



PRAYER

The Perfect Fit

A Closer Look at Prayers from the
Holy Scripture

By Pastor Eric S C Manning

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Introduction4
Prayer as asking God5
Prayer in the church19
Praying for others.....28
Prayer - “Hallowed be thy name...” (Luke 11:2)” ...43
Persistence in Prayer49
Holy Spirit and Prayer58
Doctrine of Prayer63

Introduction

“Christians who pray to God sincerely, with reverence and humility, with a sense of privilege and a pure (i.e., purified, penitent) heart, will find in themselves a Spirit-given filial instinct prompting prayer to and trust in their heavenly Father (Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:15), and a desire to pray that outruns their uncertainty as to what thoughts they should express (Rom. 8:26-27). The mysterious reality of the Holy Spirit’s help in prayer becomes known only to those who actually pray”.¹

¹J. I. Packer. “Concise Theology

Prayer as asking God

God wants his people to turn to him in prayer, individually and corporately, in times of need or crisis, and to bring requests to him as a Father.

God's people are commanded to bring their requests to him:

- Philippians 4:6 (ESV) – 6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
 - Question: Why is God at times the last person we seek?
- See also 1 Ch 16:11; Mt 7:7-11; Jn 16:24; Eph 6:18-20; 1 Th 5:17; Jas 5:13

Prayer for deliverance from difficulty:

- Psalm 4:1 (ESV) – 1 Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have given me relief when I was in distress. Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!
- See also Ps 40:2-3; Jon 2:1-3; Ac 12:5

Prayer for deliverance from enemies:

- Psalm 17:8-9 (ESV) – 8 Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings, 9 from the wicked who do me violence, my deadly enemies who surround me.
- See also 2 Ki 19:9-11; 2 Ch 14:11

PRAYERS OF INDIVIDUALS IN TIME OF CRISIS

Jacob's prayer

Genesis 32:9-12 (ESV) – 9 And Jacob said, “O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Lord who said to me, ‘Return to your country and to your kindred, that I may do you good,’ 10 I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps. 11 Please deliver me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, that he may come and attack me, the mothers with the children. 12 But you said, ‘I will surely do you good, and make your offspring as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.’ ”

David's prayers

Psalm 28:1-9 (ESV) – 1 To you, O Lord, I call; my rock, be not deaf to me, lest, if you be silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit. 2 Hear the voice of my pleas for mercy, when I cry to you for help, when I lift up my hands toward your most holy sanctuary. 3 Do not drag me off with the wicked, with the workers of evil, who speak peace with their neighbors while evil is in their hearts. 4 Give to them according to their work and according to the evil of their deeds; give to them according to the work of their hands; render them their due reward. 5 Because they do not regard the works of the Lord or the work of his hands, he will tear them down and build them up no more. 6 Blessed be the Lord! For he has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy. 7 The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him. 8 The Lord is the strength of his people; he is the saving refuge of his anointed. 9 Oh, save your people and bless your heritage! Be their shepherd and carry them forever.

Psalm 4:1 (ESV) – 1 Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have given me relief when I was in distress. Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!

Psalm 5:1-3 (ESV) – 1 Give ear to my words, O Lord; consider my groaning. 2 Give attention to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for to you do I pray. 3 O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch.

Psalm 30:8-10 (ESV) – 8 To you, O Lord, I cry, and to the Lord I plead for mercy: 9 “What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it tell

of your faithfulness? 10 Hear, O Lord, and be merciful to me! O Lord, be my helper!”

Psalm 142:1-7 (ESV) – 1 With my voice I cry out to the Lord; with my voice I plead for mercy to the Lord. 2 I pour out my complaint before him; I tell my trouble before him. 3 When my spirit faints within me, you know my way! In the path where I walk they have hidden a trap for me. 4 Look to the right and see: there is none who takes notice of me; no refuge remains to me; no one cares for my soul. 5 I cry to you, O Lord; I say, “You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.” 6 Attend to my cry, for I am brought very low! Deliver me from my persecutors, for they are too strong for me! 7 Bring me out of prison, that I may give thanks to your name! The righteous will surround me, for you will deal bountifully with me.

Elijah’s prayer

1 Kings 19:4 (ESV) – 4 But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, “It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers.”

Jeremiah’s prayer

Jeremiah 15:15-18 (ESV) – 15 O Lord, you know; remember me and visit me, and take vengeance for me on my persecutors. In your forbearance take me not away; know that for your sake I bear reproach. 16 Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart, for I am called by your name,

O Lord, God of hosts. 17 I did not sit in the company of revelers, nor did I rejoice; I sat alone, because your hand was upon me, for you had filled me with indignation. 18 Why is my pain unceasing, my wound incurable, refusing to be healed? Will you be to me like a deceitful brook, like waters that fail?

Jesus Christ's prayers

Matthew 26:39 (ESV) – 39 And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”

INDIVIDUAL PETITION TO GOD IN PRAYER

Individual prayer for guidance

Genesis 24:12-14 (ESV) – 12 And he said, “O Lord, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and show steadfast love to my master Abraham. 13 Behold, I am standing by the spring of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. 14 Let the young woman to whom I shall say, ‘Please let down your jar that I may drink,’ and who shall say, ‘Drink, and I will water your camels’—let her be the one whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac. By this I shall know that you have shown steadfast love to my master.”

Judges 1:1-2 (ESV) – 1 After the death of Joshua, the people of Israel inquired of the Lord, “Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?” 2 The Lord said, “Judah shall go up; behold, I have given the land into his hand.”

Judges 6:36-40 (ESV) – 36 Then Gideon said to God, “If you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said, 37 behold, I am laying a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece alone, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said.” 38 And it was so. When he rose early next morning and squeezed the fleece, he wrung enough dew from the fleece to fill a bowl with water. 39 Then Gideon said to God, “Let not your anger burn against me; let me speak just once more. Please let me test just once more with the fleece. Please let it be dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground let there be dew.” 40 And God did so that night; and it was dry on the fleece only, and on all the ground there was dew.

1 Samuel 14:41 (ESV) – 41 Therefore Saul said, “O Lord God of Israel, why have you not answered your servant this day? If this guilt is in me or in Jonathan my son, O Lord, God of Israel, give Urim. But if this guilt is in your people Israel, give Thummim.” And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people escaped.

2 Samuel 2:1 (ESV) – 1 After this David inquired of the Lord, “Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?” And the Lord said to him, “Go up.” David said, “To which shall I go up?” And he said, “To Hebron.”

