

Essential Keys To Prayer

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What is Prayer?

A wise man once said that prayer is “the heart and spirit of a man reaching out to God”. It could not be stated any better. Prayer is simply how we communicate with God. We can talk to God in our heart, thoughts, with words, or even just being silent before Him. Even when we are silent, we are communicating how we feel; we are pouring out our feelings to Him.

As humans, we use language to talk and communicate with each other. Some people we are closer to than others. We have some friends we talk to occasionally (perhaps every few months). We have other friends we talk to on a more frequent basis such as every week or even every day. In addition, we have family members. If you are married, you have a lifetime friend that you talk to every day.

When you were saved by God, you became a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). Prayer is simply how we talk to God. We are now one of His children, and we have an open line of communication between us and Him.

The original use of language was God and man talking to one another. We learn about this in the very first book of the Bible, the book of Genesis. Genesis records the beginning of the world and mankind.

“7 Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. 8 Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. 9 The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil... 15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowl-

edge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.’ 18 The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’” (Genesis 2:7-18)

The first use of human language was God communicating to man. God gave us instructions so that we could have a prosperous and healthy life. God even spoke when he thought it was time to give man a spouse. One of the simple rules they had to live by was not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The serpent, known as satan, came into the garden and deceived them into eating it. He also used language!

4 “ ‘You will not certainly die,’ the serpent said to the woman. 5 ‘For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’ 6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. 8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called to the man, ‘Where are you?’ 10 He answered, ‘I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.’ 11 And he said, ‘Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?’” (Genesis 3:4-11)

One day, God came down into the garden to fellowship with Adam and Eve, but they hid. He told them not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but they ate from it anyways. This was a sin. They hid from God’s presence because of their sin. He still came down to fellowship with them. He still spoke to them. He didn’t thunder down with judgment on them. He came down to speak to them one-on-one about what happened.

Right after this, Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden. They were not banished from His presence or His voice. Prayer is the opportunity for your Heavenly Father to hear your voice, your struggles, and your inner most thoughts.

Why Pray?

Some people might ask – Why should we pray at all? If God knows everything, why does it matter? Prayer is the opportunity for your Heavenly Father to hear your voice, your struggles, and your inner most thoughts. Prayer is also to help us in our time of need. We are limited beings. We can't control everything in our lives. In fact, we control very little. Every day, other people make decisions we can't control. Your employer may cut back jobs and you are let go. Someone may insult you. A friend or loved one may die. A natural disaster could occur. These are all situations humans cannot control.

These are all reasons why we need prayer. As humans, we are limited in what we can do. God controls everything. Psalm 24:1 tells us, “The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.” Everything belongs to God. Our Savior, Jesus, told us, “But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). We cannot control these situations, but God can. While we cannot control situations, we can control our response (prayer). This is how we ask God, who can do anything, to intervene on our behalf.

Sometimes you are going through a situation that you don't understand. You need wisdom. You may have experienced the death of a loved one; perhaps you have been mistreated. Sometimes you are financially struggling and need help. You may have car trouble or need a job. You need wisdom, but you also need provision. Sometimes you are hurting, and you need inner peace and healing. Sometimes you are lonely and need comfort.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:7-11, 7 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. 9 “Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you, then, though you are

evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!”

We can receive help from God, but we have to ask. This requires humility on our part because we have to admit that we need help. We have to admit that we are incomplete and lacking without God’s help. We have to realize that we can’t do it on our own. This is hard for humans to do, but why not do it? You need the help; God can help you. Here are some more verses to guide you:

“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” (James 4:10)

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.” (I Peter 5:6)

“But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.” (James 4:6)

If we will humble ourselves and ask, then God will grant us favor. This type of humility allows the Kingdom of God to grow inside of us. It allows our hearts and minds to become soft to God’s request. The prophet Isaiah told us, “Yet you, Lord, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.” (Isaiah 64:8) To God, we are all like clay. Humility shown by prayer allows God’s perfect will to mold us. The humility of asking keeps us from trusting in our human abilities. Remember, as humans we mess a lot of things up! Prayer builds our faith in Him to ask.

