close to God or the divine (**19%**)
  - d. To help others (**13%**)
  - e. To improve a person's life (**9%**)
  - f. Other (**4%**)
  - g. Don't know (**5%**)

[What **is** the purpose of prayer? As the answers above suggest, there are many reasons to pray. One way to remember "**The Purpose Of Prayer**" is with the acronym **ACTS**, where "**A**" stands for...]

### I. ADORATION

#### **A. EXPRESSING ADORATION...**

1. God is certainly worthy of our praise, our adoration
2. While we can praise God in song, we can also praise God in prayer

#### **B. EXAMPLES OF ADORATION IN PRAYER...**

1. When Paul prayed for the Ephesians, he took time to praise God - **Ep 3:14-21**
2. David provides an example of offering adoration and praise - **1 Chr 29:10-13**

[Expressing **adoration** was not one of the responses in the aforementioned survey, but it is certainly an important purpose of prayer. Continuing with our acronym **ACTS**, "**C**" stands for...]

### II. CONFESSION

#### **A. CONFESSING OUR SINS...**

1. There is mercy to be found in confessing one's sins - **Pro 28:13**
2. The Christian enjoys cleansing of sin by the blood of Jesus - **1 Jn 1:7-10**

#### **B. EXAMPLES OF CONFESSING SINS...**

1. Jesus provided an example in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican - **Lk 18:10-14**
2. Again, David provides an example with his confession of sin - **Psa 51:1-13**

[Obtaining forgiveness by **confessing** sins is a blessing now enjoyed only through Christ (**Jn 14:6**). Once we have put on Christ (cf. **Ga 3:27**), prayer is crucial to remaining forgiven. “**T**” stands for...]

### **III. THANKSGIVING**

#### **A. OFFERING THANKSGIVING...**

1. Being thankful is emphasized repeatedly in exhortations to pray - **Ep 5:20; Co 4:2; 1 Th 5:17-18**
2. The antidote to anxiety is to pray for everything, with thanksgiving - **Ph 4:6**

#### **B. EXAMPLES OF OFFERING THANKSGIVING...**

1. Christ set an example of thanksgiving - **Mt 11:25; 26:27; Jn 6:11; 11:41**
2. Daniel had the custom to thank God three times a day - **Dan 6:10**

[We cannot discount the importance of **thanksgiving** in our prayers. Especially if we expect God to answer us as we make requests for future blessings. This leads to the final letter, where “**S**” is for...]

### **IV. SUPPLICATION**

#### **A. MAKING SUPPLICATION...**

1. We are encouraged to let our requests be known to God - **Ph 4:6**
2. We are commanded to make supplications for all men - **1 Ti 2:1-2**

#### **B. EXAMPLES OF MAKING SUPPLICATION...**

1. “Real widows” are known for their supplications night and day - **1 Ti 5:5**
2. Solomon made supplication at dedication of the temple - **1 Kin 8:28-29**
3. Jesus made supplication as He was crucified; Stephen also, as he was being stoned - **Lk 23:34; Ac 7:59-60**

### **CONCLUSION**

1. With the aid of a simple acronym (**ACTS**), we should never forget “**The Purpose Of Prayer**” ...
  - a. Adoration
  - b. Confession
  - c. Thanksgiving
  - d. Supplication
2. It is good to understand prayer’s **purpose**, but do we also...
  - a. Appreciate the **power** of prayer?
  - b. Even have the **privilege** of prayer?
  - c. Understand the **principles** of prayer?
  - d. Manifest the **persistence** of prayer?
  - e. Engage in the **practice** of prayer?

Succeeding lessons in this series will endeavor to ensure that we do...!

# Prayer

## The Power Of Prayer

### INTRODUCTION

1. Jesus anticipated that people would become slack in their prayers...
  - a. Telling the parable of the persistent widow, that people might always pray - **Lk 18:1-7**
  - b. Wondering if He would find faith on earth (i.e., people praying) when He returned - **Lk 18:8**
2. Paul frequently exhorted Christians to be diligent in their prayers...
  - a. “praying always with all prayer and supplication...” - **Ep 6:18**
  - b. “Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving” - **Co 4:2**
  - c. “Pray without ceasing” - **1 Th 5:17**

[If we have become slack in our prayers, might that be an indication that we do not appreciate “**The Power Of Prayer**”? Have we forgotten what a privilege it is to pray? Consider then, some...]

