

## Prayer

### Purpose of Prayer

- The ultimate purpose of all prayer is the glory of God.

*"Whatever you ask in My Name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son"*  
(John 14:13)

*"Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify you"* (John 17:1)

"The immediate purpose of prayer is the accomplishing of God's will on earth; the ultimate purpose of prayer is the eternal glory of God."  
– Warren Wiersbe, *On Earth as It Is in Heaven: How the Lord's Prayer Teaches Us to Pray More Effectively*

- So we can say that ultimately prayer is for God's glory, but in terms of our personal prayer life, what is the primary purpose of prayer?
- Apostle Paul prayed for the Ephesian church that God the Father would give them:

*"...the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him..." or "so that you may know Him better"* (Ephesians 1:17 ESV/NIV)

"Paul sees this fuller knowledge of God as a more critical thing to receive than a change of circumstances...Therefore knowing God better is what we must have above all if we are to face life in any circumstances... He (Paul) believes that the highest good is communion or fellowship with God...He does not see prayer as merely a way to get things from God but as a way to get more of God himself."

– Tim Keller, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy With God*

“Prayer is the way that the life of God is nourished in us...the Biblical purpose of prayer is to know God Himself” – Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*

- Of course there are also other purposes and reasons for prayer.
  - Worship - Prayer can be a form of worship comprised of praise, adoration, reflecting on and declaring the attributes of God. When we pray, recognizing God for Who He is and what He's done, it is an act of worship.
  - Experiencing the Awe of God - sense of wonder, amazement, proper holy fear
  - Experiencing the love of God through communion with God
  - Delighting ourselves in the Lord
  - Thanksgiving
  - Intimate communication
  - Intentional communication (John Piper's words)
  - To connect with God
  - To align our heart with God's (Matthew 26:39 - Jesus in Gethsemane)
  - An act of dependence on God
  - An exercise of Faith
  - Solitude - self examination, self knowledge, confession of sin
  - Listening to God - discerning the Lord's voice, guidance, direction
  - Waiting on God- for renewal of spiritual strength (Isaiah 40:31; Psalm 130:5-6)
  - Supplication/petition - asking God for our needs (Matthew 7:7-11)
  - Receiving blessings that are ours in Christ
  - Intercession - asking God for others. We are now a royal priesthood (Ex.19:5-6; 1Peter2:9; Rev.5:8-10) Jesus is our Intercessor (Hebrews 7:25) so when we intercede for others we are being Christ-like.
  - An act of cooperation with God - God's way of letting us partner with Him to accomplish His purposes
  - Prevail with God - persistent/importunate prayer (Luke 18:1-8; Matthew 15:21-28; Luke 11:5-10)
  - To prevail over our flesh - submission to God's will, desiring and growing in sanctification (Galatians 5:16-17)

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- To prevail against the devil - strength to overcome temptation, power for deliverance from besetting sin, spiritual warfare on behalf of ourselves and others (Ephesians 6:10-18)
- Endurance - grace to sustain, strength to persevere (Colossians 1:11; Hebrews 10:36; Psalm 55:22; 2 Corinthians 12:9)
- Lament - mourning before God in order to be comforted
- Desperate Cry - for the Lord's intervention
- Longing - for and after God (Psalm 42:1-2; Psalm 63:1)

## **How Prayer Has Affected Me**

**Relationship**

**Worship**

**Cost**

**Word**

**Joy**

**Faith**

**Holy Spirit**

**Discipline**

**Thankfulness**

**Peace**

## **How I Have Made Prayer a Priority in My Life**

## Practical Tips for Prayer

- Ask the Lord to show you what time of day is best for you to pray. You will have the best success in establishing the habit of prayer if you choose a time that works best for you and allows you to be consistent.

*Jesus prayed in the morning, all night, and at various intervals during the day. King David prayed in the morning and evening, noon, and night. The prophet Daniel prayed three times a day. (Mark 1:35; Psalm 5:3; Luke 5:16; Luke 6:12-13; Psalm 55:17; Daniel 6:13)*

- So now that we've set aside time and place for prayer, how do we begin? Get ready for distractions and difficulty!

"Prayer is always hard work...We sometimes have to wrestle in order to pray. While God can and will grant times of peace and tranquility, no Christian outgrows the need to struggle and persevere in prayer." –Tim Keller

- So, sometimes I am able to quiet my thoughts sooner and sometimes I have to wrestle to do so. Then I will often begin to think about, meditate on, Who God is and what He has done.

- Praying in the Spirit.

*"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. 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." (Romans 8:26-27)*

- There are various prayer models that we can use for focusing and directing our prayers.

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- A.C.T.S. – Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication
- Matthew 6:9-13 – the prayer Jesus taught the disciples
- Using God's Word in Prayer.

*Praying The Bible* by Donald S. Whitney  
*Praying With Paul: A Call to Spiritual Reformation* by D.A. Carson

“By far the most important and the most authoritative of the sources that continue to shape my prayer life is the Bible itself... Learn to argue in prayer with Moses, to sing with David, to be farsighted and expansive with Solomon at the dedication of the temple. Think through what it means to pray the prayer taught us by the Lord Jesus Himself. Learn to pray with Paul. Such study will help us identify what to pray for, how to approach God, the proper grounds for our petitions.” (Carson)

- Since faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ, (Romans 10:17) hearing the Word as we read it aloud builds faith.
- Some people have found journaling to be a helpful tool during prayer.
- Some people find it helpful to list what they pray for and the answers to those prayers.
- Prayer cards are helpful.
- LCC Prayer Calendar
- Dry seasons - press through - begin again