If we humble ourselves, then God will lift us up; He will also lift up our request and grant it.

This leads us into the next question: How Do We Pray?

How Do We Pray?

Too many times when we hear the word “prayer”, we think too much about how it is supposed to look. Typically, we think that our eyes should be closed, hands clasped together, on our knees, or sitting in a chair. Truly, prayer can be done anywhere at any time. We can petition God standing up, sitting down, on our knees, on our face, and even with our eyes open.

There are times we need God to act when we are at work, no matter what position we might be in. There are times we need God to act when we are driving. At times, a friend, family member, or someone else may need you to pray right then. Of course, we want to set aside SPECIFIC time to pray to God as well. I will discuss this at the end of this chapter.

When we pray, we just talk. Make the request known to God. You can speak to God through thoughts, words, or even just groaning. Just let it out. In one way, it is like talking to your best friend or earthly father. He is always there.

Is there a right or wrong way to pray?

God does not define everything for us in the Bible. While prayer is mentioned, there is not a step-by-step guide on every type of prayer to pray. Sometimes God mentions a subject in the Bible and leaves it up to us to step out on faith and practice it.

However, Jesus gave us a great outline to guide us in praying in the gospels. A good guide on how to pray is found in Matthew 6:5-12. “5 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 others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full...7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. **9 This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,10 your**

kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

We learn a basic outline of prayer in these verses. First, we learn to never pray as a show to other people. Always pray sincerely to God because you believe it is necessary. Showing off makes God look bad (and you too). When we pray, we do not need to imitate the pagans. Some pagan religions believe that by saying a certain word or phrase so many times their wishes will be automatically granted. This is sorcery. As you read this book, you will find there is much more to prayer than just reciting words. In verses 9-12, Jesus gives us the model prayer, which is often called “The Lord’s Prayer”. It is a tremendous guideline for us.

First, we learn to address God as our the Father. He is the head of all things. As Paul said in Ephesians 4:4-6, “4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” We pray to the Father in the name of His son, Jesus. Why? Jesus is the firstborn Son of God. He is the Father’s representative to the earth. Jesus is the Holy Spirit within us (2 Cor. 3:15-18). He sits at the right hand of God and appeals to the Father on our behalf.

Jesus said, “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.” (John 15:16) “In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf.” (John 16:26) Earlier, He said, “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.” (John 14:18)

The Apostle John said, “My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.” (I John 2:1)

The writer of Hebrews said, “Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.” (Hebrews 7:25)

We make our appeal to the Father through the Son because the Son died to SAVE us. Jesus owns us because He paid for us through His death. By receiving Jesus, we become part of the God Family. We address Him to gain access to the Father. “For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.” (Ephesians 2:18)

The second step in prayer is to ask for God’s will to be done on earth. This means we pray to learn what God wants us to do. It is easy to go to God in prayer and have a list of things we want, such as saying, “Lord, I need this iPhone 7. I also need a new car. I also need a house.” Are we being selfish? The Apostle James has more to say on this:

“2 You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.” (James 4:2-3)

If we pray with selfishness, then we will not receive from God. Jesus willingly laid down His life for you. He gave up everything. He is asking us to lay down our selfish desires. Before you ask God for something, consider how we are caring for what we have. God is a great giver and a provider, but He is also infinitely responsible.

Next, we ask for daily bread. This means praying for God’s provision (such as food, shelter, and basic needs). This leads us to a greater understanding. Food in the Bible can be compared to revelation knowledge or understanding from God (1 Corinthians 3:2). We need daily understanding from God. There are things in the Bible that we do not understand. There are situations we face

daily that we do not understand. We want to understand the will of God for our lives. Because Jesus has died for us, we want to live for Him. We want to please Him. Just as our natural body needs food, our spiritual new man needs divine guidance. We need to be fed spiritually. Ask God for divine understanding.

