

# PRAYER 101

Prayer – prayer is communicating (talking) with God. Just as in any relationship with another person, the two involved in the relationship must communicate. This communication involves 2 steps:

## STEP #1 - TALKING TO JESUS (ACTS)

**A – Adoration** – tell Him who He is, what He is like (for instance, “You are Creator, You are God, You are Lord; I praise You for Your greatness, power, love, mercy and grace.”)

But does God not already know this about Himself? Yes, He knows all of this about Himself, but us telling Him who He is reminds us of who He is. He is all those things and much more. Be biblical and thorough with your adoration of Him. He will bring things to your mind about who He is.

**C – Confession** – confess (agree with by telling) your sin of the previous day and ask Him to forgive you of that sin (1 John 1:9). Yes, He already knows your sin and is fully aware of that sin, but you must acknowledge it as sin and ask Him to forgive you of that sin.

Do not do mental gymnastics to figure out what you must ask forgiveness for; He will tell you if you ask. He is the God of order and not confusion. He wants you to know so that you can be forgiven.

Confession was not a “one-time” event at salvation. Confession should be made everyday because we sin everyday. Being a clean vessel before God is important. Confess your sin everyday. Leviticus 11:44 should be our motivation for confession. God said, “.....be holy for I am Holy.”

**T – Thanksgiving** – Thank Him for everything you have spiritually (salvation, peace, etc.) and physically (family, church relationships, life’s necessities, etc.)

**S- Supplication** – Supplication means to request on behalf of someone – You can supplicate for others. Pray for the salvation of others, wisdom for others, understanding for others, the health of others and the needs of others. Write down a list with specific requests and a date. When God answers, you have more to praise Him for!

You can also supplicate for yourself. Ask Him to supply your need spiritually, mentally and physically. Depend upon Him...remember, He is all powerful and all knowing!

## **STEP #2 - LISTENING TO JESUS**

Do not miss this step!! Many like to tell Jesus things, but what about listening to Him? You can do this at the beginning, at the end, in the middle, wherever you desire.

Sit back and listen to Him. Think about Him. Gaze at Him. Behold Him. He might speak sometimes and at other times He might not. It will not be audible more than likely, but His still small voice is unmistakable.

He wants to speak to you and be spoken to. Clyde Cranford said in his book, *Because We Love Him: Embracing a Life of Holiness*, that the greatest statement of pride is not praying. Praying proves dependence upon God. You need Him...pray to Him and hear Him!!

## **A STUDY IN PRAYER**

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 1 Timothy 2:1-4

On the night of His arrest, Jesus provided His disciples with direction and encouragement for the days ahead. Woven throughout the conversation was also a message on prayer. It makes sense that He would instruct them about prayer, but what He says is almost shocking—“whatever you ask in my name, this I will do” (John 14:13). He later closed in prayer for His disciples, and they headed out to the garden where He would be arrested. Jesus’ statements on prayer are often ignored or relegated to only certain aspects of our lives. But how should we apply what He said?

Read John 14:12-14; 15:7. What did Jesus say about our requests?

What are you asking Him for? What can you ask Him for?

Even though what Jesus said about prayer can be difficult to understand or believe, it is no less true. James helps to bring balance, as we might otherwise respond incorrectly. On the one hand, he reminds us of our need to pray. —You do not have, because you do not ask (James 4:2c). On the other hand, he exhorts us about being selfish in our prayers. —You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your own passions (James 4:3). It might be helpful to look at a few examples: Elijah, Epaphras, and Paul. These are three men whose prayer journeys were recorded as models for us.

## **Elijah**

Read James 5:17-18 (see also 1 Kings 17-18). Where was Elijah's confidence? Can you pray like Elijah?

## **Epaphras**

Read Colossians 1:3-8; 4:12. What did Epaphras want for the believers in Colossae? How did he pray for them?

## **Paul**

Paul is well known as the great New Testament missionary, but he also was a man of prayer. The verses to study are many, so here I will provide just an overview. (If you'd like to do this study on your own, the references have been provided in the endnotes for this chapter.)

Throughout the book of Acts and in his letters, Paul is praying. He spoke about the need to be steadfast, watchful, constant, and unceasing in prayer. He taught us to pray with both our spirit and our mind. When we don't know what to pray, he told us that the Spirit will help and intercede for us. He taught us to pray everywhere and for everyone. And he exhorted us to not be anxious, angry, or quarrelsome. Instead, we should pray, intercede for others, and be thankful.

Paul modeled what he taught. Everywhere he went he prayed—after his conversion, throughout his missionary journeys, and in prison. In anticipation of the places he would go and in follow-up to the places he had been, he prayed for believers and the lost. On his second missionary journey, around midnight and in prison, he and Silas prayed and sang hymns to God. He prayed for the spreading of the gospel, for the salvation of the lost, and for the healing of the sick. Paul prayed for the growth of disciples and for God to be glorified through them. He prayed for believers to grow and for unity to be restored. He prayed as he committed elders to the Lord, and he asked the churches to pray for him and for his ministry. And even though there were often issues that required confrontation, Paul was thankful for those churches in his prayers. His life was marked by a constant yearning for God and ceaseless prayer.

Read Ephesians 3:14-21; Colossians 1:9-14; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12. How should you pray as you make disciples? What should you pray for as you make disciples?

You should regularly evaluate your prayer life. Do you trust God to provide what you need and answer your prayers? What are you asking God for?

We don't need a praying life because that is our duty. That would wear thin quickly. We need time to be with our Father every day because every day our hearts and the hearts of those around us are overgrown with weeds. We need to reflect on our lives and engage God with the condition of our souls and the souls he has entrusted to our care or put in our paths. In a fallen world, these things do not come automatically.

—Paul Miller, *A Praying Life*

How can you grow to become more faithfully constant, steadfast, and watchful in prayer?

In life and on mission, how should you be praying with and for others?