### I. EXAMPLES OF THE POWER OF PRAYER

#### **A. THERE IS FORGIVENESS FROM GOD...**

1. The Christian can find forgiveness through the blood of Christ - **1 Jn 1:7-10**
  2. Thus the erring Christian is told to repent and pray - **Ac 8:22**
- **Don't you want the assurance of knowing that your sins are forgiven?**

#### **B. THERE IS PEACE FROM GOD...**

1. The antidote to anxiety is to pray - **Ph 4:6**
  2. The Christian will find their hearts and minds guarded by the peace of God - **Ph 4:7**
- **Don't you want the peace of mind and heart that surpasses understanding?**

#### **C. THERE IS STRENGTH FROM GOD...**

1. Paul prayed that the Ephesians might be strengthened in the inner man - **Ep 3:14-16,20**
  2. When we need to be strong, Christians can likewise pray for themselves!
- **Don't you want the power that is beyond our comprehension?**

#### **D. THERE IS OPPORTUNITY FROM GOD...**

1. Paul realized that God provided him opportunity to teach others - **1 Co 3:5** (NASB)
  2. He knew that the Lord often opened doors for such opportunities - **1 Co 16:9; 2 Co 2:12**
  3. He therefore requested prayer that such opportunities would continue - **Co 4:3**
- **Don't you want the Lord to give you opportunity to lead others to Christ?**

#### **E. THERE IS BOLDNESS FROM GOD...**

1. When the apostles needed boldness, they prayed and God delivered - **Ac 4:23-31**
  2. When Paul needed boldness, he asked for prayers in his behalf - **Ep 6:19-20**
- **Don't you want boldness when you speak to others about Christ?**

**F. THERE IS WISDOM FROM GOD...**

1. Wisdom is not knowledge, but insight that makes the best use of the knowledge one has
2. The Christian is promised wisdom through prayer without doubt - **Ja 1:5-8**  
-- **Don't you want the wisdom that comes from above?**

**G. THERE IS HEALING FROM GOD...**

1. Those who are sick should ask elders to pray for them - **Ja 5:14-15**
2. Those who have sinned should confess, and we should pray for one another - **Ja 5:16**  
-- **Don't you want the aid of God whenever in need of physical or spiritual healing?**

**H. THERE IS TRANQUILITY FROM GOD...**

1. The Scriptures proclaim God has ultimate control over the nations - **Dan 4:17; Ro 13:1-7**
2. Thus we are commanded to pray for our rulers, that we may lead a quiet (tranquil, ASV) and peaceable life - **1 Ti 2:1-4**  
-- **Don't you want to live in peace and tranquility, and for others to as well?**

**CONCLUSION**

1. The **power** of prayer can indeed be a blessing...
  - a. To the one who prays in faith
  - b. For those for whom prayers are offered
2. There is **help in time of need** from God...
  - a. We have a wonderful High Priest who understands our problems - **He 4:14-15**
  - b. Thus we can at anytime approach God boldly in prayer, to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need - **He 4:16**  
-- **Don't you want mercy and grace whenever needed, for yourself and for others?**
3. Indeed, the effective fervent prayer of a righteous man (cf. **Ja 5:16**)...
  - a. "avails much" (NKJV)
  - b. "can accomplish much (NASB)
  - c. "has great power" (ESV)
  - d. "is powerful and effective" (NIV)  
-- **If such is true of one righteous man, how about the prayers of many righteous?**
4. Do we believe in the **power** of prayer...?
  - a. Then let us pray always
  - b. Let us continue earnestly in prayer  
-- **Yes, let us "pray without ceasing" (1 Th 5:17)!**

But not all have the privilege of "**The Power Of Prayer**". In our next study, we will see why...

# Prayer

## The Privilege Of Prayer

### INTRODUCTION

1. In “**The Power Of Prayer**” we saw where prayer can provide...
  - a. **Forgiveness** from God
  - b. **Peace** from God
  - c. **Strength** from God
  - d. **Wisdom** from God
  - e. **Boldness** from God
  - f. **Opportunity** from God
  - g. **Healing** from God
  - h. **Tranquility** from God
  
2. Yet “**The Privilege Of Prayer**” is not available to all who pray; for some...
  - a. Their prayers will be an abomination to God
  - b. Their prayers will fall on deaf ears
  - c. Their prayers will be hindered
  - d. Their prayers will not be answered favorably

[We might be praying people, even pray fervently; but do we have the right to pray, to expect God to heed us when we pray? Take note...]

