

THE WHERE - MATTHEW 6:6-7 | ACTS 2:7 | 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18

THE WHAT - PRAYER

As we remember and celebrate the death and resurrection of our Savior, Jesus, there is no greater way to abide in Him than deepening our prayer life. In Matthew 6, Jesus shares both the importance and the way to pray to our Heavenly Father (this is known as The Lord's Prayer). If you haven't read the Lord's Prayer, take some time to study and understand it. Jesus shares this with His disciples to demonstrate that prayer is not just about "the what", but also "the why" and "the how". The truth is prayer is not about checking off the box or listing your desires like ABCs. It isn't even about just talking to Him about your life. The purpose of prayer is to seek true, authentic devotion and a relationship with God. This means that prayer must be a priority in our day-to-day life. It should be an organized process of both give and take between you and Him. Does God want to bless you? Absolutely. But even more than that, He just wants you. He desires your heart, affection, attention, and your listening ear. As you begin to include prayer in your day and week, here are three practical but very intentional things for you to consider:

The Priority of Prayer [1 Thessalonians 5:16-18]:

Pray without ceasing means pray as much as you can while you're doing everything else! Prayer has become a thing that can seem awkward and uncomfortable, but it's time we approach it with a fresh desire to draw closer to God. It's time we make prayer a priority again. This is where we find Holy Spirit power, blessing, fruit, strength, and ability to refuel our Spirit. It's all through prayer!

How do you prioritize it? Choose a time in the day to prioritize prayer, and stick to it. Maybe for you, it's in the morning, maybe it's at night. Regardless, setting a time and sticking to it is making it a priority.

The Place of Prayer [Matthew 6:6]:

After you've picked a time, then choose a place. "Go and pray in secret" happens in your heart. The key to prayer is consistency in an environment conducive to connecting with God. It can be a skate park, a deer stand, a room in your house, a coffee shop, or anything in between. The place of prayer should help you be alone with God in your heart. You will improve your ability to prioritize prayer if you have a designated place to pray. A private place helps us pray without distraction. But remember to make it a priority to pray wherever you are!

The Plan of Prayer [Matthew 6:5-13]:

If you want to prioritize prayer, you need a plan. Many of us struggle with prayer. It's not because we don't have a set time or place, but because we don't know what to actually say when we are ready to pray. Sometimes, we begin to ramble to God. When we pray, God knows our hearts, so communication isn't the problem. It's the quality of the communication that makes us susceptible to not praying regularly. When we don't have a plan, we get in our way by rushing, checking off the box, or reciting, and we aren't truly engaging our hearts.

ABIDING DAILY

- SET A TIME EACH DAY TO PRAY AND TALK TO GOD.
- PREPARE YOUR HEART. INCORPORATE THESE 3 ELEMENTS INTO YOUR PRAYER TIME:
 - PRAISE
 - GRATITUDE/THANKS
 - FORGIVENESS OF SINS
- READ THE BIBLE AND LET HIM SPEAK TO YOU. REMEMBER THAT IT IS THE LIVING WORD OF GOD.
- ACTIVELY INVITE THE HOLY SPIRIT TO FILL YOU AND GUIDE YOU TODAY.
- MAKE WORSHIP A PRIORITY IN YOUR LIFE. WORSHIP SETS THE ATMOSPHERE FOR OUR HEARTS TO RECEIVE WHAT GOD HAS FOR US.

CCC Worship Playlist



THE HOW - ABIDE

THANK HIM AND PRAISE HIM

Psalm 100:4 says, “Enter His gates with thanksgiving; go into His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him and praise His name.” Gratitude can always set the tone for your prayer time with God. Giving thank for what He has done in your life leads to praising Him because of His goodness. Write a list of things to thank and praise the Lord for and start your prayer time by recalling His goodness!

OFFER YOURSELF TO HIM

Romans 12:1 says, “And so dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all He has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice.” Before you come to Him with all of your wants, needs, and desires, make space to offer yourself to Him. Say these words, “God, I surrender my heart to you today, use me for your glory wherever I go.” Laying down your flesh leads to greater access to the Spirit and a greater availability to be used by the Lord.

LISTEN TO HIM

Psalm 37:7 says, “Be still in the presence of the Lord, and wait patiently for Him to act.” The biggest struggle many of us have when it comes to prayer is hearing the voice of the Lord. Oftentimes, this isn't because He isn't speaking; but rather we don't stop speaking long enough to hear Him. His voice is a still small voice and in James 4 the promise is that if we draw near to God, in return, He will draw near to us. The key to experiencing this in its fullness is to listen. Take some time to just sit, be still, and rest in the peace and quiet of His presence, and then write down what He speaks to your heart and soul.

WORSHIP HIM

Revelation 5:12 says, “Worthy is the lamb who was slain — to receive all power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.” Yes, this is different than your few moments of thanking and praising Him. When it comes to a moment of worship in your prayer plan, just begin to tell Him how worthy, how holy, and how mighty He is. You don't need a reason to worship Him, His holiness and His mighty power are the reason. Even if this means playing a worship song and singing it back to God with a pure and focused heart, make worship a priority in your prayer plan!

BRING YOUR REQUESTS

1 Timothy 2:1 says, “I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them.” Many times we skip all of the above and come straight to this part of the plan. This is not always a bad thing, however, the purpose of prayer is to deepen our relationship with God. All of these things draw us deeper into abiding in Him. Once we have praised Him, surrendered to Him, listened to Him, and worshipped Him, we can present our requests to Him. This is the part where you talk to Him about your struggles, hurts, desires, and those of others as well.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1. Is prayer a part of your day?
2. When you pray, is it out of the desire for a deeper relationship with God?
3. If God needs to get a hold of you, can He? (prayer includes learning to listen to the still small voice of God)
4. Is prayer your first response or your last resort?