

Holy Habits: Prayer

“Devote yourselves to prayer; stay alert in it with thanksgiving.” Colossians 4:2

[A Passionate Prayer Life is built on...](#)

- The desire to know Your Heavenly Father
- A genuine realization we are fully dependent on God
 - The insatiable desire to do God's Will
 - The aim to be used greatly by God

Pray is not only us talking to God, but it is allowing God to talk to us. Prayer is probably the one discipline that everyone knows we should do (and do more of it) but are unsure how to do it or simply fail to pray because of busyness. Therefore, John the Baptist taught his disciples how to pray (Luke 11:1). The disciples of Jesus wanted Jesus to teach them how to pray. And that is how we have the “Lord’s Prayer” (Matthew 6:9-13).

The Lord’s Prayer gives us a model to pray. It is not meant to be the only words we use for prayer. The bible is full of other recorded prayers (1 Samuel 2:1-10; Daniel 9:1-19; John 17). Learning to pray is not just about the matter of our prayers, but the motivation behind them. Why do we pray? See, even the Holy Spirit intercedes for us as we may not know how to pray during suffering (Romans 8:26-27). It is less about our words and more about our heart.

Praying is not meant to be complicated nor a monotonous routine. Praying indicates that one believes there is a God and that He cares about people. Praying indicates that one believes they cannot do life on their own. Jesus (God Himself in human flesh) prayed often. Think about that one for a moment.

Even though Jesus and the Holy Spirit prays for us; and even though God already knows our needs, He still desires to interact with us. “While God may be everywhere, there is no certainty you are engaging Him. It is possible to have dinner with your spouse and, because you are distracted, never enter into his or her presence. We can do that with God.” Prayer is about a relationship, not a religious activity to soothe our conscience or appease God so that He grants our wishes. And although there is no “perfect” way to pray, there are some good principles to understand about prayer.

Use the following for further devotional study or with a small group.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU PRAY? WHEN YOU PRAY, YOU ARE:

1. GIVING Devotion to God.

“Hallelujah! Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; His faithful love endures forever. Who can declare the LORD’s mighty acts or proclaim all the praise due Him?” Psalm 106:1-2

2. GETTING Direction from God.

“Make Your ways known to me, LORD; teach me Your paths. Guide me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; I wait for You all day long.” Psalm 25:4-5

3. GROWING In Your Relationship with God.

“God, You are my God; I eagerly seek You. I thirst for You; my body faints for You in a land that is dry, desolate, and without water. So, I gaze on You in the sanctuary to see Your strength and Your glory. My lips will glorify You because Your faithful love is better than life.” Psalm 63:1-3

Jesus' Model for Prayer:

- Connecting with God Relationally - *"our FATHER in heaven"*
- Celebrating God - *"Your name be honored"*
- Choosing His Agenda First - *"Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven"*
- Communicating Your Daily Dependence on Him - *"Give us this day our daily bread"*
- Confessing Your Sins - *"and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us"*
- Calling for Spiritual Help - *"and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"*
- Confirming God's Ability and Purpose - *"for Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."*

Jesus tells His disciples to pray about other things, including:

- Pray God would send workers – Matthew 9:38
- Pray the days of Tribulation would not happen in winter – Mark 13:18
- Pray for those who mistreat you – Luke 6:28

The Apostles said to pray about all sorts of things.

- Pray for healing (both spiritually and physically) – James 5:13-16; 3 John 1:2
- Pray for ministry leaders and missionaries as they spread the Gospel – 2 Thess. 3:1
- Pray for other believers (everywhere & persistently) – Ephesians 6:18
- Pray for wisdom to do the right thing – James 1:5; 2 Corin. 13:7
- Pray for those in government and authority – 1 Timothy 2:1-2

Prayer can be private or public.

- Jesus withdraw to a secret place to pray – Matthew 14:23
- Jesus looked up in heaven and prayed aloud for the crowd to hear – John 11:41-42
- Prayer should not be for production, but to point people to God who hears our prayers.

Prayer can be in various postures.

- With lifted hands – 1 Timothy 2:8 "men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands..."
- Standing up – Mark 11:25 "whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone..."
- Sitting down – 1 Chronicles 17:16 "King David went in and sat before the Lord and said..."
- Kneeling – Acts 21:5 "after kneeling down on the beach to pray..."; Luke 22:41 "He withdrew from them...knelt down and began to pray"

Prayer should not be filled with "vain repetitions" but persistent prayers are encouraged.

- "Vain repetitions" is different than persistent prayer requests.
- "Vain repetitions" assume God is hard of hearing. - Matt. 6:7-8
- Persistent praying assumes God is listening and leans on His promises and abilities. - Luke 11:5-8

Prayer could be hindered if:

- We harbor unforgiveness – Mark 11:25-26
- We live with known, unrepentant sin – Psalm 66:18
- We dishonor or not live compassionately with our spouse – 1 Peter 3:1-7
- We pray for selfish reasons – James 4:3
- We do not pray – James 4:2; Matthew 7:7

1. *How often and how do you pray?*
2. *How are you going to pray differently now?*