In the next part of the Lord's Prayer, Jesus transitions to forgiveness. Jesus tells us in Mark 11:25-26 that we cannot be forgiven if we do not forgive others. When you pray, you must always forgive others. How do we do this? Start by letting go of the offense you have towards them in your heart. If you have hatred, you release it. Ask God to wipe the hurt from the offense out of your mind and heart. Ask God to forgive them; ask God to fill your heart with love for them. Ask God to bless them.

Lastly, Jesus tells us to pray for protection from the enemy. We have an enemy, Satan, who wishes to destroy us. God can give us strength to help us withstand his attacks. We can't do it on our own; we need God's help. To learn more about this subject, download the free booklet "Spiritual Warfare." It can be downloaded from our website in the resources section.

Another powerful tool is fixed prayers. They are powerful, especially when we cannot fathom the words to pray. The Psalms are an example of this. It's the Word of God. Take a Psalm, such as Psalm 91, and put your name in that Psalm to make it personal. Pray it over yourself. Pray it over others. When a church prays a fixed prayer together, it is powerful because it is the only time when everyone is praying the same way!

Our Approach to Prayer

Another important aspect to prayer is how we approach God. To quote a verse from the last chapter, “Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.” (I Peter 5:6)

Humility is the first key in prayer. If we cannot humble ourselves before God's authority and ability to act when we can't, then we cannot receive anything from him. Genuine prayer is an admission that our human effort will fall short.

The second key is reverence. While God is our Father and best friend, He is also a Great King. While you can boldly approach God whenever you need Him (Hebrews 4:16), make sure to show Him proper respect. If we show honor and respect to earthly leaders, such as the President or local official, how much more the greatest Ruler of all?

Another key to approaching God in prayer is faith. What is faith? Faith is a word that simply means confidence. If you know you have \$100 in the bank, then you can write a check for \$20. You have confidence. If we really believe that God can change our situation, then we must ask with confidence that He can do so. He must hold to that confidence.

“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” (Hebrews 11:1)

“We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we **hold** our original conviction firmly to the very end.” (Hebrews 3:14)

Let's use an example. Sometimes you may pray and request God to act, but you do not see the results in the time frame you expected. This does not mean God has not answered your prayer. You must remain confident in your heart and mind that God will do it. We must hold on to our confidence. The enemy and other people will try to beat you out of it. You just have to keep fighting to hold it. While we may not see the prayer answered in the

timeframe we want, we must trust that God will provide.

The Apostle James wrote, “5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. 6 But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. 8 Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.” (James 1:5-8)

If you ask God for something in prayer and doubt in your heart and mind that it will happen, then you become double-minded. Saying things like “God can’t do that” is limiting Him and showing a lack of confidence in His power. You are saying that you didn’t believe in Him the first time you prayed.

How do you keep the faith? First of all, you can pray in the Holy Spirit. This means speaking in tongues. The next chapter is called “Praying in the Spirit.” We will discuss this more in that chapter. “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.” (Ephesians 6:18)

Continue to pray out loud with confidence. Ask God for strength. The Apostle Paul wrote, “13 It is written: ‘I believed; therefore I have spoken.’ Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak.” (2 Cor. 4:13)

“16 Rejoice always, 17 pray continually, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18) In this verse, Paul encourages us to pray continually. Keep our mind focused on prayer. Another strategy is to thank God for answering the prayer BEFORE it comes to pass!

You can also speak Bible verses on that subject. As Paul said in Romans 10:17, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” As an example, if you have been praying for a

financial breakthrough, read aloud Bible verses about finances. If you have been praying for healing, read aloud verses about healing. These items will build up your faith.

Another vital key to help our approach in prayer is to pray according to the will of God. As mentioned in the last chapter, we don't want to be selfish towards God. In the western world, there is an entitlement mentality towards God. He doesn't owe us anything. We owe Him everything. God will help you with your basic needs. Before we pray upwardly, we must look inwardly. Always look at your intention for asking. Do you just want something because everyone else is getting it? Do you want to exalt yourself over someone else?