1 Chronicles 14:14-15 (ESV) – 14 And when David again inquired of God, God said to him, “You shall not go up after them; go around and come against them opposite the balsam trees. 15 And when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then go out to battle, for

God has gone out before you to strike down the army of the Philistines.”

Individual prayer for healing

2 Kings 20:1-11 (ESV) – 1 In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, “Thus says the Lord, ‘Set your house in order, for you shall die; you shall not recover.’ ” 2 Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord, saying, 3 “Now, O Lord, please remember how I have walked before you in faithfulness and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in your sight.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly. 4 And before Isaiah had gone out of the middle court, the word of the Lord came to him: 5 “Turn back, and say to Hezekiah the leader of my people, Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Behold, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the Lord, 6 and I will add fifteen years to your life. I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city for my own sake and for my servant David’s sake.” 7 And Isaiah said, “Bring a cake of figs. And let them take and lay it on the boil, that he may recover.” 8 And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me, and that I shall go up to the house of the Lord on the third day?” 9 And Isaiah said, “This shall be the sign to you from the Lord, that the Lord will do the thing that he has promised: shall the shadow go forward ten steps, or go back ten steps?” 10 And Hezekiah answered, “It is an easy thing for the shadow to lengthen ten steps. Rather let the shadow go back ten steps.” 11 And Isaiah the prophet called to the Lord, and he

brought the shadow back ten steps, by which it had gone down on the steps of Ahaz.

Individual prayer for the birth of a child

1 Samuel 1:10-11 (ESV) – 10 She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly. 11 And she vowed a vow and said, “O Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head.”

Genesis 25:21 (ESV) – 21 And Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren. And the Lord granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

Genesis 30:17 (ESV) – 17 And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son.

CORPORATE PETITION TO GOD

Corporate prayer for deliverance

Exodus 2:23 (ESV) – 23 During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God.

Numbers 20:15-16 (ESV) – 15 how our fathers went down to Egypt, and we lived in Egypt a long time. And the Egyptians dealt harshly with us and our fathers. 16 And when we cried to the Lord, he heard our voice and sent an angel and

brought us out of Egypt. And here we are in Kadesh, a city on the edge of your territory.

Deuteronomy 26:6-8 (ESV) – 6 And the Egyptians treated us harshly and humiliated us and laid on us hard labor. 7 Then we cried to the Lord, the God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. 8 And the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great deeds of terror, with signs and wonders.

Judges 3:9 (ESV) – 9 But when the people of Israel cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer for the people of Israel, who saved them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

Judges 4:3 (ESV) – 3 Then the people of Israel cried out to the Lord for help, for he had 900 chariots of iron and he oppressed the people of Israel cruelly for twenty years.

Judges 6:7-10 (ESV) – 7 When the people of Israel cried out to the Lord on account of the Midianites, 8 the Lord sent a prophet to the people of Israel. And he said to them, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: I led you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of slavery. 9 And I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land. 10 And I said to you, ‘I am the Lord your God; you shall not fear the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell.’ But you have not obeyed my voice.”

1 Samuel 12:8 (ESV) – 8 When Jacob went into Egypt, and the Egyptians oppressed them, then your fathers cried out to the Lord and the Lord sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your fathers out of Egypt and made them dwell in this place.

Corporate prayer for restoration

Psalm 44:23-26 (ESV) – 23 Awake! Why are you sleeping, O Lord? Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever! 24 Why do you hide your face? Why do you forget our affliction and oppression? 25 For our soul is bowed down to the dust; our belly clings to the ground. 26 Rise up; come to our help! Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love!

Psalm 79:8-9 (ESV) – 8 Do not remember against us our former iniquities; let your compassion come speedily to meet us, for we are brought very low. 9 Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of your name; deliver us, and atone for our sins, for your name's sake!

Psalm 80:4-7 (ESV) – 4 O Lord God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers? 5 You have fed them with the bread of tears and given them tears to drink in full measure. 6 You make us an object of contention for our neighbors, and our enemies laugh among themselves. 7 Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved!

Psalm 85:4-7 (ESV) – 4 Restore us again, O God of our salvation, and put away your indignation toward us! 5 Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your anger to all generations? 6 Will you not revive us again, that your

people may rejoice in you? 7 Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.

Corporate prayer for protection, especially at times of crisis

Ezra 8:21-23 (ESV) – 21 Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods. 22 For I was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and horsemen to protect us against the enemy on our way, since we had told the king, “The hand of our God is for good on all who seek him, and the power of his wrath is against all who forsake him.” 23 So we fasted and implored our God for this, and he listened to our entreaty.

Daniel 2:17-18 (ESV) – 17 Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, 18 and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

The first Christians prayed together when they met

Acts 1:13-14 (ESV) – 13 And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. 14 All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer,

together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

Acts 21:5 (ESV) – 5 When our days there were ended, we departed and went on our journey, and they all, with wives and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach, we prayed

THE FIRST CHRISTIANS PRAYED TOGETHER AT TIMES OF CRISIS OR IMPORTANT DECISIONS

When threatened with punishment

Acts 4:24-31 (ESV) – 24 And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, “Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, 25 who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, “ ‘Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? 26 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed’ – 27 for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. 29 And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, 30 while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” 31 And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy

Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

Acts 12:5 (ESV) – 5 So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

Acts 12:12 (ESV) – 12 When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.

When Barnabas and Saul were sent off by the church at Antioch

Acts 13:3 (ESV) – 3 Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

When Paul and Silas experienced persecution

Acts 16:25 (ESV) – 25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them,

Prayers for mercy and grace

Psalms 143:1 (ESV) – 1 Hear my prayer, O Lord; give ear to my pleas for mercy! In your faithfulness answer me, in your righteousness!

Hebrews 4:16 (ESV) – 16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

2 Chronicles 6:18-19 (ESV) – 18 “But will God indeed dwell with man on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, how much less this house that I have built! 19 Yet have regard to the prayer of your servant and to his plea, O Lord my God, listening to the cry and to the prayer that your servant prays before you,

Psalm 130:1-2 (ESV) – 1 Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord! 2 O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy!

Matthew 20:30-31 (ESV) – 30 And behold, there were two blind men sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!” 31 The crowd rebuked them, telling them to be silent, but they cried out all the more, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!”

Prayer in the church

The prayer life of the NT provides a pattern from which the modern church can learn, both in terms of the importance of prayer, and also matters for prayer.