### I. FOR WHOM PRAYER IS NOT A PRIVILEGE

#### **A. THOSE WHO WILL NOT HEED GOD’S WORD...**

1. Those who turn their ears from the law, their prayers are an abomination - **Pro 28:9**
2. Such is the case of those who will not endure sound doctrine - cf. **2 Ti 4:3-4**
- **If we will not listen to God, why should He listen to us?**

#### **B. THOSE WHOSE SINS SEPARATE THEM FROM GOD...**

1. Sins can separate one from God so He will not hear - **Isa 59:1-2**
2. Such is the condition of those who will not seek God’s forgiveness - **Ro 6:23**
- **If we reject God’s forgiveness of sins, can we expect Him to listen to us?**

#### **C. THOSE WHO FAIL TO TREAT OTHERS JUSTLY...**

1. Who fail to consider the poor - **Psa 41:1-3**
2. Who fail to treat their wives as they should - **Mal 2:13-14; 1 Pe 3:7**
3. Who fail to make things right with those they have offended - **Mt 5:23-24**
3. Who fail to forgive those who sinned against them - **Mt 18:21-35**
- **If we will not treat others justly, how can we hope to receive God’s mercy?**

#### **D. THOSE WHO PRAY WITHOUT FAITH...**

1. Without faith it is impossible to please God - **He 11:6**
2. Asking with doubt in our hearts ensures failure - **Ja 1:5-8**
- **If we doubt God’s existence and ability to provide, why should God answer us?**

[Thus “**The Privilege Of Prayer**” is not extended to everyone. It is a blessing graciously bestowed on those whose hearts are in a proper condition. Consider, then...]

## **II. FOR WHOM PRAYER IS A PRIVILEGE**

### **A. THE SINNER SEEKING TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS...**

1. This we learn from the example of Cornelius
    - a. He was a good man, but still in need of salvation - **Ac 10:1-2**; cf. **11:14**
    - b. His prayers and alms had been noticed by God - **Ac 10:4,31**
    - c. Thus God saw to it that he had an opportunity to hear the words whereby he could be saved (i.e., the gospel of Christ) - **Ac 11:14**
  2. **Note well:** he was not saved by praying per se!
    - a. He needed to hear “words” by which he would be saved - **Ac 11:14**
    - b. I.e. the gospel of Christ, which is God’s power to salvation - **Ro 1:16**
    - c. Just as Saul of Tarsus was still in his sins, despite praying - cf. **Ac 9:11; 22:16**
  3. Yet God heard the prayer of a sinner like Cornelius
    - a. Who was hungering and thirsting for righteousness - cf. **Mt 5:6**
    - b. Who was asking, seeking, knocking - cf. **Mt 7:7-8**
    - c. Providing an opportunity to one day hear and obey the gospel of Christ
- **For a sinner seeking truth and righteousness, such prayers will be heard!**

### **B. THE CHRISTIAN WITH JESUS AS THEIR HIGH PRIEST...**

1. **Jesus** has become our **High Priest**
    - a. He is now a merciful and faithful high priest, able to aid His brethren - **He 2:17-18**
    - b. Making it possible to approach God’s throne boldly - **He 4:14-16**
    - c. Able to save to the uttermost, since He ever lives to intercede - **He 7:25**
  2. **Jesus** has now become our **Advocate** and **Mediator**
    - a. Our advocate with the Father - **1 Jn 2:1**
    - b. The one mediator between God and man - **1 Ti 2:5**
    - c. Who makes intercession for us at the right hand of God - **Ro 8:34**
- **Such is the blessing of those who have put on Christ in baptism and become children of God through faith (cf. Ga 3:26-27)**

## **CONCLUSION**

1. The ears of the Lord are open to the prayer of the righteous... - **1 Pe 3:12**
  - a. We must submit to the righteousness of God offering in Christ - cf. **Ro 10:1-4**
  - b. I.e., we must respond to the gospel of Christ - cf. **Ro 1:16-17**
2. If we desire “**The Privilege Of Prayer**”, then we must be either...
  - a. A faithful child of God through obedience to Jesus Christ
  - b. A sinner with a good and noble heart, seeking after truth and righteousness

The **sinner** hungering and thirsting for righteousness will be filled; how much more the **child of God** when he or she experiences “**The Privilege Of Prayer**” in all its fulness...!

# Prayer

## The Principles Of Prayer

### INTRODUCTION

1. In “**The Privilege Of Prayer**” we saw that few truly benefited from prayer...
  - a. **Children of God**, who became such through obedience to Jesus Christ
  - b. **Sinners seeking after truth and righteousness**, who will be heard in that God will provide them opportunity to hear and obey the truth
2. The full benefit of prayer comes only as “**The Principles Of Prayer**” are observed...
  - a. Principles laid down by Jesus and His inspired apostles
  - b. Principles that determine the final outcome of our prayers

[What are “**The Principles Of Prayer**” that must govern our praying? First of all...]