While you can pray at any time, it is a great idea to set apart time every day to communicate to God through prayer. This special contact with Him will sustain you. Ten to fifteen minutes or so a day is a good starting place. If you get behind during the week, you can always use Sabbath to catch up. We are all busy; make time to pray. He eagerly desires for us to commune with Him. In my private time, I prefer to be on my knees and still before Him. Find a way to pray in your private time so that you can focus and reverence Him. The time, place, and position are up to you.

When you pick a certain location to pray every day, you want to create the right environment so you can focus. One way to do this is play worship music while you pray. Another way is to purchase a prayer shawl (also known as a tallit). Using this garment in prayer time will help you focus. You can also pray in the spirit, which is also known as praying in tongues. When you first start to pray, you may experience a flood of thoughts going through your mind. These tips create a spiritual atmosphere that helps you concentrate. Keep pressing through. The Lord will help you.

Praying in the Spirit

There are times when we do not know what to pray in our mind because we have experienced something traumatic. We may not have the words to pray. We may have trouble concentrating because our life is busy. One way to fight through this is to pray in tongues, also known as praying in the Spirit.

Paul wrote to us and said, “14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. 15 So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding.” (I Cor. 14:14-15)

Paul said “I will pray with my spirit” and “I will pray with my understanding”. There is a time and place for both. We don’t have to get rid of one for the other. Our understanding will be unfruitful, meaning that we won’t know in our natural mind what we are praying. We are letting the Lord pray through us in the Spirit. Praying in tongues is praying according to the will of God.

“26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God. 28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:26-28)

Praying in tongues will impart into your spirit the sense that God is working everything out when you don’t naturally understand. It also builds your faith.

“But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit” (Jude 1:20)

Previously, we discussed how hearing the Bible increased our

faith. Because praying in tongues is the very Words of God and the Will of God flowing from our vessel, it builds up the new man inside of us. It makes us spiritually stronger. It helps us in our time of weakness.

To learn more about this subject, read the free booklet “Be Filled With The Spirit”.

Hearing the Voice of God

We have covered much ground relating to prayer and how we communicate to God. It would be easy to do all the talking when we pray, but a vital component of prayer is that we learn to LISTEN to God! In fact, some of my best prayers are simply times when I am silent in the presence of God. I just want to know His will for my life. “Your will be done, your Kingdom come, on earth as it is in Heaven”.

If you pray and ask God for wisdom, strength, or anything – sit silently before Him so that you can hear Him speak back to you.

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

“Call to me and **I will answer you** and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.” (Jer. 33:3)

There is an expectation that we will HEAR from God when we ask! Jesus said that His Sheep KNOW His voice. In Jeremiah 33:3, the Lord said, “Call and I WILL answer you” – future tense. He will speak to us. We just have to recognize it. As we discussed earlier, “Ask and you shall receive”.

Paul warned us that there are many voices in the world. “There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.” (I Corinthians 14:10)

We have to distinguish the voice of God from other voices. What other voices exist? First, there are your inner thoughts and feelings. Other people can speak to you. Satan can speak to you. Satan spoke to Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11). Satan spoke through Peter (Matthew 16:22-23). Finally, God speaks to us. God can use other people, just as He used prophets to speak in the times of old.

God can speak in many ways. Sometimes He speaks through a

dream or a vision. A dream mainly happens at night. A vision occurs during the day. Most of the time when God speaks to me, it comes as a thought inside of me (mind, heart, or spirit). Jesus lives within us, so His speech will dwell within us. Sometimes He speaks as a still small voice. It can be very subtle. At times, His voice is strong and cannot be denied. God can move on us in different intensities. Ask God to help you be sensitive to His leading.

Since satan can speak to us in our thoughts, we can have human thoughts, or other people can influence our thoughts, we must learn to test what we receive. How do we do this?

Always test a voice against the Bible. If you think a voice is speaking to you and telling you to sin or the voice contradicts the Word of God, then you can discount it. This is where reading the Bible every day will become vital. Use research tools such as biblegateway.com to search the Bible for key words you received in your heart/mind.