PRAYER WAS AT THE CENTRE OF THE LIFE OF THE EARLY CHURCH

They prayed when they met together

Acts 1:14 (ESV) – 14 All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

Acts 2:42 (ESV) – 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Acts 4:23-31 (ESV) – 23 When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. 24 And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, “Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, 25 who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, “ ‘Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? 26 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed’ – 27 for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. 29 And

now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, 30 while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” 31 And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

Acts 12:12 (ESV) – 12 When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.

Acts 20:36 (ESV) – 36 And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

Acts 21:5 (ESV) – 5 When our days there were ended, we departed and went on our journey, and they all, with wives and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach, we prayed

They prayed about the selection and ordination of Christian leaders

Acts 13:2-3 (ESV) – 2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” 3 Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

Acts 1:24-25 (ESV) – 24 And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these

two you have chosen 25 to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.”

Acts 6:6 (ESV) – 6 These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them.

Acts 14:23 (ESV) – 23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

They prayed during persecution

Acts 12:5 (ESV) – 5 So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

Acts 7:59-60 (ESV) – 59 And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” 60 And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Acts 12:12 (ESV) – 12 When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.

Acts 16:22-25 (ESV) – 22 The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. 23 And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. 24 Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and

fastened their feet in the stocks. 25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them,

They prayed for healing

Acts 9:40 (ESV) – 40 But Peter put them all outside, and knelt down and prayed; and turning to the body he said, “Tabitha, arise.” And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up.

Acts 28:7-8 (ESV) – 7 Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius, who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days. 8 It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. And Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him, healed him.

THE APOSTLES’ TEACHING ON PRAYER IN CHURCH LIFE

The importance of prayer

Colossians 4:2 (ESV) – 2 Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

Romans 12:12 (ESV) – 12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

Ephesians 6:18 (ESV) – 18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

1 Thessalonians 5:17 (ESV) – 17 pray without ceasing,

1 Timothy 2:1 (ESV) – 1 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people,

1 Peter 4:7 (ESV) – 7 The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.

Prayer for the spread of the gospel

Colossians 4:3-4 (ESV) – 3 At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison– 4 that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

Ephesians 6:19-20 (ESV) – 19 and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

2 Thessalonians 3:1 (ESV) – 1 Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you,

Prayer for the sick

James 5:14 (ESV) – 14 Is anyone 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.

Prayer for sinners

1 John 5:16-17 (ESV) – 16 If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. 17 All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.

James 5:16 (ESV) – 16 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.

Prayer for God's servants

Romans 15:30 (ESV) – 30 I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf,

2 Corinthians 1:11 (ESV) – 11 You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

Orderly conduct of public prayer

1 Corinthians 11:4-5 (ESV) – 4 Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, 5 but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven.

1 Corinthians 11:13-15 (ESV) – 13 Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? 14 Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, 15 but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering.

THE PRACTICE OF THE APOSTLES

Prayer was central to their ministry

Acts 6:3-4 (ESV) – 3 Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. 4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”

They prayed for the church

Colossians 1:9-10 (ESV) – 9 And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Ephesians 1:16-21 (ESV) – 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead

and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

Ephesians 3:16-19 (ESV) – 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Philippians 1:9-11 (ESV) – 9 And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Colossians 1:3 (ESV) – 3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you,
1 Thessalonians 1:2 (ESV) – 2 We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers,

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 (ESV) – 11 To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, 12 so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Praying for others

Believers should pray, not only for their own needs, but for those of others. Scripture provides many examples of intercession, and commends it as pleasing to God.

Believers must value others

Philippians 2:3-4 (ESV) – 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

EXAMPLES OF PRAYING FOR OTHERS

Moses prays for the Israelites

Deuteronomy 9:18-19 (ESV) – 18 Then I lay prostrate before the Lord as before, forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all the sin that you had committed, in doing what was evil in the sight of the Lord to provoke him to anger. 19 For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure that the Lord bore against you, so that he was ready to destroy you. But the Lord listened to me that time also.

Exodus 32:9-14 (ESV) – 9 And the Lord said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. 10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you.” 11 But Moses implored the Lord his God and said, “O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have

brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? 12 Why should the Egyptians say, ‘With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth’? Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people. 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, ‘I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.’ ” 14 And the Lord relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people.

Exodus 34:9 (ESV) – 9 And he said, “If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, please let the Lord go in the midst of us, for it is a stiff-necked people, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance.”

Numbers 14:11-19 (ESV) – 11 And the Lord said to Moses, “How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them? 12 I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they.” 13 But Moses said to the Lord, “Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for you brought up this people in your might from among them, 14 and they will tell the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that you, O Lord, are in the midst of this people. For you, O Lord, are seen face to face, and your cloud stands over them and you go before them, in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. 15 Now if you kill this people as one man, then the nations who have heard your fame will say, 16 ‘It is because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the

land that he swore to give to them that he has killed them in the wilderness.’ 17 And now, please let the power of the Lord be great as you have promised, saying, 18 ‘The Lord is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to the third and the fourth generation.’ 19 Please pardon the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of your steadfast love, just as you have forgiven this people, from Egypt until now.”

Deuteronomy 9:25-29 (ESV) – 25 “So I lay prostrate before the Lord for these forty days and forty nights, because the Lord had said he would destroy you. 26 And I prayed to the Lord, ‘O Lord God, do not destroy your people and your heritage, whom you have redeemed through your greatness, whom you have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand. 27 Remember your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Do not regard the stubbornness of this people, or their wickedness or their sin, 28 lest the land from which you brought us say, “Because the Lord was not able to bring them into the land that he promised them, and because he hated them, he has brought them out to put them to death in the wilderness.” 29 For they are your people and your heritage, whom you brought out by your great power and by your outstretched arm.’

Samuel prays for Israel

1 Samuel 7:5-9 (ESV) – 5 Then Samuel said, “Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the Lord for you.” 6 So they gathered at Mizpah and drew water and poured it out before the Lord and fasted on that day and said there, “We

have sinned against the Lord.” And Samuel judged the people of Israel at Mizpah. 7 Now when the Philistines heard that the people of Israel had gathered at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the people of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines. 8 And the people of Israel said to Samuel, “Do not cease to cry out to the Lord our God for us, that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines.” 9 So Samuel took a nursing lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the Lord. And Samuel cried out to the Lord for Israel, and the Lord answered him.

1 Samuel 12:19-23 (ESV) – 19 And all the people said to Samuel, “Pray for your servants to the Lord your God, that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for ourselves a king.” 20 And Samuel said to the people, “Do not be afraid; you have done all this evil. Yet do not turn aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart. 21 And do not turn aside after empty things that cannot profit or deliver, for they are empty. 22 For the Lord will not forsake his people, for his great name’s sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you a people for himself. 23 Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you, and I will instruct you in the good and the right way.