### I. WE MUST PRAY IN FAITH

#### **A. PRAYER REQUIRES FAITH...**

1. “And all things, whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.” - **Mt 21:22**
2. Otherwise, prayer will not be answered - cf. **Ja 1:5-8**

#### **B. FAITH IN GOD...**

1. That He is, and is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him - **He 11:6**
2. Such faith comes from the Word of God - **Ro 10:17**

[With the aid of His Word, we can have the kind of **faith** that pleases God, and ensures an answer to our prayers.]

### II. WE MUST PRAY WITH HUMILITY

#### **A. HUMILITY BEFORE GOD...**

1. A virtue highly valued by God - **Isa 57:15; 66:1-2**
2. The Lord is near, and saves those with contrite spirits - **Psa 34:18**
3. He gives grace to the humble - **Pro 3:34**

#### **B. HUMILITY IN PRAYER...**

1. Exemplified in the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector - **Lk 18:9-14**
2. Humility leads to exaltation by God - **Lk 18:14; Ja 4:10**

[With **faith** and **humility** before God, we are prepared to pray with the proper disposition...]

### III. WE MUST PRAY IN HARMONY WITH GOD’S WILL

**A. GOD'S WILL AND OUR PRAYERS...**

1. Prayers are answered favorably if we ask "according to His will" - **1 Jn 5:14**
2. Prayers more concerned with our will than God's are turned down - **Ja 4:3**

**B. HIS WILL BE DONE...**

1. So Jesus taught us to pray - **Mt 6:9-10**
2. So He prayed in the garden at Gethsemane - **Lk 22:42**
3. Such praying made easier when our will is to do God's will - cf. **Jn 4:34**

[With **faith** in God and **humility** toward Him, we will gladly yield to **His will** for us. Note also...]

**IV. WE MUST PRAY WITH THANKSGIVING**

**A. PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING...**

1. "giving thanks always for all things to God" - **Ep 5:20**
2. "in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving" - **Ph 4:6**
3. "...prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving" - **Co 4:2**
4. "pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks" - **1 Th 5:17-18**

**B. THE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE...**

1. God's people were always to be thankful - **Psa 100:4; Co 3:15**
2. Ingratitude an indication of apostasy - **Ro 1:21; 2 Ti 3:2**

[Do we seriously think God will help us with our **present burdens** if don't take the time to thank Him for **past blessings**? Finally, another principle of prayer is that...]

**V. WE MUST PRAY IN THE NAME OF JESUS**

**A. PRAYING IN THE NAME OF JESUS...**

1. Taught by Jesus Himself to His disciples - **Jn 14:13-14; 16:23**
2. Commanded by Paul to the Christians at Ephesus - **Ep 5:20**

**B. THE NAME OF JESUS AND PRAYER...**

1. Means more than simply adding "in Jesus' name" at the end of our prayers
2. We acknowledge Jesus as the only way by which we can approach God - **Jn 14:6**
3. We recognize Him as our "high priest" who intercedes for us - **He 7:24-25; Jn 14:13**

**CONCLUSION**

1. In summary, "**The Principles Of Prayer**" we have examined are these...
  - a. We must pray in faith
  - b. We must pray with humility
  - c. We must pray in harmony with the will of God
  - d. We must pray with thanksgiving
  - e. We must pray in the name of Jesus

2. We cannot overestimate **the value of the Word of God** in regards to these principles...
  - a. Faith comes from the Word of God
  - b. Humility is learned by reading the Word of God
  - c. Knowing the will of God is impossible without the Word of God
  - d. Thanksgiving is made easier when we read of our blessings in the Word of God
  - e. The importance of having Jesus as our High Priest is revealed in the Word of God

With the Word of God to guide and aid us in observing “**The Principles Of Prayer**”, we are better equipped to make prayer a truly meaningful and beneficial experience in our lives. But there is yet another principle of prayer (persistence) to which we shall give consideration in our next study...

# Prayer

## The Persistence Of Prayer

### INTRODUCTION

1. In our study on “**The Principles Of Prayer**”, we surveyed several essential principles...
  - a. We must pray in faith
  - b. We must pray with humility
  - c. We must pray in harmony with the will of God
  - d. We must pray with thanksgiving
  - e. We must pray in the name of Jesus
2. There is another principle of prayer worthy of careful consideration...
  - a. We must pray with **persistence**
  - b. A principle of prayer that was very important to Jesus

[The importance of “**The Persistence Of Prayer**” can be gleaned from the attention given to it in the Scriptures. Note first of all...]

