

Living a Life of Prayer “Intimacy and Intercession”

- *Many times, over the years I have spoken with Christians who say they struggle with their prayer life.*
- *Some Christians say they struggle with feeling like they do not pray enough.*
- *Some Christians say they struggle with knowing what to say, or what to pray for.*
- *Some Christians say they struggle with how to pray.*
- *Sometimes overthinking prayer can keep us from praying.*
- *Prayer is the most neglected privilege of all spiritual practices.*
- **Luke 11:1** Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, *that* one of His disciples said to Him, “**Lord, teach us to pray**, as John also taught his disciples.”
 - *The disciples did not ask the Lord to teach them how to pray, but to pray.*
- **Acts 2:42** And **they continued steadfastly** in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and **in prayers**.
 - *Prayer is something that the Church should be continually devoted to.*
- **Isaiah 56:7** ⁷ Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices *Will be* accepted on My altar; **For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.**
 - *A Church stays on its feet when its members live on their knees.*

Prayer life examples.

- **Psalms 5:1-3** ¹ Give ear to my words, O Lord, **Consider my meditation.** ² Give heed to the voice of my cry, My King and my God, For to You I will pray. ³ **My voice You shall hear in the morning, O Lord; In the morning I will direct it to You,** And I will look up.
 - *Prayer can be vocalized.*
 - *Prayer can be meditation.*
 - *The beginning of the day is the best time to begin praying.*
- **Mark 1:35** Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and **departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.**
 - *Prayer should be done in a place free from distractions.*

- **Daniel 6:10** Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, **he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.**
 - *Prayer should be from a humble heart.*
 - *Prayer should be from a thankful heart.*
 - *Prayer should be a daily habit.*
- **Daniel 9:3-5** ³ Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. ⁴ And I prayed to the Lord my God, and made confession, and said, “O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, ⁵ **we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments.**
 - *Prayer is a deliberate focus on the Lord.*
 - *Prayer should involve confession of sin.*
- **Matthew 6:5-7** ⁵ “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, **that they may be seen by men.** Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. ⁶ But you, **when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place;** and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. ⁷ And **when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.**
 - *Prayer should be sincere.*
 - *Prayer should be intimate.*
 - *The Lord does not want us speaking to Him in gibberish.*
 - *It is not about saying many words; it is about pouring out our hearts to the Lord with understanding.*

How often should a Christian pray?

- **Luke 5:16** So He Himself **often withdrew** into the wilderness and prayed.
- **Luke 18:1** Then He spoke a parable to them, that **men always ought to pray and not lose heart,**

- **Luke 21:36** Watch therefore, and **pray always** that you may ^{be} counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man
- **1 Thessalonians 5:17** **pray without ceasing,**
 - *Treat prayer like breathing; inhale and exhale prayer.*

What should Christians be praying for?

- **Acts 1:4-5** ⁴ And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but **to wait for the Promise of the Father**, "which," *He said*, "you have heard from Me; ⁵ for John truly baptized with water, but **you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit** not many days from now."
- **Philippians 4:6** **Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer** and supplication, with thanksgiving, **let your requests be made known to God**;
- The Christian life is not a constant high. I have my moments of deep discouragement. I have to go to God in prayer with tears in my eyes, and say, 'O God, forgive me,' or 'Help me. -Billy Graham
- **Matthew 26:41** **Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.** The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak."
- **Psalms 109:4** In return for my love they are my accusers, **But I give myself to prayer.**
- **Matthew 5:44** But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and **pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,**
- **Luke 6:12** Now it came to pass **in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.**
- **Acts 13:2-3** ² **As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said**, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³ Then, **having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.**
- **Matthew 9:37-38** ³⁷ Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but **the laborers are few.** ³⁸ **Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."**

- **Acts 6:4** but we will **give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.**"
- **Acts 12:5** Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.
- **Matthew 19:13** Then little children were brought to Him that He might put *His* hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them.
- **Romans 10:1** Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.
 - *The best way to bring people to God, is to bring them to God in prayer.*
- **John 17:20** "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;
- **Ephesians 6:18** praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication **for all the saints**—
- **Colossians 4:2-4** ² Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; ³ meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, ⁴ that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.
- **1 Timothy 2:1-2** ¹ Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, ² for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.
- **Luke 22:32** But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."
- **Luke 22:44** And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.
- **Acts 4:31** And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.
- **Ephesians 1:16** do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:
- **Philippians 1:9** And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,

- **Colossians 1:9-11** ⁹ For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to **pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;** ¹⁰ **that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;** ¹¹ **strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;**
- **James 5:13-16** ¹³ **Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray.** Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. 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 sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶ **Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another,** that you may be healed. **The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.**
- **3 John 2** Beloved, **I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health,** just as your soul prospers

Incentives to pray.

- **Proverbs 15:8, 29** ⁸ The sacrifice of the wicked *is* an abomination to the Lord, But **the prayer of the upright is His delight.** ²⁹ The Lord *is* far from the wicked, **But He hears the prayer of the righteous.**
- **Matthew 7:7-11** ⁷ **"Ask, and it will be given to you;** seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.⁸ **For everyone who asks receives,** and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? ¹¹ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!**
- **Matthew 21:22** **And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."**
- **1 John 5:14-15** ¹⁴ Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that **if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.** ¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

Unbiblical teachings about prayer that discourage Christians.

- *That there is a secret personal prayer life that you must have for God to hear you.*
- *That you must speak in the tongues of angels to be heard by God.*
- *That God only hears long prayers.*
- *That God only hears loud prayers.*
- *That God only hears our prayers when we are kneeling.*
- *That God does not hear our prayers when we are sitting.*
- *It is the posture of the heart that matters to God, not our physical posture. The Bible records people praying in various physical postures.*
- *That the Devil can stop God from answering your prayer if you pray in your own native tongue.*

Closing exhortations:

- **Luke 18:11** The Pharisee stood and **prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men**—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.
- **Psalm 66:18** If I regard iniquity in my heart,
The Lord will not hear.
- **1 Corinthians 14:2** For **he who speaks in a tongue** does not **speak** to men but **to God**, for no one understands *him*; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.
 - ***Pray to God in your native tongue.***
- **Romans 8:26-27** ²⁶ Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession  for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ²⁷ Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is*, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*.
 - ***The Lord knows your heart without words. The Lord can interpret the groan of the sigh of your heart.***
- **Jude 20** But you, beloved, **building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,**
 - ***Praying in the Holy Spirit means inviting Him to direct your prayers and not merely your own thoughts.***
 - ***To interpret this as praying in tongues is an assumption based upon presupposition.***

- **1 Peter 4:7** But **the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.**
- **Acts 10:4** And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, "What is it, lord?" So he said to him, "**Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God.**
- **James 5:17-18** ¹⁷ Elijah was a man **with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly** that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. ¹⁸ And **he prayed again**, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

Prayer is not about eloquence, but about earnestness.

A praying Christian is never a useless Christian.

People who take time to pray, will find that they have time for all the other things that need their attention.