Job prays for his friends

Job 42:10 (ESV) – 10 And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job, when he had prayed for his friends. And the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.

Jeremiah prays for Judah

Je 7:16 God forbade the prophet Jeremiah to pray for his people because they were unrepentant sinners.

Jeremiah 7:16 (ESV) – 16 “As for you, do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them, and do not intercede with me, for I will not hear you.

Jeremiah 11:14 (ESV) – 14 “Therefore do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer on their behalf, for I will not listen when they call to me in the time of their trouble.

Jeremiah 14:11 (ESV) – 11 The Lord said to me: “Do not pray for the welfare of this people.

Jesus Christ intercedes for believers

Romans 8:34 (ESV) – 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Isaiah 53:12 (ESV) – 12 Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

Hebrews 7:25 (ESV) – 25 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.

1 John 2:1 (ESV) – 1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

The Holy Spirit intercedes for believers

Romans 8:26-27 (ESV) – 26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. 27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

CHRISTIANS ARE TO INTERCEDE FOR OTHERS

Christians are to pray for their enemies

Matthew 5:44 (ESV) – 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

Luke 6:28 (ESV) – 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.

Luke 23:34 (ESV) – 34 And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments.

Acts 7:60 (ESV) – 60 And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Christians are to pray for one another

Ephesians 6:18 (ESV) – 18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

1 Thessalonians 5:25 (ESV) – 25 Brothers, pray for us.

Philemon 22 (ESV) – 22 At the same time, prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping that through your prayers I will be graciously given to you.

Hebrews 13:18-19 (ESV) – 18 Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. 19 I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner.

James 5:14-16 (ESV) – 14 Is anyone 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 one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. 16 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.

1 John 5:16 (ESV) – 16 If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that.

Christians are to prayer for rulers

1 Timothy 2:1-2 (ESV) – 1 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

Examples of pleas made to Jesus Christ on behalf of others

Matthew 8:5-13 (ESV) – 5 When he had entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, appealing to him, 6 “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly.” 7 And he said to him, “I will come and heal him.” 8 But the centurion replied, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes, and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” 10 When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, “Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. 11 I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, 12 while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” 13 And to the centurion Jesus said, “Go; let it be done for you as you have believed.” And the servant was healed at that very moment.

Matthew 15:21-28 (ESV) – 21 And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon.” 23 But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, “Send her away, for she is crying out after us.” 24 He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” 25 But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” 26 And he answered, “It is

not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." 27 She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." 28 Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.

Matthew 17:14-20 (ESV) – 14 And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and, kneeling before him, 15 said, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he has seizures and he suffers terribly. For often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. 16 And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him." 17 And Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me." 18 And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was healed instantly. 19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" 20 He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you."

Examples of notable prayers of intercession

2 Kings 19:14-19 (ESV) – 14 Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord and spread it before the Lord. 15 And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord and said: "O Lord, the God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. 16 Incline your ear, O Lord, and hear; open your eyes, O Lord, and see;

and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to mock the living God. 17 Truly, O Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands 18 and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. Therefore they were destroyed. 19 So now, O Lord our God, save us, please, from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O Lord, are God alone.”

Ezra 8:21-23 (ESV) – 21 Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods. 22 For I was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and horsemen to protect us against the enemy on our way, since we had told the king, “The hand of our God is for good on all who seek him, and the power of his wrath is against all who forsake him.” 23 So we fasted and implored our God for this, and he listened to our entreaty.

Daniel 9:1-19 (ESV) – 1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans– 2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. 3 Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. 4 I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession, saying, “O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, 5 we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and

rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. 6 We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. 7 To you, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame, as at this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against you. 8 To us, O Lord, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you. 9 To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him 10 and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God by walking in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. 11 All Israel has transgressed your law and turned aside, refusing to obey your voice. And the curse and oath that are written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against him. 12 He has confirmed his words, which he spoke against us and against our rulers who ruled us, by bringing upon us a great calamity. For under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what has been done against Jerusalem. 13 As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this calamity has come upon us; yet we have not entreated the favor of the Lord our God, turning from our iniquities and gaining insight by your truth. 14 Therefore the Lord has kept ready the calamity and has brought it upon us, for the Lord our God is righteous in all the works that he has done, and we have not obeyed his voice. 15 And now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and have made a name for yourself, as at this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly. 16 “O Lord,

according to all your righteous acts, let your anger and your wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy hill, because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become a byword among all who are around us. 17 Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas for mercy, and for your own sake, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate. 18 O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. 19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name.”

John 17:6-26 (ESV) – 6 “I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. 7 Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. 8 For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. 9 I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. 10 All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. 11 And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. 12 While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the

Scripture might be fulfilled. 13 But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 14 I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. 20 “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. 24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. 25 O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. 26 I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

Paul for the believers in Ephesus:

Ephesians 1:15-21 (ESV) – 15 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward

all the saints, 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

Ephesians 3:14-21 (ESV) – 14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. 20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Paul for the believers in Colosse

Colossians 1:9-13 (ESV) – 9 And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. 13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,

Prayer - “Hallowed be thy name...” (Luke 11:2)”

God made us and has redeemed us for fellowship with himself, and that is what prayer is. God speaks to us in and through the contents of the Bible, which the Holy Spirit opens up and applies to us and enables us to understand. We then speak to God about himself, and ourselves, and people in his world, shaping what we say as response to what he has said. This unique form of two-way conversation continues as long as life lasts. The Bible teaches and exemplifies prayer as a fourfold activity, to be performed by God’s people individually both in private (Matt. 6:5-8) and in company with each other (Acts 1:14; 4:24). Adoration and praise are to be expressed; contrite confession of sin is to be made and forgiveness sought; thanks for benefits received are to be offered; and petitions and supplications for ourselves and others are to be voiced. The Lord’s Prayer (Matt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4) embodies adoration “petition, and confession; the Psalter consists of models of all four elements of prayer. Petition, in which the persons praying humbly acknowledge their need and express themselves as trustfully depending on God to meet it out of his sovereign resources of wisdom and goodness, is the dimension of prayer that is most constantly highlighted in the Bible (e.g., Gen. 18:16-33; Exod. 32:31-33:17; Ezra 9:5-15; Neh. 1:5-11; 4:4-5, 9; 6:9, 14; Dan. 9:4-19; John 17; James 5:16-18; Matt. 7:7-11; John 16:23-24; Eph. 6:18-20; 1 John 5:14-16). Petition, along with the other modes of prayer, should ordinarily be directed to the Father, as the Lord’s Prayer shows, but

