

Prayer – Part 2

Life of Prayer

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for the saints,” (Eph. 6:18). One of the greatest hindrances to any relationship is a lack of communication. God, desiring that we would know Him intimately, gave us the means of prayer for knowing and communicating with Him. Phrases such as “say a prayer for me” or “did you say your prayers before you went to bed?” show the religious misconceptions people have about prayer. Prayer is not something you do to please God; it is a means of communication. You don’t get in so many hours of prayer to prove you love God. You communicate with Him through prayer to get to know Him better. The word prayer covers a wide range of communication ranging from a wish to an interview (as seen from Strong’s Concordance). This study is to help you see prayer as a way of communicating with God your Father through the Lord Jesus rather than religious duty to a God afar off.

I. The Definitions of Prayer – The word prayer is used to translate a large number of Greek and Hebrew words. There are thirteen words in the Old Testament Hebrew translated as pray or prayer, and nine words in the New Testament Greek translated this way.

A. Old Testament words

1. Na – a primitive participle of incitement and entreaty
2. Palal – a primitive root, to judge (officially or mentally); by extension, to intercede, pray, entreat, judge, make supplication.
3. Luw – a wish, I would, would God that.
4. Anna – from a contraction from the words love and pray, I beseech thee.
5. Chanan – to favor, bestow, to implore.
6. Tsela – the sense of bowing, pray.
7. Paga – by importunity, come (betwixt), cause to entreat, fall upon, make intercession, entreat.
8. Athar – to burn incense in worship.
9. Siyach – to ponder, to converse with oneself and hence aloud, utter, commune, complain, declare, meditate, muse, pray, speak, talk with.
10. Shael – to inquire, to request, demand, ask counsel on, beg, borrow, lay to charge, consult, desire.
11. Chalah – to be rubbed or worn, hence to be weak, sick, afflicted, be grieved, be sorry, woman in travail, be weak, be wounded.
12. Tephillah – a hymn, a prayer.
13. Lachash – a whisper, a private prayer.

B. New Testament words

1. Proseuchomai – to pray to God, supplication, worship.
2. Deomai – to beg as binding oneself, petition, beseech, make a request.

3. Parakaleo – to call near, invite, invoke, beseech, call for.
4. Erotao – to interrogate, to request, ask, beseech, desire, entreat, pray.
5. Euchomai – to wish, to pray to God.
6. Deesis – from the word “to beg,” a prayer, request, supplication.
7. Eucho – a wish expressed as a petition to God, a prayer, a vow.
8. Enteuxis – an interview, supplication, intercession, a prayer.
9. Prosecho – to hold the mind toward, pay attention to, be cautious about, adhere to, apply oneself to, beware, be given to.

IMPORTANT POINTS

List some definitions of prayer.

II. The Call to Prayer – Throughout history God has been calling men and women into fellowship with Him. Now, it is through the Lord Jesus that we can have the fullness of a relationship with our Father. Through the life of Jesus we can see more clearly the depth of that communication. “And in that day ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it to you,” (Jn. 16:23).

- A. God Desires Prayer. From the beginning, in the book of Genesis, it is established that God desires for man to communicate with Him.
 1. God would walk through the Garden of Eden to have close communion with man. Gen. 3:8-9.
 2. Both Enoch and Noah walked in close fellowship with the Lord. Gen. 5:22-24, 6:9.
 3. God appeared to Abraham and called for a relationship with him. Gen. 17:1-4.

- B. The Basis of Prayer. We now talk to God boldly through the name of Jesus because of the work of the cross.
 1. Because Jesus understands our weakness, we can come boldly into His presence. Heb. 4:15-16.
 2. It is in Jesus and through faith in Jesus that we come to the Father. Eph. 2:18.
 3. Specifically, it is because of the atonement of the cross for the remission of sins that warrants our boldness to come to God. Heb. 10:17-19.
 4. In the name of Jesus we may once again speak and talk with God.

Mic. 4:5.

