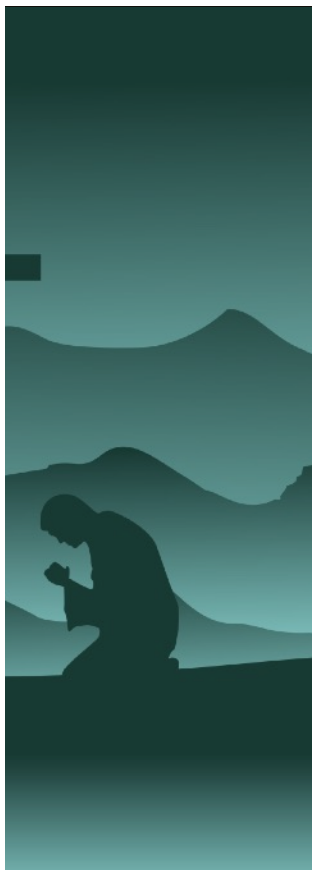


PRAYER

#3

A SPIRITUAL PRACTICES DEVOTIONAL

B/P



Prayer

A classic definition of Christian prayer is “an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgement of his mercies” (Westminster Shorter Catechism).

In the book of Genesis, Adam walked with God and had intimate relationship with His creator. Sin broke this relationship but the desire to communicate with God still remained. Prayer then is not about informing God of your situation or giving a list of needs to be met but rather it represents a sincere desire to have that personal, intimate relationship with God restored.

When we pray, we don't have to use complicated or memorized phrases. Talk to God in the same way as you would talk to any other person. Tell God about your problems, your hurts, your worries, and your joys. It doesn't matter when or where you pray. You can do it while you're driving, at work, or before you go to bed. He is always listening.

This is how Jesus taught His followers to pray:

““And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then like this:

“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 also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

(Matthew 6:5–13)

The qualities of our prayers...

So how should we pray and what posture should our heart be in when we seek the Lord in prayer? Here are a few postures to consider when you approach God in prayer:

Purity of Heart | “If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; but God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer.” (Psalm 66:18–19)

Believing | “If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.” (Matthew 21:22)

In Christ’s Name | “And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.” (John 14:13)

In Faith | “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” (Hebrews 11:6), “Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.” (Mark 11:24)

Persistent and Unceasing | “pray continually;” (1 Thessalonians 5:17), “And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off?” (Luke 18:7)

Simplicity | ““And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.” (Matthew 6:5–6)

Day 11 : The Power and Purpose of Prayer

READ: **Philippians 4:6-7** "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

THINK: Worrying at times can be a subtle form of distrust in God that he won't provide for you or care about what you are going through. Paul instead encourages followers of Jesus to take all the energy that is used in worrying and put it into prayer. Money, status, security can never guard your heart quite like the peace of God can. So, in every situation seek not to be anxious but rather trust God with the cares of your life and receive the peace that God has to offer.

DO: Take a few moments to reflect on areas of your life that cause anxiety or worry. Write down specific concerns and burdens in this journal. Then, spend time in prayer, presenting each one to God, along with a heart of gratitude. As you pray, consider using the ACTS model of prayer. This disciplines our prayer life to be more than just asking for our needs to be met.

USE THE ACTS MODEL OF PRAYER

There are many ways to pray, but here is one simple way to engage God in prayer and at the same time keep it balanced. It's called **ACTS**:

ADORATION: Tell God why He is so great and amazing. Think about the attributes of God: holy, great, mighty, creative, wonderful, merciful, faithful, never-changing, etc.

"At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation." (Daniel 4:34)

CONFESS: Tell God about the things you have done, thought or desired that do not please Him. He wants to know that you know that those things are not what He wants for you.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

THANKSGIVING: Thank God for what He's done, and doing in your life right now as well as in the lives of those around you.

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”
(Philippians 4:6)

SUPPLICATION: This is your time to bring your requests before God.

“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior,” (1 Timothy 2:1–3)

“To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.”

- Martin Luther

Day 12: Drawing Near to God in Prayer

READ: **James 4:8** “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”

THINK: Prayer is about drawing closer to God and to sense his presence. Part of that drawing closer will inevitably reveal areas of our life that need to be changed. There may be unconfessed sin, unresolved issues, temptations that we allow to be entertained, and all of those must be cleansed. When we pray, we are asking God to change more than just our circumstances, we are asking God to change us. We cannot make those changes on our own, we need the help of the Holy Spirit to change us from the inside out.