Christ may be called on for salvation and healing, as in the days of his flesh (Rom. 10:8-13; 2 Cor. 12:7-9), and the Holy Spirit for grace and peace (Rev. 1:4). It cannot be wrong to present petitions to God as triune or to request any spiritual blessing from any one of the three Persons, but there is wisdom in following the New Testament pattern”.²

“In the great Azusa Street revival of the early 1900s, this altar invitation was given: “Everyone interested in pardon, sanctification, healing and the baptism in the Holy Spirit, rise and come.” The speaker was right on! Jesus is our righteousness, sanctifier, peace, healer, provider, banner and shepherd, and He is the overflowing One present within us. Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Help us, Lord, not to take Your name in vain.”³

“Remember, you are hallowing God's name because of who He is and because of what He has done for you. As you meditate upon the various names of God your Father, affirm your faith by turning your thoughts into declarations of faith and praise. ***Father, You are Jehovah-tsidkenu. You are my righteousness. I stand before You righteous and forgiven because of the blood of Your dear Son. You are Jehovah-m'kaddesh, “the Lord Who Sanctifies.” You conform me into the image of Your Son and break sin's power over me. You are Jehovah-shalom, my peace. Jesus made peace by the blood of His cross and reconciled me to You. Now Your peace which passes all understanding keeps my heart and my mind. You are Jehovah-shammah. You have filled me with Your overflowing presence, and You will never leave me nor forsake me. Thank You for***

² J. I. Packer. “Concise Theology.”

³ Larry Lea. “Could You Not Tarry”

living in me, Lord. That is an example of what it means to hallow God's name and to make faith declarations based upon who He is and what He has done for you. But there is much, much more for which you should hallow your Father's name.”⁴

“When the Lord first proclaimed to Moses, “I AM THAT I AM,” the name He used for Himself was considered by Hebrew translators too sacred to be spoken aloud. So they used the consonants YHWH or JHVH, which we can read as Yahweh or Jehovah. Yahweh implies more than just God's existence; it implies His personal, intimate presence. God's name Jehovah reveals His readiness to save His people and to act for them. Thus, the name Jehovah, or I AM THAT I AM, can be rendered, “I am with you, ready to save and to act, just as I have always been.”⁵

Now in the Old Testament, there are eight names compounded with the name Jehovah: Jehovah-tsidkenu, Jehovah-m'kaddesh, Jehovah-shammah, Jehovah-shalom, Jehovah-rophe, Jehovah-jireh, Jehovah-nissi and Jehovah-rohi. Each of these names is a revelation of the character and nature of God.

1. Jehovah-tsidkenu - Our Righteousness - Jer. 23:5-6, Romans 5:17-19
2. Jehovah-m'kaddesh - the Lord who Sanctifies - Leviticus 20:8; Romans 6:17,18; Hebrews 13:12; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11
3. Jehovah-shammah - the Lord is there - Ezekiel 48:35
4. Jehovah-shalom - Our Peace - Judges 6:24, Colossians 1:20-22

⁴ Larry Lea. “Could You Not Tarry.”

⁵ Larry Lea, “Could You Not Tarry”

5. Jehovah-rophe - the Lord who Heals - The word rophe means “to restore, cure or heal not only in the physical sense but also in the spiritual and moral sense. - “Do you or does someone you know need healing? Then begin to thank the Lord that by His stripes you are healed (see Is. 53:5; Matt. 8:16,17). Healing is already a finished work in the mind of God (1 Pet. 2:24). Make that faith declaration. Concentrate on the blood, not on yourself or how you feel. Concentrate upon who He is and upon what His blood has purchased for you. As you praise Him, He will be what you need Him to be—He will be Jehovah-rophe, “the Lord Who Heals.”
6. Jehovah-jireh - “The name Jehovah-jireh means “the Lord Who Sees” or “Jehovah's Provision Shall Be Seen” (see Gen. 22, especially v. 14). God our Father sees our needs beforehand and makes provision for them. His name, Jehovah-jireh, is a revelation of God's willingness and ability to make provision for our sin and need. Because Jesus has taken the curse away, we are free from moral, financial, emotional, social or spiritual failure, for God has ordained our success. We can do all things through Christ (see Phil. 4:13). Therefore, as you hallow His name, Jehovah-jireh, thank God that you are free from the curse. Make the praise declaration that Jesus, who was made a curse for you, has freed you, and you do not have to live under the curse of the law. The writer of an old hymn made such a declaration: “Though earth hinders and hell rages, all must work for good to thee!” Sing it! Say it! Believe it!”
7. Jehovah-nissi - The Lord our banner - Ex 17:15 - “When Jesus Christ, our banner, was resurrected from the dead, He abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (see 2 Tim. 1:10).

Now we no longer have to fear death, for Jesus Christ's death and resurrection rendered powerless him who had the power of death, Satan (Heb. 2:14,15). Christ's banner over us is love, and love never fails."

8. Jehovah-rohi - the Lord is our Shepherd - Psalm 23 - "Jesus is the shepherd of His people (John 10:11; Heb. 13:20), and He feeds, leads, protects and cares for His sheep. Because He is our shepherd, we do not have to fear death (see Ps. 23:1,4,6; 1 Cor. 15:55-57). As you meditate upon the cross, praise the Lord that you are free from death and hell because your sin was taken away at Calvary. Praise Him because you will never perish, but have eternal life. Focus on Jesus who was crucified and declare: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). Consider this. If you are a believer, and someone took a gun and shot you right now, your earthly body would slump in death, but your living spirit would go immediately into the presence of the Lord (see 2 Cor. 5:8). Once your spirit grasps the truth that you are an eternal creature who will never die, you will live differently, talk differently, walk differently. You are an eternal being, already experiencing eternal life."

"What are the five promises or benefits in the New Covenant with which the eight compound names of God correspond? Of what five things did the testifying blood on the altar speak? The benefits we enjoy in the New Covenant deal with five vital areas. To make the areas easy to remember, I'll begin each with an 5: (1) sin—forgiveness of sin and deliverance from sin's dominion; (2) Spirit—the fullness of the Holy Spirit; (3) soundness—the promise of health and healing; (4) success—freedom from the law's

curse of failure and insufficiency; (5) security–freedom from the fear of death and hell. As the Spirit of the Lord revealed what the blood has done for us, I began to understand what it means to pray, “Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.” Let's look at the five benefits given to us by virtue of Jesus' death.”