III. Prayers of Jesus – Jesus Prayed. Jesus maintained an intimate communion with God.

- A. He is found praying before major events in His life.
 - 1. His baptism. Lu. 3:21.
 - 2. The selection of the 12 apostles. Lu. 6:12-13.
 - 3. On the mount of transfiguration. Lu. 9:28-29.
 - 4. The Last Supper. Matt. 26:27.
 - 5. In Gethsemane. Lu. 22:39-46.
 - 6. On the cross at His death. Lu. 23:46.
- B. Prayer was prominent in His exercise of miracles.
 - 1. Healing the multitudes. Mk. 1:32-35.
 - 2. Feeding the five thousand. Mk. 6:41.
 - 3. Feeding the four thousand. Mk. 8:6.
 - 4. Healing the deaf mute. Mk. 7:34.
 - 5. Raising Lazarus from the dead. Jn. 11:41-42.
- C. Prayer was also heard from Jesus as He related with His disciples.
 - 1. At their confession of His Messiahship. Lu. 9:18
 - 2. On hearing their reports of evangelism. Lu. 10:21-22.
 - 3. The loving concern for Peter. Lu. 22:32.
 - 4. The great high-priestly prayer before He goes to die. Jn. 17:6-19.
 - 5. At the home of the disciples in Emmaus. Lu. 24:30.
- D. Finally, Jesus prays for the multitudes for whom He came to save.
 - 1. Before coming into conflict with the religious leaders. Lu. 5:16-17.
 - 2. In the discussion with the Greeks who came to see Him. Jn. 12:27-28.
 - 3. After sending away the five thousand who had been fed. Mk. 6:45-46.
 - 4. Blessing the little children. Mk. 10:16.
 - 5. For those who nailed Him to the cross. Lu. 23:34.

IMPORTANT POINTS

Describe Jesus' prayer life.

IV. The Openness of Prayer – In prayer we get to know God and openly reveal our hearts to Him. Honesty is always an important part of a close relationship, so prayer should not involve some sort of superficial personality before God.

- A. Prayer for Knowing God. Moses is an example of one getting to know God through prayer. The Lord spoke face to face with Moses, denoting the intimacy through seeing each other's facial expressions. Ex. 33:11-23.
 - 1. Moses refers back to the things God has spoken to him. vs. 12.
 - 2. His request is to know God. vs. 13, 18.
 - 3. The Lord is quick to respond. vs. 14, 17.
 - 4. The result of Moses' praying was knowing more fully the name and glory of the Lord. vs. 19, 34:5-7.

- B. Prayer for Revealing our Hearts to God.
 - 1. The tax collector who openly revealed his heart went home justified before God. Lu. 18:9-14.
 - 2. This can be referred to as humbling ourselves before the Lord. II Chr. 33:11-13, 34:26-27.
 - 3. The result of humbling ourselves before God is exaltation. Matt. 23:12; Ja. 4:10; I Pet. 5:6.

IMPORTANT POINTS

What need is there for openness in prayer?

V. Types of Prayer – Throughout the day God leads us in several different types of prayer for different purposes and effects. If we stumble, He leads us toward repentance; if there is Satanic oppression, God leads us toward spiritual warfare. The results from the different types of prayer range from relieving anxiety to holding back God's wrath.

- A. Petition. This is simply making a request before God.
 - 1. A petition was used in reference to coming before an earthly king to make a request. Est. 5:1-8; I Ki. 2:19-20.
 - 2. In the same way, we are to come before the King of the universe to make our petitions today. Dan. 6:7, 13; I Sam 1:17; Ps. 20:5.
 - 3. The effect of these petitions is God moving on our behalf. I Sam 1:27; I Jn. 5:15.

IMPORTANT POINTS

Describe the role of petitioning in prayer.

- B. Communion. This King James word refers to talking things over with another.
1. When two came together to discuss something, it was said that they “communed” together. Gen. 23:7-8; I Sam. 9:25.
 2. We have the opportunity to have this communion with God. Ex. 25:22, 31: 18; Lu. 24:15.
 3. Another way of seeing this is through “rehearsing” the matter before the Lord, as Samuel did. I Sam. 8:21.
 4. The result is a deeper understanding of the will of the Lord when He answers. I Sam. 8:22.

IMPORTANT POINTS

What are the purposes and effects of communion?