### I. TEACHINGS OF PERSISTENCE IN PRAYER

#### **A. THE PARABLE OF THE PERSISTENT FRIEND...**

1. Told in connection with a request for teaching on prayer - **Lk 11:1**
  2. Following instruction providing a model for prayer - **Lk 11:2-4**
  3. The parable itself, easy enough to understand - **Lk 11:5-8**
  4. Followed with an emphasis on being persistent in asking, seeking, knocking - **Lk 11:9-10**
- **Note how persistence is connected to learning how to pray!**

#### **B. THE PARABLE OF THE PERSISTENT WIDOW...**

1. Told that men always ought to pray and not lose heart - **Lk 18:1**
  2. The parable itself, illustrating the value of persistent requests - **Lk 18:2-5**
  3. Adding that God will certainly heed His chosen who cry out day and night - **Lk 18:6-8a**
  4. Followed by concern for whether such faith will be found when He returns - **Lk 18:8b**
- **Note how persistence is related to having faith in the Lord!**

#### **C. THE TEACHING OF PAUL...**

1. “... continuing steadfastly in prayer” - **Ro 12:12**
  2. “praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints” - **Ep 6:18**
  3. “Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;” - **Co 4:2**
  4. “pray without ceasing” - **1 Th 5:17**
- **Note how often persistence is mentioned in exhortations to pray!**

[Persistence in prayer must be very important to be stressed so often. Yet we find more than simply **teaching** on persistence, we also find...]

## II. EXAMPLES OF PERSISTENCE IN PRAYER

### A. JESUS IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE...

1. When deeply distressed over His impending suffering - **Mt 26:36-39**
  2. While His closest disciples slept, he prayed three times - **Mt 26:40-44**
  3. In which He received the necessary help to face what lay ahead - **Mt 26:45-47**
    - a. Strengthened by an angel; cf. **Lk 22:41-44**
    - b. Heard by God, though His actual request was not answered - cf. **He 5:7**
- **If the Son of God needed persistence in prayer, do not we?**

### B. PAUL AND HIS THORN IN THE FLESH...

1. Paul endured the infirmity of persecution - **2 Co 11:30-33; 12:7,10**; cf. **Judg 2:3**
  2. He prayed three times that it might be removed - **2 Co 12:8**
  3. It was not, but the Lord provided what he needed
    - a. Sufficient grace and the strength of Christ to endure - **2 Co 12:9**
    - b. Enabling him to even take pleasure in his infirmities - **2 Co 12:10**
- **If the apostle of Christ needed persistence in prayer, do not we?**

### C. THE PRAYERS OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS...

1. The church in Jerusalem continued steadfastly in prayer - **Ac 2:42**
  2. When Peter was imprisoned, constant prayer was offered for him - **Ac 12:5,12**
  3. Epaphras labored fervently in prayer for his brethren at Colosse - **Co 4:12**
  4. Widows were assumed to be devoted to prayer - **1 Ti 5:5** (like Anna, cf. **Lk 2:36-37**)
- **If the early church needed persistence in prayer, do not we?**

## CONCLUSION

1. With such **examples** and **teaching** on persistence in prayer...
  - a. The importance of persistence cannot be overemphasized
  - b. Persistence in general (**keep praying!**); persistence in particular (**don't ask just once!**)
2. **Note well:** persistence does not ensure God **answers we may desire ...**
  - a. Jesus still had to drink the cup of suffering by going to the cross
  - b. Paul still had to bear his thorn in the flesh by enduring persecution for Christ
3. Yet persistence in prayer is key to receiving **answers we need..**
  - a. **Grace** and **mercy** to help in time of need
  - b. **Strength** to endure whatever it is we must face

And so, through **persistence in prayer**, let us “ask, seek, knock” (cf. **Mt 7:7-8**), until God provides the answer to our prayers, giving whatever He graciously determines we really need...!

# Prayer

## The Practice Of Prayer - I

### INTRODUCTION

1. In our study on prayer, we have examined...
  - a. The purpose of prayer
  - b. The power of prayer
  - c. The privilege of prayer
  - d. The principles of prayer
  - e. The persistence of prayer
2. Hopefully this study has increased our desire to pray...
  - a. To pray more fervently, with more consistency
  - b. To benefit from all that prayer has to offer
3. To encourage us even more to pray, let's look closer at **"The Practice Of Prayer"** ...
  - a. How should we pray?
  - b. When should we pray?
  - c. With whom should we pray?
  - d. For what should we pray?