Persistence in Prayer

An answer to prayer may not come immediately. Petitioners are to continue praying earnestly. This requires patience, determination and, at times, a willingness to wrestle with God for the desired outcome.

THE PRINCIPLE OF PERSISTENCE IN PRAYER

Prayer should be made with patience and perseverance

Psalm 40:1 (ESV) – 1 I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry.

Psalm 88:1 (ESV) – 1 O Lord, God of my salvation, I cry out day and night before you.

1 Chronicles 16:11 (ESV) – 11 Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually!

Psalm 116:2 (ESV) – 2 Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live.

Jesus Christ taught his disciples to persist in prayer

Luke 18:1-8 (ESV) – 1 And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. 2 He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. 3 And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’ 4 For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down

by her continual coming.’ ” 6 And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge says. 7 And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? 8 I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

Luke 11:5-10 (ESV) – 5 And he said to them, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves, 6 for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; 7 and he will answer from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything’? 8 I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs. 9 And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

Persistence in prayer was exemplified in the early church

Acts 1:14 (ESV) – 14 All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

Acts 2:42 (ESV) – 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Paul exhorted the churches to practice persistent prayer

Ephesians 6:18 (ESV) – 18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

Romans 12:12 (ESV) – 12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 (ESV) – 17 pray without ceasing,

EXAMPLES OF PERSISTENCE IN PRAYER

Abraham pleads persistently for Sodom

Genesis 18:23-33 (ESV) – 23 Then Abraham drew near and said, “Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? 24 Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? 25 Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?” 26 And the Lord said, “If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake.” 27 Abraham answered and said, “Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. 28 Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?” And he said, “I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.” 29 Again he spoke to him and said, “Suppose forty are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of forty I will not do it.” 30 Then

he said, “Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there.” He answered, “I will not do it, if I find thirty there.” 31 He said, “Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it.” 32 Then he said, “Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of ten I will not destroy it.” 33 And the Lord went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

Jacob persists in wrestling with God

Genesis 32:24-32 (ESV) – 24 And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. 25 When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob’s hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. 26 Then he said, “Let me go, for the day has broken.” But Jacob said, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.” 27 And he said to him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Jacob.” 28 Then he said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.” 29 Then Jacob asked him, “Please tell me your name.” But he said, “Why is it that you ask my name?” And there he blessed him. 30 So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, “For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered.” 31 The sun rose upon him as he passed Peniel, limping because of his hip. 32 Therefore to this day the people of Israel do not eat the sinew of the thigh that is on the hip socket, because he touched the socket of Jacob’s hip on the sinew of the thigh.

Moses persists in interceding for Israel

Deuteronomy 9:25-29 (ESV) – 25 “So I lay prostrate before the Lord for these forty days and forty nights, because the Lord had said he would destroy you. 26 And I prayed to the Lord, ‘O Lord God, do not destroy your people and your heritage, whom you have redeemed through your greatness, whom you have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand. 27 Remember your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Do not regard the stubbornness of this people, or their wickedness or their sin, 28 lest the land from which you brought us say, “Because the Lord was not able to bring them into the land that he promised them, and because he hated them, he has brought them out to put them to death in the wilderness.” 29 For they are your people and your heritage, whom you brought out by your great power and by your outstretched arm.’

Exodus 32:31-32 (ESV) – 31 So Moses returned to the Lord and said, “Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. 32 But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written.”

Hannah persistently asks for a son

1 Samuel 1:10-11 (ESV) – 10 She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly. 11 And she vowed a vow and said, “O Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head.”

Elijah persists in prayer about the rain

James 5:17-18 (ESV) – 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. 18 Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

1 Kings 18:36-44 (ESV) – 36 And at the time of the offering of the oblation, Elijah the prophet came near and said, “O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. 37 Answer me, O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back.” 38 Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. 39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, “The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God.” 40 And Elijah said to them, “Seize the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape.” And they seized them. And Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon and slaughtered them there. 41 And Elijah said to Ahab, “Go up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of the rushing of rain.” 42 So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Mount Carmel. And he bowed himself down on the earth and put his face between his knees. 43 And he said to his servant, “Go up now, look toward the sea.” And he went up and looked and said, “There is nothing.” And he said, “Go again,” seven times. 44 And at the seventh time he said, “Behold, a little cloud like a man’s hand is rising from

the sea.” And he said, “Go up, say to Ahab, ‘Prepare your chariot and go down, lest the rain stop you.’ ”

The psalmists persist in calling out to God

Psalm 88:1-18 (ESV) – 1 O Lord, God of my salvation, I cry out day and night before you. 2 Let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my cry! 3 For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draws near to Sheol. 4 I am counted among those who go down to the pit; I am a man who has no strength, 5 like one set loose among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, like those whom you remember no more, for they are cut off from your hand. 6 You have put me in the depths of the pit, in the regions dark and deep. 7 Your wrath lies heavy upon me, and you overwhelm me with all your waves. Selah 8 You have caused my companions to shun me; you have made me a horror to them. I am shut in so that I cannot escape; 9 my eye grows dim through sorrow. Every day I call upon you, O Lord; I spread out my hands to you. 10 Do you work wonders for the dead? Do the departed rise up to praise you? Selah 11 Is your steadfast love declared in the grave, or your faithfulness in Abaddon? 12 Are your wonders known in the darkness, or your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? 13 But I, O Lord, cry to you; in the morning my prayer comes before you. 14 O Lord, why do you cast my soul away? Why do you hide your face from me? 15 Afflicted and close to death from my youth up, I suffer your terrors; I am helpless. 16 Your wrath has swept over me; your dreadful assaults destroy me. 17 They surround me like a flood all day long; they close in on me together. 18 You have caused my beloved and my friend to shun me; my companions have become darkness.

Psalm 119:147-149 (ESV) – 147 I rise before dawn and cry for help; I hope in your words. 148 My eyes are awake before the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promise. 149 Hear my voice according to your steadfast love; O Lord, according to your justice give me life.

Psalm 130:1-6 (ESV) – 1 Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord! 2 O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy! 3 If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? 4 But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared. 5 I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; 6 my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning.

Jesus Christ persisted in pursuing the Father's will

Luke 22:42-44 (ESV) – 42 saying, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” 43 And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. 44 And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Persistence in prayer is exemplified in waiting for God

Micah 7:7 (ESV) – 7 But as for me, I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me.

Psalm 27:14 (ESV) – 14 Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!