- C. Thanksgiving. In Christ we are called to abound with thanksgiving. Col. 2:7.
1. Whenever we receive good things from the Lord, it is cause for giving him thanks. Col. 1:12.
 2. However, we are still commanded to give thanks regardless of the situation. I Thes. 5:18; Col. 3:15; Eph. 5:20.
 3. We are also to give thanks in everything we do. Col. 3:17.
- D. Repentance. There are times in prayer where we seek God’s forgiveness and a change of heart.
1. Repentance has a definite place in our prayer life. Hos. 14:1-2; Isa. 30:15; Jer. 31:9.
 2. God’s response to our penitence is forgiveness. Isa. 55:7; I Jn. 1:9.
 3. The result is greater purity in our lives. II Tim. 2:20-21.

IMPORTANT POINTS

While repenting in prayer, what are the results?

- E. Intercession. This is standing before God on behalf of another.
 - 1. God is looking for men who will intercede for others' unrighteousness. Isa. 59:16; Eze. 22:30.
 - 2. We have the opportunity today to intercede just as others have in the past. Deu. 9:25-26; I Sam. 7:5.
 - 3. The result can be that God's judgment will be held back. Ps. 106:23.

- F. Spiritual Warfare. This is confronting and breaking the influence of the powers of darkness.
 - 1. We have authority to overcome all of the enemy's attack and maneuvers. Lu. 10:19; I Jn. 4:4.
 - 2. We are not able to carry off those that are bound by the Devil unless we first bind his power. Matt. 12:29; Isa. 42:22.
 - 3. Spiritual warfare is carrying out our authority in prayer to bind the Devil's attempts to thwart God's purposes. Matt. 16:19, 18:18.

IMPORTANT POINTS

What is spiritual warfare?

VI. Forms of Prayer – Ideally, prayer begins early and alone with God when we wake up in the morning. However, it is not to end there. We can continue in prayer in many different postures, places, and methods.

- A. Postures.
 - 1. Bowing down. Ex. 34:8.

2. Kneeling. I Ki. 8:54; Ezra 9:5; Ac. 20:36.
3. On the face. Nu. 20:6; Josh. 5:14; Matt. 26:39.
4. Standing. I Ki. 8:22-23; Mk. 11:25.
5. Sitting. Ezra 9:3.

B. Places.

1. Quiet and alone. Ps. 4:4; Matt. 6:6.
2. With groups in public. Lu. 1:10.
3. Before a meal. I Sam. 9:13; Ac. 27:35.
4. With our families. Ac. 1:14; 21:5.
5. Everywhere. I Tim. 2:8.

C. Methods.

1. Eyes opened. Lu. 9:16.
2. Silent. I Sam. 1:12-15.
3. Brief. I Ki. 18:36-37; Matt. 6:7.
4. Loud. Neh. 9:4; Ac. 7:60.

IMPORTANT POINTS

Describe the different places and methods of prayer.

VII. Continual Prayer – Just as communication with a friend is constant, although it takes on different forms, we are to be in continual prayer unto and with God. “Pray without ceasing,” (I Thes. 5:17).

A. Continual Prayer Commanded.

1. The church is called to be both faithful and devoted to prayer.
Rom. 12:12; Col. 4:2.
2. It takes clear-mindedness and self-control to pray throughout the day.
I Pet. 4:7.
3. These various types of prayer are to be made for everyone. I Tim. 2:1.

B. Continual Prayer Exemplified.

1. Jesus demonstrated a constant prayer life. Heb. 5:7.
2. The early disciples themselves were devoted to prayer. Ac. 2:42.
3. Paul said he was bound to always give thanks to God.
II Thes. 1:3, 2:13.

4. He testified that he did in fact make continual prayer for the churches.
I Thes. 1:2, 2:13, 3:10; II Thes. 1:11.

VIII. Point of Decision – Based on God’s desire to communicate with us and the work of the cross, we can walk in continual contact with God through various forms of prayer. If we choose this lifestyle of continual praying, we will grow in our knowledge and obedience to Him. “But it is good for me to draw near to God...” (Ps. 73:28).

PERSONAL APPLICATION - THE LIFE OF PRAYER

1. How is Jesus’ prayer life an example for me?

2. Have I been open and honest before the Lord in prayer?

3. What specific types of prayer have I not pursued though I should?

4. At this point of decision, I desire to obtain a continual prayer life by...