Another way to go about this is to get still before the Lord in your quiet time and simply ask the Lord "Please Lord, I earnestly ask that you speak to your servant and clarify this word." Prepare to receive communication from Him. You can also spend time praying in tongues before you sit still before the Lord. It will remove human thoughts and clear your spirit to receive from Him.

We might not always recognize the voice of the Lord. If you read I Samuel 3:1-10, God spoke to Samuel three times and he did not recognize the Word of the Lord. The high priest, who was the highest spiritual authority in the land, did not recognize it until the third time.

Make sure to write down the words you receive from God. As God told Jeremiah, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you." (Jeremiah 30:2) Compare words you receive in your spirit to what you have already received.

You can also talk to others who are known to hear from the Lord. This is extremely important, as certain people are spiritual mentors for your life. Samuel went to the high priest to ask for clarification of what he heard. As the Bible tells us, “Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the others judge.” (1 Cor. 14:29) What we perceive to be the voice of God needs to be judged by others.

Jesus said, “Consider carefully what you hear,” he continued. “With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more.” (Mark 4:24)

We will be judged by God based upon what we say when we pray, but we will also be judged on how we hear (and if we heard). Be patient; don’t rush. Learning the voice of the Lord is a process, and it will take time.

Who Should We Pray For?

Well, in short, we should pray for everyone! But, I have listed some specific examples/Bible verses below.

Pray For Your Political Leaders and Those in Authority

It's easy to criticize and even curse your leaders. The Bible tells us to pray for our leaders.

“2 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way. 3 This is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,” (1Timothy 2:1-3)

We want to pray for our leaders to make the right decisions. Whether it's the President, a Congressman, a local ruler, or a judge on any level, we want to pray for wisdom. Their decisions will have a direct influence on us. Pray for God to save them in truth and fill them with His Spirit. When Paul wrote this, Rome had an evil ruler. It is important that we pray for leaders no matter what we might think about them. Pray for your boss and others at work. If those above you are blessed, you will be blessed as well.

Praying for leaders includes church leaders. They watch over you and have to give an account to God. We should have a heart to see them make the right decision at all times. “Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you.” (Hebrews 13:17)

Pray For Those Who Curse You And Mistreat You.

“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you, and persecute you;” (Matthew 5:44)

It would be easy to hate these people. Jesus prayed for all of us while we were yet sinners (John Chapter 17)

Pray For Others –

There are many ways that we pray for others.

Pray For Others To Receive The Truth.

“Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.” (Rom. 10:1)

“But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O LORD, in an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation.” (Psalms 69:13)

Pray For Their Faith Not to Fail

“...but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail; and when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren.” (Luke 22:32)

Pray For The Sick (physically, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally)

“13 Is any one among you suffering? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing praise. 14 Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; 15 and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.” (James 5:13-15)

Pray For The Word of God to Spread Without Hindrance

“As for other matters, brothers and sisters, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you.” (2Thess. 3:1)

Pray For Those Who Are Persecuted

“So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.” (Acts 12:5)

Continually Pray For Others

“I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers.” (Philemon 1:4)

Pray For Your Congregation

Pray for unity in your congregation and that your church would be of one mind in Christ. Pray against division and dissension.

Praying For Self

You need guidance, strength and wisdom. Even Jesus would pray to the Father for strength. Remember, we have not because we ask not.

Strength

“40 On reaching the place, he said to them, “Pray that you will not fall into temptation.” 41 He withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, 42 “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” 43 An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.” (Luke 22:40-43)

Thanksgiving

“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.” (Col. 4:2)

Pray For Help With Anxiety

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

Praying for others and even those we hate will keep you from feeling selfish because you are pouring out your heart and spirit for the welfare of someone else without expecting a return.

These are just some of the many examples of who we pray for and the types of prayers we can pray. The Bible is full of more examples.

Pray with Purpose

When we pray, we should pray from within; we should pray like we mean it. Do you want others to pray sincere prayers with fervency and intensity? Of course! You should pray the same!