DO: Find a quiet and comfortable place where you can spend uninterrupted time with God. Begin by simply being still in His presence, allowing your mind to settle and your heart to be open. As you draw near to God, take time to listen. Reflect on this passage of Scripture:

**“Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!”
(Psalm 139:23–24, ESV)**

“Prayer should not be regarded as a duty which must be performed, but rather as a privilege to be enjoyed, a rare delight that is always revealing some new beauty.”

- E.M. Bounds

Day 14: Interceding for Others

READ: **1 Timothy 2:1** "I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made for all people."

THINK: Despite being omnipotent and omniscient, God has made the deliberate choice to involve us in the transformation of the world through our prayers. The exact mechanics of this process remain a mystery to us due to our limited comprehension, yet it is an undeniable truth. Paul encourages Timothy to pray for all people and even their leaders that they might live a peaceful and godly life. Today, consider the people in your life that could prosper from you interceding on their behalf.

DO: Make a list of individuals, groups, or situations that are in need of prayer. Set aside dedicated time to intercede for them, lifting them up before God's throne of grace. As you pray for others, ask the Holy Spirit to guide your prayers and empower you to stand in the gap on their behalf. Consider reaching out to some of the individuals to let them know you have been praying for them.

Family

Friends

Co-workers

Neighbours

"God never gives us discernment in order that we may criticize, but that we may intercede."

Day 15: Persevering in Prayer

READ: Luke 18:1 "Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up."

THINK: Persevering in prayer and refusing to lose hope does not involve monotonous repetition or excessively lengthy prayer sessions. Consistently praying entails continually presenting one's petitions to God while living each day for Him, firmly believing that He will respond. *Living a life of faith requires not giving up.* Although God may postpone His answers, His delays always stem from valid reasons. Christians should not be disheartened by these delays.

DO: Read Luke 18:1-8 and reflect on how persistent you have been in your prayer life. Are there any prayers that you have been tempted to give up on or have grown weary in waiting for answers? **Write down those prayers below and the reasons why you feel discouraged to continue to pray for them.** Then, spend time in prayer, surrendering those prayers to God once again. Ask Him to renew your faith, strengthen your perseverance, and grant you the patience to trust in His perfect timing.

The Prayer: _____

Why discouraged to persevere: _____

The Prayer: _____

Why discouraged to persevere: _____

"Prayer is not monologue, but dialogue; God's voice is its most essential part. Listening to God's voice is the secret of the assurance that He will listen to mine."

WHY MY PRAYERS MAY NOT BE ANSWERED?

Prayerlessness | “You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.” (James 4:2, ESV)

Unconfessed Sin | “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.” (James 5:16, ESV)

Relational Conflict | “So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” (Matthew 5:23–24, ESV)

Disobedience | “If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.” (Proverbs 28:9, ESV)

Wrong Motives | “You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.” (James 4:3, ESV)

Lack of Faith | “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.” (James 1:5–6, ESV)

Pride | ““Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”” (Luke 18:10–14)

WELL KNOWN PRAYERS IN THE BIBLE

The Bible contains numerous prayers, many of which are well-known and widely recited by Christians. Here are some of the most famous prayers in the Bible:

1. **The Lord's Prayer** (Matthew 6:9-13): Also known as the "Our Father," this prayer was taught by Jesus to his disciples as a model prayer. It begins with "Our Father, who art in heaven" and covers various aspects of worship, seeking God's kingdom, and personal needs.
2. **The Prayer of Jabez** (1 Chronicles 4:10): Jabez prayed for God's blessing and expanded territory, asking that God's hand would be with him and that he would be kept from harm.
3. **The Prayer of Hannah** (1 Samuel 2:1-10): Hannah, a barren woman, prayed fervently to God for a son. After God granted her request and she gave birth to Samuel, she praised God with a powerful prayer.
4. **The High Priestly Prayer** (John 17): Jesus prayed this intimate and profound prayer on behalf of his disciples just before his crucifixion. It covers themes of unity, sanctification, and the glorification of God.
5. **The Prayer of Solomon at the Dedication of the Temple** (1 Kings 8:22-61): Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem expresses praise, repentance, and a plea for God's mercy and faithfulness.
6. **The Prayer of David** (Psalm 51): David composed this psalm after his sin with Bathsheba. It is a heartfelt plea for forgiveness, cleansing, and restoration.
7. **The Prayer of Paul for the Ephesians** (Ephesians 1:15-23; 3:14-21): Paul's prayers for the Ephesian church focus on their spiritual growth, understanding, and knowledge of God's love and power.

These are just a few examples of the famous prayers found in the Bible. The Bible contains many more prayers that are cherished and revered by believers around the world.