[Even if we have been praying all our lives, it never hurts to ask **"Lord, teach us to pray..."**]

### I. HOW TO PRAY

#### **A. THE MODEL PRAYER...**

1. Jesus was asked by His disciples how to pray - **Lk 11:1**
    - a. They had just witnessed Jesus praying
    - b. They knew John the Baptist had taught his disciples to pray
    - c. While they had prayed as Jews, they recognized a need to learn more
  2. In response, Jesus offered a model, a guide for learning to pray - **Lk 11:2-4**
    - a. Commonly called **"The Lord's Prayer"**, also found in **Mt 6:9-13**
    - b. It was intended to serve as a **model** ("In this manner...") - **Mt 6:9**
- **The Lord's prayer serves as an example of how to pray, not a liturgical exercise**

#### **B. THE PROPER PRAYER...**

1. Addresses God the Father (**"Our Father in heaven"**) - **Mt 6:9**
2. Expresses reverence toward God (**"Hallowed be Your Name"**) - **Mt 6:9**
3. Includes supplication for such things as:
  - a. God's purposes (**"Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."**) - **Mt 6:10**
  - b. Our physical needs (**"Give us this day our daily bread."**) - **Mt 6:11**
  - c. Our spiritual needs (**"And forgive us our debts..."**) - **Mt 6:12**
  - d. The spiritual needs of others (**"...as we forgive our debtors."**) - **Mt 6:12**
  - e. Guidance and help in our struggle against sin and Satan (**"And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."**) - **Mt 6:13**
4. Praises God (**"For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever."**)

- Amen.”) - Mt 6:13**
5. In teaching on prayer, Jesus stressed the importance of:
    - a. Simplicity in prayers - **Mt 6:7-8**
    - b. Forgiving others - **Mt 6:14-15**
    - c. Persistence in prayers - **Lk 12:5-10**
- **Memorize the Lord’s prayer and it can serve to remind you how to pray**

[Another common concern in “**The Practice Of Prayer**” is...]

## **II. WHEN TO PRAY**

### **A. SCHEDULED PRAYERS...**

1. Having set times to pray can help develop a **habit** of prayer
  2. Consider the practice of two great men of God
    - a. **David**, whom God described as “a man after My own heart” - **Psa 55:17**
    - b. **Daniel**, whom the angel of God described as “O man greatly beloved” - **Dan 6:10**
  3. They made it a habit to pray at set times during the day
    - a. It would not hurt to imitate them
    - b. Praying three times daily: morning, noon, and evening
- **At the very least, make time each day to spend time in prayer**

### **B. SPONTANEOUS PRAYERS...**

1. Prayers should not be limited to set times
  2. Jesus spent all night in prayer before selecting His apostles - **Lk 6:12-13**
  3. Paul and Silas prayed when faced with trying circumstances - **Ac 16:25**
  4. Nehemiah prayed silently on the spur of the moment - **Neh 2:4-5**
  5. The Israelites prayed to God in the heat of battle - **1 Chr 5:20**
- **We should pray whenever and however the occasion calls for it**

### **C. PRAY WITHOUT CEASING...**

1. The goal is to “pray without ceasing” - **1 Th 5:17**
  2. Having **scheduled times** to pray will develop experience in prayer
  3. Praying **spontaneously** will develop a disposition to pray in every circumstance
- **Together, they help us reach the goal of praying without ceasing**

## **CONCLUSION**

1. In regards to “**The Practice Of Prayer**”, we have considered...
  - a. **How to pray**, with the aid of the Lord’s prayer
  - b. **When to pray**, suggesting both set times and spontaneous prayers
2. As we develop both the experience and disposition to pray, we should also consider...
  - a. **With whom to pray**, alone or with others
  - b. **For what to pray**, besides what has already been suggested

This we will do in the second part of our study on “**The Practice Of Prayer**”...

# Prayer

## The Practice Of Prayer - II

### INTRODUCTION

1. In part one of “**The Practice Of Prayer**”, we considered...
  - a. **How to pray**, with the aid of the Lord’s prayer
  - b. **When to pray**, suggesting both set times and spontaneous prayers
2. In part two of “**The Practice Of Prayer**”, we shall now consider...
  - a. **With whom to pray**, alone or with others?
  - b. **For what to pray**, besides what has already been suggested

[Again we turn to Jesus the master teacher, especially with regards to prayer, as we consider...]