Psalm 33:20 (ESV) – 20 Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and our shield.

Psalm 37:7 (ESV) – 7 Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!

Psalm 38:15 (ESV) – 15 But for you, O Lord, do I wait; it is you, O Lord my God, who will answer.

Psalm 40:1 (ESV) – 1 I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry.

Isaiah 26:8 (ESV) – 8 In the path of your judgments, O Lord, we wait for you; your name and remembrance are the desire of our soul.

Holy Spirit and Prayer

The Holy Spirit intercedes for God’s people and also prompts their petitions, supplications and thanksgivings.

THE HOLY SPIRIT ENABLES GOD’S CHILDREN TO ADDRESS HIM AS “ABBA”

Romans 8:15 (ESV) – 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”

Galatians 4:6 (ESV) – 6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”

THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN PRAYER

He prompts supplication

Zec 12:10 “a spirit” (NIV text) or “the Spirit” (NIV footnote).
Zechariah 12:10 (ESV) – 10 “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

He inspires prayers of praise

Luke 10:21 (ESV) – 21 In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise

and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.

Ephesians 5:18-20 (ESV) – 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, 20 giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

He inspires praying in tongues

Acts 2:4 (ESV) – 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 10:44-46 (ESV) – 44 While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. 45 And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. 46 For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared,

Acts 19:6 (ESV) – 6 And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying.

1 Corinthians 14:14-18 (ESV) – 14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. 15 What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also. 16 Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit,

how can anyone in the position of an outsider say “Amen” to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? 17 For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up. 18 I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.

He intercedes for believers

Romans 8:26-27 (ESV) – 26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. 27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

The evidence of the Holy Spirit’s work prompts praise and thanks

1 Thessalonians 1:2-5 (ESV) – 2 We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, 3 remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. 4 For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, 5 because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

Acts 11:15-18 (ESV) – 15 As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. 16 And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ 17 If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave

to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" 18 When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life."

Believers are exhorted to pray in the Spirit

Ephesians 6:18-20 (ESV) – 18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, 19 and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

Jude 20 (ESV) – 20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit,

The love of the Holy Spirit is a motive for prayer

Romans 15:30-32 (ESV) – 30 I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, 31 that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, 32 so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company.

Luke 11:13 (ESV) – 13 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Acts 8:14-17 (ESV) – 14 Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, 15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

Doctrine of Prayer

“WHY DOES GOD WANT US TO PRAY? HOW CAN WE PRAY EFFECTIVELY?”

Why Does God Want Us to Pray?

Prayer is not made so that God can find out what we need, because Jesus tells us, “Your Father knows what you need before you ask him” (Matt. 6:8). God wants us to pray because prayer expresses our trust in God and is a means whereby our trust in him can increase. In fact, perhaps the primary emphasis of the Bible’s teaching on prayer is that we are to pray with faith, which means trust or dependence on God. God as our Creator delights in being trusted by us as his creatures, for an attitude of dependence is most appropriate to the Creator/creature relationship. Praying in humble dependence also indicates that we are genuinely convinced of God’s wisdom, love, goodness, and power – indeed of all of the attributes that make up his excellent character. When we truly pray, we as persons, in the wholeness of our character, are relating to God as a person, in the wholeness of his character. Thus, all that we think or feel about God comes to expression in our prayer. It is only natural that God would delight in such activity and place much emphasis on it in his relationship with us”.⁶

⁶Wayne A. Grudem. “Systematic Theology.”

The effectiveness of prayer - How exactly does prayer work? Does prayer not only do us good but also affect God and the world?

1. Prayer Changes the Way God Acts.

- James tells us, “You do not have, because you do not ask” (James 4:2). He implies that failure to ask deprives us of what God would otherwise have given to us. We pray, and God responds. Jesus also says, “Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened” (Luke 11:9 - 10). He makes a clear connection between seeking things from God and receiving them. When we ask, God responds.”

2. Effective Prayer Is Made Possible by Our Mediator, Jesus Christ.

- Because we are sinful and God is holy, we have no right on our own to enter into his presence. We need a mediator to come between us and God and to bring us into God’s presence. Scripture clearly teaches, “There is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5).”

3. What Is Praying “in Jesus’ Name”?

- Jesus says, “Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; if you ask anything in my name, I will do it” (John 14:13 - 14). He also says that he chose his disciples “so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you” (John 15:16). Similarly, he says, “Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father, he will give it to you in

my name. Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full” (John 16:23 - 24; cf. Eph. 5:20). But what does this mean?”

4. Should We Pray to Jesus and to the Holy Spirit?

- A survey of the prayers of the New Testament indicates that they are usually addressed neither to God the Son nor to the Holy Spirit, but to God the Father. Yet a mere count of such prayers may be misleading, for the majority of the prayers we have recorded in the New Testament are those of Jesus himself, who constantly prayed to God the Father, but of course did not pray to himself as God the Son. Moreover, in the Old Testament, the trinitarian nature of God was not so clearly revealed, and it is not surprising that we do not find much evidence of prayer addressed directly to God the Son or God the Holy Spirit before the time of Christ.”

Some Important Considerations in Effective Prayer - Scripture indicates a number of considerations that need to be taken into account if we would offer the kind of prayer that God desires from us.

1. Praying According to God’s Will.

- John tells us, “This is the confidence which we have in 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 obtained the requests made of him” (1 John 5:14 - 15). Jesus teaches us to pray, “Your will be done” (Matt. 6:10), and he himself gives us an example, by praying in the garden of Gethsemane, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will” (Matt. 26:39).”

2. Praying With Faith

- “Jesus says, “Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours” (Mark 11:24). Some translations vary, but the Greek text actually says, “believe that you have received it.” Later scribes who copied the Greek manuscripts and some later commentators have taken it to mean “believe that you will receive it.” However, if we accept the text as it is in the earliest and best manuscripts (“believe that you have received it”), Jesus is apparently saying that when we ask for something, the kind of faith that will bring results is a settled assurance that when we prayed for something (or perhaps after we had been praying over a period of time), God agreed to grant our specific request. In the personal communion with God that occurs in genuine prayer, this kind of faith on our part could only come as God gives us a sense of assurance that he has agreed to grant our request. “Of course, we cannot “work up” this kind of genuine faith by any sort of frenzied prayer or great emotional effort to try to make ourselves believe, nor can we force it upon ourselves by saying words we don’t think to be true. This is something that only God can give us, and that he may or may not give us each time we pray. This assured faith will often come when we ask God for something and then quietly wait before him for an answer.”