“16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. 17 Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.” (James 5:16-18)

The prophet Elijah is a man who is a model of prayer in the Bible. The Bible tells us that our prayers should be effective and fervent. This literally means effective and powerful. Effectiveness in prayer means taking the right approach in prayer. Powerful means drawing upon the power of the Holy Spirit within us and pouring it out in prayer. When we do this, we may pray softly, we may pray loudly, we may weep, laugh, or show any number of emotions. Praying powerfully means using your entire vessel to direct that prayer to the intended purpose.

“38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” (Luke 6:38)

When we pour out our prayers with power and efficiency, God will answer with an even greater amount of power than what we put it in! What we pour out will be poured back out into you in your time of need!

Some people ask questions such as – “How many times should you pray for something?”; “How long should I pray?”; and “When should I expect an answer?”

“When Should I Expect an Answer?”

Some prayers require instant action. If a tornado is coming, we need God to act right then. Other prayers, such as the salvation of a lost loved one or the answer to a question, may take time. The mighty prophet Jeremiah received a revelation from God ten days after he asked (Jeremiah 42:1-7). Hannah prayed for a child, but it took years before she had one (I Samuel 1:1-14).

Sometimes, God withholds an answer until we are broken before Him. Brokenness means we are empty of ourselves. We have a total surrender before God. We realize that the absolute only way something can be done is by God’s divine intervention. Why does God do this? So that when He answers, we will dedicate the answer to Him and give Him all the glory. Hannah devoted the baby she had to God. God gave her many more after this (I Samuel 2:1-5).

There may be other reasons the answer doesn’t come in the time-frame we think it should. Sometimes there is action required on another person’s part. We can pray a person up to the point of decision, but they must make the decision. There can be countless reasons as to the timing of an answered prayer. This is where our faith comes into play.

“How many times should you pray for something?” and “How long should I pray?”

Pray until that prayer is answered or God tells you to stop.

Elijah prayed about 60 words and fire fell from Heaven (I Kings 18:36-38). He prayed seven times for rain to come (I Kings 18:41-46). Jesus prayed twice for the man who was sick (Mark 8:22-26) and three times for strength in the Garden (Mark 14:32-42).

God actually told Jeremiah to stop praying for the people of Judah because they refused to make the right decision. “So do not pray for this people nor offer any plea or petition for them; do not plead with me, for I will not listen to you.” (Jer. 7:16)

A better way to clarify answers to these questions is to look at the example Jesus gave us of prayer warrior. His example was a widow woman.

Luke 18:2-8

2 He said: “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. 3 And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’ 4 ‘For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care what people think, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually come and attack me!’” 6 And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7 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? 8 I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

We have to press in and keep praying. God is looking for a people who will believe in His all-sufficient provision. He is looking for people who will simply believe that He is who He says He is. He is looking for a people humble enough to rely on him.

Prayer is an enemy of our sinful, human nature, which is hostile to God’s Spirit. The human nature or flesh of man wants to put life on auto-pilot. Prayer is something we must choose to do. We must set aside to reach out to the God of Israel. This requires that we put aside other things, whether sports, recreation, or any another activity that is non-essential. Prayer is essential, and we cannot represent God without it.

As you practice these essential keys, you will learn to flow in prayer. The amount of time you pray will be easier to discern. You will learn to pray with fervency and effectiveness.

To learn more about praying for healing, download our booklet “Divine Healing.”

Sample Prayers

In this chapter, we give some sample prayers for you to pray in specific situations. This will help you get started if you do not know what to pray.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Great God in Heaven above, I thank you for all that you have given to me. I thank you for sending your Son to die for me that I might be one of your very children. I thank you for salvation and opening my eyes to your goodness. I thank you for your Holy Spirit within me that you gave to me for strength. Thank you for providing for me in every way during my life. Thank you for the family, friends, and the church you have blessed me with. I thank you for everything you have graciously given to me. Help me to be appreciative and I ask for wisdom to handle it in a way that pleases you. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Prayer for Wisdom (you or others)

God I pray for wisdom for _____ (name). I ask that they would be full of wisdom from Heaven. I ask God that (he or she) would receive this wisdom and apply it. (He or She) needs guidance in a difficult situation. I pray that (he or she) would be able to see the benefits of your great wisdom. Help them to recognize that it has come from you, appreciate it, and give you Glory for it! In Jesus name, Amen.