### III. WITH WHOM TO PRAY

#### **A. PRAYING ALONE...**

1. Jesus encouraged the practice of praying in secret - **Mt 6:5-6**
  2. Private prayer cultivates our spiritual nature through regular exercise
    - a. “Prayer is the spiritual gymnasium in which we exercise and practice godliness.” - **V. L. Crawford**
    - b. “...Prayer is educative. The man who prays grows; and the muscles of the soul swell from this whipcord to iron bands.” - **Frederick B. Meyer**
    - c. The opposite is also true: “Seven days without prayer makes one weak.” - **Allan E. Bartlette**
  3. Private prayer forms a close union and fellowship with our Heavenly Father
    - a. It is just you and Him
    - b. Time spent together strengthens the bond of fellowship
  4. Private prayer is a true test of your sincerity and devotion
    - a. You certainly are not doing it to please men (they cannot see you)
    - b. You can’t be trying to falsely impress God (He will see right through you)
  5. Private prayer will be rewarded “openly” - **Mt 6:6**
    - a. The answers to our prayer will be seen by others
    - b. Both here and in the hereafter
- **Private prayer should be a priority in the practice of praying**

#### **B. PRAYING WITH OTHERS...**

1. Jesus also spoke of praying with others - **Mt 18:19-20**
  - a. Where the requests of two or three are answered by our Father in heaven
  - b. For in their midst is Jesus Himself, who also intercedes for them - cf. **Ro 8:34**
2. Early Christians prayed together often...
  - a. In times of trouble - **Ac 4:23-24; 12:5,12; 16:25**
  - b. In times of departure - **Ac 20:36; 21:5**

3. Immediate blessings when God's people pray together
    - a. A sweetness of fellowship
    - b. A sense of strength
- **Praying with others should be done whenever possible**

[In the "Lord's Prayer" (Mt 6:9-14) we find what sort of things we should pray about. Elsewhere in the Scriptures, we find there are many things for which we can pray as we consider...]

#### **IV. FOR WHAT TO PRAY**

##### **A. AS REVEALED IN SCRIPTURE...**

1. **Self**
    - a. For physical daily needs - **Mt 6:11**
    - b. For personal growth in Christ-likeness and devotion to God - **Co 1:9-12**
  2. **Family**
    - a. For spouse, children, parents, siblings, etc.
    - b. For their nurture and growth in the teaching of the Lord - **Ep 6:4**
  3. **Community**
    - a. For peace to prevail
    - b. E.g., **Jer 29:7**
  4. **Church**
    - a. For love and unity to prevail - **Jn 13:35; 17:20-21**
    - b. For the spiritual growth of each member - **Ph 1:9-11**
    - c. For the gospel to have free course - **2 Th 3:1**
  5. **Nation**
    - a. For national repentance and consciousness of who God is - **Psa 33:12; Pro 14:34**
    - b. For leaders to rule wisely - **1 Ti 2:2**
  6. **Nonbelievers**
    - a. For their salvation - **Ro 10:1**
    - b. For the effort of those involved in teaching them - **Ep 6:18-20**
  7. **The sick**
    - a. For their restoration to health - **Ja 5:14-15**
    - b. For spiritual strength and peace of mind - **Ja 5:16**
  8. **The poor and oppressed**
    - a. Such as the homeless, fatherless, unborn children - **Pro 29:7**
    - b. Those in other nations oppressed by their own rulers or outside influences
- **There is certainly much for which we ought to pray!**

##### **B. USING A PRAYER STRATEGY...**

1. **On Monday - Family**
  - a. Pray for both immediate and extended family members
  - b. For both their physical and spiritual well-being
2. **On Tuesday - Church**
  - a. For members in the local congregation
  - b. For Christians and congregations throughout the world
3. **On Wednesday - Community**

- a. For community leaders
  - b. For your neighbors
  - 4. **On Thursday - Nation**
    - a. For elected officials
    - b. For efforts to bring peace and righteousness
  - 5. **On Friday - World**
    - a. For world peace
    - b. For nations that are "closed" to the gospel
  - 6. **On Saturday - Afflicted**
    - a. For the poor, homeless, jobless
    - b. For those in prison
    - c. For those who are sick
    - d. For widows, single mothers, fatherless children
- **A simpler prayer strategy: morning-family; noon-church; evening-community**

## CONCLUSION

1. Such strategies are simply suggestions to provide some direction in prayer...
  - a. Develop one that suits you
  - b. One might also keep a list or journal of those for whom you are praying
2. The important thing is to PRAY, and to do so:
  - a. "always"
  - b. "in everything"
  - c. "earnestly"
  - d. "being vigilant"
  - e. "without ceasing"

I pray this study on prayer will encourage us to be more diligent in utilizing this wonderful privilege of prayer...!