3. Obedience.

- “Since prayer is a relationship with God as a person, anything in our lives that displeases him will be a hindrance to prayer. The psalmist says, “If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened” (Ps. 66:18). Though “The sacrifice of the

wicked is an abomination to the LORD,” by contrast, “the prayer of the upright is his delight” (Prov. 15:8). Again we read that “the LORD . . . hears the prayer of the righteous” (Prov. 15:29). But God is not favorably disposed to those who reject his laws: “If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination” (Prov. 28:9).”

4. Confession of Sins.

- Because our obedience to God is never perfect in this life, we continually depend on his forgiveness for our sins. Confession of sins is necessary in order for God to “forgive us” in the sense of restoring his day-by-day relationship with us (see Matt. 6:12; 1 John 1:9). It is good when we pray to confess all known sin to the Lord and to ask for his forgiveness. Sometimes when we wait on him, he will bring other sins to mind that we need to confess. With respect to those sins that we do not remember or are unaware of, it is appropriate to pray the general prayer of David, “Clear me from hidden faults” (Ps. 19:12).”

5. Forgiving Others.

- Jesus says, “If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matt. 6:14 - 15). Similarly, Jesus says, “Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against any one; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses” (Mark 11:25). Our Lord does not have in mind the initial experience of forgiveness we know when we are justified by faith, for that would not belong in a prayer that we pray every day (see Matt. 6:12 with vv. 14 - 15).

He refers rather to the day-by-day relationship with God that we need to have restored when we have sinned and displeased him. In fact, Jesus commands us to build into our prayers a request that God forgive us in the same way that we have forgiven others who have harmed us (in the same “personal relationship” sense of “forgive” – that is, not holding a grudge or cherishing bitterness against another person or harboring any desire to harm them): “Forgive us our sins, as we also have forgiven those who sin against us” (Matt. 6:12, author’s translation). If there are those whom we have not forgiven when we pray this prayer, then we are asking God not to restore a right relationship with us after we sin, in just the same way as we have refused to do so with others.”

6. Humility.

- “James tells us that “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6; also 1 Peter 5:5). Therefore he says, “Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you” (James 4:10). Humility is thus the right attitude to have in praying to God, whereas pride is altogether inappropriate.”

7. Continuing in Prayer Over Time.

- Just as Moses twice stayed on the mountain forty days before God for the people of Israel (Deut. 9:25 - 26; 10:10 - 11), and just as Jacob said to God, “I will not let you go, unless you bless me” (Gen. 32:26), so we see in Jesus’ life a pattern of much time given to prayer. When great multitudes were following him, “he himself was often withdrawing into the wilderness regions and praying” (Luke 5:16, author’s translation).¹² At another time, “all night he continued in prayer to God” (Luke 6:12).”

8. Praying Earnestly.

- “Jesus himself, who is our model for prayer, prayed earnestly. “In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard for his godly fear” (Heb. 5:7). In some of the prayers of Scripture, we can almost hear the great intensity with which the saints pour out their hearts before God. Daniel cries out, “O LORD, hear! O LORD, forgive! O LORD, listen and take action! For Thine own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name” (Dan. 9:19 NASB). When God shows Amos the judgment that he is going to bring on his people, Amos pleads, “O Lord GOD, forgive, I beseech you! How can Jacob stand? He is so small!” (Amos 7:2).”

9. Waiting on the Lord.

- “After crying out to God for help in distress, David says, “Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; yea, wait for the LORD!” (Ps. 27:14). Similarly, he says, “But for you, O LORD, do I wait; it is you, O LORD my God, who will answer” (Ps. 38:15).”

10. Praying in Private.

- “Daniel went to his upper chamber and “got down upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God” (Dan. 6:10).¹³ Jesus frequently went out into solitary places to be alone to pray (Luke 5:16 et al.). And he also teaches us, “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” (Matt. 6:6). This statement is in the context of avoiding the error of the hypocrites who loved to pray at the street corners “that they may be seen by men”

(Matt. 6:5). There is wisdom in Jesus' encouragement to pray in secret, not only that we might avoid hypocrisy, but also that we might not be distracted by the presence of other people and therefore modify our prayers to suit what we think they will expect to hear. When we are truly alone with God, in the privacy of a room to which we have "shut the door" (Matt. 6:6), then we can pour out our hearts to him."

11. Praying With Others.

- "Believers find strength in praying together with others. In fact, Jesus teaches us, "Again, I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:19 - 20)".

12. Fasting.

- "Prayer is often connected with fasting in Scripture. Sometimes these are occasions of intense supplication before God, as when Nehemiah, on hearing of the ruin of Jerusalem, "continued fasting and praying before the God of Heaven" (Neh. 1:4), or when the Jews learned of the decree of Ahasuerus that they would all be killed, and "there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting" (Esth. 4:3), or when Daniel sought the LORD "by prayer and supplications with fasting and sackcloth and ashes" (Dan. 9:3). At other times fasting is connected with repentance, for God says to the people who have sinned against him, " 'Yet even now,' says the LORD, 'return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning' " (Joel 2:12)."

13. What About Unanswered Prayer?

- We must begin by recognizing that as long as God is God and we are his creatures, there must be some unanswered prayers. This is because God keeps hidden his own wise plans for the future, and even though people pray, many events will not come about until the time that God has decreed. The Jews prayed for centuries for the Messiah to come, and rightly so, but it was not until “the time had fully come” that “God sent forth his Son” (Gal. 4:4). The souls of martyrs in heaven, free from sin, cry out for God to judge the earth (Rev. 6:10), but God does not immediately answer; rather he tells them to rest a little longer (Rev. 6:11). It is clear that there can be long periods of delay during which prayers go unanswered, because the people praying do not know God’s wise timing.”

Praise and Thanksgiving

Praise and thanksgiving to God, which will be treated more fully in chapter 51, are an essential element of prayer. The model prayer that Jesus left us begins with a word of praise: “Hallowed be your name” (Matt. 6:9). And Paul tells the Philippians, “in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God” (Phil. 4:6), and the Colossians, “Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving” (Col. 4:2). Thanksgiving, like every other aspect of prayer, should not be a mechanical mouthing of a “thank you” to God, but the expression of words that reflect the thankfulness of our hearts. Moreover, we should never think that thanking God for the answer to something we ask for can somehow force God to give it to us, for that changes the prayer from a genuine, sincere request to a demand that assumes we can

make God do what we want him to do. Such a spirit in our prayers really denies the essential nature of prayer as dependence on God.”