

IGNITE INSTITUTE | HOW TO GROW

CLASS 4: PRAYER

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.”

Matthew 7:7-8

THE INVITATION TO PRAY

Prayer is an offering up of our desires to God.

*Ask, and it will be given to you; **seek**, and you will **find**; **knock**, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.* (Matthew 7:7-8)

1. Ask, Seek, Find, Knock: Our Invitation to Pray

→ The Lord longs to hear us cry out to him.

- The Lord loves when we are dependent upon him

2. We are Expected to Pray

→ “... of all the Spiritual Disciplines, prayer is second only to the intake of God’s Word in importance.”²¹ (Donald Whitney)

HOW TO PRAY

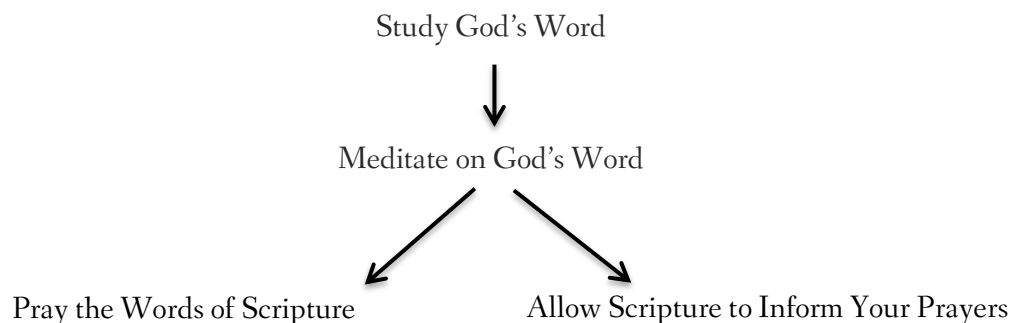
1. Pray God’s Will

And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him. (1 John 5:14-15)

‘Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.’ (Luke 22:42)

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. (John 15:7)

→ God’s will is revealed to us in Scripture.



²¹ Whitney, Donald S. (2014). *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*. (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress), 80.

→ Meditation is the bridge that links our knowledge of the Word to prayer; which in turn links it to our hearts.

2. Posture Your Prayer

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. (Matthew 6:5-6)

“But to the man who withdraws himself from all that is of the world and man, and prepares to wait upon God alone, the Father will reveal Himself.”²² (Andrew Murray)

→ Have a solitary spot where you can go and be alone with God.

- Make the space for the meeting
- Pray with pure motives
- Posture yourself for receiving

3. Be Vulnerable Before the Lord

Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved. (Psalm 55:22)

I am feeble and crushed; I groan because of the tumult of my heart. O Lord, all my longing is before you; my sighing is not hidden from you. My heart throbs; my strength fails me, and the light of my eyes—it also has gone from me. My friends and companions stand aloof from my plague, and my nearest kin stand far off. (Psalm 38:8-11)

“Christians often complain that private prayer is not what it should be. The feel weak and sinful, the heart is cold and dark; it is as if they have so little to pray and in that little no faith or joy. They are discouraged and kept from prayer by the thought that they cannot come to the Father as they ought or wish....Do not be thinking of how little you have to bring to God, but how much he wants to give to you.”²³ (Andrew Murray)

→ When you go away to be with Lord, bring *all of yourself* to him.

- All doubts, fears, worry, sorrow, burden, guilt, shame, and desires
- We can do this because we know who God is

4. Pray in the Powerful Name of Jesus

Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. (John 14:13-14).

Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask in my Father's name He will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. (John 16:23b-24)

“When I go in the name of another, I deny myself, I take not only his name, but himself instead of what he is instead of myself and what I am.”²⁴(Andrew Murray)

²² Murray, Andrew (2013). *With Christ in the School of Prayer: Thoughts on our Training for the Ministry of Intercession.*, (Merchant Books), 16.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 127.

→ Using the name of Jesus is a powerful act of surrender:

- The name of Jesus has power (Luke 10:17; Acts 3:6, 16; 4:10)
- As adopted sons and daughters of the Father, we receive the right to use Jesus' name and the blessings that accompany it (Ephesians 1:3-14)
- By using his name, we forfeit our old identities and take on his interests, desires, and will (Colossians 3:1-17)

5. Ask, Seek, Find, Knock: Pray without Ceasing

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. (Matthew 7:7-8)

And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.' And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. (Luke 18:1-8a)

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. 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. (Romans 8:26-27)

→ Pray with persistency.

- When you do not want to pray – keep praying
- When you are not receiving answers to your prayers - keep praying
- When you don't know what to pray – keep praying

→ Pray continually.

- "Continual prayer is like a conversation with frequent interruptions." (Donald Whitney)
- As we become more disciplined in prayer and learn to love communion with the Father more and more, prayer should continue to become a default mode throughout our days.

6. Pray with Faith and Expectation

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. (Mark 11:24)

→ Faith is both the precursor and product of our prayer.

- Believe Jesus at his word
- Do not allow doubt to keep you from praying and believing in his promises.

PROMISES IN PRAYER

*Ask, and **it will be given to you**; seek, and **you will find**; knock, **and it will be opened to you**. For everyone who asks **receives**, and the one who seeks **finds**, and to the one who knocks **it will be opened**. (Matthew 7:7-8)*

“Let us beware of weakening the Word with our human wisdom. When He tells us heavily things, let us believe Him: His Word will explain itself to him who believes it fully. If questions and difficulties arise, let us not seek to have them settled before we accept the Word. No; let us entrust them all to Him: it is His to solve them: our work is first and fully to accept and hold fast His promise.”²⁵ (Andrew Murray)

1. We are Promised that our Prayers will be Heard and Answered

→ His answers may vary but he will always give one.

→ God’s answers often reveal themselves in these ways:

- You receive what you prayed for
- Through his spirit, his Word, and his Church, the Father changes our hearts to his will and desire

2. The Father will Give Good Gifts to his Children

Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him. (Matthew 7:9-11)

→ Jesus asks us to look at our earthly father’s goodness and then calculate Heavenly Father’s greater goodness.

- If the gift is not good for us, then it is not given

3. Jesus is Mediating on our Behalf

... but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. (Luke 22:32a)

Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:25).

→ Jesus prays for us and with us in intercession.

- Through his Holy Spirit, he prays for us when we do not know what to say
- He invites us to pray in unison with him

PRACTICAL TIPS

1. Make time
2. Make space
3. Set a rhythm
4. Get creative (find what works for you)

²⁵ Murray, Andrew (2013). *With Christ in the School of Prayer: Thoughts on our Training for the Ministry of Intercession.*, (Merchant Books), 26.