Prayer For Salvation and Truth

God I intercede on behalf of _____ (name). (He or she) is lost and is living without you. (He or she) is living a way of life that is destructive to self and others. (He or she) is full of emptiness. God, I humbly ask that you would reveal yourself to (him or her). I ask that you would do miracles and wonders to move this person into your perfect will. I pray that they would feel the emptiness of living life without you. Help them to see that there is a way that is better than the road they are on. Save them God! Show them the Way! In Jesus name, Amen!

Prayer for Strength

God, I ask for strength. I am human and frail without you. I am a vapor that is here now but disappears. I have weaknesses that I cannot overcome by my own strength. I am nothing without you. God, I ask that you help me to lean on and trust in your strength. Let others see your transformative power in me. Help me God not to stand in the way of your power. Help me to yield completely to you. Show me the Way. In Jesus' name, Amen! (you can also insert someone else's name into this prayer who needs strength)

Prayer for Healing

God, we are in need of your healing power. I ask by the name of your Son Jesus that you remove all illness from _____ (name). Destroy all infection and disease in (his/her) body right now! Grow back any ligaments, tendons, muscles or tissues that are torn. Heal every cell in the body and infirmity. Heal the wounded spirit. Heal wounds from the past. Impart power and strength where there is weakness. We ask these things in Jesus' name, Amen!

**In the near future, look for a full-length book on
prayer published by Hungry Hearts!**

Meet the Author

Kelly McDonald Jr. is an ordained Evangelist at Hungry Hearts Ministries in Jackson, TN. For 21 years, Kelly attended Trinity Baptist Church in Bemis, TN, where he was saved in 1992. While at Trinity, a small independent Baptist church, Kelly learned boldness for the Kingdom of God and that being a Christian is an all or nothing experience. In June 2006, Kelly was called to his first ministry, going door to door in the Bemis community and inviting people to church. In September 2006, Kelly was called to begin a Christian men's group at his then college, Lambuth University. In February 2007, Kelly was called to preach. Less than a month later, he became introduced to Hungry Hearts Ministries.

Since becoming a member of Hungry Hearts, Kelly has taken on many roles to further the ministry's work, from going door-to-door to pass out booklets, preaching, administering the prison ministry, teaching Bible Studies, and starting churches. Due to his service in the ministry, he was ordained a Deacon during the Feast of Pentecost on May 31st, 2009. His spiritual growth and desire to serve God led to his ordination as an Evangelist during the Feast of Pentecost on May 25th, 2012.

Kelly has written for a local Christian magazine, *The Christian to Christian Connection*, the international Sabbatarian magazine, *The Sabbath Sentinel*, and the regional magazine, *The Good News*. He has written Partner Devotionals for Perry Stone. He currently writes for and serves as the Editor for the Ministry's magazine, *Pursuit*. Kelly has written 9 books and 21 booklets on various Bible topics. Kelly graduated *summa cum laude* from Lambuth University in Jackson, TN in 2009. He earned a Bachelor of Science with a double major in Political Science and Sociology with a minor in Legal Studies. Kelly has been preaching since 2007 and is available to speak at your church upon request.

Prayer is a misunderstood subject. It is simply the way that we communicate and fellowship with God. It is the process where the will of God becomes one with our heart, mind, and spirit. God desires a relationship with us more than anything else. In this booklet, you will learn the basics of prayer and how to use this powerful tool.



Kelly McDonald, Jr. is an ordained Evangelist at Hungry Hearts Ministries in Jackson, TN. Kelly writes for the international Sabbatarian magazine, *The Sabbath Sentinel*. He also writes and serves as the Editor for the ministry's magazine, *Pursuit*. He has written 30 books and booklets on pursuing Jesus Christ. He has been preaching since 2007 and is available to speak at your church upon request.