

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What are some of the outstanding features of Paul's prayers?
2. How are Paul's prayers different than the prayers we normally pray for ourselves and each other?
3. How might our prayer life change if our prayers were as rich and deep as Paul's?

MY PRACTICE OF PRAYER (PRIVATE)

A. THREE KINDS OF PRAYER

1. Formal Prayer
2. Spontaneous Prayer
3. Prayer in Community

B. THE WORD OF GOD AND PRAYER

1. I read a selection of four or five chapters of Scripture (a Selection from Covenant History, the Writings, the Prophets, and the Gospels /Epistles).
2. I highlight the verses that stand out to me (or capture the heart of the passage).
3. I choose one of the verses I've highlighted for further meditation.
4. I write it out in my journal.
5. I write a short prayer in response.
6. I continue in an extended time of prayer.

C. ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE IN PRAYER

1. Key Passages on Prayer from the Gospels and Epistles
2. Members of Christ Church
3. Things I Am Praying for Myself
4. Things I Am Praying for my Family
5. Things I Am Praying for our Church
6. Friends and Neighbors Who Do Not Know the Lord

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Did you find any of these practical suggestions particularly helpful? If so, which ones?
2. What are some practical steps you can take in the coming week to be more meaningfully engaged with God through the word and in prayer?



If you could grab a cup of coffee and enjoy a morning or afternoon of uninterrupted conversation with anyone past or present, who would it be?. It might be a historical figure, it might be someone you lost, it might be a distant friend or someone you've always admired.

I am not so sure the Apostle Paul was into coffee, but he would be high on my list. My list would be pretty boring by most standards—John Calvin, Martin Luther, Abraham Kuyper. Perhaps Thomas Jefferson. Tim Keller or Donald Carson would be fun. Who would you choose?

Remarkably, the God of the universe, chooses you. He created you to live and flourish in a personal relationship with him. He has invited you into the joyous fellowship he has enjoyed with His Son and the Spirit throughout eternity. He has given you the means to know him, hear his voice, cast your cares on him, enjoy his presence, and find comfort and rest in him..

One of the most compelling invitations in Scripture is, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and enjoy a meal with them and they with me (Revelation 3:20)."

It is almost as if an overstuffed leather chair sits empty and waiting, the coffee has been brewed, the invitation extended. The only thing left is for you to take your place and enjoy his company.

We've spent the last few weeks talking about the Rhythms of Grace. These are the rhythms that usher us into God's presence to know him, enjoy him and be transformed by his Spirit into the image of his Son.

This week we turn our attention toward the practice of prayer.

THE SHAPE OF PRAYER

A. THE PSALMS

B. THE LORD'S PRAYER | MATTHEW 6:9-13

1. God's Name and God's Kingdom

a. An Invitation into Immanence and Transcendence (v. 9)

⁹ Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

b. An Invitation into Participation and Longing (v. 10)

¹⁰ your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

2. Our Needs

a. Provision (v. 11)

¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.

b. Pardon (v. 12)

¹² And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

c. Protection (v. 13)

¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'

SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What are some elements of the Lord's prayer that we do not often include in our prayers?
2. How might our prayer life change if we adopted these patterns for ourselves?

C. PAUL'S PRAYERS

1 THESSALONIANS 3:12–13 May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. ¹³ May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

2 THESSALONIANS 1:11–12 With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith. ¹² We pray this 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.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:16–17 May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, ¹⁷ encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

PHILIPPIANS 1:9–11 ⁹ And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may 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 1:9–14 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, ¹⁰ so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹ being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, ¹² and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. ¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

EPHESIANS 1:18–21 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰ he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹ far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

EPHESIANS 3:14–21 ¹⁴ For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.