*"Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;"*

*- Co 4:2*

# Prayer

## How God Answers Prayer

### INTRODUCTION

1. In our study on prayer, we have examined...
  - a. The purpose of prayer
  - b. The power of prayer
  - c. The privilege of prayer
  - d. The principles of prayer
  - e. The persistence of prayer
  - f. The practice of prayer
2. Why don't people pray more often...?
  - a. Perhaps they don't believe their prayers are being answered
  - b. Not knowing how God answers, they may have lost faith in prayer

[Lest we begin to think that God does not hear us when we pray, we should remember that there are **at least four ways** that God answers prayer, beginning with...]

### I. REQUEST GRANTED

#### **A. GOD MAY ANSWER "YES"...**

1. God often grants the petitions we ask of Him - **Psa 118:5; 138:3**
2. Especially when we put Him first in our lives - **Mt 6:33; cf. Pro 3:5-10**

#### **B. FOR GOD TO ANSWER "YES"...**

1. We must ask according to His will - **1 Jn 5:14**
2. We must be doing His will in our lives - **1 Jn 3:22**

[Naturally we rejoice when God grants our request. But sometimes we may receive the answer...]

### II. REQUEST GRANTED, BUT NOT YET

#### **A. GOD MAY ANSWER "YES, BUT WAIT..."**

1. God may grant our request, but in time and according to His purpose - cf. **Ecc 3:1,11**
2. So we may think God is saying "No", when He is really saying "Yes, but wait" - **Lk 18:7**

#### **B. WHEN THE ANSWER SEEMS TO BE "WAIT"...**

1. We need to have patience - **He 6:10-12**
2. We need to keep asking, seeking, knocking - **Lk 11:8-10**
3. We need to remember God's promise - **Ro 8:24**

[When God seems to be saying "**yes, but wait**", it is a time for patience and trust in His providence. We need similar trust should it become apparent that God's answer is...]

### III. REQUEST GRANTED, BUT NOT AS EXPECTED

**A. GOD MAY ANSWER “YES, BUT NOT AS YOU THINK...”**

1. Sometimes God answers in a way differently than we may anticipate
2. Remember, His thoughts and methods are much different than ours - **Isa 55:8,9**
3. For example, asking God for strength and perseverance...
  - a. He may give us trials to bear - e.g., **Ph 1:29-30**
  - b. Which in turn develops the virtues we prayed for! - cf. **Ro 5:3-4**

**B. WE MUST NOT LIMIT GOD’S OPTIONS...**

1. We should be careful and not dictate to God **how** to answer our prayers
  - a. There are forces at work beyond what we can imagine - cf. **Ep 3:20**
  - b. Plus, we do not always know what to pray for as we ought - cf. **Ro 8:26**
2. Limit the **how** and we might limit the **result**; e.g., when praying for the sick...
  - a. Do we pray simply that God bless the use of natural means (doctors, medicine, etc.)?
  - b. If so, might we limit God as to how He might restore them? (in ways beyond what we are able to imagine)?
  - c. Is it not better to simply ask God to restore the sick, and leave the methods to Him?

[As we pray, our trust in God should **allow Him latitude to answer** however He deems best. We especially need trust in God should it become apparent that the answer to prayer is...]

**IV. REQUEST DENIED**

**A. GOD MAY ANSWER “NO”...**

1. There may be times when God denies our requests - cf. **Ja 4:3**
2. We must trust that God, who knows what is best, would do so only if granting our request might not be for our good - cf. **He 12:5-11**

**B. WHEN GOD SEEMS TO SAY “NO”...**

1. We may not fully understand, but we can still fully trust Him! - cf. **Hab 3:17-19**
2. Especially in light of the promise in **1 Co 10:13**
3. God will provide the grace and mercy to do without - e.g., **2 Co 12:7-9**

**CONCLUSION**

1. In at least four ways, then, God answers our prayers...
  - a. Request granted
  - b. Request granted, but not yet
  - c. Request granted, but not as expected
  - d. Request denied
2. However God may choose to answer our prayers...
  - a. We can have confidence that it will be for our good
  - b. We should never grow weary in praying to God

***“The Lord has heard my supplication; The Lord will receive my prayer.” - Psa 6:9***